



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF NOVEMBER 26–DECEMBER 2, 2017

Summary

- The House of Representatives passed three laws governing the proposed Dabaa nuclear power plant in an emergency session this week. However, the legislature is still in recess until December 3. Therefore, only committees and the ministerial cabinet discussed further legislation.
- The emergency session was held just days after the deadliest terror attack in Egyptian history, but after a short speech by the speaker of the House, no additional discussion of the attack was allowed in session and the body moved forward with the power plant vote. Representatives continued to make statements on the attack in the media, though no legislative reaction came this week.

Notable Developments

Emergency Session called to Vote on Nuclear Power Plant Laws:

The House of Representatives held an emergency session to vote on three government draft laws related to the proposed Dabaa nuclear power plant. All three laws **passed** during the five-hour session despite a spate of recent issues with achieving quorum in the legislature. Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al defended the emergency session, saying that it was necessary because the government deemed the matter to be urgent. Abdel 'Al **opened** the session with a speech on why terrorism will not win in Egypt and a moment of **silence** for the victims of the Rawda mosque attack. However, after this brief remembrance, Abdel 'Al would not allow representatives time to make individual statements during the session on the topic of the attack. Instead, he **called** on representatives to legislate and moved to discuss the nuclear power plant draft laws.

Representatives React to Ahmed Shafiq's Candidacy:

Multiple representatives began supporting narratives against Ahmed Shafiq's [announced](#) candidacy for the presidency in 2018. Shafiq is a past presidential candidate and former prime minister, though his connection to the current House of Representatives is that he is the chairman of the National Movement Party, which has [four seats](#) in the legislature. His party officially [defended](#) Shafiq over his public disagreement with the minister of state for foreign affairs of the United Arab Emirates over Shafiq's [inability](#) to leave the country and the accompanying video that was released on Al Jazeera. However, party member Samir al-Bateekhi [called](#) on Shafiq to apologize and condemned his unilateral decision to run (a statement that contradicts earlier [reports](#) of a party conference on his campaign). Representatives including [Mustafa Bakri](#), [Diaa al-Din Dawoud](#), and [Gamal Abbas](#) also initially questioned or denigrated Shafiq's decision to run against President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi. In a flurry of confusion on his travel status over the weekend, Shafiq did return to Egypt, and gave an interview to TV presenter Wael al-Abrashy in which he denied claims he was transported against his will and said he is still assessing whether he will formally run for president.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

During the emergency session, parliament passed the [Establishing an Executive Oversight Body for Nuclear Power Plants Law](#), [amendments to the Nuclear Power Plants Authority Law](#), and the [Regulating Nuclear and Radiological Activities Law](#). Two days later, Sisi [ratified](#) each of the laws.

In Session:

A 14-person delegation from the Defense Committee, which included the chairman and deputy chairman of the Manufacturing Committee, [visited](#) the Nasser Chemicals Company in Abu Rawash.

The Media Committee [sent](#) parts of the draft Media Organization Law back to the government for review because of constitutional discrepancies in some of the legislation's articles.

In News and Statements:

Following continued media coverage of the Rawda mosque attack last week, Representative Gharib Hassan of North Sinai reported that several "lying, traitorous media channels" had tried to contact him for comment. Muhammad al-Suweidi, chairman of the majority Coalition in Support of Egypt, responded to the coverage by [calling](#) for an emergency session of parliament to discuss a draft law to provide exceptional pensions to the families of people injured or killed in terror attacks. Constitutional Affairs Committee Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa took a more historical view of the tragedy and [said](#) that "Egypt, which defeated the Hyksos and Tartars in ancient times, will also be able to defeat terrorists."

Several representatives reacted to the release of documents by the BBC claiming that former President Hosni Mubarak agreed in 1983 to a Palestinian resettlement plan that would have given Sinai to Palestinians. Representative Haytham al-Hariri [called](#) for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to respond. Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan called the statement part of a long-running foreign plan to take Sinai that Egypt must resist. Representative Mustafa Bakri [denied](#) the veracity of the documents and pointed to what he described as the United States' support for the Muslim Brotherhood against Mubarak in 2011 as evidence for his views.

The Coalition in Support of Egypt [announced](#) that Saad al-Gamal will be the honorary chairman of the coalition, that Taher Abu Zaid will be the first deputy of the coalition, and that Salah Hassiballah will be the coalition spokesman. Muhammad al-Suweidi will still be the official coalition chairman. The coalition's office will [include](#) Hussein Aissa, Amr Ghalab, Karim Darwish, Ashraf Rashad Osman, and Muhammad Ali Rashwan as deputies to Suweidi. The coalition's secretariat will

reportedly include Magdi Murshid as secretary general (though other reports place Taher Abu Zaid in this position), Muhammad Ali Youssef, Samir al-Khouli, Samer al-Talawi, Abdullah Mabrouk, and Hasanein Aboul Mukaram. The advisory body for the coalition will include Hassan Bassiouni for legal affairs, Ahmed Samir for project affairs, Rasha Ramadan for family work affairs, Sharif Fakhri for communications and information technology affairs, Amr Sedki for economic affairs, and Abdul Hamid al-Demerdash for agricultural affairs.

Speaker Abdel 'Al [welcomed](#) the Ethiopian ambassador to Cairo to yesterday's emergency session of parliament.

The official campaigning period for deceased representative Herqel Wafqi's seat in the House [began](#) and will run through December 14.

Representative Mortada Mansour [won](#) reelection as the chairman of Zamalek Sporting Club, much to the chagrin of many of the club's fans. He joins at least three other representatives as [chairmen](#) of sporting clubs.

Looking Ahead

- The House of Representatives is set to reconvene on December 3 following the recent [recess](#) and [emergency session](#). Final votes for the Youth Bodies Law, Unions Law, Drones Law, amendments to the Deputy Ministers Law, amendments to the Family Courts Law, and amendments to the Inheritance Law will be on the agenda as the legislature seeks to reach the necessary two-thirds quorum for these votes, which it has had difficulty obtaining for several weeks. Given the apparent quorum at the emergency session, representatives are likely to return to vote this week. However, celebrations of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday last Thursday and Friday may negatively affect turnout for sessions early next week.
- The Constitutional Affairs Committee is [set](#) to review the court ruling against Representative Sahar al-Hawari, who was [sentenced](#) to five years in prison in April over financial crimes. The issue of her continued membership in the legislature has been [postponed](#) by the committee [multiple times](#) since the ruling was issued.
- Shafiq, as chairman of the National Movement Party, has declared his intention to weigh his decision to formally contest the seat for presidency, leaving open the question of political support for the former prime minister.



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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.