



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF JULY 15–28, 2018

Summary

- Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al announced the end of the third legislative session; the House will be on parliamentary recess until early October. He thanked President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi and representatives in the House for their efforts during the legislative session.
- The House voted to approve the cabinet's agenda after hearing the recommendations of fellow representatives and Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli. Madbouli described various highlights of the program before the legislature took a vote, and the agenda was approved by most parliamentary committees and parties, except the 25-30 Bloc.
- Several representatives, including Representatives Sahar al-Hawiri and Haytham al-Hariri, are under membership review by the Ethics Committee. Hawiri's membership vote was postponed until the fourth session and Hariri has a summons date with the committee in early August. Some members of the 25-30 Bloc are reportedly under review, though their names are not public.

Notable Developments

House's Third Legislative Session Concludes:

The third legislative session of parliament **concluded** Wednesday, July 25. Abdel 'Al **thanked** Sisi for his leadership over the course of the legislature's session and representatives in the House for their efforts to **rebuke** threats intended to disrupt parliament's operations. A parliamentary report asserted that the House approved 197 bills over the entirety of the third legislative session. The House is expected to **reconvene** for the fourth session during the first week of October.

House Votes to Approve the Cabinet's Agenda:

After weeks of internal debates and meetings, the House voted to **approve** the cabinet's agenda. Representatives gathered in multiple general sessions to **hear** the recommendations of the special parliamentary committee tasked with reviewing the program; Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli also **attended** one of the plenary sessions to respond to any concerns among the legislature. Some highlights of the agenda include **expanding** sources of domestic funding through economic endeavors, **creating** a task force within each ministry to provide quarterly **updates** on the ministries' adherence to the program, and **continuing** the rapid implementation of the comprehensive health-care program. Leading up to the official vote, several political parties and parliamentary blocs, including the **Coalition in Support of Egypt**, the **Nation's Future Party**, the **Wafd Party**, and the **Free Egyptians Party**, announced their support of the agenda. The 25-30 Bloc **rejected** the program based on the bloc's assessment that the agenda will not achieve measurable progress compared to previous cabinet initiatives.

Several Representatives Face Membership Review:

The Ethics Committee began **investigating** Representative Sahar al-Hawiri to decide whether to remove her as a member of the House, though Abdel 'Al did not provide **insight** into her investigation other than stating that all representatives must abide by the constitution and the House's bylaws. The Constitutional Affairs Committee later **released** a report stating that the body lost faith in Hawiri over a 2012 court case involving fraudulent financial dealings on her behalf. The House **postponed** a final vote on Hawiri's status until the beginning of the fourth legislative session, pending the Ethics Committee's final report into the matter.

Hawiri was not the only parliamentarian under investigation by the Ethics Committee, as Representative Haytham al-Hariri has a pending summons date with the body **scheduled** for August 5. Four separate claims were **filed** against Hariri alleging that he exhibited inappropriate behavior during legislative sessions and publicized representatives' personal information on his Facebook account. Additionally, Abdel 'Al **stated** that some representatives in the 25-30 Bloc were under membership review, but did not **state** their names.

Release of Withheld Aid Draws Representatives' Praise:

On July 25, the United States Department of State **released** \$195 million in withheld military aid to Egypt; the aid had been withheld since August 2017 over concerns with Egypt's human rights **violations** and its **relationship** with North Korea. Representatives, notably **Yehia Kedwani** of the Defense Committee, praised the decision, calling it an important **step** for Egypt's war on terror and international support of these efforts. Similarly, Arab Affairs Committee Chairman Saad al-Gamal **described** the move as an affirmation of the historic relations between Egypt and the United States.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

The House **approved** amendments by the government to the Egyptian Nationality Law that require foreign nationals seeking to become Egyptian citizens to **maintain** a bank deposit of seven million Egyptian pounds (LE), or the foreign equivalent, for a five-year period in order to attain citizenship.

The House **approved** the government's International Universities Law. The law regulates international universities seeking to establish satellite campuses, in order to attract a larger number of foreign students to Egypt.

The House **approved** the Egypt Fund Law, which allows public companies to transfer some of their funds for reinvestment; the initial level of capital in the fund is LE5 billion, with a maximum of LE200 billion.

The House **approved** amendments to the Police Act that establish a disciplinary board in the Ministry of Interior to hear cases brought forward against members of the police.

The House **approved** a \$35 million loan agreement between Egypt and OPEC's International Development Fund in order to improve the water sanitation system nationwide.

The House **agreed** in principle to the Financiers Exemption Law, which reduces the burden of tax disputes by setting a waiver deadline of 90 days for an individual to pay the principal on their taxes without repercussions.

The House **approved** the \$530 million loan agreement between Egypt and the World Bank for developing the health sector.

The House **approved** in their entirety the amendments to the Tenders and Auctions Law. The bill is **aimed** at promoting transparency in government agencies and contracts between government agencies and private companies through a merit-based system.

The House **approved** the amendments to the Governors' and Ministers' Pension Law. The law **states** that government officials will receive a minimum monthly pension of 25 percent of their last salary and a maximum pension of 80 percent. The bill also **increases** the pension to 80 percent if a government official leaves their position because of disability.

The House **approved** a \$500 million loan between Egypt and the World Bank for the purpose of reforming Egypt's education system.

The House **approved** five agreements between the Ministry of Petroleum and various oil companies to explore for oil in locations both on land and offshore.

In Session:

The Local Administration Committee **discussed** 271 of the 390 briefing requests distributed to the various committees of parliament during the third legislative session.

Suggestions and Complaints Committee Chairman Hemam al-Adali **stated** that the committee received over 4,000 requests during the third legislative session, and they were only able to address roughly half of the requests. Adali added that representatives must resubmit their requests if they were not discussed so that they may be addressed during the next legislative session.

The Human Rights Committee **called** on various agencies within the state apparatus to investigate claims made by nongovernmental organizations that the committee deemed as aiming to distort the image of the state; Representative Sharif al-Wardani, member of the committee, did not specify

which agencies were involved in the request.

The Arab Affairs Committee **condemned** the terrorist attack in Syria that claimed the lives of over 220 people.

The Religious Affairs Committee **condemned** the Jewish “nation state” law passed in Israel and stated that it violates international principles prohibiting racial discrimination.

In response to a briefing request regarding the 3,000 workers in the Ministry of Awqaf whose salaries were frozen, the Religious Affairs Committee **recommended** utilizing temporary employment policies for the unemployed workers.

In News and Statements:

Representative Yehia Kedwani of the Defense Committee **called** upon representatives to hold awareness campaigns with their constituents to discuss the danger of rumors spreading among citizens, especially those originating from the Muslim Brotherhood.

Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan **stated** that pluralism and party dynamics have weakened in the legislature, and criticized the Wafd Party specifically for failing to abide by its revolutionary platform. Wahdan is an active member of the Wafd Party.

Representative Mortada Mansour **accused** the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as the Egyptian Olympic Committee of being corrupt and wasting public money through fraudulent financial transactions.

Abdel 'Al **stated** that there are no foreign funds being utilized in Sinai for the war on terror except for those obtained through legal processes and approved by the House. This followed Representative Talaat Khalil's assertion that foreign funds were being used without proper authorization.

Wafd Party Spokesman Yasser al-Hudeibi **denied** rumors that former defense minister Sedki Sobhi joined the party, though he stated that Sobhi would be a notable addition to the organization.

A delegation from Sri Lanka, including Speaker of the Parliament Karu Jayasuriya, **visited** the House and sat in during Wednesday's morning plenary session.

A delegation from the Education Committee **traveled** to the United Kingdom and met with officials from a council of British universities; the visit comes in light of Sisi's call to reform the Egyptian education system.

Abdel 'Al **traveled** to Italy to speak with Roberto Fico, the head of Italy's lower house of parliament.

The Human Rights Committee **met** with several officials from the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, though the committee refused to explain the nature of the meeting.

Abdel 'Al **met** with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, who expressed his excitement over Sisi's visit to Serbia later this year. Vucic specifically noted Egypt as a tourist destination during his meeting with Abdel 'Al.

Abdel 'Al **called** for Article 273 of the House's bylaws to be amended because it is overly restrictive to the legislative process. Article 273 requires a quorum of two-thirds of the House to be present to vote on legislation.

Local Administration Committee Chairman Ahmed al-Sageeni **stated** that plenary sessions should be broadcasted for the general public to view, based on the growing national interest in the parliament's operations.

Looking Ahead

- As the House is on parliamentary recess, no plenary sessions will occur until the legislature [reconvenes](#) in early October.



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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.