



# EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



## WEEK IN BRIEF OCTOBER 15–21, 2017

### Summary

- Parliament did not discuss or vote on the state of emergency decreed on October 12. The legality of the delayed consideration of the decree is highly questionable, as states of emergency are required to be “presented” to the House of Representatives within seven days of issuance.
- Representatives continue to back the To Build It Campaign to support President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi’s unannounced reelection campaign. The campaign claimed that 120 representatives have signed its petition, though at least 300 have declared public support for the campaign.

### Notable Developments

#### Pro-Regime Parliament Backs Sisi for President:

Given that the House of Representatives was in recess this week, the most notable developments occurred outside the halls of parliament. The To Build It Campaign, which is circulating a petition pleading for President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi to run for reelection, announced that 120 representatives [signed](#) its petition and that the campaign has [access](#) to 180 offices around the country. However, over 300 representatives have publicly announced their support for the campaign, [including](#) the majority Coalition in Support of Egypt. All but one of the 54 Nation’s Future Party members in parliament also [signed](#) the petition this week.

## Other Developments

### In Legislation:

The Cabinet [approved](#) a draft Traffic Law that will [replace](#) the existing law from 1973. The draft includes provisions for an electronic ticketing system for traffic violations, a penalty point system in which repeat violators would lose their licenses, a requirement that newly-licensed public transport vehicles be less than five years old, and that criminalizes building unauthorized speed bumps. The law was sent to the State Council for legal review, though sources [say](#) that the law could not be implemented in the next year because of electronic and infrastructure changes that need to be made.

Sisi [ratified](#) the amendments to the Administrative Control Authority Law that parliament [passed](#) on October 10.

### In Session:

The Human Rights Committee [continued](#) its prison visits, going to prisons in Gamasa and [Borg al-Arab](#). Committee members inspected the cafeteria, mosque, bakery, kitchens, and medical facilities of each prison, as well as other services. According to the delegation, the prisoners praised the quality of the services they receive. The committee [announced](#) that it would compile the results of its recent visits to prisons onto a CD that would be given to foreign embassies and nongovernmental organizations. The U.S. Congress was singled out as a future recipient of the CD because of the recently suspended aid.

The Human Rights Committee is [reportedly](#) coordinating with the Detained Youth Committee to hold meetings with youth released from prison via presidential pardon to bring them back into public life and keep them from joining groups that pit youth against the state.

The Workforce Committee [called](#) for [discussions](#) with government representatives and the director of the Central Authority for Organization and Administration on the state's failure to follow through on pension payments mandated in the new Civil Service Law. Unhappiness with the implementation of the law became a talking point for other representatives this week as well.

The Health Affairs Committee [summoned](#) Minister of Health and Housing Ahmed Emad al-Din to discuss the pharmaceutical shortage and product pricing. The committee reportedly plans to present the minister with recommendations to fix the issues.

A delegation from the Economic Affairs Committee [went](#) on a two-day inspection tour of the Suez Canal Authority and Port Said ports.

### In News and Statements:

Representative Shadia Thabet [announced](#) details about a draft law regarding homosexuality and prostitution. The draft attempts to further define immoral conduct and includes punishments for using social media and other technology to promote "immoral actions."

Some Free Egyptians Party members, including Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed, [declared](#) their [support](#) for the proposed amendments to the Citizenship Law, which would allow the state to strip convicted terrorists of their citizenship.

The perpetual rumblings for a cabinet reshuffle have started again in parliament, [causing](#) a low-level debate over whether this is the right time for it. Soleiman Wahdan, deputy speaker of parliament, entered the debate, [saying](#) the Cabinet needs more time to implement its plans. A lively media [debate](#) broke out over the [proposal](#) of combating Egypt's population growth by issuing childbirth permits that

would grant couples the right to have another child within the five-year term of the permit.

Amr al-Gawhari of the Economic Affairs Committee [said](#) that Article 7 of the government's draft Consumer Protection Law may be unconstitutional because it calls for products to have clear prices, which al-Gawhari believes may run counter to the constitutional mandate that Egypt be a free-market economy.

Bahaa Abu Shoqa [won](#) the [race](#) against Salah Shouqi Aqeel for the [leadership](#) of the Wafd Party parliamentary body. Abu Shoqa also currently holds the position of chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee.

## Looking Ahead

- The House of Representatives will [reconvene](#) for a general assembly and committee meetings on October 22, which should be a busy day. The newly decreed state of emergency, the resignations of two representatives, the government's draft Youth Law, and the final elections for the two deputy chair positions in the African Affairs Committee will be on the agenda. Prime Minister Sherif Ismail is [scheduled](#) to [address](#) the assembly on the topic of the national state of emergency.
- Expect the House of Representatives to approve the state of emergency with no hesitation. The Civil Service Law and the Tiran and Sanafir islands agreement were the only state edicts challenged by representatives during the past two sessions. Several powerful representatives have already announced their support for this decree as well.
- The discussion of the resignations Muhammad Fuad and Akmal Qartam, who has [filed resignations](#) several times, will be telling. The House of Representatives must accept a resignation for it to go into effect, and the body has only accepted one resignation in its previous two legislative sessions, that of [Siri Siam](#). The act of resigning and subsequently retracting the statement has been a popular way to express frustration since parliament was seated.



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EGYPT **PARLIAMENT WATCH**

Egypt Parliament Watch is the most comprehensive project on Egypt's elected legislature, providing analysis of the body's performance in fulfilling its constitutionally mandated tasks, the legislation it produces, and the political dynamics at play.