



The Tahrir Institute  
for Middle East Policy

# EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH

Session **Three** Report



October 2017 – July 2018



# EGYPT PARLIAMENT QWATCH

## Session **Three** Report



The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) is dedicated to influencing policy toward the Middle East and North Africa through rigorous research and targeted advocacy efforts that promote local voices.

TIMEP was founded in 2013 and currently has offices in DC and Brussels, with a network of expert fellows located throughout the world. TIMEP is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the District of Columbia.

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# INTRODUCTION

When Egypt's current legislature gathered under the dome of the parliament building on January 10, 2016, the country completed the final step in its "democratic road map." But simply convening as a parliament does not necessarily mean that the body is truly engaging in democratic practice; further analysis is necessary to examine the function of the parliament and the ability of members to uphold their sworn oath to respect rule of law and the interests of the Egyptian people. Thus, the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) launched its Egypt Parliament Watch project to assess the performance of Egypt's unicameral parliament, the House of Representatives, and the quality of the legislation it produces.

The project includes years of data collection and review of political developments in the country, and it builds on TIMEP's Parliamentary Elections and Legislation Tracker projects, which provided comprehensive analysis of the 2015 elections and legislation passed by executive decrees under President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi.

This report serves as the third full session report in the ongoing project. Along with the others in the Egypt Parliament Watch series, it provides analysis on the parliament with sections on parliamentary performance and legislation, along with appendices detailing a timeline of the third session and the report's methodology.

## Performance Indicators

This section reviews the parliament's performance based on four key indicators, describing relevant developments and providing analysis and areas of concern.

### The indicators include:

*Checks and Balances:* Was the parliament able to act as an effective check and balance to the executive, the judiciary, and other state institutions?

*Accountability:* Did members of parliament restrict their activity in accordance with existing statutes and bylaws, and did parliament implement equitable mechanisms to sanction members who did not?

*Public Engagement and Transparency:* Did the parliament make its activities known to the public and seek to engage with its constituencies to ensure effective representation?

*Legislative Capacity:* Was the parliament able to craft sound legislation in compliance with international and constitutional law?

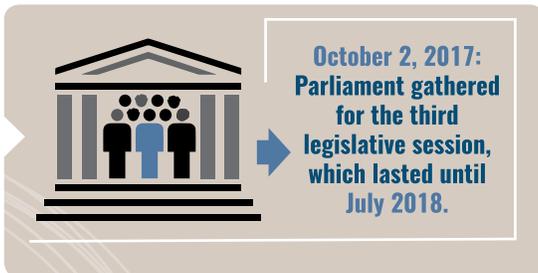
## Legislation Tracker

In line with TIMEP's previous legislation tracker project, this section provides an English-language register of laws passed by parliament during the session. This section also features a spotlight of some of the most notable pieces of legislation; additional detail on these laws is available via the TIMEP Law Briefs, a separate output which complements this EPW report.

It is TIMEP's hope that this report and the analysis found herein will be of use to those interested in Egypt's progress toward more democratic representation, which was and has been a key demand since the 2011 revolution. As with all of TIMEP's work, the report is intended to inform policies that will support the role of truly democratic institutions as part of a holistic policy program that holds human rights and rule of law as both inherently valuable and integral to security, stability, and prosperity.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Egypt's House of Representatives reconvened for its third legislative session on October 2, 2017. Parliament gathered for a full legislative session from that date until July 2018, a period during which the legislature approved 85 laws and amendments, according to TIMEP's monitoring. This session was unique compared to previous sessions because of the presidential election in March 2018; parliamentary work took a break during this time to allow representatives to campaign ahead of the election, and representatives began calling for constitutional amendments to extend term limits for Sisi before his eventual reelection. In addition to their legislative endeavors and campaign efforts, representatives traveled on international delegation visits, referred colleagues to investigation for violating internal regulations, and continued to follow a path of consolidation behind the executive branch that was demonstrated in previous legislative sessions.

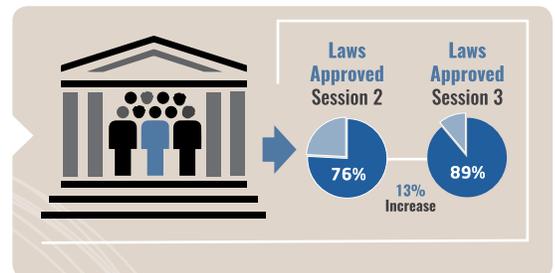


### Performance Indicators

The performance indicators consider developments over the course of the session and analysis in the context of the parliament's stated mandate and international standards for democratic function.

### Checks and Balances

- Representatives continued to criticize ministers for failing to respond to requests to attend parliamentary sessions or to address shortcomings in their respective positions, yet this criticism was selective depending on the ministry in question, avoiding the Ministries of Interior and Defense altogether. Notably, representatives requested the justice minister's attendance in a committee session for the first time since the House reconvened in 2016, though he ignored the request.
- While Article 131 of the Egyptian Constitution permits representatives to conduct a vote of no confidence for cabinet-level ministers, the House did not invoke this right despite repeated conflicts with certain ministers, such as the minister of local development. **Instead, Sisi's second term began with a reshuffling of cabinet ministers, notably those who were publicly criticized by representatives in the House.** (Under Article 146 of the constitution, representatives are not allowed to influence the appointment of cabinet ministers.)
- In keeping with previous legislative sessions, parliament continued to serve as a rubber stamp for the executive branch's bills. **According to TIMEP documentation, the House approved 85 laws during the third legislative session, 76 of which originated from the executive branch and nine of which**



were drafted by representatives—a breakdown of 89 percent compared to 11 percent. This represents an increase of 13 percentage points compared to the second session, in which 76 percent of approved laws were drafted by the executive. Though in previous sessions some representative-drafted laws originated from a government draft, the nine such laws approved during the third session all appeared to be entirely representative-drafted.

- Ahead of the presidential election, presidential candidates required at least 20 endorsements from representatives to be eligible for the ballot; Sisi secured his nomination handily, as 549 members of the House announced their official support for him. Individual representatives and political parties almost unanimously supported Sisi during the election

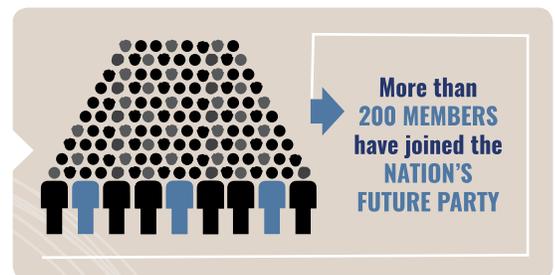
period. Similarly, the House's affinity for Sisi's new cabinet and its agenda for the new presidential term further highlighted parliament's nearly unconditional support for the executive branch and the institution's failure to check the executive's authority.

“ Sisi secured his nomination handedly, as 549 representatives announced their official support for him. ”

- Political party consolidation discussions were a contentious point of debate throughout the third session, as different political parties vied for majority control in the legislature and new political formations were discussed that would signify consolidation of support for Sisi.

### Accountability

- The Ethics Committee continued to punish representatives for political purposes rather than for procedural violations, as it was intended; this included five representatives being investigated for meeting with a former representative, and Representative Haytham al-Hariri being referred to the committee after interviewing with a media outlet deemed anti-Egyptian.
- Based on TIMEP data from the previous two legislative sessions, quorum was violated on fewer occasions than in previous sessions but remained a concern. Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al issued multiple verbal warnings but failed to carry out any substantive reprimands.
- The House's legislative process followed requirements and standards set forth in the constitution and bylaws in terms of following the mandated channels for approving a draft law through the legislature, though some laws were expedited through the drafting process in order to limit public exposure to controversial topics.
- Other parliamentary activities, such as the continued renewal of the state of emergency, appeared to infringe upon constitutional standards. The House approved the state of emergency nearly one month prior to its mandated expiration day.
- While changing party affiliation mid-session is prohibited under parliamentary bylaws, hundreds of representatives changed their political designation during the third session, with the most prominent shift being the more than 200 members of parliament that joined the Nation's Future Party.



## Public Engagement and Transparency

- **Representatives increased the number of domestic public appearances compared to previous sessions**, though this mostly consisted of extensive campaigning on behalf of Sisi. Besides campaign events, representatives conducted more committee delegation visits to various governorates and engaged at times with “political activists and experts” to discuss legislation.
- The number of international delegation visits also increased from previous sessions, **though representatives promoted the executive branch’s agenda on these trips rather than attempting to promote parliament as an institution**. During delegation trips, representatives usually dismissed critical reports made by other countries or claimed that any actions adhered to constitutional standards.
- Media access continued to be restricted, as *al-Youm al-Sabaa* and its subsidiary Parlmany

“ **Media access continued to be restricted, as *al-Youm al-Sabaa* and its subsidiary Parlmany had nearly exclusive access for parliamentary news.** ”

**had nearly exclusive access for parliamentary news.** Some media outlets and civil society organizations, such as the BBC and Amnesty International, reported critical stories about agencies within the executive branch engaging in activities violating human rights, but parliament denounced these stories and even labeled these groups as terrorist entities.

- **Parliamentary activities such remained obscure, and votes were conducted by standing in the legislature**; Abdel ‘Al called for roll call to be abolished in order to expedite the legislative process. A report published by the legislature further highlighted the lack of transparency in legislation, as the House claimed to have passed 197 laws during the third legislative session, yet the report did not contain a comprehensive list of the 197 laws and no official parliamentary resource exists to confirm this number.

## Legislative Capacity

- Parliament’s legislative capacity continued to dwindle, as **only nine of the 85 laws approved by the House were drafted by representatives**, though representatives and the executive branch submitted a similar number of laws (174 and 159, respectively). Similar to previous legislative sessions, the House’s drafting process remained obscure, with little information revealed about its procedures.
- **Representatives failed to incorporate feedback from civil society organizations or professional groups when debating controversial legislation**. Any objections to draft laws or alternatives made by these organizations were dismissed by legislators.
- **The House approved laws that directly contravene Egypt’s constitutional and international legal obligations**. Despite measures designed to prevent the passage of laws that may be deemed questionable, the House failed to adhere to these protocols, resulting in the approval of repressive legislation such as the Supreme Council for Media Regulation Law.

## Legislation Tracker

TIMEP's legislation tracker spotlights key pieces of legislation and features a register of laws passed by parliament during this session. For each of the key pieces of legislation designated, a summary of the law, its significance and impact, an explanation of the political and legal context, and a discussion of the law's adherence to constitutional and international standards is available via TIMEP's Law Briefs, a separate output which complements the EPW report.

- **Bankruptcy Law:** Passed amid a series of economic reforms, the Bankruptcy Law reduces legal punishments associated with filing for bankruptcy to promote economic liberalization endeavors. The law also eases restructuring requirements for businesses to prevent them from faltering.
- **Custody of Terrorist Funds Law:** The Custody of Terrorist Funds Law lays out a new legal process for the seizure of the funds of terrorist organizations and terrorists. In addition, the law empowers the government to manage and use seized assets by depositing them into the state treasury.
- **Cybercrime Law:** The Cybercrime Law requires service providers to store user data and information regarding their online activity or face fines and prison time. The law also permits investigatory authorities to block websites for the purpose of defending national security.
- **Military Immunity Law:** The Military Immunity Law grants certain military commanders legal immunity for violations that arise from actions committed between July 3, 2013, and January 10, 2016.
- **Supreme Council for Media Regulation Law (SCMR Law):** The SCMR Law grants authorities discretion to censor or block content, subjects media to burdensome requirements in order to be licensed, and criminalizes the spreading of false news by social media users with over 5,000 followers.
- **Public Transportation Using Information Technology Law (also known as the Uber and Careem Law):** The Uber and Careem Law, the first law governing ride sharing in Egypt, requires ride-sharing companies to store user information and provide the information to the security apparatus upon request.



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Checks and Balances

#### Limited Attempts to Hold State Bodies Accountable:

In the third legislative session, the House demonstrated an increased proclivity for holding cabinet ministers accountable—a continuing trend from previous sessions. Representatives requested the presence of ministers to discuss pressing developments, though these requests were often ignored. Cabinet ministers such as the local development minister and the justice minister **ignored** representatives' requests to attend committee meetings or general sessions; others publicly refused, leading to harsh reactions from representatives in the House. This animosity was best exemplified in the responses to former Local Development Minister Abu Bakr al-Gindi's refusal to attend committee meetings after multiple requests. Representatives **demanded** that Gindi resign over what they determined to be his lack of **respect** for his position. Gindi publicly **apologized** and made amends with representatives in parliament, but he was ultimately **replaced** as part of the June cabinet reshuffle following Sisi's inauguration. Similar to Gindi, other ministers who engaged in what legislators determined to be demeaning behavior toward the parliament were replaced during the June cabinet shakeup.<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary officials **claim** they did not influence nor offer insight to Sisi on his cabinet replacements, as Article 146 of the constitution states that the president determines ministerial appointments and the legislature, rather than individual ministers, is tasked with approving the cabinet's policies.

While representatives requested the presence of some ministers more than others or publicly criticized certain ministers, such as Gindi, for their lack of attendance, the ministers of defense, interior, and justice were generally above reproach—a trend continuing from previous sessions. Based on TIMEP media monitoring, Minister of Justice Muhammad Hussam Ahmed was **called** to appear before the legislature once during the third session, while neither the ministers of defense nor interior were requested at any point to attend a parliamentary meeting during the third legislative session.

“The ministers of defense, interior, and justice were generally above reproach, a continuing trend from previous sessions.”

Representatives within the Constitutional Affairs Committee **requested** Ahmed's presence regarding judicial appointments and vacant public prosecutor positions in multiple governorates. Ahmed did not **acknowledge** the request and did not face consequences from any representatives other than public outcry.

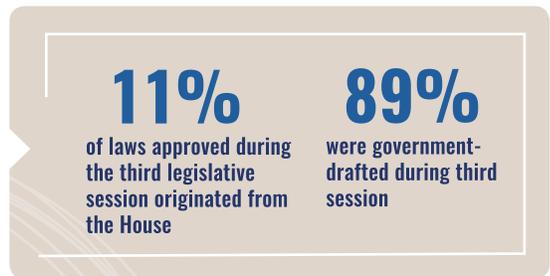
In addition to its domestic efforts, the House sent members on several delegation visits to other countries, though representatives often advocated for the agenda of the executive branch rather than attempting to advance international relations with the host country or promoting parliamenta-

<sup>1</sup> Twelve ministers were replaced during the June 2018 shake-up including the ministers of defense, interior, civil aviation, health and population, finance, agriculture, local development, business sector, trade and industry, youth and sports, environment, and communications.

ry operations as an independent institution. These parliamentary visits included trips to the [United States](#) in October 2017, the [United Kingdom](#) in March 2018, and the legislature of the [European Union](#) in June 2018. The visits to the U.S. and European Parliament were particularly significant given the criticism that representatives faced during these trips. U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi [condemned](#) Egypt's crackdown on the LGBT community ahead of her meeting with the delegation, which Abdel 'Al attempted to dismiss by stating that any crackdown occurred in response to public displays of homosexuality.

### Continued Support of Executive Policies Without Meaningful Alternatives:

According to TIMEP's monitoring, 11 percent of laws approved during the third legislative session originated from the House, while 89 percent were government-drafted.<sup>2</sup> If separate laws presented by both a representative and a cabinet member pertained to a similar subject, parliamentarians continued discussing the government-drafted bill as opposed to the representative-drafted bill, such as the amendments to the [Value Added Tax Law](#) (VAT Law) or the [two](#) separate government-proposed [amendments](#) to the Egyptian Penal Code. Additionally, more information was presented about draft laws submitted by the executive branch as opposed to representative-proposed draft laws on similar subjects, as was the case in the legislative processes for the aforementioned amendments to the VAT Law and penal code.



Similarly, the House adjusted its schedule to accommodate government projects, as was the case with three laws passed in an emergency session in late November 2017. Following a deadly attack on a mosque in Rawda, North Sinai, on November 23 that killed over 300 people, the House [held](#) an emergency general session on November 27 to discuss the attack and three laws permitting the construction of a nuclear power plant for energy development purposes. Each of the laws were [approved](#) during the special session. The three draft laws were submitted by the government and were unreported until Abdel 'Al's [announcement](#) of the emergency session; Abdel 'Al did not disclose a reason for voting on the laws during emergency session as opposed to waiting until the next scheduled general session. Other than a moment of silence held during the emergency session, there was no additional mention of the Rawda attack during the session or as part of the approved legislation.

### Near-Universal Support for Sisi's Reelection Bid:

Ahead of the presidential election in March 2018, representatives demonstrated nearly universal support for Sisi. Per Article 142 of the constitution, presidential candidates must receive at least 20 endorsements from representatives to be eligible to contest the elections. The National Election Authority set the campaign announcement period for January 20–30, followed by two months of campaigning leading to the election over multiple days in April (April 19–21 for Egyptian expatriates and April 24–26 for domestic residents). Sisi [received](#) 549 parliamentary endorsements in the 10 days

<sup>2</sup> According to TIMEP research, the House approved 85 bills during the third legislative session. Nine of those bills originated from representatives while the remaining 76 were drafted by the executive branch. For more on methodology, see Appendix B.

leading up to the official registration date, while his opponent, Moussa Mustafa Moussa of the Ghad Party, announced his intention to campaign for the presidency on January 30, hours before the deadline for candidates to register for the election. Moussa **received** 20 parliamentary endorsements during his last-minute candidacy submission; no representatives publicly supported Moussa during

the campaign process.<sup>3</sup> While multiple representatives considered entering the presidential election, notably former Wafd Party chairman **al-Sayyid al-Badawi** and Representative **Mortada Mansour**, they failed to gain any traction in their campaign endeavors, as representatives were already predisposed to supporting Sisi for a second term, and neither formally registered as a candidate. During the campaign

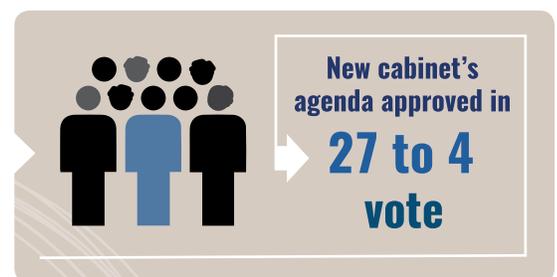
“ Similarly, Representative **Badawi al-Nuweishi** proposed an initiative to extend presidential terms to two eight-year terms; his proposal also failed to gain any momentum in the House during the third session. ”

period, representatives exclusively campaigned on behalf of Sisi: Political parties and blocs such as the Coalition in Support of Egypt **held** rallies throughout the country to promote Sisi’s reelection efforts, while individual representatives **hosted** rallies with their constituents for similar purposes.

Three weeks prior to Sisi’s reelection, Representative **Ismail Nasser al-Din** publicly **proposed** amending the constitution to allow for presidential terms of six years as opposed to four, though his suggestion did not garner further legislative traction. Similarly, Representative **Badawi al-Nuweishi** **proposed** an initiative to extend presidential terms to two eight-year terms; his proposal also failed to gain any momentum in the House during the third session.

### Parliament Offers Little Substantive Feedback on New Government Agenda:

Following the presidential election and Sisi’s announcement of new cabinet officials, the new prime minister, **Mustafa Madbouli**, was tasked with formulating an agenda for the next four years subject to parliamentary approval per Article 146 of the constitution. After **Madbouli** **presented** the cabinet’s agenda to the House in general session on July 3, 2018, **Abdel ‘Al** **formed** an ad hoc committee comprising 31 representatives tasked with reviewing the cabinet’s plan. The committee was **divided** into five separate subcommittees based on the different components of the agenda, and the committee ultimately **approved** the agenda in preliminary discussions by a vote of 27–4. Following this vote, the ad hoc committee’s findings were presented to the general body of parliament, while the cabinet’s plan was **granted** a vote of confidence on July 25, 2018. Representatives offered



<sup>3</sup> For more information on the 2018 presidential election, visit TIMEP’s website for its elections project, Pulling Back the Curtain: Dynamics and Implications of Egypt’s Elections Period.

feedback of minimal significance during this period, as representatives [praised](#) the new cabinet's agenda for addressing a variety of concerns related to economic development, national security, and promotion of Sisi's new health-care policies. Any [criticism](#) of the agenda was primarily economic, though these [criticisms](#) were not emphasized to the extent that the agenda's approval was in jeopardy. Meanwhile, the 25-30 Bloc, known for being a critical voice in the legislature, was the only parliamentary grouping to outright [reject](#) the agenda for, according to bloc member Talaat Khalil, failing to accomplish meaningful change.

### No Fact-Finding Efforts Despite Evidence of Rights Abuses:

“ In only one case did the House investigate credible reports of rights abuse, visiting the Abbasiya Psychiatric Hospital. ”

Reports documenting credible information about the government and its policies concerning military efforts and human rights violations were dismissed by representatives without hesitation. These reports originated from both international governments and private organizations, yet

the legislature defended the executive without calling for independent investigations or parliamentary fact-finding committees to investigate the situation. The Egyptian news website Masr al-Arabia [published](#) an article documenting vote buying in the presidential election, the BBC [reported](#) on forced disappearances in Egypt, and Amnesty International [described](#) the illegal utilization of cluster bombs by the Egyptian military. Each of these reports was [condemned](#) at various points by representatives as an attempt by a private institution to embarrass the government and support the goals of terrorist organizations. Similarly, a European Parliament statement condemning the use of the death penalty in Egypt and a congressional memo about the rights of Copts in Egypt were decried as infringements upon Egypt's national sovereignty. In one case, the House's Health Committee formed a subcommittee tasked specifically with investigating the Abbasiya Psychiatric Hospital after reports of abused patients circulated in Egyptian media; the subcommittee investigated the incident and sent a private report throughout the legislature.

### Significant Changes to Political Landscape as Parties Consolidate:

Political party consolidation discussions were a focal point of parliamentary dynamics during the third legislative session, as political parties and blocs in the House vied to become the majority organization in the legislature while simultaneously silencing any groups that demonstrated marginal opposition to the executive authority under Sisi. Despite Article 6 of the House's bylaws [prohibiting](#) representatives from changing party affiliation mid-session, members changed their affiliation based on new power lines in the legislature. The Coalition in Support of Egypt, [formed](#) at the behest of Egypt's General Intelligence Directorate, [led](#) the consolidation charge for much of the third session until the Nation's Future Party, [formed](#) at the behest of the military intelligence apparatus for the 2015 parliamentary election, [withdrew](#) from the bloc and [gained](#) over 200 members between independent representatives from the coalition and 51 parliamentarians who left the Free

Egyptians Party. Meanwhile, the Wafd Party hosted meetings with other political parties with and without representation in the House to discuss joint endeavors regarding the consolidation process. Throughout this process, representatives in the House and officials within political parties championed the need for consolidation to stabilize the political dynamic in the legislature and create more fruitful and partisan debate.<sup>4</sup>

### Analysis:

As in previous legislative sessions, parliament failed to serve as a meaningful check or balance on the executive branch during the third session. Though the House had questioned some of the ministers that were replaced in the June 2018 shuffling, their requests for appearances were often ignored and the ministers were ultimately accountable only to Sisi as he made the final decision to replace or maintain them. Representatives failed to summon officials from the Ministries of Defense and Interior, while also foregoing the pursuit of repercussions for the minister of justice, who failed to attend a parliamentary session upon request. As these ministries are three of the most prominent institutions in the cabinet managing military and judicial matters, the House abdicated its responsibility in holding these powerful ministries to account, amid ample and credible evidence of violations of domestic and international law.

Similarly, the presidential election period, subsequent cabinet approval process, and party consolidation indicate the legislature's increasing role as an agent of the executive's power, rather than a check on its authority. The House expressed near-unanimous support for Sisi through endorsements, and those that nominated a second candidate never publicly asserted their endorsement. Similarly, representatives pondering a presidential run failed to gain any traction as they were unable to secure support to oppose Sisi for another term in office. Calls among representatives to alter current presidential terms contradict the intent of Article 226 of the constitution, yet the vocal proposals for constitutional amendments represent a disregard for democratic process in favor of support for the current executive authority.<sup>5</sup>

## Accountability

### Political, Not Procedural, Utilization of the Ethics Committee:

The Ethics Committee serves as the House's internal control mechanism for any actions performed that violate the institution's bylaws, yet the committee was utilized for political purposes as opposed to procedural matters, a continuing trend from previous sessions. Representative Haytham al-Hariri of the 25-30 Bloc, a political organization typically critical of executive policies, faced two separate

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<sup>4</sup> Party consolidation, a new trend compared to previous sessions, figures to play an important role in the fourth legislative session with the Nation's Future Party, Coalition in Support of Egypt, and the Wafd Party all attempting to position themselves as the chief political organization in the legislature. For additional insight into the consolidation movement, view TIMEP's commentary piece "Egypt's Party Consolidation and the Stifling of Pluralism."

<sup>5</sup> Article 226 states that in all cases, texts pertaining to the principles of freedom and equality stipulated in the constitution may not be amended unless the amendment brings more guarantees.

summons to the Ethics Committee. The first charge involved four representatives **filing** claims against him for inappropriate behavior during session and for publicizing representatives' personal information on his Facebook account. The second summons occurred after Hariri conducted an interview with Qatari-funded media outlet al-Arabi al-Jadeed, in which he **discredited** Egypt's economic reform program and the \$12 billion economic support loan from the International Monetary Fund. Hariri's comments were met with intense backlash, as representatives **equated** his comments to terrorist language. Hariri was scheduled to have an investigatory hearing on August 5, though this hearing was **delayed** until parliament's fourth session.

Continuing on a development from the second legislative session, five representatives were reportedly **referred** to the Ethics Committee for traveling to Europe to meet with former representative Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, who was expelled from parliament in the second session. The five parliamentarians **met** with Sadat to discuss the current state of political affairs in Egypt, yet they were **denounced** by their colleagues in the House and by House leadership officials for "**attempting to overthrow the government.**"<sup>6</sup> Abdel 'Al reportedly referred them to the Ethics Committee for traveling outside of Egypt without his permission, but no further updates on their investigations were reported. In keeping with failing to prosecute procedural violations, Abdel 'Al frequently criticized representatives for failing to attend general session, as quorum continued to be an issue in the fourth legislative session, though the percentage of sessions that met quorum improved from **65 percent** in the second session to about 75 percent in the third. While the intensity of Abdel 'Al's criticism heightened compared to previous legislative sessions, Abdel 'Al failed to refer any representatives to the Ethics Committee for violating this bylaw.

65% → 75%

The percentage of sessions that met quorum increased by about 10 percentage points from Session 2 to Session 3.

### Party and Committee Membership Violates Internal Procedures:

Similarly in terms of parliamentary regulations, the shifting landscape of political parties and representatives changing party affiliation violated Article 6 of parliament's bylaws. As previously noted, over 200 representatives changed party affiliation during the third legislative session, which violates parliamentary bylaws prohibiting representatives from changing party affiliation after their election to office. Similarly in keeping with previous legislative sessions, representatives failed to adhere to parliamentary bylaws by changing committee membership and **stacking** committees to elect certain representatives to leadership positions, such as in the Local Administration Committee. Per the House's bylaws, parliamentarians are allowed to sit in only one standing committee as an active member. Despite this regulation, representatives changed their committee affiliation throughout the third legislative session, though primarily for vote-stacking purposes at the beginning of third session.

House officials also continued to ignore a **ruling** by the Court of Cassation in June 2016 and an August 2016 **decision** by the Constitutional Affairs Committee to seat Amr Shobaki as an official representative. Shobaki lost in the 2015 parliamentary elections to Ahmed Mortada Mansour, the son of Representative Mortada Mansour, and his appeal for a recount was approved upon request. Despite the legal ruling over two years ago, the House refuses to take any action on behalf of Shobaki, with

<sup>6</sup> The five representatives were Ahmed al-Tantawi, Ahmed al-Bardisi, Ayman Khader, Talaat Khalil, and Shadid Abu Hendia.

Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah most recently [stating](#) in January 2018 that the issue is an internal matter.

### Controversial Draft Laws Expedited through Parliament:

In general, the legislative process for drafting and approving laws adhered to constitutional standards. Most laws were submitted, either by individual representatives or the government, to the general secretariat of parliament and passed through committee to general session, per Article 122 of the constitution. But potentially controversial laws—such as the Military Immunity Law, which granted legal immunity to certain military officials for any of their actions between July 3, 2013, and January 10, 2016—were expedited through the legislative process. The law was first [referred](#) to a joint committee of the Budget, Constitutional Affairs, Defense, and Foreign Affairs Committees on July 2, 2018, and [agreed](#) on in principle by the House the following day; the House would later [approve](#) it in its entirety on July 16. As it had in the previous two sessions, the House failed to issue a

transitional justice law, which is mandated under Article 241 of the constitution, or contemplate a potential draft law for it. Despite the requirement, no penalties exist for the legislature if it fails to develop a transitional justice law.

““ Laws followed standards for process, but controversial legislation was expedited. ””

### State of Emergency Continuously Renewed Despite Protections against Multiple Extensions:

Per the constitution, the executive branch issues the state of emergency subject to parliamentary approval. In October 2017, then prime minister Sherif Ismail [reissued](#) a state of emergency that had been put in place in April of that year, which the House subsequently [approved](#) on October 10. This state of emergency was [renewed](#) three months later, on January 13, 2018. A new state of emergency was [approved](#) again by the House on April 14, 2018, and it later [approved](#) an extension of the same decree on June 25 and set it to [renew](#) retroactively on July 14. The retroactive approval of the state of emergency before the previous declaration expired directly contradicts Article 154 of the constitution, which states that “the declaration is for a specified period not exceeding three months, which can only be extended by another similar period upon the approval of two-thirds of House members.”

### Analysis:

Though designed as an internal control mechanism, the Ethics Committee was utilized primarily for political rather than procedural purposes. Representatives were investigated for partaking in activities deemed contradictory to the views of the executive branch, which were also held by the vast majority of their colleagues in parliament. Meanwhile, relevant procedural matters such as repeated absences from general sessions were publicly scorned, but action was never taken to reprimand representatives for their violations.

While the process for drafting and approving legislation generally adhered to parliamentary bylaws and constitutional requirements, some laws were expedited through the process, raising concerns about the body's failure to allocate proper time for discussion and debate. Parliament also continued to disregard constitutional requirements and internal regulations in the form of its bylaws in other regards as well. The repeated renewal of the state of emergency exemplifies a disregard for the rule of law, as the House approved a renewal of the decree before the previous declaration had even expired. Similarly, the House violated its bylaws by prioritizing standing votes as opposed to roll-call votes.

## Public Engagement and Transparency

### Increasing Public Presence for Representatives:

Representatives continued to assert themselves in the public sphere during the third legislative session through a variety of forums, particularly around the time of the presidential election. Parliamentary figures from little-known **representatives** to entire **political parties** promoted Sisi's reelection by holding public rallies and forums for their constituents. Public campaigning was facilitated by House leadership, as Abdel 'Al **canceled** general session for nearly all of March to allow representatives to campaign.

Representatives also engaged with the public through field visits in their respective committees. These delegation trips included the Tourism Committee **traveling** to the Giza pyramids to inspect the success of the tourism industry, the Local Administration Committee **assessing** infrastructure projects in Aswan, and the Education Committee **inspecting** technology-focused schools in Alexandria. Perhaps the most significant endeavor in the third session involved the Health and Human Rights Committees investigating the Abbasiya Psychiatric Hospital following **claims** of abuse and mistreatment of the patients. The Health Committee **formed** a subcommittee to investigate the reports and submitted an internal report to other representatives with its findings. Additionally, representatives claimed to have **held** forums with political experts and activists to discuss legislation. While these meetings were reported in the media, no information was reported regarding the identity of these experts and how they contributed to the legislative process. A delegation from the Human Rights Committee **conducted** an unscheduled visit to the U.K. in March 2018 following the death of Miriam Mustafa, an Egyptian student who was attacked by a group of students and **died** from injuries sustained during the attack. The delegation **met** with British police authorities, medical personnel who treated Mustafa, and her family. The committee continued to discuss updates pertaining to the attack for the duration of the third legislative session.

### Media Access Continued to Be Restricted, Undermining Transparency:

Continuing a trend from previous sessions, media access to parliament was nearly exclusively limited to *al-Youm al-Sabaa* subsidiary Parlmany, which is **owned** by the General Intelligence Directorate through its holding group Eagle Capital. Through this connection, Parlmany reporters had access to more stories and representatives compared to other media institutions. Further, some of the reports deliberately **painted** the legislature in a positive light, best evident following Abdel 'Al's visit to the European Parliament in June 2018, when reports **claimed** that E.U. representatives praised Egypt for its counter-terrorism

House delegations traveled abroad, but representatives often advocated for the executive branch's agenda rather than attempting to advance bilateral relations with the host country or promoting parliamentary operations as an independent institution.



initiatives and human rights record. In reality, E.U. representatives **pressed** Abdel ‘Al about Egypt’s human rights violations, prominent judicial cases, and freedom of the press; Abdel ‘Al attempted to **deflect** these inquiries in order to promote government developments or by defending government institutions.

In addition to its limited media access and repudiation of civil society organizations, the House’s internal operations remained obscure. As voting procedures were primarily conducted through standing vote rather than roll call, constituents will not be able to hold their representatives accountable for their legislative record. Additionally, representatives began investigating the process to eliminate roll-call voting entirely per Abdel ‘Al’s request to expedite voting procedures. The House **released** a report stating that it had approved 197 laws during the third legislative session, **highlighting** 33 laws passed during the session pertaining to areas such as the economy, national security, and health care. Despite this report, no comprehensive list of the laws approved during the third session has been released by parliamentary sources. TIMEP media monitoring accounted for 85 laws passed

during the most recent legislative session. General sessions were not broadcast via live video or available for viewing after the fact, though representatives **expect** this mechanism to be established for the fourth session. (Similar comments have been made since before the seating of the first session of the House.)

“ **No comprehensive list of the laws approved during the third session has been released by parliamentary sources.** ”

### **Antagonizing Opposition Groups:**

Coupled with the House’s restrictions on media access was its rejection of critical reports issued by civil society organizations. A group of former politicians known as the Civil Democratic Movement, which called for a boycott of the presidential election, was **labeled** pro-terrorist by representatives. Parliamentarians decried the group’s oppositionist rhetoric and called for its proponents to be **prosecuted**. Similarly, Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed **accused** seven different nongovernmental organizations, including the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, of receiving payments from foreign countries in exchange for publishing critical reports about the Egyptian government.

### **Analysis:**

The House of Representatives marginally increased its public engagement compared to previous sessions, attributable to campaigns for Sisi’s candidacy for a second term as president. Though the House was much more engaged with the public through public forums and campaign initiatives, the substance of the forums confirms that these endeavors were not meaningful public engagement to present substantial or unique information to constituents.

As in previous legislative sessions, the House severely restricted media access and the institution continued its antagonistic rhetoric against media bodies and civil society organizations. The House’s preference for Parliament as opposed to other media outlets raised questions of biased reporting, as the media outlet twisted stories to depict the House in a positive manner. Independent media

institutions were not afforded similar access. Additionally, representatives' disdain for civil society organizations became increasingly apparent during the third legislative session, as parliamentarians denounced critical reports of the government instead of using them as an opportunity to collaborate and build relationships with these groups.

The House's opaque internal operations continued as in prior legislative sessions. While the House conducted more public field visits than it had in the past, parliament remained restricted in its discussions regarding legislation. Media reports claimed that representatives met with political experts to discuss prominent legislation, yet these meetings remain concealed, as information was routinely not provided about the experts. The House's internal procedure of conducting votes by

“ **Representatives' disdain for civil society organizations became increasingly apparent during the third legislative session, as parliamentarians denounced critical reports of the government.** ”

standing eliminates any chance at promoting transparency for constituents, as individual votes are impossible to track through this method. Furthermore, the House's self-proclamation of 197 approved laws during the legislative session is questionable because this claim was not supported by any public list. The House ultimately failed to meaningfully engage the public and work as a transparent institution.

## Legislative Capacity

### **Lack of Rigor in the Process of Passing Legislation:**

During the most recent legislative session, TIMEP counted 333 draft laws proposed and 85 approved by parliament; 174 of the 333 draft laws were proposed by representatives, while the cabinet or other government agencies proposed 159 draft laws. Despite the balance in bills submitted, only nine of the 174 parliamentarian-drafted bills were approved by the House, while 76 of the 159 cabinet-proposed draft laws were approved. Of the total 85 approved laws that TIMEP documented, 47 focused on administration and appointments (55 percent of laws), 20 on economy and state issues (24 percent), 11 on military and security issues (13 percent), and seven on social and political rights (8 percent). Each of these numbers resembles the percentage breakdown of laws from the second session. Representatives technically adhered to Article 122 of the constitution by acquiring the support of at least 60 signatories in the House for individual bills.<sup>7</sup> Despite this, draft laws were generally characterized as written by one representative. On the other hand, cabinet-proposed draft laws originated within an individual ministry before receiving the approval of the cabinet to refer the bill to the House for continued discussions.

As previously noted, the House often expedited discussions of cabinet-generated bills pertaining to controversial subjects such as the [Military Immunity Law](#) or the [SCMR Law](#). Laws that appeared to be controversial, such as the Military Immunity Law, were often obscured from the public during the drafting process, thus making the time taken to draft these bills difficult to determine and

<sup>7</sup> Article 122 states: Every bill presented by the government or by one-tenth of the members of the House is referred to a specialized committee of the House to study and submit a report about it to the House.

the process as a whole challenging to follow. Representative-drafted bills tended to be even more difficult to track than cabinet-generated bills, as representatives did not always announce that they introduced draft laws and, if they did announce them, their timing varied. For example, Representative Osman al-Muntaser gave no indication of his intent to submit an amendment to the Mayors Law, as the law was only reported when Abdel 'Al [referred](#) it to the Defense Committee for debate on April 2. Despite the lack of notice, the amendments progressed through parliament and were [approved](#) in general session on June 5. Other parliamentarians referenced their intention to submit a draft law at various points during the legislative session, as was the case with Representative Mustafa Bakri and his draft [amendments](#) to the Martyrs Fund Law. Some parliamentarians failed to follow through on these claims while some of these draft laws, such as Bakri's proposed amendments, were not approved.

In its third session, the House interacted with experts and the general public on a limited basis, and these interactions generally did not yield major results for individual draft laws. More controversial proposals tended to be secluded from public discussions. Representatives and cabinet officials asserted that they collaborated with “experts” or the general public in the drafting process, but little information that would corroborate these reports is available. In a specific example, the Syndicate of Egyptian Journalists, a professional union of journalists in Egypt, was outspoken in its rejection of the SCMR Law, and members from the syndicate [met](#) with parliamentary officials throughout the third session to discuss the draft law. Yet the syndicate's suggestions for the law were not heeded, and the House approved the law in its original form.

The State Council, the judicial body designated to review the constitutionality of draft laws, also [raised](#) concerns regarding the constitutionality of the SCMR Law, specifically Articles 6, 59, 63, 67, and 79 pertaining to the state's ability to block a publication in print or online media. Though a discussion ensued accordingly among members of the House about the State Council's objections, representatives often did not take constitutional objections into account when passing legislation such as the SCMR Law during the third session.

### **Legislation Fails to Meet Egypt's Constitutional and International Legal Obligations:**

Some of the most notable draft laws approved by the House in its third session fail to meet Egypt's constitutional and international legal obligations, particularly when it comes to respecting the rights of Egyptian citizens. The SCMR Law—which threatens to censor the social media posts of everyday citizens, creates burdensome licensing requirements for media outlets, and authorizes the state to block content with wide discretion—likely violates Egypt's obligations to respect the rights of citizens to freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of publication, and the right to privacy. Similarly, with its creation of a system of mass surveillance and the censorship authority it grants, the Cybercrime Law likely violates Egypt's obligations to respect the rights of individuals to privacy, freedom of thought, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression. (See more in TIMEP's Law Briefs.) Despite these clear violations, there is no evidence to suggest the House took constitutional and international legal obligations or even concerns into account when drafting and approving said legislation.

### **Analysis:**

Keeping with trends from previous legislative sessions, the House demonstrated poor legislative capacity when drafting, considering, and approving both cabinet-generated and representa-

tive-drafted bills. Overall, the process lacked the rigor that is expected of a legislative body. When deliberating on and drafting legislation, the House failed to sufficiently interact with experts, the State Council, and civil society in a meaningful manner. While a process exists to review the constitutionality of draft laws, this process was ultimately ignored, indicating a preference to streamline specific bills that may have been controversial in order to pass them quickly and without any form of opposition or critique, rather than adhering to the proper internal protocols.

Additionally, the fact that the House ultimately passed numerous pieces of legislation that fail to comply with the country's constitutional and international legal obligations raises questions on its respect for the rule of law, as well as the capacity it has to enact legal measures that will not be overturned or repealed on grounds of constitutionality in the future.

## Legislation Tracker

*What follows is a spotlight into some of the key pieces of legislation passed during this session. TIMEP Law Briefs, a separate output which complements this EPW report, provide more information on these laws:*

- **Bankruptcy Law:** The Bankruptcy Law continues Egypt's general economic liberalization program through relaxed restrictions for businesses and individuals facing bankruptcy. Per the law, individuals and commercial organizations will enjoy more financial freedom, as the law eliminates prison sentences for bankruptcy declarations except in cases of fraudulent financial behavior. Additionally, the law permits businesses to seek restructuring plans pertaining to their individual bankruptcy status; special judges are given discretion to manage each business's unique plan.
- **Military Immunity Law:** Under the Military Immunity Law, the president may designate a select group of military officers with lifelong reserve status, affording them the rights and privileges of cabinet ministers. The law additionally grants legal immunity for crimes that these selected officers may have committed between the suspension of the constitution under former president Muhammad Morsi (July 3, 2013) and the reconvening of parliament (January 10, 2016). Thus, the law eats away at accountability for violations committed against citizens during this transitional period, including significant events such as the dispersal of the sit-in at Raba'a al-Adaweya Square.
- **Custody of Terrorist Funds Law:** The Custody of Terrorist Funds Law creates a legal scheme that empowers the government not only to seize the assets of those deemed to be terrorists or terrorist organizations but also to manage and use the assets by depositing them into the state budget. Because of the legally questionable process in which individuals are designated as terrorists, there is fear that a law like this may result in the seizure and use of assets belonging to individuals who were erroneously and improperly deemed to be terrorists.
- **Cybercrime Law:** The Cybercrime Law requires service providers to store user data on their online activity for 180 days. Authorities may request access to this data, and service providers face significant fines and potential prison time if they fail to adhere to this data storage requirement. Additionally, the law permits state authorities to submit a censor or block request for a website if the site has allegedly published content that poses a threat to national security, granting authorities significant discretion.

- Supreme Council for Media Regulation Law (SCMR Law): Under this law, the SCMR may prevent media outlets including print and electronic platforms from publishing information that the state deems in violation of public morals and order. A prohibition on the publication of false news is set forth by the law and even covers social media accounts of any person who has over 5,000 followers, even if they are not a member of the media. The law further establishes new licensing requirements for press entities, creating burdensome requirements for outlets seeking official, legal status.
- Uber and Careem Law: This law regulates ride-sharing companies such as Uber and Careem and requires the companies to store user information for a period of 180 days; this information must be made available to state authorities upon request. Similar to the Cyber-crime law, this law expands the state's surveillance authority and mechanisms.

*What follows is a register of all of the laws and amendments approved by the House during this legislative session that TIMEP has been able to track. Please note that not all of these laws have been ratified by Sisi, and thus they have not all gone into effect.*

## TABLE OF LAWS

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Leasing and Financing Law	Adds clauses to regulate small and medium enterprise financing and authorize the country's economic courts to resolve legal issues pertaining to this legislation.	Government	6/25/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Amendments to the Administrative Control Authority Law	Allows the Administrative Control Authority to conduct investigations into public figures whenever deemed necessary; any legal action to be taken will be under the jurisdiction of the relevant investigatory body. The law also outlines the procedures for appointing members to the authority and the financial composition of the body.	Government	10/10/17	Administration and Appointments
Amendment to the Family Courts Law	Requires a social worker to note whether the minor in question falls under the jurisdiction of alternative families within the Ministry of Social Solidarity.	Government	12/5/17	Social and Political Rights/Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Tenders and Auctions Law	Establishes new regulations and promote performance standards as opposed to general guidelines for the pertinent administrative body.	Government	7/25/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Capital Markets Law	Establishes a new framework for issuing sukuk (Islamic bonds) while also expanding the market for public trading and futures contracts in the Egyptian stock exchange.	Government	2/14/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Consumer Protection Law	Establishes protocols to eliminate fraudulent goods in the Egyptian marketplace that do not meet national standards or specifications.	Government	3/4/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Consumer Protection Law	Allows the president to appoint the chairman of the relevant authority on cases of appeals and judicial matters.	Government	4/2/18	Administration and Appointments
Consumer Protection Law	Allows the Consumer Protection Authority to reconcile financially with violators of the law. Will also place e-commerce under government control and include stricter penalties for perpetrators of the law.	Government	4/17/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Amendments to the Agriculture Law	Increases the penalties for building on agricultural land to sentences of two to five years in prison and fines ranging from 100,000 Egyptian pounds (LE) to LE5 million. The penalties for unauthorized cotton ginning were also increased to a prison sentence of at least two years and fines of LE10,000 to LE50,000.	Government	1/9/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Agriculture Law	Increases penalties for violating the designations of agricultural land.	Government	4/24/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Nuclear Power Plants Authority Law	Allows the president to appoint members of the board of directors, and ensures the independence of the board of directors to appoint new members temporarily. Also exempts contractors from taxes and other fees and requires that the state adopt renewable sources of energy.	Government	11/27/17	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Establishing an Executive Oversight Body for Nuclear Power Plants Law	Establishes an executive oversight body to monitor any projects ongoing at nuclear power plants.	Government	11/27/17	Administration and Appointments
Regulating Nuclear and Radiological Activities Law	Changes the name of the body regulating internal nuclear and radiological activity while granting the authority additional oversight in these fields based on technological advances in the industry.	Government	11/27/17	Administration and Appointments
General Authority for the Development of Manufacturing Law	Establishes an independent economic body to regulate industrial activity. The body will maintain its own budget under the jurisdiction of the Central Auditing Organization.	Representative Ahmed Samir	5/15/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Youth Bodies Law	Designates more seats on the leadership of youth and sports organizations for youth but also set up oversight bodies to approve their actions and donations. The law would also prohibit those bodies from any religious, political, or popular mobilization on issues.	Government	12/5/17	Social and Political Rights/Administration and Appointments

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
University Hospital Law	Establishes the bureaucratic structure of university hospitals and the different leadership positions that comprise each institution. Also separates university hospitals from universities to avoid financial complications.	Government	3/5/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Appropriation of Real Estate for Public Benefit Law	Requires that the report on the appropriation of real estate for the public benefit be issued by the president or one of his appointed representatives.	Government	2/12/18	Administration and Appointments
Money for Martyrs and Families of Those Injured in Terror Attacks Law	Provides financial compensation for “martyrs” of the war on terror and their families while also providing occupational, educational, and additional social services for these individuals. Includes a small fee for all students in secondary schools to pay as part of their tuition to fund this program as well as a financial contribution of government funds totaling no more than 5 percent of general funds.	Representative Muhammad Abdullah Zayn	3/7/18	Military and Security Issues
Honoring the Families of Martyrs Law	Offers additional social services to the families of “martyrs” and injured citizens.	Representative Abdel Hadi al-Qasbi	2/12/18	Military and Security Issues
Unions Law	Requires unions to have at least 150 members in order to be recognized as official legal entities. Also refers any legal disputes regarding the trade union to the labor courts.	Government	12/5/17	Administration and Appointments
Comprehensive Health Insurance Law	Creates three new bodies: the Social Health Insurance Authority, which would be charged with funding the new health-care system; the Health-care Authority, which would be in charge of managing health-care services provided by the system; and a quality-control regulator that would cover 40 percent of Egyptians once the law is implemented over six stages amounting to 15 years. The law also creates different prices of insurance for citizens based on their marital status, children, and employment. Anyone in the military, even conscripts, will be removed from the new system and covered under military insurance.	Government	12/18/17	Economy and State Issues/ Administration and Appointments

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Bankruptcy Law	Creates a bankruptcy department within existing economic courts that would intermediate in restructuring processes in cases of bankruptcy. Also eliminates potential imprisonment for individuals going through bankruptcy but strengthens penalties for bankruptcy fraud. Under the law, a restructuring plan must be completed within 60 days of filing for a standstill, and bankruptcy court judges will have the right to extend that period at their discretion. The bankruptcy law also reduces the liquidation period for companies to nine months instead of the current average of more than two years.	Government	1/28/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Deputy Ministers Law	Designates the prime minister responsible for the heads of administrative bodies and ministers deputies, with the approval of the cabinet.	Government	12/5/17	Administration and Appointments
Egyptian Space Agency Law	Creates an agency to conduct research, explore space, and launch satellites for Egypt's strategic use. The agency's high council includes strong representation for Egypt's security sector.	Government	12/25/17	Administration and Appointments
Inheritance Law	Imprisons an individual for at least six months and fine the person LE20,000–100,000 for failing to deliver an inheritance package to the rightful owner. Will also imprison an individual for at least three months and fine the person LE10,000–50,000 for obstructing legal documents related to an inheritance package.	Government	12/5/17	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Amendment to Police Academy Law	Notes the criteria for which applicants may enter the academy as specialized officers depending on their level of university education.	Government	11/8/17	Administration and Appointments/Military and Security Issues
Drone Law	Bans the use, importation, or sale of drones without a permit for such actions from the Ministry of Defense. Violators will face a fine of LE5,000–50,000 and a prison sentence of one to seven years.	Government	12/18/17	Military and Security Issues

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Amendment to National Tunnels Authority Law	Requires investigations by government authorities to assess current metro and rail projects in Egypt and calls for updates to current railway systems. The law delegates authority for metro rails to the National Tunnels Authority.	Government	4/24/18	Administration and Appointments
Archaeologists Syndicate Law	Establishes the Archaeologists Syndicate in order to promote the industry and maintain the rights of professionals in the field.	Representative Osama Heikal	11/21/17*	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the VAT Law	Increases the tax on cigarettes and tobacco by varying amounts depending on the product and the amount of the product.	Government	11/21/17	Economy and State Issues
Amendments to the Sports Law	Prevents judges from running for chairmanship of sporting clubs so as to prevent conflicts of interests in judicial processes for sporting clubs.	Representative Fawzi Fatta	11/21/17*	Administration and Appointments
Uber and Careem Law	Regulates companies such as Uber and Careem and ostensibly aim to attract new investments to the ride-sharing and group transport industry. Would prohibit personal car users from extending ride-sharing services independently without being registered to an app. Would also mandate the Ministries of Transportation and Interior to coordinate on issuing regulations on licensing procedures and fees for personal cars used in ride-sharing services. Would also require companies such as Uber and Careem to store user information on government servers and include additional fees for the companies to maintain their operating status.	Government	5/7/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Rights of Persons with Special Needs Law	Allows persons with special needs who start small businesses not to pay income tax for 10 years after starting a business. Persons with special needs would only pay 50 percent of required taxes under the law and could negotiate the number of hours they work each day based on their circumstances.	Government	12/26/17	Economy and State Issues/Social and Political Rights

\* These laws were agreed upon in principle by the House, meaning that the House had approved an initial reading of the bill but had not voted on individual articles, as mandated in the bylaws. No additional reporting could be found regarding the Archaeologists Law once it was agreed upon in principle by the legislature, while the State Council objected to amendments to the Sports Law and the House ignored the council's objections without taking further action on the legislation. The exact status of these bills is unclear; it is unknown if these bills will be revived in the next session of parliament.

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Amendments to the Civil Status Law	Requires citizens to register their updated information at government offices that provide them with various social welfare services and benefits. Citizens will have one year from when the law is published in the Official Gazette to comply with new regulations or they risk seeing services—such as bread and commodity subsidies, for example—suspended, in addition to facing a fine of LE1,000–5,000.	Government	1/9/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Military Pensions, Retirement, and Insurance Law	Raises the retirement age for people at the lieutenant general rank from 62 to 64.	Government	12/19/17	Military and Security Issues
Amendments to the National Railroads Authority Law	Allows ordinary citizens and other legal entities to participate in the management of the railway system. Would also promote the interests of private businesses in the industry.	Government	3/5/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Names of Ministry of Interior Departments Law	Changes names of some departments in the Ministry of Interior so as to modernize the structure of the ministry.	Government	2/8/18	Administration and Appointments/Military and Security Issues
Amendments to the Prisons Law	Sets the parameters for the conditional release of convicted prisoners who have served at least half of their prison sentences.	Government	1/9/18	Administration and Appointments/Military and Security Issues
Amendments to the Penal Code	Increases the legal penalties for abducting or kidnapping children. Depending on the circumstances of the disappearance, perpetrators could face sentences of seven years to life in prison. The death penalty may also be invoked if the kidnapper commits a felony against a woman or a child who has been taken.	Government	1/9/18	Military and Security Issues

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Amendments to the Penal Code	Permits the death penalty to be utilized if an individual purchases explosives and subsequently uses the devices for terrorist purposes. The law calls for life imprisonment for individuals who obtain explosives without adhering to the proper licensing policy.	Government	3/7/18	Military and Security Issues
Amendments to the Companies Law	Governs the establishment of sole proprietorship companies and allows boards of directors the right to suspend a members who “divulge corporate secrets.” Also sets out the framework for transforming a company from a sole proprietorship into a joint stock company.	Government	12/24/17	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the New Urban Communities Law	Empowers the state to deal with informal settlements and buildings on agricultural land, and makes it so the cabinet and ministry of housing must authorize new urban communities.	Government	12/25/17	Administration and Appointments
Social Housing and Mortgage Support Law	Establishes a fund under the Ministry of Housing’s jurisdiction to assist low-income residents in acquiring stable housing. Will also provide for the development of housing alternatives for low-income residents.	Government	5/14/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Civil Aviation Law	Prohibits the use of light-emitting devices that may obstruct vision near an airport and stipulates prison terms of six months to two years and fines of LE30,000–200,000 for the use of such a device.	Government	1/28/18	Military and Security Issues
National Council for Women Law	Outlines the organizational structure of the National Council for Women, which includes one president and 29 additional members on the council. The law also redefines the expectations and goals of the council as they pertain to promoting female empowerment related to politics, the economy, and social development.	Government	4/16/18	Administration and Appointments/Social and Political Rights

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Supreme Council to Combat Terrorism Law	Establishes a supreme council to monitor terrorist activity under the leadership of the president. Creates new monitoring systems for civilians, military personnel, political officials, and religious institutions to report terror-related incidents and rumors.	Government	4/2/18	Military and Security Issues/ Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Ending Tax Disputes Law	Renews the Ending Tax Disputes Law for a period of two years.	Government	2/11/18	Economy and State issues
Amendments to the Importers Registry Law	Grants holders of import cards a period of six months to reconcile their situations.	Representative Amr Ghalab	1/28/18	Economy and State Issues/ Administration and Appointments
Electing Workers Representatives to the Boards of Organizations Law	Requires that boards consist of at least 50 percent public workers and outlines various conditions for an individual to be eligible as chairman of the board.	Government	1/28/18	Administration and Appointments
Income Tax Law	Grants a window of 60 days after tax declaration forms are submitted to the Tax Authority for citizens to submit the remaining necessary documents. The move is meant to reduce the rate of incomplete tax declarations.	Government	4/16/18	Economy and State Issues
Amendments to the Income Tax Law	Raises the personal tax exemption level to LE8,000 from LE7,200.	Government	6/5/18	Economy and State Issues
Amendments to the Income Tax Law	Imposes a 2.5 percent tax on the property value of newly constructed residential units, not including units located in rural villages.	Representative Mervat al-Kasan	7/2/18	Economy and State Issues
Development Authority of Southern Egypt Law	Promotes development projects in Upper Egypt, specifically the southern part of the region.	Government	6/5/18	Economy and State Issues

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Amendments to the Customs Law	Provides stricter punishments for smuggling charges and outline additional regulations regarding the shipping of goods.	Government	7/2/18	Administration and Appointments
Cybercrime Law	Requires service providers to store user data on their online activity for a period of 180 days, which authorities can access upon request. Punishes service providers for failing to meet this requirement. Permits investigatory agencies to submit a request to the judiciary to have websites blocked and allows these authorities to temporarily block websites without judicial permission for a 48-hour period if national security is deemed to be at risk.	Government	6/5/18	Social and Political rights/Military and Security Issues
Amendments to the Public Roads Law	Grants entrepreneurs a license to operate a food cart for a one-year period and maximum cost of LE20,000.	Government	4/24/18	Administration and Appointments
Real Estate in Urban Communities Law	Mandates a time frame for real estate development projects in urban areas to conform to local and national building standards.	Government	4/2/18	Administration and Appointments
Food Cart Regulation Law	Codifies regulations for food carts and individuals who operate them.	Representative Muhammad Ali Youssef	5/14/18	Administration and Appointments
Incentives for Science, Technology and Innovation Law	Authorizes research bodies to partner with companies to perform specialized research with financial incentives and tax breaks included.	Government	4/3/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Egyptian Products Law	Determines which manufactured products, as well as the type of companies, fall under the law's jurisdiction. Will also stipulate a fine ranging from LE50,000–500,000 for noncompliance.	Government	5/15/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Egyptian Nationality Law	Requires foreign nationals seeking to become Egyptian citizens to hold a bank deposit for five years or pay a LE7 million deposit.	Government	7/16/18	Social and Political Rights/Administration and Appointments

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Fiscal Year 18–19 Budget	Includes LE1.4 trillion in government spending, measures to reduce unemployment from 13 percent to 10 percent, and a target growth rate of 5 percent.	Government	6/5/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Amendments to the Mayors Law	Allows local officials to run for the position of mayor or sheikh at age 30 instead of 35. Will also dictate cases in which the Ministry of Interior is allowed to interject and supervise in the elections of mayors based on local traditions and customs.	Representative Osman al-Muntaser	6/5/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Diplomatic Corps Law	Designates a monthly pension of 80–90 percent of final salary for retired government officials including cabinet members, the Speaker of the House, and foreign diplomats.	Government	4/17/18	Administration and Appointments
Custody of Terrorist Funds Law	Creates a legal scheme to seize and manage assets of terrorists and terrorist organizations.	Government	4/17/18	Military and Security Issues/ Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the Police Law	Establishes a disciplinary board within the Ministry of Interior to hear cases brought forward against members of the police.	Government	7/16/18	Administration and Appointments/Military and Security Issues
Amendments to the Antiquities Law	Criminalizes the illegal transfer of items and knowledge in regard to antiquities with a life imprisonment and fines of LE50,000–250,000. Will also penalize the sale of goods to tourists without a license with a fine of LE3,000–10,000.	Government	4/24/18	Administration and Appointments
Clinical Trials Law	Organizes clinical research procedures and establish a legal framework respecting human rights.	Government	5/14/18	Administration and Appointments/Social and Political Rights
International Universities Law	Regulates international universities located in Egypt in an attempt to attract foreign students to reside and study in Egypt.	Government	5/14/18	Administration and Appointments

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Amendments to the Railway Travel Law	Intensifies the punishment for crimes committed on railway lines, with an emphasis on railway lines in agricultural locations, by punishing perpetrators of the law with a LE20,000 fine and at least one year's imprisonment.	Government	5/14/18	Administration and Appointments
Amendments to the 1992 Oil Exploration Law	Supports oil exploration measures in North Sinai based on an agreement between the Ministry of Petroleum and the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation.	Government	5/14/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Security Officials Pension Law	Increases the pension rate for security personnel by 15 percent or LE125—whichever figure is larger.	Government	6/4/18	Military and Security Issues/Administration and Appointments
State Employees Pension Law	Grants a raise to various state officials not associated with the security sector by 15 percent of their current pension while raising the minimum monthly pension value to LE750.	Government	6/4/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Budget Linking Law	Links the budget for the Public Economic Bodies Commission and the National Military Production Commission to the official state budget.	Government	6/5/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
National Press Commission Law	Regulates national press institutions such as <i>al-Ahram</i> newspaper.	Government	7/16/18	Social and Political Rights/Administration and Appointments
National Media Commission Law	Regulates media broadcasting institutions.	Government	7/16/18	Social and Political Rights/Administration and Appointments

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
Supreme Council for Media Regulation Law	Allows the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR) to block a newspaper's publication if it is deemed to be threatening to national security. Prevents media outlets from disseminating false news and classifies any individual with over 5,000 followers on Twitter as a member of the media for the purposes of the "false news" prohibition. Outlaws any pretrial detention of journalists except in cases of inciting violence or defamation. Media outlets must store content for a specific period of time or face fines and imprisonment from SCMR. The law also establishes new licensing procedures for print and media entities seeking to become officially recognized by the government.	Government	7/16/18	Social and Political Rights/Administration and Appointments
Military Immunity Law	Grants senior commanders in the military who are specifically designated by the president the same privileges and benefits as cabinet ministers. The law also grants the same designated commanders legal immunity for any actions committed between July 3, 2013, and January 10, 2016.	Government	7/16/18	Military and Security Issues/Administration and Appointments
Egypt Fund Law	Allows public companies to transfer some of their funds for the purpose of reinvestment; the initial level of capital is LE5 billion, with a maximum of LE200 billion.	Government	7/16/18	Economy and State Issues/Administration and Appointments
Governors' and Ministers' Pensions Law	Grants government officials a minimum monthly pension of 25 percent of their last month's salary and a maximum pension of 80 percent. Also will raise the pension to 80 percent if a government official leaves their position because of a disability.	Government	7/17/18	Administration and Appointments
World Bank Health Sector Loan Agreement	Provides a \$530 million loan agreement between Egypt and the World Bank in order to improve the health sector.	Government	7/25/18	Administration and Appointments

Legislation Name	Description of Legislation	Genesis	Date Approved by Parliament	Type
International Finance Corporation and Omar Effendi Agreement	Allows the government to assume control of the financial dispute between the retail chain Omar Effendi and the International Finance Corporation over unpaid debts.	Government	7/25/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
State Treasury Funds Transfer Law	Transfers surplus funds controlled by the government to be deposited into the State Treasury.	Government	7/25/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues
Financiers Exemption Law	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 facing repercussions.	Government	7/25/18	Economy and State Issues
OPEC Development Fund Loan	Provides a \$35 million loan agreement between Egypt and the OPEC Fund for International Development to improve the national water sanitation system.	Government	7/26/18	Administration and Appointments/Economy and State Issues

## APPENDIX A: TIMELINE OF EVENTS

**October 2, 2017:** The House of Representatives **reconvened** for its third legislative session after parliamentary elections were held in late 2015.

**October 3:** Reports **emerged** of vote stacking in the Local Administration Committee, Housing Committee, Defense Committee, and Energy Committee, among others.

**October 9:** The Energy Committee reconvened to hold a second round of chairmanship elections after Representative Talaat al-Suweidi appealed his defeat to fellow Coalition in Support of Egypt member Muhammad Rashwan. Suweidi **emerged** victorious in the second round of voting. Vote stacking continued to be an issue as in the preliminary election.

**October 27–November 2:** A high-level parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of the House Ali Abdel Al traveled to the United States. The group met with officials from the State Department and **held** meetings at the Middle East Institute in Washington and with members of Congress including **Paul Ryan, Nancy Pelosi, Ted Cruz, and Orrin Hatch**. Ahead of the meeting with Pelosi, her office **released** a letter to the delegation condemning the country's crackdown on the LGBT community.

**November 27:** Following the attack on a mosque in Rawda, North Sinai, that killed over 300 people, the House held an emergency session to discuss three government draft laws establishing the Dabaa nuclear power plant. After five hours of debate, the draft laws were **approved** with few changes.

**December 12–15:** A parliamentary delegation traveled to Europe to meet with officials from the European Parliament as well as Egyptian ambassadors to various European countries.

**January 13, 2018:** The House of Representatives **gathered** in an emergency general session to approve a limited cabinet reshuffle proposed by Sisi. Four new ministers and two deputy ministers were **appointed** to office through the parliament's vote.

**January 28:** The House **approved** the Bankruptcy Law proposed by the government.

**March 4–April 2:** The House did not convene in general session, so as to allow representatives to campaign at the height of the presidential election period.

**April 2:** After a lack of support in the presidential election and as leader of the Wafd Party, Chairman al-Sayyid al-Badawi announced his intention to step down from the position. The party held its internal elections on April 2 and Constitutional Affairs Committee Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa was **elected** as the new chairman of the party.

**April 17:** The House approved the Custody of Terrorist Funds Law drafted by the government.

**April 23:** Thirty representatives belonging to different political parties or having independent affiliation **joined** the Coalition in Support of Egypt.

**May 7:** Parliament **approves** the revised version of the Uber and Careem Law proposed by the government

**May 21:** Fifty-one members of the Free Egyptians Party **resigned** from the organization in order to **join** the Nation's Future Party.

**May 26:** About 150 independent representatives **joined** the Nation's Future Party. The party also **an-**

**nounced** its intention to withdraw from the Coalition in Support of Egypt.

**June 2:** Following his successful reelection bid, Sisi was **inaugurated** to his second term in office before a general session of parliament.

**June 5:** The House **approved** the Cybercrime Law drafted by the government.

**June 14:** Following his inauguration, Sisi **installed** his new cabinet, which included a new prime minister as well as 12 new ministers. Per the Egyptian Constitution, the House is tasked with approving the cabinet's agenda for the presidential term.

**June 19–June 21:** Abdel 'Al traveled to the European Parliament, where he **met** with the legislature's president, Antonio Tajani. Abdel 'Al also **spoke** at a session of the Foreign Affairs Committee and **met** in private with various other legislators. European officials **pressed** Abdel 'Al on Egypt's human rights violations, calling for the NGO Law to be overturned and inquiring about the "Foreign Funding" Case.

**July 3:** Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli **presented** the cabinet's agenda for the new presidential term to the House in the hopes of acquiring parliamentary approval per Article 146 of the Egyptian Constitution. After hearing Madbouli's speech, Abdel 'Al **formed** a specialized committee comprising 31 representatives mandated to debate each component of the cabinet's agenda and present its findings to the general legislature to vote upon.

**July 11:** The specialized committee tasked with reviewing the cabinet's platform **approved** the agenda by a 27–4 vote; the ad hoc committee's findings were **submitted** to the general body of parliament for review ahead of the House's final vote.

**July 16:** The House **approved** the Supreme Council for Media Regulation Law proposed by the government.

**July 16:** Parliament **approves** the Military Immunity Law proposed by the government.

**July 25:** Parliament voted to **approve** the cabinet's agenda for the new presidential term.

**July 25:** Abdel 'Al **closed** the third legislative session of parliament.

## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

The Egypt Parliament Watch report series was developed as part of a longer-term project to monitor and evaluate the function of the Egyptian House of Representatives. The project and the report address several fundamental research questions: What is the role of the Egyptian parliament in its political landscape? Does it embody the democratic entity that was envisioned as a final step in the transitional road map? How effectively does the parliament function per its constitutional obligations and international legal norms? Who are the main actors driving trends and developments in the political and legislative landscape, and what effect do they have on the previous questions?

To answer these questions, the Egypt Parliament Watch project draws on existing literature and praxis related to legislative monitoring, and it is based on TIMEP's independent and systematic media monitoring and analysis, legal review of legislation for compliance, review of official documents, and extensive consultation with policymakers, journalists, human rights practitioners, and experts in Egyptian and international law, politics, and civil society. Data collection for the project began in late 2014, at the time of the announcement of parliamentary elections, and is ongoing. Since that time, TIMEP has conducted daily media monitoring of local and international Arabic and English-language press and social media, collating and reviewing statements made by policymakers or Egyptian political figures. TIMEP conducted extensive background research into the platforms and ideologies of the political parties and collected electoral data to conduct quantitative analysis related to its prior parliamentary elections project.

With Egypt Parliament Watch, TIMEP continues to monitor statements and media from within or about the House of Representatives, comparing this to existing research and data on political platform and ideology. The project also relies on the Official Gazette, parliamentary reports, and published legislation from the government; where possible, the project references data from these primary sources. To develop the key indicators used to assess the parliament's performance, TIMEP conducted a review of the seven leading parliamentary performance monitors' indicators, distilling a targeted list that was most appropriate to the Egyptian context. These four overarching indicators were broken into sub-indicators, with a series of questions outlined for each to ensure uniformity in assessing performance over time and to facilitate measurability for each sub-indicator. Further information and detail about these indicators or methodology is available upon request.



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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.