



# EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



## WEEK IN BRIEF NOVEMBER 18-24, 2018

### Summary

- After its internal council elections, several members of the Wafd Party contested the results, prompting party Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa to expel six members from the organization for allegedly promoting personal interests ahead of the organization's goals. The council also elected a new secretary-general and five new vice-presidents for the party.
- Officials from President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's office and the General Intelligence Directorate have been meeting to discuss amendments to the constitution involving presidential term limits and reducing the number of members in the House of Representatives. While the proposals continue to be finalized, representatives have touted amendments to the term limits in the past, and officials expect any amendments to reach the House by March 2019 for review, followed by a national referendum in June.
- The National Election Authority (NEA) finalized the list of candidates for the three available House seats in Zefta, Tamiya, and Arish. The final list of 36 candidates was issued after the judicial appeals process to verify an individual's eligibility to campaign for office according to NEA standards.
- Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli formed a cabinet subcommittee under Social Solidarity Minister Ghada Wali's authority to study potential amendments to the Law Governing Civil Society (NGO Law). The subcommittee is expected to consult the National Council for Human Rights before sending any legislation to the House to consider.

## Notable Developments

### Internal Strife Occurs Following Wafd Party Council Elections:

Following the Wafd Party's council elections, several members of the organization, including former vice-president of the party Yasser Qora, [contested](#) the results, prompting the council to [authorize](#) Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa to adopt appropriate measures to respond to the dissenting group. Abu Shoqa [expelled](#) six members, including Qora, from the organization for reportedly acting against its interests.<sup>1</sup> Abu Shoqa also [referred](#) former party chairman al-Sayyid al-Badawi to the prosecutor-general for investigation over his alleged involvement in the internal dispute. Badawi is currently honorary president of the Wafd Party. Qora later [rejected](#) Abu Shoqa's decision to expel him and five other members from the organization.

Besides the conflict within the organization, the Wafd council also elected new leadership for positions other than chairman. Fuad Badrawi was [elected](#) the party's new secretary-general, while Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan, party spokesman Yasser al-Hudeibi, Abdel Aziz al-Nahas, Tariq Sibaq, and Hussein Mansour were [elected](#) as the party's five vice-presidents.

### Constitutional Amendments Appear Imminent:

A [report](#) issued by Mada Masr documented a series of meetings for several months between officials from Sisi's office and representatives from the General Intelligence Directorate to amend the constitution. Though the group continues to finalize proposed amendments, two confirmed initiatives would [increase](#) the presidential term limits to two six-year terms and [reduce](#) the number of representatives in the House from 596 to 350. Another proposed amendment would [establish](#) a permanent council to safeguard the constitution during times of power transition. Sisi would be appointed to serve as chairman of the council for a lifelong term. The final list of amendments is expected to [reach](#) the House by March 2019 with a nationwide constitutional referendum to follow by June.

Representatives including [Mustafa Bakri](#) had previously touted amendments to the presidential term regulations, though representatives [offered](#) alternatives to the term limits that differed in terms of [length](#). There has not been any previous discussion in the House regarding a constitutional amendment for a reduction in the number of representatives.

### National Election Authority Finalizes Candidate Lists for Open House Seats:

The National Election Authority [announced](#) the final list of candidates for the three open House seats following judicial review of all candidates' applications. Ten individuals (eight independent, one Nation's Future Party, and one Arab Party for Justice and Equality) are campaigning for the open seat in Tamiya, 13 (12 independent and one Nation's Future) are campaigning for the available position in Zefta, and 13 (10 independent, one from the Arab Party for Justice and Equality, one Egypt Party, and one Homeland Defenders Party) are vying for the seat in Arish.

### Cabinet Forms Subcommittee to Study Amendments to the NGO Law:

Madbouli [issued](#) a decree forming a subcommittee to investigate possible amendments to the NGO Law, which will [operate](#) under the leadership of Social Solidarity Minister Ghada Wali; the subcommittee will have one month to [issue](#) its findings from the time of its formation.

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<sup>1</sup>The list of expelled members [includes](#) Yasser Qora, Ahmed Attallah, Sharif Hamoda, Muhammad Ibrahim, Muhammad al-Husseini, and Fathi Morsi; none of the expelled members are members of parliament.

The National Council for Human Rights is expected to [send](#) its suggestions for the law to the cabinet subcommittee before the amendments are formally introduced to the House. The suggestions are expected to include about 20 [observations](#), notably pertaining to imprisonment for infringing portions of the law, financial fees tied to the law, and limitation of civil society organizations' associations with other groups. Social Solidarity Committee Chairman Abdel Hadi al-Qasbi is expected to [refrain](#) from holding any debates about proposed amendments to the NGO Law until any legislation is referred to the relevant committee following the cabinet subcommittee's study of the law.

## Other Developments

### In Legislation:

The House [approved](#) Representative Hamdi al-Sisi's amendments to the Wetlands Law, which authorizes local officials to determine whether a marsh or pond area ought to be filled. The law also permits private citizens to object legally to the local government's decision to fill waterways on private property.

The House [approved](#) the government's amendments to the Manuscript Protection Law, which involves a commission comprising officials from various libraries, al-Azhar, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Religious Endowments, and the Ministry of Justice to manage specific manuscripts and alert pertinent authorities if a document falls under a department's jurisdiction (e.g., military documents for the armed forces).

The House [agreed](#) in principle to Representative Ahmed Samir Salah's amendments to the Manufacturing Federation Law. The amendments are aimed at making the federation more independent from government association and allow the federation to cooperate more closely with businesses.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee [approved](#) a presidential decree for a loan between Egypt and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for 40 million Kuwaiti dinars—about 2.36 billion Egyptian pounds (LE)—to modernize Egypt's wastewater treatment facilities.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee [approved](#) a second presidential decree for a loan between Egypt and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for 70 million Kuwaiti dinars (about LE4.13 billion) aimed at reducing lake pollution.

The Manpower Committee [agreed](#) in principle to two separate bills drafted by Representative Ahmed Ali Ibrahim and Representative Hiba Hegeris. Both bills would establish a syndicate for psychologists.

### In Session:

Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al [stated](#) that the parliamentary council received on November 1 a request to lift the immunity of an undisclosed representative. The request was referred to the Constitutional Affairs Committee for consideration and ultimately withdrawn.

Representative Muhammad Fuad of the Energy Committee [submitted](#) a question to Abdel 'Al and Education Minister Tariq Shawqi on the expected arrival of tablets for students in national high schools.

Representative Ismail Nasser al-Din of the Housing Committee [submitted](#) an urgent statement to Madbouli on the dangers of television advertisements for unlicensed drugs.

## In News and Statements:

Abdel 'Al [welcomed](#) a delegation from the Shanghai Committee in China amid attempts to improve economic cooperation among the two countries and promote Chinese investments in Egypt. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Speaker of the House Ahmed Saad al-Din, Manufacturing Committee Chairman Farag Amer, Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah, and Nation's Future Party President Ashraf Rashad.

The Arab Affairs Committee [expressed](#) its support for United Nations efforts to achieving a peaceful solution in Yemen, while condemning Iranian involvement in the ongoing conflict.

Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Karim Darwish [visited](#) Italy over the weekend to meet with Italian House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Vito Petrocelli to discuss illegal migration, European investments in Egypt, the ongoing situation in Libya, and advocating for Egypt in the European Parliament.

While addressing a U.N. forum on human rights in Geneva, Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed [asserted](#) that the House has approved 34 laws pertaining to human rights since the legislature reconvened in 2016.

Abdel 'Al is [holding](#) several meetings with international officials Wednesday, including the delegation from China, newly appointed Japanese Ambassador to Egypt Masaki Nouke, Armenian Ambassador to Egypt Armen Melkonian, officials from the National Defense College of the United Arab Emirates, and Marta Matrai, deputy to the Speaker of the Hungarian parliament.

Representative Sharif al-Wardani [proposed](#) the inauguration of a monument commemorating victims of the Rawda mosque attack, which he denounced as the worst attack in the country's history.

Following the parliamentary delegation visit to the United Kingdom, Representative Tariq al-Khouli of the Foreign Affairs Committee [stated](#) that the U.K. continues to maintain some misconceptions about the Muslim Brotherhood. Khouli also [stated](#) that members of the Brotherhood verbally accosted the visiting delegation outside of a British university during their trip.

Representative Mahmoud al-Saidi of the Economic Affairs Committee [called](#) upon Madbouli to establish a supreme taxation council to serve as the final arbitrator for any tax disputes.

During the Wafd Party's inaugural meeting yesterday with the new high council, Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa [revealed](#) that the party is operating at a deficit of over LE48 million.

## Looking Ahead

- Deputy Speaker of the House al-Sayyid al-Sharif will **lead** a parliamentary delegation traveling to China from November 21 through November 25 to participate in a conference hosted by the Communist Party.
- A parliamentary subcommittee under Sharif's leadership will **convene** in early December to discuss the Clinical Trials Law, which Sisi vetoed in September. The subcommittee will **consist** of Constitutional Affairs Committee Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa, Health Committee Chairman Muhammad al-Omari, and Representatives Ahmed Helmi al-Sharif, Nabil al-Gamal, Hani Abaza, Mageda Bakri, Ayman Abul Alaa, and Leila Abu Ismail.



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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.