



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF NOVEMBER 4-10, 2018

Summary

- At the World Youth Forum, President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi announced that he would permit a study into potential amendments for the Law Regulating Civil Society (commonly known as the NGO Law). A cabinet subcommittee was subsequently created to investigate possible alterations to the law. Representatives mostly praised the decision to amend the law, asserting that any changes would benefit civil society organizations.
- The National Election Authority finalized the election period for the three available seats in the House of Representatives following the deaths of three representatives during the legislative recess. Candidates will be allowed to register for the election from November 10 until November 17, with elections being held at separate times in mid-December for international and domestic residents.

Notable Developments

Sisi Announces Potential Amendments to NGO Law:

During the World Youth Forum, a conference in Sharm el-Sheikh dedicated to promoting youth development, Sisi **announced** that he would seek to amend the NGO Law. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli subsequently **formed** a cabinet subcommittee comprising officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, and Social Solidarity to study potential amendments to the law in **concert** with undisclosed civil society organizations. Most representatives, notably **Muhammad Abu Hamad**, welcomed Sisi's calls to amend the NGO Law, stating that the law has proven ineffective thus far because of the absence of its implementing regulations. Representative Ahmed al-Tantawi of the 25-30 Bloc, a dissenting coalition in the legislature, **expressed** concern over any potential amendments to

the law, as the bloc opposed the law when it was ratified in 2017 over its restrictive policies for civil society organizations.

Election Dates Finalized for Open House Seats:

The National Election Authority (NEA) **announced** the election timeline for the three open seats in parliament following the deaths of Representatives Ahmed Abdel Tawab, Rifaat Dagher, and Hossam al-Rifai during the legislative recess. Candidates for the three open House seats in Arish (North Sinai), Tamiya (Fayoum), and Zefta (Gharbiya) will be permitted to **submit** their nomination paperwork between November 10 and 17. The NEA also **published** the 11 eligibility requirements that each candidate must possess for the election.¹ Elections for the available seats will take place December 14–15 for Egyptian nationals living abroad and December 19–20 for domestic residents; the results for all three seats are expected to be finalized by January 17.

Representatives Praise the World Youth Forum:

Egypt hosted the World Youth Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh. The event claims to bring together youth from across the world to discuss modern issues. Representatives including Coalition in Support of Egypt Chairman **Abdel Hadi al-Qasbi** and **Tariq al-Khouli** as well as political parties resoundingly praised the event for promoting Egypt's international status through stability, economic opportunities, and potential tourism growth. Meanwhile, the **Wafd Party** and **Conference Party** released separate statements praising the forum for promoting open communication and spreading world peace.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

The House **agreed** in principle to the amendments to the Education Law, though a final vote was postponed because of a lack of quorum. The law requires educators to have Egyptian nationality or originate from a country with similar standards as Egypt for public positions, possess a bachelor's degree, and undergo professional development programs necessary for the position.

The House **agreed** in principle to the amendments to the State Property Law, which establish new procedures for land allocation filings and seek to promote investments in state property by reorganizing the registration process for real estate ventures.

The House **approved** a presidential decree for a loan of 243 million euros from South Korea to Egypt to purchase 32 metro cars for the railway system.

The House **approved** a presidential decree for an agreement between Egypt and Russia establishing the Russian industrial zone in the Suez.

The House **approved** an agreement between Egypt and Germany to establish a branch of the German KfW Development Bank in Egypt.

Representative Ghada Agemi of the Foreign Affairs Committee **withdrew** her draft law banning women from wearing a niqab in public locations because of the criticism that her proposal received.

Representative Nadia Henry **announced** her intention to submit a unified draft law to combat violence against women, in coordination with several rights groups including El Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, the New Women's Foundation, the Egyptian Women's Rights Initiative, and the Cairo Development Center. The draft law reportedly touches on the issues of inheritance, abortion, and domestic violence.

¹The 11 requirements include an official application, a statement of professional experience, official academic record, official criminal record (if applicable), political affiliation, financial disclosure, proof of military service or exemption, a deposit of 3,000 Egyptian pounds, an updated medical physical exam, fulfillment of any NEA-mandated paperwork, and proof of having no conflict of interest through active military service.

In Session:

Representative Muhammad al-Husseini of the Local Administration Committee [submitted](#) a briefing request to Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al, Madbouli, Education Minister Tariq Shawqi, Local Development Minister Mahmoud Sharawi, and Minister of Religious Endowments Mokhtar Gomaa regarding the delay in reducing student overcrowding at schools in the Cairo neighborhood of Bulaq.

The Budget Committee [held](#) three separate meetings Thursday to discuss the final account of the state budget for the 2016–17 fiscal year, Egypt's development plan known as Vision 2030, and the state budget for the 2018–19 fiscal year.

Representative Haytham al-Hariri of the Budget Committee [submitted](#) a briefing request to Abdel 'Al, Madbouli, and Finance Minister Muhammad Mait about the implementation of the International Monetary Fund loan agreement, noting that the preconditions of the loan have impacted Egypt's poorest residents disproportionately and the overall condition of the economy.

Representative Muhammad Fuad of the Energy Committee [submitted](#) a briefing request to Abdel 'Al, Madbouli, and Industry Minister Amr Nassar about the declining number of exports despite the flotation of the Egyptian pound.

A subcommittee of the Budget Committee, under Representative Mervat al-Kasan's leadership, [met](#) to discuss the implementation of the real estate tax and the value-added tax.

Representative Muhammad al-Husseini of the Local Administration Committee [submitted](#) a briefing request to Supply Minister Ali al-Maseelhi regarding the random revocation of citizens from the ration card system.

Representative Raif Tamraz of the Agriculture Committee [submitted](#) a briefing request to Agriculture Minister Ezz al-Din Abu Satit, Minister of the Public Enterprise Sector Minister Hisham Tawfiq, Irrigation Minister Muhammad Abdel Atty, Industry Minister Amr Adel Nasser, and Supply Minister Amr al-Maseelhi about the ongoing cotton crisis. Tamraz also requested their presence at an upcoming committee meeting.

In News and Statements:

The Wafd Party is [holding](#) its elections for the party's high council. The election is being monitored by officials from the National Council for Human Rights. A total of 116 candidates are vying for 50 available seats on the high council after Bahaa Abu Shoqa, chairman of the party, selected 10 businessmen to be appointed to the party's high council.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan [met](#) with officials from the Nigerian and Egyptian foreign ministries to discuss bilateral relations and issues of mutual concern such as state stability.

The Wafd Party [announced](#) its intention to seek legal action against the Facebook group Free Wafdis for spreading false news about the party, though it is unclear what was posted on the account that drew the ire of the organization. The page has since been removed from Facebook.

Representative Ahmed Rifaat of the Communications Committee [warned](#) of the dangers of Facebook and the spread of information, asserting that it may be under "Zionist" control by institutions harmful to the Middle East. He also expressed a desire to establish an Egyptian platform similar to Facebook.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan [traveled](#) to Nigeria and met with Youssef Majaji, chairman of the Nigerian state security apparatus, regarding the disappearance of Egyptian Rida Hassanein, who has been missing for over three weeks and is believed to have been kidnapped.

Representative Amr al-Ghaneemi of the Housing Committee **praised** the Ministry of Housing's decision to permit international residents to obtain housing through ministry programs, stating that this decision will lead to additional international investments and more jobs in Egypt.

Representative Muhammad Salah Abu Hameela, parliamentary chairman of the Republican People's Party and later a member of the Coalition in Support of Egypt, **announced** that representatives in the bloc will make a concerted effort to arrive early for plenary sessions and avoid embarrassing attendance situations.

The Tourism Committee **hosted** the French-Coptic Orthodox Association, the Egyptian-French Organization for Human Rights, and Bishop Athanasius of the French Coptic Orthodox Church to discuss locations of religious significance in Egypt. Egyptian media did not mention whether the recent attack on Coptic Christians in Minya was discussed during the meeting.

Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah **claimed** that children living in refugee camps are spreading extremist ideas and promoting instability.

Representative Ehab Ghatati of the Agriculture Committee **warned** the government about its inaction on the potato crisis.

Looking Ahead

- The Communications Committee will **hold** several meetings next week in the presence of officials from the Ministries of Investment, Communications, Defense, and Interior to discuss the spread of rumors and false news deemed detrimental to the state.
- The Manpower Committee **requested** the presence of three ministers next week at various meetings. Planning Minister Hala al-Said has been asked to discuss her ministry's training program for government workers, Manpower Minister Muhammad Saifan has been asked to discuss the ministry's general vision, and Minister of Public Sector Enterprise Hisham Tawfiq has been asked to discuss strategies to revive faltering businesses.
- The House will **reconvene** in general session on November 25.



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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.