



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF JANUARY 21–27, 2018

Summary

- Multiple parties and party leaders discussed presenting last-minute candidates for the presidential election, though only Moussa Mustafa Moussa, chairman of the Ghad Party (which has no seats in parliament), presented his paperwork to campaign, after 27 representatives reportedly [endorsed](#) him.
- Multiple political parties spoke out in support of the military's decision to arrest former presidential hopeful Sami Anan.
- Several representatives criticized United States Senator John McCain for his recent condemnation of the closure of civil society and undemocratic processes in Egypt.

Presidential Elections Developments

Parties in Parliament Debate Fielding Presidential Candidates:

In light of the recent withdrawal of multiple presidential candidates, state actors reportedly [contacted](#) several individuals and groups, including Wafd Party members and Democratic Peace Party Chairman Ahmed al-Fadali, encouraging them to field a challenger to President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi in the upcoming election. While most (including former candidate Hamdeen Sabahi, Representative Mustafa Bakri, the [Free Egyptians Party](#), and Conservative Party Chairman Akmal Qartam) rejected the proposal, Yasser al-Hudaybi of the Wafd Party [announced](#) that the party was considering three members—party chairman al-Sayyid al-Badawi, Representative Muhammad Fuad, and Hani Siri al-Din—for potential candidacy. As part of this process, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Soleiman Wahdan and Constitutional Affairs Committee Chairman Bahaa al-Din Abu Shoqa, both Wafd Party members, [held](#) a series of closed-door meetings with

Wafd Party leaders, attempting to convince them to support Badawi for president. The party had recently endorsed Sisi for a second term in office, but **held** an emergency meeting Saturday to vote on changing its position to endorse Badawi. Badawi appeared to expect to win the party's nomination and **said** that he **intended** to announce his candidacy for president. However, he **withdrew** from consideration after the party's supreme council **voted** 41–4 against approving his candidacy. These events played out on the backdrop of conflict within the Wafd Party over the issue. Tariq al-Tohami, deputy secretary of the party, and Muhammad Khalifa, deputy head of the Wafd parliamentary body, **expressed** confusion over the potential of fielding a Wafd presidential candidate after previously agreeing to support Sisi, and Khalifa even reiterated his party's endorsement of Sisi. Party officers at the governorate level also **announced** their opposition to Badawi's proposed campaign, and the youth wing of the Wafd Party **protested** against Badawi's presumed candidacy.

Democratic Peace Party Chairman Ahmed al-Fadali **announced** that he was calling for a meeting of the party supreme council to discuss his entrance into the presidential election, and Said Hassassein, chairman of the party's parliamentary body, said that he would begin collecting endorsements for Fadali's candidacy. However, Fadali did not submit his final paperwork to the National Election Authority and therefore will not be a candidate.

Sisi, Moussa Mustafa Moussa Only Candidates to Receive Endorsements from the House :

Ghad Party Chairman Moussa Mustafa Moussa applied to run against Sisi in the presidential election. Although neither Moussa nor his party hold any seats in the parliament, the party leader was able to secure endorsement from 26 representatives mere hours after his announcement, allowing him to register as the only other candidate in the race only seven minutes before registration closed. Sisi received as many as 549 representatives' endorsements, with the 25-30 Bloc and some individual representatives having not endorsed any candidate. No list of official endorsements submitted has yet been made public.

Party Involvement in Presidential Election:

Alaa Abed, chairman of the Human Rights Committee, **said** that the committee will be receiving copies of any complaints related to the election submitted to the Ministry of Social Solidarity Operations Room. Abed **claimed** to be aware of organizations attempting to distort the image of Egypt during the election, and said that he believed this new responsibility for the committee will ensure that election coverage will remain transparent and factual. Similarly, Abed **commented** that the Human Rights Committee will supervise nongovernmental organizations monitoring the presidential election.

Party Campaigning in Presidential Election:

Representatives from the Coalition in Support of Egypt traveled extensively throughout Egypt this week as part of their national campaign to support the reelection of Sisi. Their campaign visits this week included the governorates of **Port Said**, **Monofeya**, **Fayoum**, and **Kafr al-Sheikh**. The coalition said it **intends** to hold conferences in every governorate by mid-February. Similarly, the To Build It Campaign **intends** to organize tours across Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait to allow representatives and campaign officials to advertise Sisi's achievements to Egyptians abroad.

Representative Haytham al-Hariri of the 25-30 Bloc **stated** that the bloc plans to endorse a candidate for president following the deadline for individuals to submit their candidacy. The

endorsements from the 16 representatives that comprise the 25-30 Bloc would then not be used to provide any potential presidential candidates with the constitutionally mandated 20 endorsements from representatives.

Representatives React to Sami Anan's Arrest:

Following the [arrest](#) of former armed forces chief of staff Sami Anan for campaigning for president while still a member of the military, several political parties expressed their support for Anan's detention. The Coalition in Support of Egypt [praised](#) the decision, [describing](#) it as an initiative indicative of the will of the people. In related comments, the [Free Egyptians Party](#), the Conference Party's [parliamentary body](#), and the [Liberal Constitutional Party](#) all announced their support of the military's actions and the rejection of Anan's campaign status. After Anan's arrest, Representative Khaled Youssef of the 25-30 Bloc [denied](#) rumors that he previously endorsed Anan's campaign for president.

Notable Developments

Salah Hassiballah's First Comments as Spokesman:

Salah Hassiballah, the newly [appointed](#) spokesman for the House of Representatives, held his first official press conference. In this event, Hassiballah covered a variety of political concerns. He [ensured](#) the neutrality of parliament in the upcoming election, and stated that representatives are free to endorse any candidate that they support. Hassiballah reported on recent developments in parliament, [claiming](#) that the body has passed 323 different laws up to the present day, while [adding](#) that the legislature will decide on the status of Amr al-Shobaki, whom a court awarded Ahmed Mortada Mansour's seat in parliament last year, during this legislative session. He also [criticized](#) the State Council's ruling that the legislative amendments to the Sports Law preventing judges from campaigning to lead sporting clubs are unconstitutional. Hassiballah [concluded](#) his press conference by criticizing the six United States congressmen who proposed legislation pertaining to Copts in Egypt, condemning the representatives for overstepping political bounds.

In related news, Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan [opposed](#) the appointment of a spokesperson for parliament, as he believes every representative deserves the opportunity to speak freely on his or her behalf. Wahdan's comments came after Hassiballah's press conference.

Representatives React to Criticism from Senator John McCain:

U.S. Senator John McCain [released](#) a statement Tuesday ahead of the seventh anniversary of the January 25 Revolution in which he criticized the backlash against civil society in Egypt and claimed that this trend has led to regression under the leadership of Sisi. McCain's comments received fierce backlash from several representatives in parliament. Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan and committee member Tariq al-Khouli were particularly [outspoken](#) in their condemnation of McCain, both [stating](#) that he has no authority to interfere in Egyptian internal affairs and judicial processes. Khouli [added](#) that McCain's consistent attempts to degrade Egypt's image stemmed from the closure of the International Republican Institute's headquarters in Egypt. Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed [offered](#) further criticism of McCain's comments, echoing similar sentiments on McCain's desire to interfere in Egyptian politics.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

Parliament is on recess until January 28 and did not ratify any legislation this week.

The Cabinet [approved](#) a draft Advertising on Public Roads Law, and draft [amendments](#) to the Income Tax Law.

In Session:

Several members of the Budget Committee [met](#) with a [delegation](#) from the South Korean parliament mainly comprising members of its budget committee. The two sides primarily [discussed](#) South Korean companies' investments in Egypt and [strengthening](#) economic cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan [held](#) separate meetings on Sunday with ambassadors from Portugal, Jordan, and Mexico. Radwan primarily focused on economic relations and parliamentary relations with Jordan and Mexico, while his meeting with the Portuguese ambassador revolved around terrorism and security concerns.

Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al [led](#) a parliamentary delegation to Bahrain that included Representative Abdel Hadi al-Qasbi. They [met](#) with the Bahraini prime minister and the [chairman](#) of the Bahraini Shura Council. During this visit, Abdel 'Al [stressed](#) the importance of Egyptians abroad in representing their homeland and serving as ambassadors.

Australian Ambassador to Egypt Neil Hawkins and an accompanying delegation [visited](#) Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed and other committee members, including Deputy Chairwoman Margaret Azer and Representative Soulaf Darwish. The group [discussed](#) bilateral relations, particularly concerning human rights issues.

In News and Statements:

Several leaders in parliament commented on the 66th Police Day, yet few made any reference to the January 25 Revolution. [Abdel 'Al](#) along with Coalition in Support of Egypt leader [Muhammad al-Suweidi](#) and Representatives [Ehab al-Tamawi](#), [Alaa Wali](#), and [Emad Hamouda](#) expressed similar sentiments, congratulating Sisi, Egyptian civilians, the police, and the Minister of the Interior. In a more pointed statement, Representative Muhammad Abu Hamed [defended](#) the Ministry of the Interior in the wake of the January 25 Revolution and the ensuing violence, arguing that any bloodshed occurred as a result of attacks on government buildings primarily conducted by the Muslim Brotherhood. Finally, Representative Tariq al-Khouli [offered](#) his congratulations to the Egyptian population on January 25 and Police Day, stating that both occasions serve as a reminder for the country to remain unified in achieving the aspirations of the revolution.

Representative Sami al-Mashed [denied](#) rumors that he had been arrested in connection to the corruption case against Monofeya Governor Hisham Abdel Basset, refuting the notion that he was an accomplice to the crime by claiming that he reported the governor's illegal activity.

The Foreign Relations Committee [published](#) its response to the U.S. congressional memo on Coptic issues in Egypt. The committee [emphasized](#) what it believes are a variety of falsehoods in the congressional memo, pointing to the 39 Coptic representatives in the legislature, the overwhelming role that the Muslim Brotherhood played in the violence against Copts before the current government took over, and the reconstruction of 83 Coptic churches throughout Egypt under Sisi.

- Parliament was **set** to take a final vote on the Bankruptcy Law and the Election of Workers Representatives to Boards of Directors Law once the body reconvenes.
- According to Representative Tariq al-Khouli, Abdel 'Al will **lead** a meeting of the Detained Youth Committee this week to discuss reintegration policies for formerly detained youths transitioning back into society. Khouli **added** that the number of released youth eclipsed 600 individuals.
- Tariq Radwan, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, **said** that the committee is preparing a visit to the U.S. Congress in May to respond in person to the congressional memo on Coptic issues in Egypt.



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy

1140 Connecticut Ave NW Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036
office 202 969 3343
fax 202 480 2178
timep.org

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.