SCRIPT: “Ultras in Egypt ? Football fans or Criminals”
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This audio document is made to focus on very important aspect in the football crisis now in Egypt, the ULTRAS groups. Are the main reason or not, if not where is the solution ? That will be shown in the documentary.

MUSIC :: FADE IN :: Old music played on the Egyptian television channels before matches.

Soccer, is a sport like tennis, basketball, rugby a normal sport. Some people like it and some do not also like any sport.

NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: Egypt fans in the match between Egypt and Algeria on 2009

But in Egypt, it is different; Egyptians breathe soccer, the first page that an Egyptian open in newspaper is the sports page to follow soccer news, an Egyptian family can prefer going to watch a soccer match in stadium rather than going to watch a new movie for Adel Imam in Cinema.

Matches are always full with fans; chanting, supporting. Even sometimes clashing with opponent supporters. Also, some informal and formal associations and groups were formed to have more organized supporting to teams. Karim Said, Editor in chief of Yallakora sports website and a big fan of Al Ahly; witnessed the beginning of that associations.

Karim Said ( K. S ) : “ In 2005, launching AFC that was Ahly fans club, i do believe it was the first organized fan club in Egypt, and later on the group was authorized from the Egyptian government.”

NAT SOUND:: FADE IN :: ULTRAS AHLAWY CHANTS IN A MATCH BETWEEN AHLY AND ZAMALEK IN DECEMBER 2010

Everything was normal, till the presence of more organized group; the Ultras. In 2007, a new social movement appeared in Egypt in order to give a new creative and hardcore way of supporting. We started to here new songs, chants and we started to see great sceneries in the stadiums.

MUSIC :: FADE IN :: HEKAYTNA BY ULTRAS AHLAWY
The Ultras groups in Egypt started from scratch and they were self funded, they began to recruit a lot of youth. Each popular team in Egypt started to have their own Ultras groups like, Ultras Ahlawy and Ultras white knights for Al ahly and Al Zamalik Respectively, they were successful to reach a lot of people. They started to have an extremely influential role in supporting their teams.

An interview was conducted with an anonymous member of Ultras white knights from upper Egypt. He stated,

Anonymous (Anon.) : “I joined the Ultras when i was 14 “ , “I met someone and he offered me to join White Knights. “

Here started the problem,

NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: CLASHES BETWEEN AHLY AND ZAMALEK FANS

K.S : “I do believe, it’s the biggest problem in the Ultra Movement in Egypt, because there is a competition between Ultras Groups, either among the same club, or among the different clubs.”
“ That Competition creates anger, creates ego, creates a lot of negative emotions that might be transferred to violence.”

The extremist devotion and loyalty to teams formed some harsh clashes between the different ultras groups.

MUSIC :: FADE IN :: AL GHORAB 2 BY ULTRAS AHLAWY

The problem also took place when the police restricted their activity like stopping all publications and materials or stopping all their musical instruments they use, which made clashes too. However, The Ultras members see that they are not the main cause of the clashes.

Anon. : “For years, the Ultras have been in the stadium, we never caused any clashes or problems.”
“Problem is we say what we feel we didn’t feel justice so we cheered against injustice.”

NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: Cheering of Ultras against Police

In 2010, where insulting or chanting against the government was a total risk Ultras started to make direct insults towards police; they were organized to the level that they can’t be caught by police forces. To summarize the story, Police don’t want organized groups and Ultras do not want any governmental interfer.

MUSIC:: FADE IN :: ALHOREYA BY ULTRAS AHLAWY
The turning point was on 2011, after the 25th of January revolution. The Ultras members were part of the protests calling for liberty and freedom, but, it was not an official collective act.

24-NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: MOHAMED MAHMOOD CLASHES

Another turning point was on November 2011, where there was clashes between some protesters and police forces in Mohamed Mahmood street; both main Ultras groups decided for the first time to participate officially in the protests and they were having an important role. Starting from here, the relation between Ultras and Police took a rigid turn. Ultras devoted all their efforts and chants to insulting the police but at the same time soccer were matches working normally.

NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: PORT SAID CLASHES

But, suddenly this was the shock, it was the day that made soccer source of sadness and sorrow instead of being source of entertainment; 72 of the fans lost their lives after a match between Al ahly and Al masry in Port-Said stadium. This incident took place when Al masry fans attacked Ultras ahlawy fans inside the stadium in the presence of the police forces, and the only one who was able to help the fans was the security manager. Soccer clashes were usual, but not to the extent that 72 lose their lives. So, it was very clear that police were part of the accident after the relation between Ultras and the Police.

MUSIC :: FADE IN :: HEKAYTNA BY ULTRAS AHLAWY

After the accident, matches were played without fans, in the meanwhile, the Ultras started to escalate in order to have the revenge of their friends. They blocked the streets, the stock building they also started to disable the traffic. The media started to deliver a message that they are terrorists and riots makers and they were trying to show them as a group with political background.

Anon. : “Political loyalty when it is related to the death of our friends”

After An adjudication was made against some accused officials and fans from Port-Said; Ultras ahlawy group felt that they had back their right. Gradually they started to attend some Matches.

A great example was on 2014, where AL Ahly sporting club was playing against Sewe Sport from Ivory Coast on the CAF confederation cup final in Cairo stadium. The Match passed without problems, because simply police was not making any clashes with the Ultras.
On 2015, the government decided to get back fans into stadiums, you know what happened?

NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: AIR DEFENCE STADIUM CLASHES

Anon. : The first clash i witnessed was in the air defence stadium last year, i was late to watch, i wasn't one of the heros who were trapped inside the iron cage.

20 OF AL zamalek fans were killed after clashes between white knights and the police. At the same days, thousands were arrested. Again, we see the scenery of mothers crying after losing their sons.
The case here was somehow different, Ultras are now the criminals and they were accused with a lot of charges.

NAT SOUND :: FADE IN :: SOUND OF EMPTY MATCHES

Back, matches are played silently and we do not hear except coaches voices.

MUSIC :: FADE IN :: AL KORA LEL GAMAHEER BY ULTRAS WHITE KNIGHTS

Not only that, but, hundreds of Ultras members had been arrested only because they wanted to go back to their normal places and only chant for their teams in stadiums.
The problem here that the government fear any new clashes if matches began to be played regularly with fans. And some people fear, the death of new people.

K.S : Let us all agree that, our main target is no one can be hurt.”

The Ultras are now accused that they are the main reason of empty stadiums because of the problems they make, in the same time they see that they are doing nothing except calling for their rights.

Anon : “First, you have to prosecute do who killed our friends, then we will stop insulting the police and they’ll stop fighting back and everything will be ok “

Some matches in the African tournament were played with the presence of Ultras passed safely, because police forces were not involved in the security process inside the fields. That shows, when government stop treating Ultras as Criminals, they will show good manners, moreover, putting restrictions without involving police forces will pass the matches safely. However, we should not only blame the Police, Ultras members need a lot of awareness they need to know their rights and liabilities especially most of them are underaged.

K.S : They are too young, they are inexperienced in life, you put them in a situation they can’t control their emotion.”
Finally, all we need is some awareness; then we will see back that great sceneries without regretting losing new lives.

This audio documentary was produced by Hussein Elmoataz for the audio production course in the American University in Cairo taught by Professor Kim Fox in Fall 2016. Special Thanks for my Interviewees Karim Said and the anonymous ultras member. Music from the opening track of maspero’s sport show. Hekaitna, Al ghorab 2 and Horrya from Ultras Ahlawy Album and El kora lel gamaher from Ultras White Knights Album. Nat sound recorded by me and gathered from youtube.com