

Tuesday, 2 July 2013

Egyptian army drafts plan to suspend constitution, parliament



Al Arabiya

The Egyptian armed forces have drafted a political plan that will suspend the constitution, dissolve an Islamist-dominated parliament, and establish an interim council led by the country's chief justice if the country's parties do not resolve their differences, military sources told Reuters.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) gave Islamist President Mohammad Mursi and the opposition until Wednesday to reach a solution.

The sources said that SCAF was still deliberating over the details and the plan, which is meant to resolve a political crisis that brought to the streets millions of demonstrators.

The army intends to allow an interim council to take effect, said the sources, adding that it will be made up of mainly civilians from different political backgrounds and experience.

But they did not specify how the army was planning to deal with the Islamist president if he refused to step down quietly.

However, sources told Reuters that the plan may be amended depending on political developments and discussions.

General Abdel Fattah al-Sissi, whose statement was broadcast live on state television, said on Monday that Mursi has 48 hours to agree on power-sharing with other political parties, warning that the army would implement its own roadmap for Egypt.

The president rejected the ultimatum and the opposition alliance, which has refused to talk to Mursi.

Protesters against him turned to a new target, massing a giant crowd outside the Qasr el-Qobba presidential palace where Mursi has been working in recent days, in addition to filling wide avenues outside another palace, central Tahrir Square and main squares in cities nationwide, according to Associated Press. It was not clear if Mursi was in the palace. Mursi's supporters also increased their presence in the streets, after his Muslim Brotherhood and hard-line Islamist leaders called them out to defend the legitimacy of the country's first freely elected president. Tens of thousands held marches in Cairo and other cities. Clashes broke out around pro-Mursi marches in several parts of the capital and a string of cities to the north and south. Mursi opponents stormed Brotherhood offices in two towns. With the clock ticking on the military's ultimatum, many in the anti-Mursi and pro-Mursi camps were vowing to fight to the end.

U.S. Position

Fearing an implosion that could throw Egypt into chaos, U.S. officials said Washington has suggested to Mursi that he call early elections, though they underlined they were demanding specific steps - and they said they had underlined to Egypt's military that a coup would have consequences for U.S. aid. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter, Associated Press reported. Mursi adviser Ayman Ali denied that Washington asked the president to call for early presidential elections and said consultations were continuing to reach national conciliation and resolve the current political crisis. He did not elaborate. The army has underlined that it has no intention to take power. But the reported army road map showed it was ready to replace Mursi and make a sweeping change in the ramshackle political structure that has evolved since the 2011 fall of autocrat Hosni Mubarak. A retired army general with close ties to the military confirmed the news agency report on the road map. Hossam Sweilam said a panel of experts would draft a new constitution and the interim administration would be a presidential council led by the Supreme Constitutional Court's chief justice and including the defense minister, representatives of political parties, youth groups, al-Azhar Mosque and the Coptic Church. He said the military envisaged a one-year transitional period before presidential elections are held. The military spokesman, Col. Ahmed Mohammed Ali, declined to confirm the details. "It is too early and we don't want to jump into conclusions," he said. In a significant move, opposition parties and the youth movement behind the demonstrations agreed that reform leader and Nobel Peace laureate Mohamed ElBaradei would represent them in any negotiations on the country's political future. The move appeared aimed at presenting a unified voice in a post-Mursi system, given the widespread criticism that the opposition has been too fragmented to present an alternative to the Islamists. Mursi faced fissures from within. Three government spokesmen - two who spoke for Mursi and one who spoke for Prime Minister Hesham Kandil - were the latest to quit as part of high-level defections that underscored his increasing isolation and fallout from the military's ultimatum. Five Cabinet ministers, including the foreign minister, resigned Monday, and sixth, Youth Minister el-Amry Farouq, quit Tuesday. (Reuters and Associated Press)

For the up-to-the-minute news on the Egyptian uprising, [click here](#).

STATEMENT OF: THE EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES Monday 1st July 2013 at 19:57

In light of what has been allegedly repeated by some people in mass media, seeking to interpret the statement of the General Command of the Armed Forces as “a military coup”, the military establishment would like to highlight the following:

- **The doctrine and culture of the Armed Forces do not allow the adoption of any “military-coup-based” policies. The Egyptian military took to the streets in several events in 1977, 1986, and 2011, and there was no coup. Instead, the Egyptian military always stands by the will and aspirations of the glorious Egyptian people for change and reform.**

- **The aim of the Armed Forces’ statement is to push all political parties nationwide to quickly find solutions for the current crisis and reach a formula of national compromise that complies with the demands of the Egyptian people.**

- **In addition, we stress that the statement of the General Command of the Armed Forces comes out as an interaction with the pulse of the Egyptian street. The statement points out clearly that the Armed Forces will never be a party in politics or ruling, and will not accept any role beyond that drawn up in the genuine democratic ideology driven from the will of the people.**