By Lauren Williamson, Great North News Services reporter

(Watch a minute and a half video that includes photographs of Saturday's protest. It can be viewed via this ">Youtube link.)

This weekend protesters in London took to the streets as part of a continued display of solidarity with the Egyptian popular uprising against President Hosni Mubarak, whose rule has lasted nearly thirty years. Though the number of demonstrators on Saturday was only around a hundred, far fewer than in llast weekend's London demonstrations, the emotional and political fury were still intense.

"We won't give up, we won't give in, until we see our people win," chanted the emphatic crowd.

Parents with children, young students, British nationals and other foreigners joined the Egyptian diaspora as they called on London-based Egyptian representatives and the UK government to support the populist movement. Though some sections within the protesting group talked of different paths toward Egyptian political change, everyone seemed to share the same goal of achieving a sweeping transformation.

Saturday's protest at the Egyptian Embassy on 26 South Street was closely monitored by dozens of police on foot, on bikes, and in surveillance vans, with additional forces on standby in Hyde Park. Though the noon demonstrations started off slowly, within a few hours more people joined the group. Some women bought roses to commemorate the lives lost in the clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt. The UN estimates around 300 people have been killed and an equal or greater number injured.

"We support the [Egyptian] people because we know now what Mubarak did in supporting Saddam Hussein," said a Kurdish protester as he expressed outrage over the atrocities Hussein committed against his fellow Kurds. The man proudly displayed a large poster with a caricature of Mubarak oozing into the sewers with rats crawling nearby.

Though the protest's organisers refused to speak to us, other members of the crowd expressed their opinions freely, requesting to remain anonymous.

"Some protest because they want Islamic law. They think that kind of system would bring peace," one Egyptian said. "But we don't want that. The people who started all this, here, we don't support the Muslim Brotherhood."

This demonstrator's statement encapsulates a pressing concern of Western governments. There is a worry over the Muslim Brotherhood's conservative policies, which conflict with liberal democratic values. There is further anxiety that if the Muslim Brotherhood were to take power, Egypt's peace with Israel might be compromised.

Just thirty miles north of London, on the same day as the Embassy protests, thousands of English Defence League supporters filled the streets of Luton. Their message targeted UK lawmakers, imploring them to help stop the spread
of Sharia law and Islamic extremism within the UK, as reported by Sky News. Interestingly, the day prior in London, on 5 February, the Egyptian embassy protesters were unexpectedly joined by an extremist Muslim anti-war group
whose members made threatening statements against the UK, according to Demotix.

The extent of the fear from all sides, built upon vastly contrasting rhetoric, is dangerous. It contributes to misunderstandings of the evolving process in Egypt and may fuel further grievances of disenfranchised groups.
Many in the West equate the Muslim Brotherhood to al-Qaeda when, in fact, they are two separate organisations with very different doctrines. The connections, however, do exist. It is well known that a Muslim Brotherhood
leader, Sayyid Qtub, served as an inspirational mentor for Osama bin Laden. But the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has urgently tried to distance itself from violent jihad and gain political legitimacy to support their conservative religious policies.

Of course, political legitimacy in Egypt, which outlaws openly religious political factions, is nearly impossible to gain. Because group members have had to run for political positions as independents and operate
clandestinely, the exact number of Muslim Brotherhood supporters and sympathisers is unknown. Prominent anthropologist Scot Atran, in an article for *The International Herald Tribune*, says it may be around 20-30 percent.
This, Atran argues, should not spark such panic of a Muslim Brotherhood usurpation in Egypt.

But the Muslim Brotherhood's ideals have gained traction among the Egyptian people, as evidenced by the group's parliamentary election gains in 2005, which deeply disturbed Mubarak and the National Democratic Party. Could it
be that the oppression of this group has actually gained them sympathisers?

In stark contrast to Atran's views, authors in *The Jerusalem Post* have been overwhelmingly alarmist about the situation; an anti-Zionist group is, to Israel, a decisive threat. The US has also indicated that it would not support extremist groups. But Atran's point is that by and large the demonstrations have been organised and sustained by a more educated and secular stratum.

Saturday's London protest provides some proof of this. The weekend demonstrations, which included protests on Downing Street on Sunday, were organised via Facebook groups, just like the initial demonstrations in Egypt
before the government shut down the internet. Many Facebook attendees have changed their profile pictures to Egyptian flags, a show of loyalty to their countrymen in this time of upheaval. Generally the
digital majority's chosen representation is the Egyptian flag, not the crescent and star of Islam.

"Like standing in no man's land, many Egyptians are confused, caught between feeling

immense pride and great shame," wrote one London-based Egyptian, poignantly describing the ambivalence he and many of his countrymen feel at this point.

The author said it is pride for the scenes of bravery, the people's struggle for a freer life, the unity seen between Christians and Muslims. It is shame for the eruptions of violence, the government's manipulation, and those that believe the propaganda, he argued. The author chided the notion that the protestors have caused the chaos in Egypt, an idea promoted on state-run media outlets. He equates it to blaming a rape victim for screaming for help.

There are endless accounts and opinions circulating on the web via social media platforms from Facebook to Twitter, Youtube to independent blogs. Some want Mubarak gone immediately. Others want the current administration to
maintain control of security and allow protesters to pursue their demonstrations, gaining support for a future election.

It is perhaps all too obvious that true democracy takes time to cultivate. A transitional period for Egypt seems only appropriate. But if during the transition any emerging political group, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, receives undue global condemnation, these criticisms may escalate the faction's domestic support. This political revolution is under intense international scrutiny and equally intense media coverage. At this critical juncture, decision makers in the West and the Arab world must not underestimate the potential of deeply rooted national loyalties.

Lauren Williamson is a London-based freelance journalist with a passion for security and development issues. She holds a Master's degree in International Studies and Diplomacy from the University of London.