



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 6, 2018

Summary

- The House of Representatives resumed legislative activities for its fourth session. Speaker Ali Abdel 'Al welcomed representatives by praising them for their efforts in previous sessions and encouraging parliamentarians to continue to accomplish their constitutional mandate in the new session. He also announced that three seats in the House remain vacant following the deaths of three representatives during the recess.
- The House held internal committee leadership elections, which included major turnover: 11 of parliament's 25 standing committees have new chairmen, though only two of the committees had contested elections. Both the Nation's Future Party and Coalition in Support of Egypt claimed to have gained a majority of the chairmanship positions despite Nation's Future withdrawing from the bloc earlier this year.

Notable Developments

Parliament Begins Fourth Legislative Session:

The House of Representatives **resumed** legislative session Tuesday, October 2 after a two-month recess; Abdel 'Al **recited** President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's presidential decree officially opening the new session of parliament. At the beginning of the new session, Abdel 'Al **addressed** representatives and expressed his gratitude to them for their efforts in past sessions, while also **noting** that the legislature has additional goals to accomplish as part of its constitutional mandate. Later during his address, Abdel 'Al **announced** the vacancy of three seats in the House following the deaths of Representative Ahmed Abdel Tawab, Representative Rifaat Dagher, and Representative Hossam al-

Rifaai; an election date for these three seats has yet to be disclosed.

After just one general session, Abdel 'Al [criticized](#) representatives for their failure to attend session. Plenary session on October 3 was [delayed](#) two hours, as Abdel 'Al waited for representatives to arrive to parliament's chambers.

Committee Leadership Elections Yield Significant Turnover:

Following the opening of the new legislative session, the House held internal leadership elections. The elections yielded significant turnover, as 11 of the House's 25 standing committees had their committee chairman [replaced](#), notably the Economic Affairs Committee, the Housing Committee, and Youth and Sports Committee. Despite the multitude of new leaders, only two of parliament's 25 standing committees [included](#) contested elections for the chairmanship position; Representative Talaat al-Suweidi of the Energy Committee and Representative Osama Heikal of the Media Committee both [retained](#) their leadership positions following contested votes. Although there were only two committees with contested elections, vote-stacking continued to be an issue similar to previous legislative sessions, as 25 representatives [joined](#) the Energy Committee to secure Suweidi's victory. Egyptian media [reported](#) that the Coalition in Support of Egypt won 21 chairmanship seats, which includes representatives affiliated with the Nation's Future Party. This follows a [report](#) earlier this year that the Nation's Future Party withdrew from the coalition to assert itself as the majority organization in parliament. Similarly, sources within the Nation's Future Party claimed that the organization had gained the 21 chairmanship positions, rather than attributing the seats to the coalition; the party also claimed to have won 87 of the 100 committee leadership positions, which includes the post of chairman. Meanwhile, the Wafd Party and Free Egyptians Party both [garnered](#) two chairmanship positions in the elections.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

Sisi objected to 17 articles within the Clinical Trials Law that the House approved in May; he returned the law to parliament for revision. Sisi [objected](#) to various articles in the bill that required multiple approval levels by different government agencies for individuals seeking to conduct medical research, as well as articles that restricted researchers' ability to conduct research involving DNA. Per Article 123 of the Egyptian Constitution, the president has 30 days to refer a draft law back to parliament after notifying the legislature of his intention to veto.

In Session:

Representative Samir Rashad Abu Talib of the Social Solidarity Committee submitted a request to Abdel 'Al for Education Minister Tariq Shawqi to attend an upcoming plenary session of parliament to discuss the national delay in distributing school supplies to students.

Representative Amin Massoud of the Housing Committee proposed that the committee conduct monthly delegation visits to national development projects throughout the country to assess their construction progress.

Representative Khaled Hilali of the Health Committee submitted a request for a fact-finding committee to investigate unlicensed addiction treatment centers.

Representative Essam al-Fiqi of the Budget Committee submitted a request for a fact-finding committee to investigate infrastructure projects that have been stalled in construction for at least 10 years.

Representative Ahmed al-Aragawi of the Health Committee submitted a request for a fact-finding committee to investigate dialysis units in public hospitals.

Representative Muhammad Badawi Dessouki of the Transportation Committee submitted a request for a fact-finding committee to investigate tomato seed imports.

Representative Amr al-Gawahiri of the Economic Affairs Committee submitted a request for a fact-finding committee to investigate the business failures of the National Cement Company.

Abdel 'Al stated that he had received two requests to lift the immunity of representatives, though he did not reveal which representatives; he assured the legislature that Representative Mortada Mansour was not one of them.

The House approved the appointment of three deputy ministers: Hamdi Sanad Louza for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amr Abdel Salam for the Ministry of Transportation, and Tamer Essam for the Ministry of Health.

900 billion Egyptian pounds. The minister of agriculture also [appeared](#) before parliament to answer questions, though several of the representatives who had requested to question him were absent at the time. The minister of investment appeared before parliament to discuss the Single Person Company Law. The ministers of planning, transportation, petroleum, and the public sector also [appeared](#) before the parliament for the December 26 general session.

In News and Statements:

Representative Yesri al-Mughazi of the Housing Committee [stated](#) that the committee will request the government create maps detailing the various drinking water lines nationwide in order to address the ongoing crisis.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan [proposed](#) the creation of a Ministry of African Affairs; he intends to meet with Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli to discuss the implementation of this new institution.

Several representatives [visited](#) the Ministry of Defense to meet with Defense Minister Muhammad Ahmed Zaki, though the names of the representatives were not mentioned and details of the meeting were not disclosed. In the past three legislative sessions, parliament has not acted on its constitutional ability to request the defense minister's presence during a general session.

Abdel 'Al [hosted](#) Muhammad Halabousi, newly elected speaker of the Iraqi parliament, to promote bilateral relations.

Representative Sami al-Mashed of the Health Committee [praised](#) the government's new initiative to combat hepatitis C, adding that the committee will coordinate frequently with the Ministry of Health to implement the strategy.

Local Administration Committee Chairman Ahmed al-Sageeni was [named](#) Secretary-General of the Coalition in Support of Egypt, replacing Representative Magdi Murshid; Sageeni recently resigned from the Wafd Party following the internal dispute with Representative Muhammad Fuad.

Members of the Energy Committee [participated](#) in a conference hosted by the Ministry of Environment last week to discuss the ministry's strategy for promoting nature reserves in Sinai.

The Supreme Council for Media Regulation is **restricting** Representative Mortada Mansour's media access over inappropriate behavior he demonstrated during a recent cable news interview.

Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed **hosted** the Australian ambassador to Egypt to discuss bilateral relations.

Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah **called** for political parties in the House of Representatives to consolidate and merge activities to promote further political discussions and partisan debates.

Looking Ahead

- Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah **stated** that the House of Representatives will begin broadcasting its sessions live in the near future, though he did not reveal a date. Parliamentary officials have made similar promises in the past, especially at the beginning of new sessions.
- Ethics Committee Spokesman Ahmed Sameeh **stated** that committee membership will change early in the new legislative session. Once the committee's membership is determined, the body will discuss the investigation referrals for Representative Haytham al-Hariri and Representative Ilhami Ageina for being interviewed by a Qatar-supported media outlet and accosting journalists, respectively.



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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.