

Investigation



Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK
المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا

into the **murder of nine Egyptians** by security forces



September 2015



Investigation

into the murder of nine Egyptians

by

security forces

September 2015



From right:

Jamal Khalifa, Hisham Al-Dusuki, Mu'tasim Al-Ajizi, Abdulfatah Ibrahim, Taher Ismail, Hisham Khafaji, Nasir Salem Al-Hafi, Osama Al-Husseini and Al-Sayyed Yusuf.



Details of the Incident:

On 1 July 2015, the Egyptian ministry of interior released a statement at 4:20pm announcing it had killed 9 Muslim Brotherhood (MB) leaders at an apartment in Al-Bashayer neighbourhood in 6 October City, Giza.

The murdered men were: Abdulfatah Mohammed Ibrahim (52, engineer and owner of a construction company), Nasir Salem Salem Al-Hafi (55, former MP and president of the MB Legal Committee), Hisham Ibrahim Al-Dusuki (50, lawyer), Jamal Sa'ad Badawi Khalifa (57, physician), Al-Sayyed Yusuf Al-Sayyed Yusuf (50, teacher), Mu'tasim Ahmed Al-Ajizi (26, chemist at a pharmaceutical company), Taher Ahmed Ismail (50, veterinarian), Osama Ahmed Al-Husseini (56, former president of Mtobis local council in Kafr Al-Sheik and president of the Teacher Syndicate's Kafr Al-Sheik branch), Hisham Zaki Al-Mahdi Khafaji (49, orthopaedist). All nine men were leading MB figures.

The ministry of interior statement alleged that authorities had pinpointed the location of an MB leader wanted in several cases and sent security forces to pick him up. As officers approached the building, the statement claimed that several gunshots were fired



from inside an apartment prompting the police to shoot back. When forces stormed the apartment, they found 9 bodies riddled with bullets, in addition to three automatic rifles, six bullet magazines, 132 cartridges, documents and a large sum of money. The statement added that all 9 men were involved in planning the explosion that killed State Prosecutor Hisham Barakat.



Investigating the truth

behind the incident:

After reviewing the evidence presented by the ministry of interior and its statement regarding the incident and matching it with photos and videos from the same source, it became glaringly evident that the official version of the events was deeply flawed and fraught with contradictions.

Evidence and information were collected, analysed and compared with evidence provided by the ministry of interior statement in an attempt to figure out what happened in that apartment on the day of the killings. The ministry of interior refused to respond to any of our queries.

The largest bulk of the information came from the families of the nine victims, death certificates containing the causes of death based on the medical examiner's report, video footage and information contained in the ministry of interior's statement, testimonies from several individuals who took part washing the victims before burial (they also provided us with photographs of bullet entry and exit wounds on the victims bodies which were



later shown to another medical examiner for his expert opinion), and testimonies from two people who reside in the same building where the shooting took place. The following is a detailed account of these pieces of information and evidence.



One: Analysis of the Ministry of Interior's version of events

According to images and video footage released by the ministry of interior (faces of victims have been deliberately hidden) to accompany the official statement, the fighting began from the moment security forces arrived. The nine victims allegedly began shooting at security forces who, according to the law, can only shoot back in self defense in a manner proportionate to the threat. If so, none of the evidence supports this version of the events for the following reasons:

- 1- The building's façade is free of bullet holes. Had the ministry's version been true, there would at least be bullet holes near the window from which the victims allegedly shot at the police.

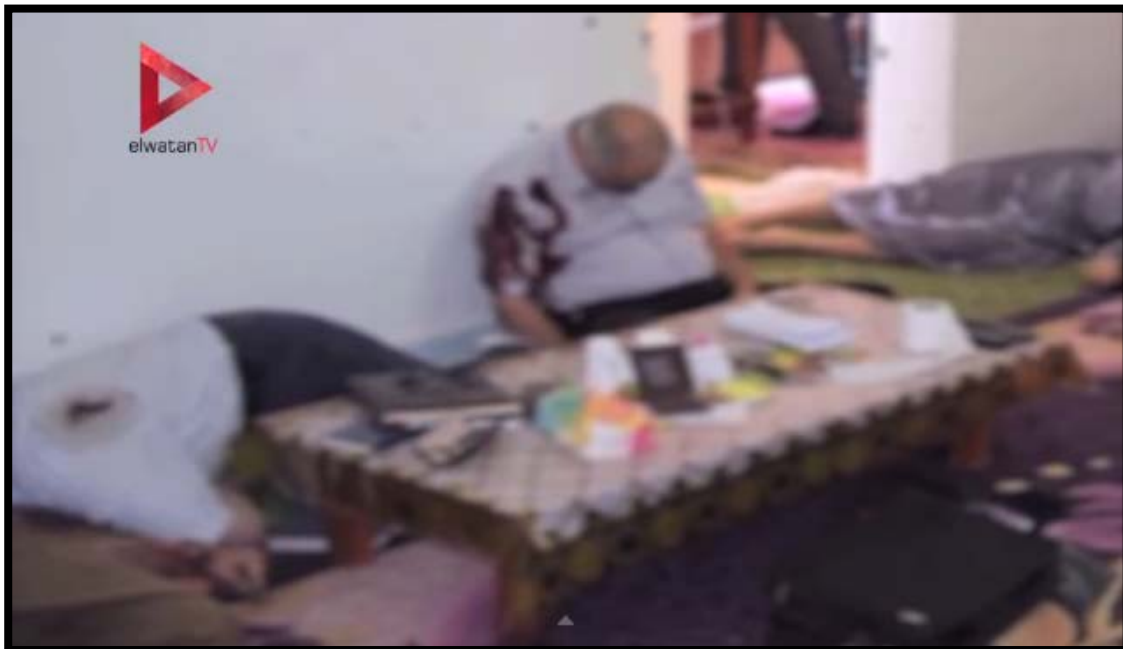


The wall of the building show know marks of bullets from where the exchange fire alleged



- 2- The use of force was not proportionate to the alleged use of force by the victims. According to the ministry's statement, there were only three firearms and the ammunitions mentioned in the statement cannot be used without weapons. Moreover, there were no casings at the scene of the bullets allegedly fired by the victims, which proves that these weapons were never used.

- 3- The position of the dead bodies and the manner in which they were almost piled on top of each other in one room (as evident in the footage released by the ministry and published by Al-Watan newspaper) does not support the official version of the events which claims the victims shot at the police from one of the apartment's windows.



- 4- An examination of the ministry's images and footage reveals that the window of the room in which the bodies were found was closed and there were no bodies in the only room with an open window. This proves that the official version was fabricated.



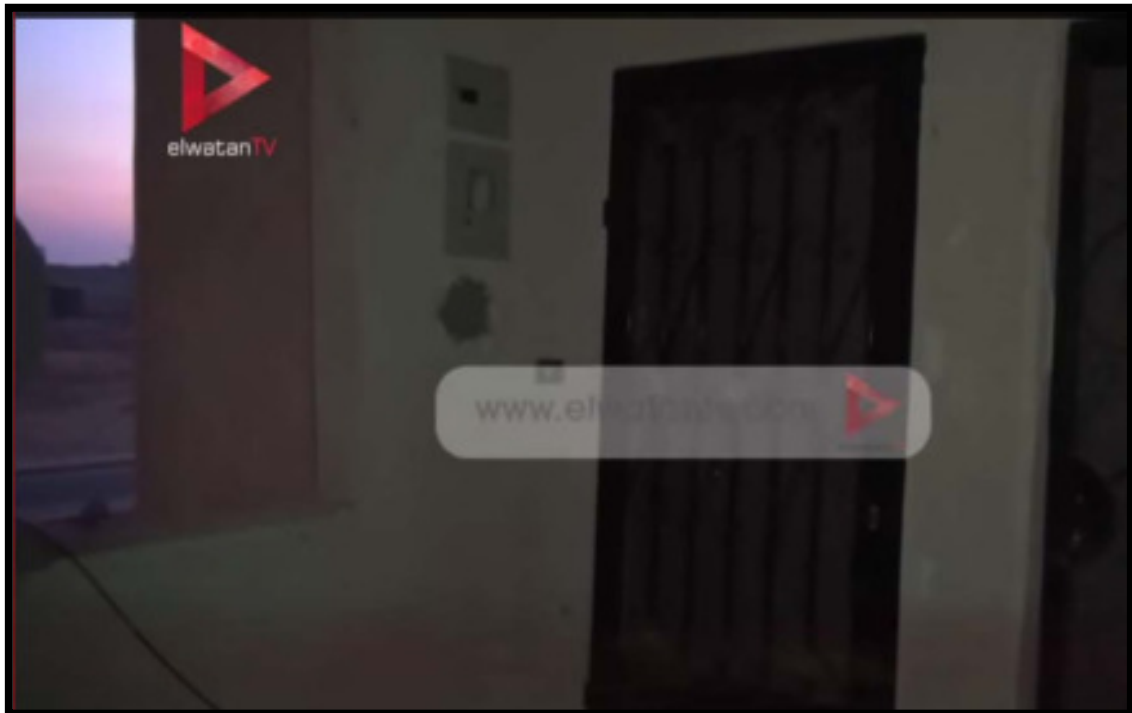
The photo show the only closed window which lead to the main entrance of the building

5- The position of the two automatic rifles was identical. How could two victims and their weapons fall to the floor and assume identical positions? This supports the view that the victims were positioned next to the weapons and next to each other.



Photos show how the weapons have been put in the same order

- 6- Photographs taken of the apartment's door after the incident show that it was intact and there was no sign of forced entry, proving that security forces did not encounter any resistance.





Two: Testimonies from the families of the 9 victims.

The victims' families revealed that they found out the victims had been arrested several hours before their death. They were then stunned to hear the ministry of interior publish footage of the killings and release the official version of the events. Those who washed the victims' bodies in preparation for their burial said the bodies bore clear signs of torture, burn marks and some had fractured bones. The families took photos of the injuries on the victims' bodies. The images were examined by experts and medical examiners for their professional opinion (see below).



The families' testimonies were as follows:

- According to the family of Mu'tasim Ahmed Al-Ajizi (born 22 November 1989), "we went to pick up his body from the morgue and were shocked to see signs of torture and physical assault all over his body. He had broken bones, bruises all over, cuts on his jaw and mouth, and at least seven gunshot wounds (three in his abdomen, two in his right arm and two in his left arm).
- The family of Dr.HishamZaki Al-Mahdi Khafaji (born 29 January 1966) said in their testimony: "At 12pm on the day of the incident, we received information that Dr.Hisham had been arrested along with several MB leaders but were not able to verify the information. At 5 p.m. we were shocked to hear that he had been killed by security forces. We headed to 6 October 2nd Precinct to enquire about the circumstances surrounding his death but the police denied any knowledge of the incident. We then went to the scene of the killings and asked the neighbours about what happened. They replied they had not seen or heard any exchange of fire and that the police had cordoned off the whole building to prevent anyone from accessing the apartment until the bodies had been removed. In the evening, we heard that the bodies had been taken to Zinhum morgue, and so we headed there to collect the body which, we discovered, had been tortured and stabbed in the



back with a sharp object. My father's right shoulder was dislocated and he had a fractured collarbone in addition to the several gunshot wounds."

- The son of Dr. Jamal Sa'adBadawiKhalifa (born 14 August 1958) said in his testimony, "We heard that my father had been arrested while attending a meeting in 6 October city at noon time on the day of his death. Earlier that day he had told us he was headed to an important meeting and so we were shocked to hear of his death on the news. When we went to collect his body from the morgue, we noticed it bore the tell-tale signs of torture and physical assault. There were two gunshot wounds in his abdomen and one in his head which resulted in a fractured skull."
- The daughter of Al-Sayyed Yusuf Al-Sayyed Yusuf (born 29 December 1965) said in her testimony, "we heard that my father had been arrested at around noon time on the day of his death but were not able to verify the information until we heard on the news that he had been killed. We later learned that his body was at Zinhum morgue, so we headed there to collect it. It was clear from his body that he had been tortured. There was a 10-cm wound on his back, a deep wound on the back of his head between his ears and a several gunshot wounds, including one in his head and another in his abdomen. We also noticed that, similar to all the other 9 victims, he had ink on his fingertips as if his fingerprints had been taken."



- The son of Osama Ahmed Al-Husseini (born 5 November 1959) said in his testimony, “We heard that my father had been arrested around noon time on Wednesday 1 July 2015 and as we were trying to find out if that was true or not, news of his death reached us. He had been killed at 4p.m. that same day. When we went to collect his body from the morgue, we noticed it bore the tell-tale signs of torture and stabbings. He had been stabbed several times in the shoulder and his right arm was broken. There were several gunshot wounds on his body. His fingerprints had been taken as evidenced by the ink on his fingers.”
- The family of Nasser Salem Salem Al-Hafi (21 October 1960) said in their testimony, “We heard on the news that Nasser Al-Hafi had been killed. We head to Zinhum morgue to collect his body and that’s when we noticed signs of torture and beatings all over his body. His face was very bruised, especially the right side which was quite swollen. His nose and the upper part of his face were broken. He had also been stabled multiple times.”
- The brother of Taher Ahmed Ismail Abdullah (born 27 December 1964) said in his testimony, “we were shocked to hear on the news that Taher had been killed on Wednesday. We went to Zinhum morgue to collect his body but when we inspected the body, we noticed ink on all his fingers. He had been shot seven times in the cheek, hand, right arm, lung, heart, abdomen and head.”



- The family of Hisham Ibrahim Al-Dusuki (born 18 September 1961) said in their testimony, “ we heard news about Hisham’s arrest at an apartment in 6 October city on Wednesday. At around 4p.m. news of his killing reached us, so we went to Zinhum morgue to pick up his body. We noticed ink on his fingertips as if his fingerprints had been taken. His face was bruised and he had been shot 7 times in the chest and shoulders.”
- The family of Abdulfattah Mohammed Ibrahim (born 22 December 1963) said, “we received a phone call from a relative telling us that Abdulfattah had been arrested and we were not able to confirm the news. We tried calling him several times but his phone was switched off. We later heard he had been killed by security forces at 4:30 that day. When we picked up his body at Zinhum morgue, we found six gunshot wounds in head, left arm, heart and abdomen.”



Three: Testimony of an independent medical examiner:

After reviewing the images and the footage of the bodies of five of the victims (Al-Hafi, Khalifa, Yusuf, Al-Ajizi, and Khafaji) and relatives' testimonies, Dr. A. K., an assistant professor at the department of forensic medicine at University (X), supplied the following testimony:

“After reviewing the images and preliminary reports, I can provide the following observations which, nonetheless, are not a substitute for a medical report based on a direct examination of the bodies.

- Mu'tasim Ahmed Al-Ajizi: There are visible contusions on the arms, face, neck and chest consistent with blunt trauma inflicted with a baton or a stick. There are circular burn marks on the chest consistent with cigarette burns. Ribcage is fractured. There are four transverse gunshot wounds consistent with being shot from above, most probably by someone who was standing to the left above the victim. The cause of death is gunshot wounds which led to internal lacerations and bleeding. There is a gunshot wound on the right arm.



- HishamZaki Al-Mahdi Khafaji: There are visible contusions on the face, neck and torso consistent with blunt object trauma. Evidence of gunshot entry through the back and exit from the chest. Evidence of another gunshot entry wound on the top of the head and exit through the neck. Cause of death are lacerations in the brain and internal bleeding. The injuries are consistent with being shot from above by someone standing over the victim. There is a slight possibility that the gunshot had entered through the neck and exited through the top of the head in which case the victim would have been shot at very close range (less than one metre) which resulted in lacerations to the entry wound. The outcome in both cases is the same: lacerations in the brain and internal bleeding.
- Jamal Khalifa: Contusions on the face, extremities, and torso. Burn marks on the chest. Two gunshot wounds to the chest which most probably caused internal bleeding and lacerations leading to death.
- Alsayyed Yusuf: the images are not very clear but the cause of death is most probably a gunshot wound to the chest. There are also contusions on the face consistent with blunt trauma.
- Nasser Al-Hafi: evidence of bleeding around the eyes caused by either blunt trauma to the face and head using a blunt object or by stomping on the victim's face, or due to a brain haemorrhage. There are multiple contusions on the face and extremities, and gunshot wounds on the torso, right arm and the head. The last one probably caused his death.



Most of the images show contusions on the extremities and marks consistent with electrocution.

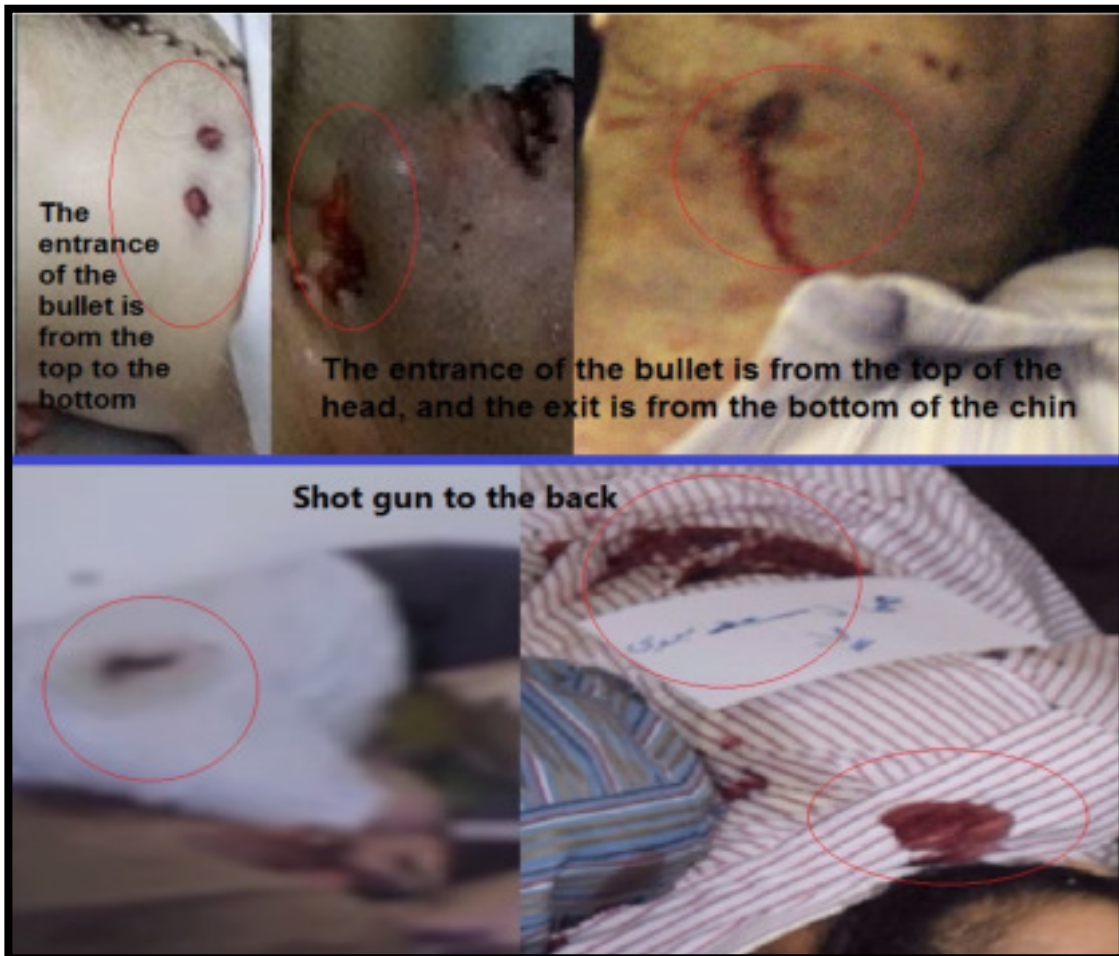
The official medical examiner's report did not make any reference to these injuries, marks or contusions and was limited to stating the cause of death. This, in my opinion, is a deliberate attempt at concealing evidence of torture.”

The following images confirm the previous testimony:

1- Images of torture



2- Images showing entry and exit wounds





Four: Resident testimonies

Residents and neighbours confirmed they had not heard any exchange of fire and that it was the police who had ordered them to claim they witnessed a shootout. All residents of the area were also ordered to stay home for almost three hours on the afternoon of the incident.

A local man said in a testimony, “ I was out on the street near my home on Wednesday when security forces arrived and surrounded a building near my home. We were all ordered to return to our homes. Two hours later, we heard news that 9 members of the Muslim Brotherhood had been killed in clashes with the police. I personally did not hear any gunshots being exchanged or witness any clashes.”

Another witness said, “I left the house located near the building at 7a.m. that day. Everything appeared to be normal. On my way back at around 3:45 p.m., I came across a huge number of police cars surrounding the area, especially outside the building where the incident took place. All residents were ordered to return to their homes without telling us why. Half an hour later security forces told us they had killed 9 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in an exchange of fire. I personally did not hear anything except what I just told you. I did not even know there were members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the area.”



Conclusions:

1. The official version of events about the killing of 9 Muslim Brotherhood leaders inside an apartment in Giza is illogical, false and a fabrication not supported by evidence. On the other hand, there are scores of pieces of evidence that support the theory the victims were killed in cold blood by security forces, rendering this a form of extrajudicial murder.
2. The evidence and independent medical examiner's report outlined above proves that some of the victims were killed from above as if they had been sitting down while their killers were standing over them. Others were killed with a shot to the back of the head, the back and the side, which refutes the claim they were killed in an exchange of fire with security forces. The nature of the injuries would have been different had they been killed in a shootout.
3. Each victim had been shot at least seven times in various parts of his body to ensure their death. Had they been involved in an exchange of fire, there would have been fewer bullets in each body and all would have been in the upper part of the body.
4. Relatives' testimonies and preliminary medical reports by specialists support the theory that all the victims had been tortured, beaten with blunt objects, burnt and electrocuted before being shot dead.



Recommendations:

1. The death of the nine individuals mentioned in the report and the subsequent false report by the ministry of interior about the circumstances surrounding their death constitutes a very dangerous development and sets a new precedent in terms of the way they were liquidated.
2. There is conclusive evidence that at least 12 Egyptians have been assassinated by security forces since January 2015. Another 32 were killed in similar suspicious circumstances by security forces but, their deaths have not been investigated by the authorities.
3. The evidence contained in this report, which refutes the official version of events, is not a substitute for the official report from the department of forensic evidence which is yet to release a detained autopsy report. The latter should ideally contain a detailed account of the victims' injuries. The question is: will the department of forensic evidence support the official narrative or opt to do its job with transparency and integrity?
4. There is very little doubt that the Egyptian regime is adamant to continue along this bloody path where



members of the political opposition are murdered in cold blood. It is time for the international community to end this carnage. The crimes and mass killings committed by the military regime since the 3rd of July 2013 coup necessitate the formation of an international fact-finding mission to investigate these crimes in an impartial and transparent manner and bring those responsible to justice.