



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF OCTOBER 21-27, 2018

Summary

- In light of Coptic Orthodox monks being removed and arrested from the Deir al-Sultan Monastery in Jerusalem, officials in the House of Representatives condemned the incident. Representatives claimed that Israeli authorities used excessive violence in the incident, while others called on the international community to investigate the situation.
- The Human Rights Committee visited the Torah Prison complex, a facility with documented history of human rights abuses and torturing inmates. Despite previous reports, committee members spoke glowingly about the treatment that prisoners received at the facility.
- Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al referred the Egyptian Olympic Committee (EOC) to a special investigative committee for investigation. Last week, the EOC suspended Representative Mortada Mansour for alleged financial corruption with the Zamalek Club, where Mansour is chairman; Abdel 'Al asserted that the EOC's actions were illegal under the Sports Law.

Notable Developments

Representatives Condemn Coptic Incident at Jerusalem Monastery:

Earlier this week, Coptic Orthodox monks were [removed](#) from the Deir al-Sultan Monastery in Jerusalem and one monk was arrested after [protesting](#) Israeli authorities seeking to renovate the facilities in accordance with local building laws. The Coptic Orthodox Church claims ownership of the monastery, which is situated on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but the monastery is under the control of monks in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. The Ethiopian monks assented to the repairs and renovations.

Following the incident, several representatives and parliamentary committees condemned the situation. Fifteen representatives [signed](#) a statement decrying the incident and alleging violence perpetrated on the part of Israeli authorities; 14 of the 15 signatories were Copts. Free Egyptians Party Chairman [Essam Khalil](#) and the [Human Rights Committee](#) issued separate statements calling on the United Nations and United States respectively to investigate the incident. Parliamentary Spokesman [Salah Hassiballah](#) and the [Foreign Affairs Committee](#) also denounced the incident as an international scandal.

Human Rights Committee Visits Torah:

A delegation from the Human Rights Committee [conducted](#) a field visit to the Torah Prison complex in Cairo, which civil society organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented cases of [solitary confinement](#), [torture](#) of prisoners, and other human rights [abuses](#) pertaining to nutrition and prisoners' health at the facility. Committee Chairman Alaa Abed [asserted](#) following the visit that the inmates receive proper treatment at the facility in regards to nutrition, health care, and other areas of concern for the human rights group. The delegation [included](#) Abed and Representatives Margaret Azer, Ali Abdel Wanees, Sharif al-Wardani, Said Shabayek, Ahmed al-Gazar, and Magdy Seif.

Abdel 'Al Refers Egyptian Olympic Committee to Investigation:

Officials from the Egyptian Olympic Committee [submitted](#) a request to Abdel 'Al to lift Representative Mortada Mansour's legal immunity after the organization [claimed](#) that Mansour abused his parliamentary immunity to conceal illegal financial dealings for the Zamalek Sports Club, a sports club that Mansour manages. The EOC [suspended](#) Mortada for two years and [threatened](#) to cancel future Zamalek soccer matches if Mansour did not submit to questioning by the committee. Abdel 'Al [rejected](#) the EOC's request and [referred](#) the institution to a special ad hoc committee for investigation; Abdel 'Al [asserted](#) that the committee violated the Sports Law by penalizing Mansour.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

The Economic Affairs Committee [approved](#) an agreement establishing the Russian Industrial Zone in the Suez Canal area.

The Manufacturing Committee [agreed](#) in principle to the draft Advertising Syndicate Law; the committee began debating individual articles of the draft law on Tuesday. The draft law would [establish](#) an advertising union under similar guidelines as other professional organizations. The Manufacturing Committee will [coordinate](#) with representatives from the Media Committee, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Justice, and the National Media Commission in regard to the draft law establishing the Advertising Syndicate.

The House [formed](#) a special committee under Deputy Speaker al-Sayyid al-Sharif's leadership and composed of eight additional representatives to investigate the Clinical Trials Law that President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi vetoed.

In Session:

Representative Ahmed Helmi al-Sharif of the Constitutional Affairs Committee **submitted** a request to Abdel 'Al on behalf of the committee to seek legal action against Representative Muhammad Fuad for his comments made about the committee and Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa during the height of the dispute about the Personal Status Law. Sharif claimed that Fuad's disparaging remarks could lead to a prosecution under the Penal Code.

Representative Samir al-Bateekhi of the Manufacturing Committee **submitted** a briefing request to Finance Minister Muhammad Mait regarding the business failures of the Egyptian television industry.

Representative Muhammad al-Husseini of the Local Administration Committee **submitted** a briefing request to Abdel 'Al, Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli, and Local Development Minister Mahmoud Sharawi regarding the drinking water shortage in Bulaq and the contamination of the drinking water with sewage waste.

Representative Muhammad Zein al-Din of the Transportation Committee **submitted** a briefing request to Irrigation Minister Muhammad Abdel Atty asking that the ministry develop a comprehensive strategy to combat flooding situations, especially at prominent locations such as power plants.

Representative Sharif Nadi of the African Affairs Committee **submitted** a briefing request to Health Minister Hala Zayed regarding the recent deaths of two citizens at Malawi General Hospital due to insufficient medical supplies.

Representative Ehab Ghatati of the Agriculture Committee **submitted** a briefing request to Abdel 'Al and Agriculture Minister Ezz al-Din Abu Satit regarding the issue of potato crop sales.

Abdel 'Al **announced** that he received a request to lift the immunity of a representative, though he did not reveal who and the reason for the request.

Abdel 'Al **ordered** the removal of the phrase "they're all liars" from the official plenary session record following Representative Rania al-Sadat's use of the phrase in criticizing gubernatorial performance.

In News and Statements:

Wafd Party Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa **assured** party members that the organization is committed to transparency during the party's high council elections.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan **announced** the formation of a parliamentary friendship association between Egypt and Ghana. Radwan noted the presence of investment opportunities for Egyptian businesses in Ghana.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan **hosted** Ugandan Ambassador Arthur Katsigazi in order to promote improved bilateral relations between the countries.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan **met** with Rwandan Ambassador Salah Habimana on Wednesday. The two officials discussed political stability, economic investment opportunities, and the Nile River.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan **hosted** Angolan Ambassador Antonio Fernandez; the two discussed regional concerns in Africa as well as promoting investment opportunities in Egypt.

Abdel 'Al **accused the chairman of** the Egyptian Iron and Steel Company of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party and of corrupt business dealings.

The Nour Party **named** Representative Ahmed Khairallah of the Communications Committee its parliamentary chairman for the new legislative session.

According to a study conducted by Representative Mageda Bakri of the Education Committee, student overcrowding in schools is endemic, with schools in some governorates **eclipsing** 120 students per classroom.

Representative Mustafa Bakri **suggested** that Saudi officials add Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the list of the accused in Khashoggi's killing, claiming that Erdogan was aware of the perpetrators' intent to commit a crime on his country's soil and therefore complicit in the act.

Representative Mustafa Bakri of the Constitutional Affairs Committee **called** for the implementation of Article 110 of the constitution, which permits representatives to be removed from the House if they no longer satisfy their electoral requirements. Bakri made these comments in light of multiple representatives changing party affiliation.

The House **launched** a channel on YouTube to provide highlights of important sessions and other notable events that transpire in the legislature. The page does not appear to be active yet and the only available videos are found on parliament's website.

Looking Ahead

- African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan **stated** that a parliamentary delegation will travel to Sudan on November 1 to follow up on the presidential summit between the two countries' leaders.
- The House of Representatives will **reconvene** in general session on November 10.



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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.