



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF DECEMBER 31, 2017–JANUARY 6, 2018

Summary

- The House of Representatives is in [recess](#) until January 8. Only committees and the Cabinet will discuss or vote on legislation until the full legislature reconvenes.
- The presidential decree to extend the national state of emergency for an additional three months received relatively little comment from representatives, despite its constitutionally tenuous position.

Notable Developments

Extension of the National State of Emergency:

The Official Gazette [published](#) a presidential decree on December 31 that will [renew](#) the current national state of emergency for an additional three months beginning on January 13. This is the fourth issuance of the national state of emergency in a year, though it may only extend for three months and may only be issued twice consecutively, according to the Egyptian Constitution. Article 154 of the constitution mandates that the decree “must be presented to the House of Representatives within seven days for consideration.” The document is vague on whether presentation is merely sending a copy of the decree to the legislature or bringing it before a general session for discussion. In either case, the House of Representatives is still in [recess](#) until January 8 and the potential constitutional issues did not appear to register with representatives. Relatively few commented on the decree, and the majority of media statements [focused](#) only on the necessity of and support for renewing the state of emergency. Similarly, the House of Representatives appeared to vote on the original issuance of the state of emergency several hours after it went into effect, and neither discussed nor voted on the third extension of the state of emergency within seven days of its issuance.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

The House of Representatives was in recess, so no legislation was passed by the body this week.

President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi [ratified](#) the Youth Bodies Law, which outlines a wide-ranging list of changes to the rights, oversight, and structure of youth and sports bodies, including the prohibition of any religious, political, or popular mobilization on issues, the establishment of oversight entities to approve the bodies' actions and donations, and an increased number of seats for youths on the leadership committees of the bodies.

In its weekly meeting, the ministerial cabinet [approved](#) the government's draft Transferring Ownership in New Cities Law, which streamlines property registration procedures in those communities.

The Cabinet also [approved](#) the government's draft High Council to Combat Terrorism Law, which creates a council to replace the Supreme Anti-Terrorism Committee established by Sisi last year.

In Session:

A high-level delegation of representatives led by Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al traveled to Saudi Arabia to meet with King Salman, multiple Saudi ministers, and the head of the Shura Council there. The delegation discussed the importance of working together to improve regional security, confront terrorism, and develop their economies and societies by strengthening bilateral relations between the countries. Other members of the delegation included the chairman of the Coalition in Support of Egypt, Muhammad al-Suweidi; the chairman of the Human Rights Committee, Alaa Abed; and the chairman of the Arab Affairs Committee, Saad al-Gamal.

The Economic Affairs Committee [postponed](#) its [discussion](#) of the draft Consumer Protection Law to discuss the notes from the General Union of Chambers of Commerce and the Egyptian Manufacturing Union on the draft law.

The Foreign Relations Committee is [discussing](#) writing a report on the status of Copts in Egypt and sending it to the United States Congress and foreign media to correct misconceptions promulgated by a recent congressional memo on the topic.

A delegation from the Education Committee [visited](#) the Egyptian-Japanese University for Science and Technology in Alexandria to hear about the new educational institution and its research.

In News and Statements:

There was a small, angry reaction on social media to a [photo](#) purporting to show a citizen putting Representative Muhammad Khalifa's shoes on for him as they left a mosque. Khalifa claims the caption is misleading and that the man was putting on his own shoes when the camera caught the scene at an odd angle.

Members of the Tourism Committee [praised](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin's signing of the joint protocol to resume Russian flights to Egypt, saying it will result in increased Russian tourism to Egypt and demonstrates the level of security in the country.

Looking Ahead

- The House of Representatives is expected to be busy once it reconvenes on January 8. The body is **set** to discuss the state of emergency extension and the Bankruptcy Law, as well as the amendments to the Prisons Law, the Personal Status Law, the Penal Code, the Agriculture Law, the General Body for Manufacturing Development Law, and the Real Estate Documentation Law. It is highly unlikely that all of these pieces of legislation will be passed next week. **Several** committees are **also set to resume** work next week, with some scheduling as many as six committee meetings for the week. This situation seems to indicate that many new pieces of legislation can be expected in the near future.
- The runoff election for the seat of deceased representative Herqel Wafqi will **conclude** on January 9. The winner of the seat, **either** Rashdi Wafqi or Khalifa Radwan, is unlikely to be sworn in by the House of Representatives in the same week, however. Past precedent shows that it typically takes at least a week before the legislature can get the new member's admittance on its schedule for a general assembly.



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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.