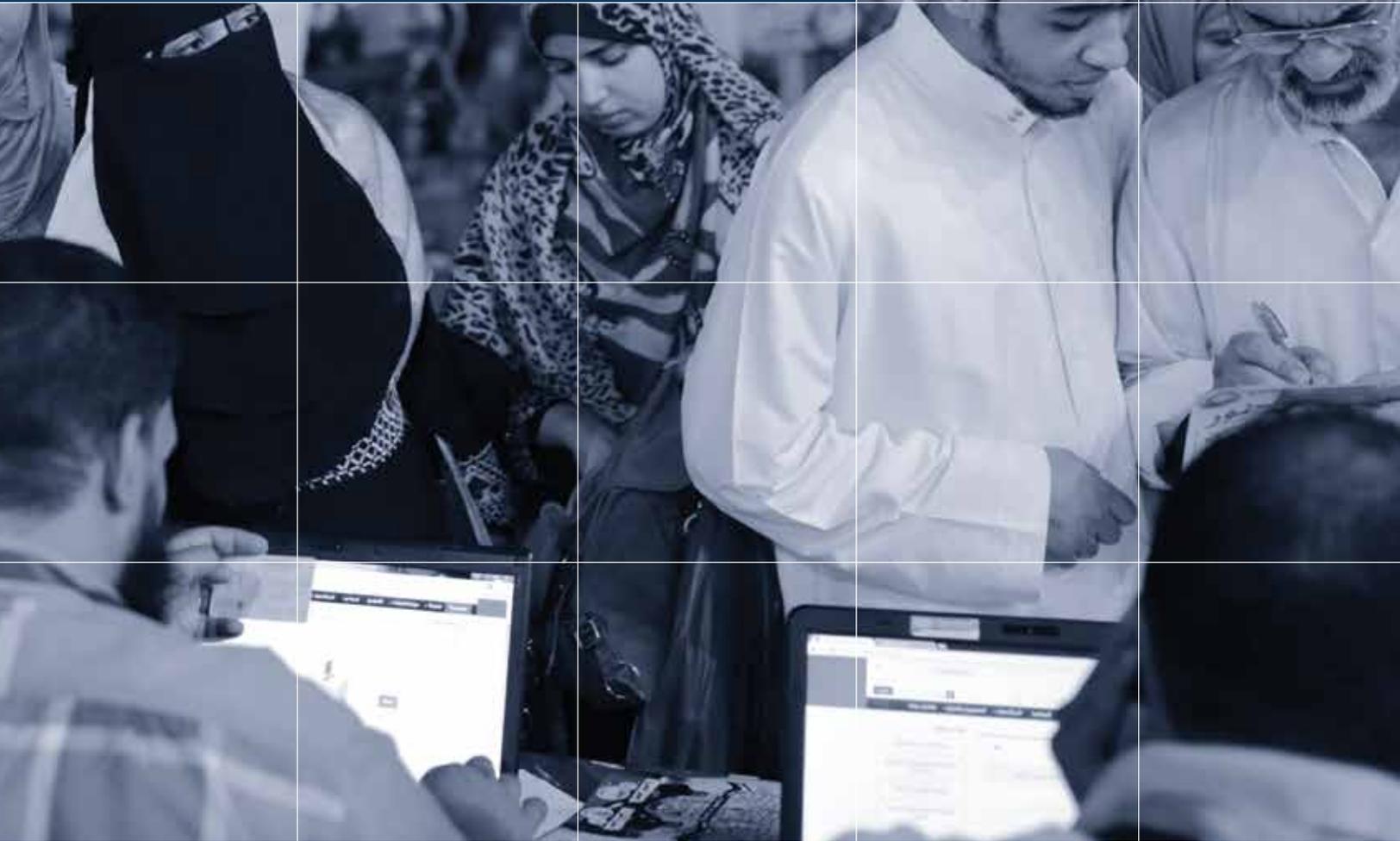




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# **EGYPT'S PRAGMATIC SALAFIS**

## **The Politics of Hizb al-Nour**

**Stéphane Lacroix**

NOVEMBER 2016



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Stéphane Lacroix

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## About the Author

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## Summary

The Salafi movement in Egypt illustrates that the dynamics of sectarianism are fluid and sometimes contradictory. Over the last five years, the Salafi party, Hizb al-Nour, has taken a pragmatic, flexible approach to politics, but maintained its intransigent religious stances. While the party has made several political concessions and decisions that go against the Salafi doctrine, it considered them necessary to protect the “interest of the Da’wa” and hold its position of influence among society—justifications that the Salafi Da’wa, the religious organization behind Hizb al-Nour, has largely accepted despite some internal conflict. Arguably, in contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb al-Nour does not behave like an Islamist party, at least in its current form; for Salafis, politics is just a means to an end.

### Hizb al-Nour’s Political Aims and Internal Divisions

- Hizb al-Nour was founded in 2011 by Salafis who decided that, in the postrevolution era, they needed a party of their own to have a say in the transition.
- The president and founder of Hizb al-Nour, Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, envisioned a party separate from the Salafi Da’wa, believing that being a politician is different than being a sheikh.
- However, Yasir Burhami and other Da’wa sheikhs contested this view over the next year, asserting that the party should principally act as the organization’s lobbying arm.
- In essence, these Da’wa leaders resented Abd al-Ghaffour’s independence, especially after Hizb al-Nour had proven its relevance during the parliamentary elections. Through reminding his audience of the religious lines Salafis should not cross, Burhami succeeded in gaining control of the party in December 2012. However, Abd al-Ghaffour’s forced resignation has not dramatically changed Hizb al-Nour’s approach to politics.

### Hizb al-Nour’s Pragmatism and Why It Is Not an Islamist Party

- Hizb al-Nour has consistently taken a pragmatic approach to politics, but the reasons for that pragmatism have changed over time, depending on the nature of the party’s leadership.
- From 2011 to 2012, the pragmatism of Hizb al-Nour was somewhat comparable to that of other mainstream Islamist parties—in that, as it adapted

to the political game and aimed to become a viable political force, the party moderated its positions by revising (or putting aside) some of its doctrinal tenets.

- Since 2013, Hizb al-Nour, led by sheikhs, has adopted a purely instrumental approach to politics. The party aims to defend the interest of the Da'wa (in other words, protect and possibly reinforce the religious movement that it represents) and uses arguments of necessity to justify its concessions.
- The party's recent stances, especially during the military takeover in July 2013 and in its aftermath, can best be explained by analyzing Hizb al-Nour not as an Islamist party, but as the lobbying arm of a religious organization.
- The paradox of the party's extreme political pragmatism and its rigidity and sectarianism at the doctrinal level seems sustainable and likely to remain.

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## Introduction

Salafis are known for their doctrinal intransigence and strong condemnations of any group or movement that does not share their religious views. Before the Arab Spring, with a few minor exceptions such as in Kuwait, Salafis limited their presence to the social sphere and refused to join the political game. This trend was reversed in the wake of the Arab Spring, when Salafi political parties started being established in various Arab countries, most successfully in Egypt. So, how did this politicization of Salafism affect the movement's religious stances and its relationship to other social and political forces?

One of the biggest surprises of the postrevolutionary period in Egypt was not the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhood, which many had predicted, but the emergence of Hizb al-Nour (the party of light), a Salafi party founded in June 2011, as a strong contender to the Brotherhood and the second-largest party in the parliament.<sup>1</sup> The political behavior Hizb al-Nour adopted from the start puzzled most observers, who had expected it to become an Islamist party on the far right of the Muslim Brotherhood and therefore much more politically intransigent. It is true that the Salafi sheikhs behind Hizb al-Nour, belonging to a religious organization called the Salafi Da'wa, were repeatedly taking virulent religious stances against non-Salafi religious groups, such as Sufis, Shia, or Christians, as well as against competing political forces, including liberals and the Brotherhood. Yet, the party adopted an extremely pragmatic attitude toward politics, allying itself with groups and parties that shared little of its religious ideology. Following the July 3, 2013, coup, Egyptian pro-army liberals commonly praised Hizb al-Nour, which had backed the coup, labeling the party as moderate while describing the Brotherhood as intractable radicals. However, many liberals reconsidered their view once it became clear that the party's political pragmatism did not entail the renouncement of its religious views, despite apparent attempts at backtracking on some of its more controversial positions.

Hizb al-Nour offers the rare example of a party that has been both extremely pragmatic in its political positions and strongly sectarian and intransigent in its religious stances. The balance between those two sides of Hizb al-Nour's discourse has depended on power shifts within the party. Initially, the party's founders made a genuine attempt to resolve some of the contradictions between its political and religious stances by arguing that politics was by nature a distinct domain from religion and entailed separate rules. But in late 2012, the sheikhs

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took control of the party, leading to a different, and purely instrumental, approach to politics based on what was perceived to be in the interest of the Salafi Da'wa. The party's recent stances can thus be better explained by analyzing Hizb al-Nour not as an Islamist party, but as the lobbying arm of a religious organization whose goal fundamentally remains changing society from below, not from above.

## The Roots of Hizb al-Nour: The Salafi Da'wa

The origins of Hizb al-Nour lie in a powerful religious organization called *al-da'wa al-salafiyya* (the Salafi Da'wa, or the Salafi Call). First called *al-madrasa al-salafiyya* (the Salafi school), the Da'wa was established in 1977 by Alexandrian former members of the Islamist student groups known as *gama'at islamiyya* who refused the decision of the *gama'at*'s leadership to join the Muslim Brotherhood. Those members had embraced Salafism and saw the Brotherhood's understanding of Islam as fundamentally unorthodox. Besides, the Da'wa's priority was not to strive for political change, but to spread its Salafi conceptions to society. For that purpose, although comprising all doctors and engineers by training, Da'wa members established themselves as sheikhs, whose main activity would be to preach in Alexandria's mosques.<sup>2</sup>

In their sermons, they preached "Sunni orthodoxy" against the beliefs and practices of Sufis, Shia, Christians, and liberal Muslims; they called for ultraconservative social practices inspired by the Prophet's *sunna* (tradition), producing fatwas and books prohibiting *ikhtilat* (gender-mixing) and men shaking hands with women or encouraging Muslim men to grow beards;<sup>3</sup> but they largely avoided discussing hot political topics, and when they did discuss issues of governance, they stuck to theoretical statements. For instance, they considered democracy, and all kinds of political systems claiming their legiti-

macy from the people and not from God, to be contrary to Islam,<sup>4</sup> but they avoided publicly denouncing the Egyptian regime. They also refused to participate in elections, arguing that change would only come from below by spreading their message to create *al-ta'ifa al-mu'mina* (the community of the believers).<sup>5</sup>

The peculiar circumstances of its creation thus made the Salafi Da'wa different from previous Salafi organiza-

tions in Egypt, such as Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya (the supporters of the Prophet's tradition), which was founded in 1926. The Da'wa's founders had all been student activists in the 1970s, so they decided to apply the principles of organized activism to Salafism. Their project was, in a sense, to borrow from the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational playbook, while replacing the Brotherhood's message with Salafism. Though the Da'wa has not reached the degree of institutional sophistication that characterizes the

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Brotherhood, it nevertheless has developed its own organizational pyramid headed by a *qayyim*<sup>6</sup>—the functional equivalent of the Brotherhood’s supreme guide, although no formal *bay’a* (pledge of allegiance) was required in the case of the *qayyim*. Numerous branches and sections were established, and a council of scholars including the Da’wa’s founders was tasked with running the organization. The “activist Salafism” of the Da’wa was justified through Salafi fatwas, notably by Kuwaiti-naturalized, Egyptian Salafi sheikh Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq, about the religious legality of collective action.<sup>7</sup>

The Da’wa’s influence grew from the 1980s onward, not only because of its organizational structure and resulting power to mobilize but also due to favorable political circumstances. Because of its apparent lack of interest in politics, the Egyptian security apparatus generally considered the Da’wa as more benign than most Islamist groups. For instance, only a few Da’wa members were detained after former president Anwar Sadat’s assassination in 1981, when Islamists from all factions, including those unconnected to the event, were thrown in jail. In the decades that followed, the Da’wa was generally subjected to less pressure than the Muslim Brotherhood and jihadi groups—at times, the government even saw the Da’wa as a useful counterforce. Although the Da’wa was sometimes forced to dismantle some of its sections and its leaders were repeatedly arrested—a sign that the security apparatus lacked confidence in the Da’wa’s commitment to the status quo—its affiliates were generally released more promptly than other Islamists. Despite the restrictions it faced, the Da’wa was able to expand considerably, establishing a presence across Egypt (especially in the north), far from its original stronghold in Alexandria. Although this is impossible to prove, a widespread belief is that generous donations from associations and individuals in the Gulf may have helped provide the Da’wa with the financial means to grow.

The growth of Salafism in Egypt was particularly quick in the 2000s. From 2006 onward, the government gave broadcasting licenses to Salafi channels, starting with Qanat al-Nas and later Qanat al-Rahma. Again, the government likely saw them as politically useful, because it assumed they drove conservative Muslims away from the politicized discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood and jihadi groups. By the end of the decade, those channels had become among the most widely watched in Egypt. Most of the sheikhs preaching on those channels were not officially affiliated with the Da’wa—they were “independent sheikhs” such as Mohammed Husayn Ya’qub, Abu Ishaq al-Huwayni, or Mohammed Hassan—but since the Da’wa was by now the biggest Salafi group active in Egypt, the increasing appeal of Salafism helped to attract thousands of new members and increase its outreach.

## Entering the Political Sphere

The January 25, 2011, revolution against former president Hosni Mubarak took the Salafi Da'wa by surprise. The sheikhs had never believed that any genuine change could come through politics, so they first reacted by denouncing the event as a *fitna* (chaos, sedition) and advising their members not to participate in the protests.<sup>8</sup> It was only a few days before the fall of Mubarak that the Da'wa finally joined the demands for change. Just as the Muslim Brotherhood's initial lack of commitment to the revolution prompted internal criticisms against the leadership, the Da'wa was also internally criticized. Among the critical voices was Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, a medical doctor who had played a crucial role in establishing the Da'wa in the late 1970s. While his ties with the organization declined over time—especially while abroad, including in Turkey where he had spent most of the 2000s—Abd al-Ghaffour still carried a lot of weight among the sheikhs. A few days after Mubarak's official resignation on February 11, Abd al-Ghaffour, who claimed to be an early supporter of the revolution, decided that in the new revolutionary era that was emerging, Salafis needed their own political party to have a say in the transition. He went to see the sheikhs one by one, eventually convincing them to allow the creation of Hizb al-Nour, which he would head.<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between the party and the Da'wa was quite strained from the beginning. Interviewed in April 2011, Yasir Burhami—who had officially become the Da'wa's number two after the *qayyim* Abu Idris but was in reality the organization's strongman<sup>10</sup>—acknowledged the relationship between the Da'wa and Hizb al-Nour but refused to describe Hizb al-Nour as the Da'wa's political arm.<sup>11</sup> The sheikhs either did not believe Abd al-Ghaffour's project could be successful or were afraid the party's stances could harm the Da'wa.

The relationship between Abd al-Ghaffour and Burhami would continue to deteriorate steadily, although for different reasons. By fall 2011, it was clear that Hizb al-Nour was becoming a success. The party's membership had grown exponentially, and it was now fielding candidates in all districts for the parliamentary elections. Its electoral posters were seen everywhere, and it had received the support of many prominent independent Salafi sheikhs. Hizb al-Nour went on to earn—as part of an “Islamic coalition” in which it was the senior partner—about 25 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections, making it the second-largest political party in Egypt after the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party.

To achieve that, Abd al-Ghaffour had endorsed moving away from the contentious religious discussions that were so prominent in the Salafi Da'wa. He constructed a political discourse that in many ways was quite unexpected, leading the party to (1) pledge respect to the procedures and rules of democracy;<sup>12</sup> (2) put forward young men as spokesmen, both as a way of presenting itself as harboring the aspirations of the youth and of insisting that its officials were new (or clean) players; and (3) portray itself as favorable to the revolution

and open to other political players both domestically and internationally.<sup>13</sup> Its discourse even had almost leftist undertones, especially when the Salafis were trying to cast themselves as the real representatives of the poor, implicitly accusing the Muslim Brotherhood of being the candidates of the conservative bourgeoisie.<sup>14</sup> The party proudly retained its Islamic identity and continued calling for the implementation of *shari'a* (Islamic law), but it insisted on a gradual and benign process, and Abd al-Ghaffour was adamant about focusing on politics, not theology. He even rejected the label “Salafi” for the party, arguing that it is a “party for all Egyptians.”<sup>15</sup>

## Debating the Purpose of Hizb al-Nour

The party's huge electoral gains awoke the interest of Yasir Burhami, who had not initially believed in the project. He was now convinced that Hizb al-Nour could be a powerful tool in the hands of the Da'wa. All he needed was to gain control of the party. For him, it was merely justice, since he believed the party's achievements had only been possible because of the strengths of Da'wa networks and not, as Abd al-Ghaffour proclaimed, because of the appeal of the party's political discourse.<sup>16</sup> Thus, in 2012, the party split into two factions: those loyal to party president Abd al-Ghaffour and those loyal to Da'wa strongman Burhami.

The split did not simply revolve around the power dispute between Abd al-Ghaffour and Burhami; there was a more profound issue at stake. For Abd al-Ghaffour and his associates, Hizb al-Nour was to be a political party like all others,<sup>17</sup> meaning that it would fully embrace the rules of the political game. It still saw itself as a religious party, but it was open to myriad alliances to advance its goals and be a government party with an applicable political program.<sup>18</sup> To draft that program, Abd al-Ghaffour even put together a team of mostly non-Salafi academics.<sup>19</sup>

Abd al-Ghaffour believed his goal could only be achieved by making the party fully separate from the Da'wa. As one close aide of Abd al-Ghaffour argued, “We may consult the Da'wa sheikhs, whom we deeply respect, if we need a fatwa from them on a specific issue, but we don't want them to meddle with the party's daily business because this is politics and politics is not their specialty.”<sup>20</sup> Many who had been involved in the party since the beginning agreed with Abd al-Ghaffour. This was partly because—as a result of the Da'wa's initial reluctance toward Hizb al-Nour—many of them had not been closely tied to the Da'wa and few were even religious scholars per se.<sup>21</sup> After becoming an active part of the political game, many members of Hizb al-Nour saw themselves more and more as politicians and understood how different this was from being a sheikh.<sup>22</sup>

Burhami had a different plan for the party. He believed the party's gains should benefit the Da'wa and *maslahat al-da'wa* (the interest of the Da'wa)

should be the party's main consideration in determining its positions.<sup>23</sup> Burhami was, of course, happy with the idea of Hizb al-Nour pushing for *shari'a*-based legislation when possible, but he believed this should never be at the expense of the Da'wa. Thus, Burhami was unwilling to see Hizb al-Nour as a regular political party; he considered it, above all, the lobbying arm of the Da'wa in the political sphere. One could argue that Burhami's position had not really changed since the pre-2011 period. He still did not consider politics a vehicle for change per se—at least not before society was religiously ready; as the Da'wa had argued many times, reform would only come through preaching Salafi Islam to society, and protecting the body that did this was the only worthy goal.

Despite the huge differences between the Salafi Da'wa and the Muslim Brotherhood, this quarrel somehow mirrored the debate that had existed since the mid-1990s between the Brotherhood's "reformists"—who were willing to engage fully in politics and make the necessary compromises, including the separation between the *gama'a* (the religious organization) and its political activities—and the "conservatives," otherwise referred to as *tanzimiyyun* (organizationists), who believed that real change could only come through the *gama'a*.<sup>24</sup> Like in Hizb al-Nour, this was both an intellectual and organizational debate. From 2009, the organizationists, led by Khayrat al-Shater, had taken control of the Brotherhood, leading to a new wave of reformist criticism in the wake of the revolution. Alluding to that comparison, Yusri Hammad, a former spokesman and dissident of Hizb al-Nour, declared, "Burhami wanted us to make the same mistakes the Brotherhood leadership was criticized for!"<sup>25</sup>

To challenge Abd al-Ghaffour and question his independence, Burhami targeted the party's excessive pragmatism by reminding his audience of the religious red lines Salafis are not allowed to cross. This was done through a series of fatwas published on Burhami's website from January 2012. In one of those fatwas, he criticized Abd al-Ghaffour for saying on a talk show that Hizb al-Nour is open to people of all religious backgrounds and that he wishes Christians would run on Hizb al-Nour's lists in the future;<sup>26</sup> this, Burhami argued, is forbidden because Christians should not be allowed in the parliament since this would give them *wilaya* (authority) over Muslims. Burhami also targeted Abd al-Ghaffour's statement that Hizb al-Nour is open to alliances with all political parties, not just Islamist ones, including the Free Egyptians Party founded by Christian businessman Naguib Sawiris; Burhami responded by proclaiming that "any alliance with groups that oppose God's Law is absolutely forbidden."<sup>27</sup> Later, in 2012, one of Abd al-Ghaffour's aides, party spokesman Mohammed Nour, was temporarily suspended from the party after Da'wa sheikhs publicly criticized his attendance at an event at the Iranian embassy.<sup>28</sup> Burhami also attacked Abd al-Ghaffour for attending the national day celebrations at the Turkish embassy, arguing that those are nothing more than a "celebration of the end of the Ottoman caliphate."<sup>29</sup> According to an associate of Burhami, Abd al-Ghaffour's pragmatic behavior meant that he was trying

to implement the “Turkish paradigm” of political Islam within Hizb al-Nour, and that was unacceptable.<sup>30</sup>

The last time the two factions in Hizb al-Nour found common ground was during the presidential elections, when they jointly decided not to present a candidate and to back Abd al-Mun’im Abu al-Futuh, a reformist dissident of the Muslim Brotherhood who portrayed himself as a liberal Islamist and was trying to form a large coalition uniting parties and individuals from both sides of the political spectrum. Yet, each faction had a different rationale. The supporters of Abd al-Ghaffour saw Abu al-Futuh as an acceptable choice because he was a consensual Islamist and his election would be the most likely to guarantee the continuation of the political process and prevent the return of the security state. Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi was also quite popular among this group.<sup>31</sup>

Burhami and his allies saw things quite differently. Their main objective was to prevent the election of Morsi—because of both the longtime rivalry between the two organizations and the belief that giving the Brotherhood such power would harm the Da’wa. In their view, the political hegemony of the Muslim Brotherhood was eventually going to result in the movement’s religious hegemony. To protect their religious presence, keeping Morsi out of power was thus a necessity. However, Burhami and his allies still believed they needed to back an Islamist candidate (especially after Burhami’s fatwa criticizing Abd al-Ghaffour’s openness to liberals), so this left three possible choices: Hazim Salah Abu Isma’il, a proclaimed revolutionary Salafi who had no ties to the Da’wa and was seen as much too politically uncontrollable;<sup>32</sup> Mohammed Salim al-‘Awwa, who had barely any chance of winning and was known (and denounced by Salafis) for having good relations with Iran;<sup>33</sup> and Abu al-Futuh, whom Burhami and his allies disliked on a religious account but was seen as the lesser evil.<sup>34</sup>

Since Abu al-Futuh lost in the first round (partly because grassroots Salafis were not enthusiastic about supporting such a liberal candidate), Hizb al-Nour leaders were faced with another dilemma for the second round: Mohammed Morsi or Ahmad Shafiq, Mubarak’s last prime minister. Here, they reluctantly decided to back the “Islamic candidate” Morsi, although they did not really support his campaign. Just before the announcement of the results, Burhami paid a cordial visit to Shafiq to negotiate favorable conditions if he were to prevail.<sup>35</sup>

During the second half of 2012, Hizb al-Nour’s divisions became more visible. Proponents of Abd al-Ghaffour started accusing Burhami of meddling with the party’s affairs by pushing for the appointment of Da’wa loyalists to key administrative positions. Since Hizb al-Nour had internal elections scheduled for the fall, the purpose was allegedly to assure the dismissal of Abd al-Ghaffour and his team and their replacement by pro-Da’wa figures.<sup>36</sup> To voice their protest, Abd al-Ghaffour’s proponents established a “reform front” within the party, calling for the Da’wa and party to fully separate—something they

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had been insisting on, but not publicly, for a year.<sup>37</sup> Tensions continued to escalate, with an attempt by pro-Burhami figures to pronounce Abd al-Ghaffour's dismissal in September 2012. In December 2012, Abd al-Ghaffour and his allies announced that they were leaving Hizb al-Nour to establish their own political party, Hizb al-Watan (the party of the homeland), whose main slogans would be "the separation of politics and preaching (*da'wa*)" and "the preference for competence over loyalty to the sheikhs."<sup>38</sup>

This meant that the Da'wa, and Burhami, had finally won. On January 9, 2013, a close associate of Burhami, Yunis Makhayoun, was elected unchallenged as president of the party. Abd al-Ghaffour's line had been defeated and, after almost two years of ambiguity, Hizb al-Nour had finally become the political arm of the Salafi Da'wa.

## A Different Kind of Salafi Pragmatism

Hizb al-Nour's takeover by Burhami and the Salafi Da'wa did not put an end to the party's pragmatism, however. Its pragmatism just changed in nature, driven by different considerations.

Hizb al-Nour's half-hearted support for Morsi during the second round of the presidential election had not done much to fix the relationship between the Da'wa and the Brotherhood. Hizb al-Nour had apparently hoped that Morsi would make it part of the national unity government he had promised his

backers between the two rounds. But, just like most other political factions that had bet on Morsi, Hizb al-Nour was deeply disappointed. Despite being the country's second biggest political force and a fellow Islamic party, all it was granted were three appointments within Morsi's presidential team. Two Hizb al-Nour officials, Khaled 'Alam al-Din and Bassam al-Zarqa, were appointed to a large and merely symbolic presidential advisory body, while then

Hizb al-Nour president Abd al-Ghaffour was offered the position of presidential aide for social dialogue.<sup>39</sup> Giving the most senior position of the three to Abd al-Ghaffour made matters worse with the Da'wa, who saw this as a Brotherhood move to play on Hizb al-Nour's divisions.

Despite this view, Hizb al-Nour initially tried to adapt to the new political reality and avoided criticizing Morsi. An issue that brought the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb al-Nour together was the constitution. A constitutional assembly was appointed by the parliament in early June 2012, a couple of weeks before the latter's dissolution by the constitutional court. That assembly included Brotherhood and Salafi sympathizers in more or less the same proportion as in the parliament (about two-thirds). The two factions shared an interest in reinforcing the influence of Islam in the constitution, which was strongly opposed by the remaining members of the assembly (especially the liberals and

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Christians). Their objective alliance eventually produced the December 2012 constitution, which kept article two of the 1980 constitution (“The principles of *shari‘a* are the main source of legislation”) unchanged but added article 219 (“The principles of *shari‘a* include its general proofs, its fundamental and legal rules, and its recognized sources within the Sunni schools”) to ensure article two would now be legally binding.

In January 2013, Hizb al-Nour’s public position on Morsi markedly shifted, with increasingly critical statements emanating from the party’s spokesmen. There were three reasons for this change. First, now that the constitution had been adopted (both by the constitutional assembly and by a referendum where it received 63 percent of the votes), Salafis and the Brotherhood had lost the last shared interest they had. Second, the political tide was shifting against Morsi in the wake of the constitutional declaration he had issued in late November 2012 granting judicial immunity to the decisions of the presidency, which had resulted in demonstrations and bloody clashes in front of the presidential palace. Though Hizb al-Nour had opposed the initial protests in the name of “stability and order,” it now started voicing criticisms. Third, and maybe most importantly, the changes and appointments Morsi was making in the ministries were starting to worry the Da‘wa, which by then had taken over Hizb al-Nour. As Patrick Haenni has shown, the Brotherhood adopted different attitudes toward state institutions depending on whether they were seen as strong or weak.<sup>40</sup> In strong institutions, like the army or the interior ministry, Morsi never appointed Brotherhood or explicitly pro-Brotherhood figures and only tried to promote second-rank officials, after having made a deal with them to ensure their loyalty (ironically, this is how then general Abd Fattah al-Sisi was chosen to become the new minister of defense). In weak institutions, the Brotherhood’s involvement reached much further. One of those weak institutions was the Ministry of Religious Affairs, where Morsi replaced most of the previous team with Brotherhood loyalists. Not long after, Morsi proposed the creation of a preachers’ syndicate, a move that the Da‘wa—which includes many sheikhs without formal religious degrees—saw as another attempt to marginalize them.<sup>41</sup> The Da‘wa viewed these actions as the start of a Brotherhood takeover of the religious sphere, and that was an existential threat.

From early 2013 onward, Hizb al-Nour started turning into an opposition party, joining other political groups in denouncing *akhwanat al-dawla* (the brotherhoodization of the state). The term had become a motto used by anti-Brotherhood activists, but it first appeared in a speech by Hizb al-Nour spokesman Nadir Bakkar in late January 2013.<sup>42</sup> Not long after, Hizb al-Nour even claimed it possessed a record of all cases of brotherhoodization and threatened to make it public.<sup>43</sup> In early February 2013, Hizb al-Nour figures vocally criticized the state visit of then Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who Morsi had invited, accusing him of Shia proselytism.<sup>44</sup> With this move, Hizb al-Nour accomplished two things simultaneously: it reaffirmed its doctrinal intransigence toward the Shia, while attacking the Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood reacted by accusing Khaled 'Alam al-Din, one of the two Salafi members of the presidential advisory team, of corruption and dismissing him. 'Alam al-Din denied those accusations in a press conference, and Bassem al-Zarqa resigned in support of his colleague. This meant there were no Hizb al-Nour representatives left in Morsi's presidential team (Abd al-Ghaffour remained in place, but he was now the president of Hizb al-Watan). This only reinforced Hizb al-Nour's resolve to join ranks with the opposition. The Brotherhood continued its retributive strategy, and in May 2013, Burhami was detained for a few hours at the Alexandria airport as he was coming back from Saudi Arabia, where he had performed Umrah.<sup>45</sup> Though he was quickly released, the Salafis perceived this action as a declaration of war. The amount of contact Hizb al-Nour had with other players involved in Morsi's fall, especially the army, remains unclear, though the newspapers reported joint meetings between Hizb al-Nour members and liberals to form a common front in the name of "national unity," which never really materialized.<sup>46</sup> However, it is clear that, with the Tamarrod campaign gaining strength and the June 30, 2013, protests approaching, Burhami was aware that the balance of power did not favor the Brotherhood and he was perfectly happy with that.

Though Burhami did not call for Hizb al-Nour members to join the anti-Morsi protests, he clarified that "if millions of protesters take the streets on June 30th, [he] will demand Morsi's resignation."<sup>47</sup> On July 3, 2013, when then defense minister Sisi announced that Morsi was no longer Egypt's president and that the army would supervise the implementation of a new roadmap, Galal Murra, a senior representative of Hizb al-Nour, was one of the few leaders sitting behind him—next to liberal figure Mohammed al-Baradei; Tamarrod leader Mahmoud

Badr; the sheikh of al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib; and Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria. To justify Hizb al-Nour's position, Burhami explained that it was the only way to "protect the Islamic identity in the constitution and to guarantee the presence of an Islamic party able to preserve the gains of the Islamic current as a whole."<sup>48</sup>

At the time, this seemed to be a smart move. The group the Da'wa considered its main contender and historical rival in the religious sphere—the Brotherhood—was now out of the game. And with Hizb al-Nour being the only

Islamic party to support the roadmap, the army would have no choice but to rely on it to regain control of the mosques. On paper, not only had the Da'wa preserved its social presence, it now had huge opportunities to expand. Some in Hizb al-Nour may have envisioned a scenario similar to those seen in Sudan and Pakistan. In Sudan, a faction within the army had relied on the Islamist National Salvation Front (NSF) to seize power in 1989. While the military governed, the NSF was in charge of social and religious affairs. In Pakistan in the 1980s, under Zia ul-Haq, a similar deal between the army and Islamist groups, especially the Jamaat-e-Islami, was made. For the Da'wa, the idea of

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**For the Da'wa it was still arguably far better than a Brotherhood government because secular or military actors supposedly have no claim over what constitutes the Da'wa's primary domain: the religious sphere.**

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relinquishing power to the army, or even to a purportedly secular government, was not an issue in itself. It was still arguably far better than a Brotherhood government because secular or military actors supposedly have no claim over what constitutes the Da'wa's primary domain: the religious sphere.

## Salafis Under Sisi: Trapped Between the Security State and a Restive Islamist Base

More than three years after the army's takeover, Hizb al-Nour has many reasons to feel dissatisfied. It quickly became clear that the new regime had no intention of giving the Salafis the kind of prominence they were hoping for. The Salafis were given no representation in the transitional government and were granted only one seat out of fifty in the constitutional assembly that was appointed during summer 2013. Thus, they had no way to influence the content of the new constitution. Acknowledging that, Bassam al-Zarqa, who had first been appointed, stopped attending and was replaced by another Hizb al-Nour member, Mohammed Mansour.<sup>49</sup> At the time though, Salafis blamed their marginalization on the liberals, who still retained a significant influence over public affairs. Yet, the gradual exclusion of the liberals and the monopolization of power by the military did not radically change the situation for the Salafis. It is true that while some of the more radical secularists had openly called for the dissolution of Hizb al-Nour—based on it being a “religious party,” which is forbidden by the new constitution<sup>50</sup>—the army apparently never thought of banning the party. The generals seemed convinced that Hizb al-Nour could still be useful to their strategy. However, while they allowed the Da'wa to retain most of its social presence, they made sure the movement would feel the heavy pressure of the state.

What Hizb al-Nour had apparently not sufficiently considered was that, with the Brotherhood gone as a contender, there was another player that could claim control over the mosques: al-Azhar. The leadership of al-Azhar, which largely adheres to a traditional form of Islam with Sufi leanings, had always been strongly opposed to the Salafis. Because of its former pro-Mubarak stance, al-Azhar's social influence had declined significantly over the last few decades—and even more in the wake of the revolution—but it still carried enormous symbolic and institutional weight. The sheikh of al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib, himself a Sufi by training, saw the military takeover (which he had backed from the start) as an opportunity to regain his authority. And the new regime saw al-Azhar, a state institution, as a much more trustworthy partner than the Salafis.

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The new regime therefore chose to rely on al-Azhar to regain the social and religious terrain lost to the Islamists. And it chose to do so through its religious arm, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, headed by an Azhari who had previously worked with al-Tayyib, Mohammed Mukhtar Gum'a. Starting in March 2014, the ministry adopted several laws and decrees to put all of Egypt's mosques under the control of the state. Imams now had to be al-Azhar graduates; and for those who were not, which was the case with many Da'wa preachers, they needed to obtain a *tarkhis* (license) to preach after passing an exam. In addition, it was announced that all of Egypt's Friday preachers now had to pronounce the same sermon sent to them in advance by the ministry.<sup>51</sup>

This represented a major theoretical threat to Salafis, but because the regime neither had the human resources to fully take control of the religious domain nor wanted to declare an all-out war on the Salafis, exceptions were made for most Da'wa preachers. Still, this was enough to prevent further expansion of the Da'wa and to keep Salafis under close watch.<sup>52</sup>

The post-Morsi era also had other consequences for the Da'wa. One core claim of Hizb al-Nour after the Da'wa's takeover of the party was that it was "intransigent with issues of doctrine, but flexible with political issues."<sup>53</sup> The first stance was fundamental to maintaining its religious legitimacy: yes, it could make alliances—which was already a shift from Burhami's 2011 position

when he had attacked Abd al-Ghaffour for saying precisely that—but it could never compromise on key doctrinal issues. Yet, in the new era, with an unprecedentedly repressive political environment for Islamists, Hizb al-Nour would be forced to make more concessions that it probably ever had imagined.

Once Hizb al-Nour had backed the military takeover, it had no choice but to support all the political developments that followed: the violent repression of the Muslim

Brotherhood and the massacres of hundreds of their followers at Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda on August 14, 2013—despite statements criticizing the police's brutality;<sup>54</sup> the adoption of the new constitution, for which Hizb al-Nour campaigned (although it was much less Islamic than the previous one); and the election of Sisi to the presidency, which it supported. One major debate between Burhami and Abd al-Ghaffour in 2011 had centered on the possibility of Hizb al-Nour offering positions to Christians on its electoral lists. In that debate, Burhami took a firm stand, arguing that Salafi doctrine prohibited this. Yet, in the first parliamentary elections after the coup, in 2015, the electoral law required that each list include a percentage of Christian candidates in order for it to be valid. Hizb al-Nour accepted and fielded Christian candidates. When confronted with the contradiction between that decision and the Da'wa's position back in 2011, party president Yunis Makhyouun said they had made it because "(they) were forced to"—which prompted a huge campaign against Hizb al-Nour in the national media.<sup>55</sup> In internal circles, Da'wa figures

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justified their reversal by referring to the Islamic legal principle of weighing *al-masalih wa-l-mafasid* (benefits and harms).<sup>56</sup>

Hizb al-Nour's stances led to strong reactions among Salafis abroad. Tens of Saudi Salafi sheikhs close to the Sahwa movement signed a joint letter criticizing Hizb al-Nour in the most virulent terms,<sup>57</sup> and Egyptian-Kuwaiti sheikh Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq, who had been among the Da'wa's early influences in the 1980s, wrote the following to Burhami: "You were one of Satan's soldiers, but you have advanced in evil, and you are now his teacher."<sup>58</sup> This also led to a relative decrease in Hizb al-Nour's following. During summer 2013, it was not uncommon to see Hizb al-Nour members or sympathizers demonstrating with the Brotherhood against the coup.<sup>59</sup>

There were numerous public defections from Hizb al-Nour and the Da'wa, including from the top leadership. Sa'id Abd al-Azim, one of the Da'wa's co-founders and foremost sheikhs, took a pro-Morsi stance and ended up leaving the country in December 2013.<sup>60</sup> Mohammed Ismail al-Muqaddim, another major name in the Da'wa and probably its most widely respected sheikh, retreated from public life after the coup to avoid having to take a stance. Both Abd al-Azim and al-Muqaddim have now been officially removed from the Da'wa's administrative council.<sup>61</sup> As for Burhami, there were reports that he sometimes had to preach under armed protection, after receiving numerous threats from anti-regime Islamists.<sup>62</sup>

The final blow took place during the 2015 elections, in which Hizb al-Nour was the sole religious party to compete. Some in Hizb al-Nour speculated that the party could do really well, since it was now the only electoral option for religious conservatives. The results showed quite the opposite, however, with the party only gaining twelve seats out of 596, merely 2 percent of the total and more than ten times less than in 2011. There were objective reasons for that defeat, starting with the electoral system that had been designed to favor state-supported candidates. Eighty percent of the members of parliament were to be chosen through individual elections (known to favor local notables with strong clientelistic networks and state connections), and for the 20 percent of seats reserved for electoral lists, a majority-vote system was adopted, meaning that the list with more than 50 percent would take all the seats in the district. Also, Hizb al-Nour was running alone, against electoral lists comprising several parties (sometimes tens of parties, like in the fervently pro-Sisi list, "For the love of Egypt"), and it presented candidates in less than half of the districts.<sup>63</sup> Finally, the media, dominated by liberal pro-state figures, adopted an anti-Hizb al-Nour tone in its coverage of the elections.

In places where the Da'wa had a limited presence historically, Hizb al-Nour performed badly. In Da'wa strongholds, Hizb al-Nour lists did much better, obtaining as much as 30 percent of the votes in the West Delta District—yet not enough to get a single seat. The few Hizb al-Nour members of parliament who made it were elected on individual seats after the second round in places like

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### Hizb al-Nour's stances led to strong reactions among Salafis abroad.

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Alexandria or Kafr al-Sheikh. Although Hizb al-Nour tried to highlight those few successes, it was not enough to counter the impression of a major defeat.<sup>64</sup>

The debate that ensued renewed demands from within the Da'wa to abandon politics once and for all and return to preaching. Similar demands had been voiced in the wake of the military takeover, and entire sections of Hizb al-Nour had apparently seceded to return to purely religious activities.<sup>65</sup> At

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this stage, the Da'wa appeared to be losing much more through its political involvement than it was gaining. Why then did Burhami and his allies refuse to back down? One possible explanation is that Burhami believed that Hizb al-Nour's strategy would eventually pay off. Hizb al-Nour figures have argued that the 2015 elections actually demonstrated the party's resilience, in particular in its strongholds, and claimed that they will do much better in the forthcoming local elections. A more probable explanation is that it would be simply impossible for the Da'wa to go back to where it was before 2011. A Hizb al-Nour decision to withdraw from politics would be seen by the regime and public opinion as a disavowal of the current political system. In a context where Islamists are being heavily repressed, with more than 50,000 of them in prison, this could unleash state repression against the Da'wa. Hizb al-Nour stays in the game mostly to ensure the survival of the religious organization behind it. The interest of the Da'wa continues to dictate the policies of Hizb al-Nour.

## Why Hizb al-Nour Is Not an Islamist Party

Hizb al-Nour has been recurrently characterized by journalists and academics as an Islamist party somehow comparable to the Muslim Brotherhood but with a Salafi understanding of Islam. Yet, if an Islamist movement believes Islam serves as a blueprint for politics, and aims at governing a country according to its conception of what an Islamic state should be, then Hizb al-Nour—at least in its post-2013 form—can hardly be described as Islamist. There are key differences between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb al-Nour beyond the two group's distinct political choices during the last five years. Those differences stem from fundamentally distinct approaches to politics.

The Muslim Brotherhood is the archetype of an Islamist movement. Its final aim is to seize power to implement its Islamic political vision. Yet, it does not care much about theological disputes within Islam: it preaches a conservative message, but one that allows for some plurality of interpretation. In contrast, the Salafi Da'wa—in line with other Salafi movements elsewhere—was established to restore the theological purity of Islam and preach that purity to fellow Muslims. Politics were always peripheral to that vision.

One major reason for the clash within Hizb al-Nour in 2011 and 2012 was that Abd al-Ghaffour seemed to be taking politics too seriously. He believed that

Hizb al-Nour was more than the political arm of a religious movement—rather a party with a political message that it was willing to implement in government. Had his faction succeeded, Hizb al-Nour could have become an Islamist movement. The party Abd al-Ghaffour and his allies founded in December 2012, Hizb al-Watan, confirmed this by siding with the Brotherhood throughout 2013 and after the coup, as part of a larger coalition of Islamist parties opposed to the new regime.

When Da‘wa sheikhs seized control of Hizb al-Nour in late 2012, they acted according to their traditional vision of politics. For them, the party was, above all, a means to preserve or reinforce the social influence of their religious movement. Islamicization (or Salafization), they believed, would happen from below, not from above. The interest of the Da‘wa would therefore dictate which decisions should be made. Hizb al-Nour would thus be devoid of an ideological vision, at least in the common sense of the term—and this is precisely what makes it something very different from an Islamist party.

One could argue that this derives from the fact that Hizb al-Nour is a party run by sheikhs, which is a rare occurrence in the Middle East. The leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, have mostly been secular figures, and the organization has always maintained an ambiguous relationship with the religious establishment. Yet, sheikhs tend to harbor a world view more centered on what remains their primary function: preaching to both ensure people’s salvation and reform society from below. As Ashraf Thabit, a senior Da‘wa figure and one of Burhami’s main associates in Hizb al-Nour, argued in early 2012, “The parliament is not, has never been, and will not be the solution for us. We believe change will only come from below, not by simply changing the laws. The parliament is only a means to help us practice what is the basis for us, *da‘wa*. This is our *manhaj* [methodology]. What matters most is purifying the *umma*’s creed.”<sup>66</sup>

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## Hizb al-Nour’s Pragmatism: Continuity and Change

Pragmatism has been a constant in Hizb al-Nour since its creation. Yet, the rationale for that pragmatism changed in late 2012. From 2011 to 2012, Hizb al-Nour’s pragmatism was comparable to that found among mainstream Islamist parties elsewhere—in that they revised (or put aside) some of their doctrinal conceptions as they adapted to the political game. This evolution is related to what some scholars have termed the “inclusion-moderation” hypothesis.<sup>67</sup> Though this short episode did not produce any genuine doctrinal revisions on the part of Salafis, it nevertheless gave birth to a secular discourse that was carried by a new type of actor, the Salafi politician, who felt he did not

need to systematically justify all his positions in religious terms because politics was by nature a relatively separate domain.<sup>68</sup> That the proponents of this line ended up forming a party called Hizb al-Watan (the party of the homeland) is in itself quite telling.

Since 2013, Hizb al-Nour's pragmatism has derived from a different source: the party's largely instrumental approach to politics. This puts into question the two common explanations usually given to explain Hizb al-Nour's support for the military takeover on July 3, 2013. The first supposes that Saudi Arabia is the main backer of Hizb al-Nour and that Hizb al-Nour acted on Saudi orders; but the Da'wa was never particularly close to the Saudi regime, and the Saudi strategy toward Egypt mainly consisted in backing the remnants of the Mubarak state and the army, not the Salafis. According to the second explanation, the Salafi Da'wa's allegedly close ties with the security apparatus under Mubarak explain Hizb al-Nour's stance; but while those ties were real (just as they were for most religious movements operating under the Mubarak regime), they were never as strong as many presume. Those explanations may be one small part of the story, but they are far from being the whole story. The party's stances were not merely opportunistic or driven by external interests; there was a clear logic behind them, defending what was perceived as being in the interest of the Da'wa, whatever the political cost.

This also forced Salafis to adopt stances that contradicted their doctrinal beliefs. This time, however, those were justified through arguments of necessity, as when Hizb al-Nour's president argued that the party was forced by the electoral system to have Christians on its lists or that it had to weigh benefits and harms. Although those justifications have caused some discomfort among grassroots Salafis, the Da'wa's base largely accepted them. One can assume that this passive pragmatism is unlikely (and certainly not meant) to produce doctrinal revisions, despite all the political concessions Hizb al-Nour has been willing, and will probably continue, to make. The paradox between the party's extreme political pragmatism and its rigidity and sectarianism at the doctrinal level thus seems perfectly sustainable and will likely remain.

## Notes

1. Among the few studies dealing with Egyptian Salafism before and after the revolution are Richard Gauvain, *Salafi Ritual Purity: In the Presence of God* (London: Routledge, 2012); Stéphane Lacroix, “Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism,” Brookings Institution, June 2012, <http://www.brookings.edu/-/media/research/files/papers/2012/6/07-egyptian-salafism-lacroix/stephane-lacroix-policy-briefing-english.pdf>; Khalil al-Anani and Maszlee Malik, “Pious Way to Politics: The Rise of Political Salafism in Post-Mubarak Egypt,” *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2013); Jacob Høigilt and Frida Nome, “Egyptian Salafism in Revolution,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no.1 (2014); Ashraf el-Sherif, “Egypt’s Salafists at a Crossroads,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 29, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/29/egypt-s-salafists-at-crossroads-pub-59928>; Georges Fahmi, “The Future of Political Salafism in Egypt and Tunisia,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 16, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/11/16/future-of-political-salafism-in-egypt-and-tunisia-pub-61871>; Stéphane Lacroix and Ahmed Zaghoul Shalata, “The Rise of Revolutionary Salafism in Post-Mubarak Egypt,” in *Egypt’s Revolutions*, eds. Stéphane Lacroix and Bernard Rougier (New York: Palgrave, 2016); in Arabic, see Ahmed Zaghoul Shalata, *Al-hala al-salafiyya fi masr* [The Salafi situation in Egypt] (Cairo: Madbuli, 2010); Ahmed Zaghoul Shalata, *Al-da’wa al-salafiyya al-sakandariyya: masarat al-tanzim wa malat al-siyasa* [The Alexandrian Salafi Da’wa: The trajectories of the organization and the outcomes of politics] (Beirut: Markaz dirasat al-wahda al-‘arabiyya, 2016); Mu’taz Zahir, *Min al-masjid ila al-barlaman* [From mosque to parliament] (Damascus: Takwin, 2014).
2. Author interview with Sa’id Abd al-Azim and founding members of the Salafi Da’wa, December 2012.
3. Mohammed Isma’il al-Muqaddim, *Adillat tabrim musafahat al-ajnabiyya* [Proofs that it is forbidden to shake hands with an unrelated woman], 14th ed. (Alexandria: Dar al-khulafa’ al-rashidun, 1993); Mohammed Isma’il, *Adillat tabrim halq al-lihya* [Proofs that it is forbidden to shave one’s beard], 4th ed. (Kuwait: Makbtaba Dar al-Arqam, 1985).
4. Sa’id Abd al-Azim, *Al-dimuqratiyya fi-l-mizan* [Democracy in the balance] (Tripoli, Lebanon: Dar al-iman, 2009).
5. Yasir Burhami, “Al-salafiyya wa manahij al-taghyir” [Salafism and the methodologies of change], *Sawt al-Da’wa* 3, 1412 (corresponding to 1991-1992).
6. *Qayyim* is the name traditionally given to the superintendent of a religious school. One of the main medieval scholars Salafis take inspiration from is Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, literally the son of the *qayyim* of (hanbali scholar) Ibn al-Jawzi’s school.
7. Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq, *Mashru’iyyat al-‘amal al-jama’i* [The religious legality of collective action] (Riyadh: Dar al-hijra li-l-nashr wa-l-tawzi’, 1988).
8. “Hukm al-musharaka fi thawrat yawm 25 Yanayir” [Judgment on participating in

- the 25<sup>th</sup> January revolution], *anasalafy.com*, January 21, 2011, <http://www.ansalafy.com/play.php?catsmktba=23685>; “Bayan al-da’wa al-salafiyya bi-sha’n al-ahdath” [Statement of the Salafi Da’wa about the events], *Sawt al-Salaf*, January 30, 2011.
- 9 Author interview with Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, Cairo, December 2011. It appears the process took some time. Still, in April 2011, Abd al-Mun’im al-Shahhat, a close associate of Da’wa strongman Yasir Burhami, declared, “We will not present candidates of our own. We will support candidates from different parties under certain conditions” (author interview with Abd al-Mun’im al-Shahhat, Alexandria, April 2011).
  - 10 Stéphane Lacroix, “Yasser Borhami,” in *Egypt’s Revolutions*, eds. Lacroix and Rougier, 268–271.
  - 11 Ahmed Zaghloul Shalata, “Hiwar ma’ Yasir Burhami : al-da’wa laha ru’ya shamila bima fiha al-musharaka al-siyasiyya” [Dialogue with Yasir Burhami: the Da’wa has a complete vision which includes political participation], *islamiyun.net*, April 13, 2011.
  - 12 Interview with Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, YouTube, December 6, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnhzbBEVYV4>.
  - 13 Author interview with Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, Cairo, December 2011.
  - 14 Stéphane Lacroix, “Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism,” Brookings Institution, June 11, 2012, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/sheikhs-and-politicians-inside-the-new-egyptian-salafism>, 4.
  - 15 Imad Abd al-Ghaffour’s interview with al-Jazeera Mubashir Masr, November 6, 2011.
  - 16 Author interview with Hizb al-Nour official Mahmud Abbas, Alexandria, November 2012; author interview with Nader Bakkar (a close associate of Burhami and spokesman of Hizb al-Nour) Cairo, April 2012.
  - 17 Author interview with Mohammed Nour (then spokesman of the Hizb al-Nour), Cairo, October 2011.
  - 18 Author interview with Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, Cairo, December 2011.
  - 19 Author interview with one of the academics who helped draft the program, December 2011.
  - 20 Author interview with Mahmud Abbas (a proponent of Abd al-Ghaffour), Alexandria, November 2012.
  - 21 Spokesman Mohammed Nour, for instance, indicated that he had not been in contact with the Da’wa since 1995 (author interview, Cairo, November 2011). Mohammed Yusri Salama, the party’s first spokesman, even claimed he had always been close to the Da’wa’s figures but had never been part of it (author interview, Alexandria, November 2012); Shalata, *Al-da’wa al-salafiyya al-sakandariyya*, 156.
  - 22 Lacroix, “Sheikhs and Politicians.”
  - 23 At the Salafi Da’wa events that I attended in 2012 and 2013, those few words were constantly repeated to justify the party’s controversial positions. This was the case, for instance, when the Da’wa organized a gathering in Alexandria in April 2012 to convince its members to vote for Abu al-Futuh.
  - 24 The term was used by Hussam Tammam. See Hussam Tammam, *Al-ikhwan al-muslimun... sanawat qabl al-thawra* [The Muslim Brotherhood: pre-revolt years] (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2013), 128.
  - 25 Author interview with Yusri Hammad, Alexandria, January 2013.
  - 26 “Hawla ta’assuf ra’is Hizb al-Nur ‘ala ‘adam tarashshuh nasrani fi qawa’im al-hizb” [On the regrets of the president of the Nour Party for the lack of Christians on the party’s lists], *Sawt al-Salaf*, January 1, 2012, <http://www.salafvoice.com/article.php?a=5914>.
  - 27 *Al-Fath* (official mouthpiece of the Salafi Da’wa), January 4, 2012. See also Lacroix, “Sheikhs and Politicians,” 6–7.
  - 28 “Iqaf al-ustadh Muhammad Nur ‘an al-tahadduth bi-ism al-hizb bi sabab hudurihi

- hifl al-safara al-iraniyya” [Suspension of Mohammed Nur as spokesman of the party because of his attendance at an Iranian embassy gathering], *forsanhaq.com*, February 24, 2012, <http://www.forsanhaq.com/archive/index.php/t-298047.html>.
- 29 “Khilafat dakhil al-da’wa al-salafiyya bi-sabab al-ihitfal bi-zikra ta’sis al-dawla al-turkiyya” [Disputes within the Salafi Da’wa because of the celebration of the foundation of the Turkish state], *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, November 6, 2012.
- 30 Informal conversation with an associate of Yasir Burhami, Alexandria, May 2012.
- 31 Author interview with Mahmud Abbas, Alexandria, November 2012.
- 32 Stéphane Lacroix and Ahmed Zaghoul Shalata, “The Rise of Revolutionary Salafism in Post-Mubarak Egypt,” in *Egypt’s Revolutions*, eds. Lacroix and Rougier, 163–178.
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