



# EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



## WEEK IN BRIEF NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 1, 2018

### Summary

- After Italian authorities announced their intention to indict up to seven Egyptian security personnel in the death of Italian graduate student Giulio Regeni in 2016, the Italian Chamber of Deputies announced a temporary suspension of ties with Egypt's House of Representatives. Egypt's House released a statement calling the investigation and Italian House decision rash and surprising given the two countries' historical relations.
- Social Solidarity Minister Ghada Wali stated that the cabinet subcommittee studying the Law on Civil Society Organizations (NGO Law) will complete its assessment in the next two weeks and report its findings to the cabinet. A collection of human rights groups and advocates, including former House representative Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, offered their suggestions for the potential amendments.
- Following Wafd Party Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa's decision to expel six members who contested the results of the recent party council election, Abu Shoqa asserted that he would not seek to reconcile with the disgraced members. Yasser Qora, one of the former members, announced that a group of former and current Wafd associates will file a suit in the Administrative Court regarding the results of the election.

### Notable Developments

#### Italian House Severs Ties with Egyptian House over Regeni Investigation:

Italian authorities [intend](#) to indict up to seven members of Egypt's security personnel, accusing them of involvement in the torture and eventual death of Italian graduate student Giulio Regeni in 2016. The Italian Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the bicameral legislature, subsequently

[announced](#) a temporary cessation of all ties with the Egyptian parliament until a “real turning point” is achieved in the Regeni investigation. Egypt’s House [released](#) a statement denouncing the Italian authorities’ imminent indictments as hasty conclusions in an ongoing investigation that will not benefit either country. In the statement, the House also expressed surprise at the Italian Chamber of Deputies’ decision to sever ties with the House based on the historical relations between the two countries.

### **Amendments to NGO Law Progressing in Cabinet Subcommittee:**

Social Solidarity Minister Ghada Wali [announced](#) that the cabinet subcommittee studying potential amendments to the NGO Law will propose amendments for cabinet-level review within the next two weeks. This announcement adheres to the 30-day mandate issued by Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli on November 17 for the subcommittee to complete its findings. The subcommittee is also expected to [hold](#) social dialogue sessions with civil society organizations to discuss the proposed amendments, though it is unclear who will attend these meetings. A coalition of human rights organizations unaffiliated with either parliament or the cabinet [offered](#) their suggestions for the law, which involve eliminating Articles 70–77 pertaining to the foundation, operation, and legal recourse of civil society organizations; former representative [Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat](#) is among the group of activists involved in this proposal.

### **Internal Wafd Party Drama Continues:**

Recently expelled Wafd Party member Yasser Qora [stated](#) that the 26 individuals who rejected the results of the party council elections filed a suit in the Administrative Court over the final vote. Qora also noted that he was preparing a draft law to present to the council that would forbid a party chairman from holding a chairmanship position in the House before he was expelled from the organization. Wafd Party Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa reportedly will not reconcile with the six expelled members from the organization and does not intend to hold a dialogue with them.

### **Media Application Timeline for House Elections Coverage Announced:**

The National Election Authority [announced](#) that media outlets and civil society organizations, both foreign and domestic, wishing to cover the elections for the three open House seats must apply to the commission by December 1 to receive official credentials. The decision was [released](#) November 29, giving media outlets and civil society groups two days to submit the application.

## **Other Developments**

### **In Legislation:**

The Housing Committee [approved](#) the draft Reconciling Building Violations Law. The bill [includes](#) new restrictions on construction in land designated for agricultural purposes, as well as [fines](#) for individuals who violate paperwork procedures under the bill of at least 100,000 Egyptian pounds and five years’ imprisonment. Housing Committee Chairman Alaa Wali [stated](#) that the committee is preparing its final report on the bill to submit to the general legislature.

Speaker of the House Ali Abdel ‘Al [stated](#) that the Local Administration Law is ready for discussion, though he did not disclose the bill’s current legislative track. The law had previously been [touted](#) as a prelude to holding local council elections.

### **In Session:**

The Foreign Affairs Committee is [seeking](#) to coordinate its efforts for human rights protections with the international community as part of its human development agenda. Committee Chairman Karim

Darwish also [said](#) that the government has been working diligently on safeguarding human rights since 2013 and has made significant gains in advancing economic and social rights.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Committee Chairman Muhammad Marai [submitted](#) a request to Abdel 'Al, Madbouli, and Local Development Minister Mahmoud Sharawi regarding the absence of the governors of Minya and Beheira despite their requested presence at a committee meeting last week.

The Budget Committee [hosted](#) officials from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, and the Railways Authority to discuss each institution's respective measures to curb exorbitant spending. The committee [criticized](#) National Media Commission Chairman Hussein Zein for failing to attend the committee's meeting upon request to discuss the commission's budget for the fiscal year 2016–17.

Representative Muhammad Fuad of the Energy Committee [submitted](#) a briefing request to Abdel 'Al, Madbouli, and Education Minister Tariq al-Shawqi on the increase in the number of student dropouts.

Abdel 'Al [threatened](#) to utilize the House's internal regulatory controls against Representative Bakr Abu Ghraib during plenary session for speaking beyond his allotted time.

Abdel 'Al [threatened](#) to suspend general session Tuesday because of the significant number of representatives crowding around cabinet ministers and vying for responses to briefing requests.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee [rejected](#) a request submitted by the prosecutor-general at the behest of former Zamalek football club president Mamdouh Abbas to lift the legal immunity of Representative Mortada Mansour for financial corruption within the organization.

During plenary session Tuesday, Abdel 'Al [asserted](#) that the cabinet has not implemented the promises of Sisi's program for his second term at a sufficient rate.

### **In News and Statements:**

The Arab Affairs Committee [issued](#) a statement emphasizing the need for unity in Libya among the country's armed forces and government institutions in order to rebuild the country.

Coalition in Support of Egypt Chairman Abdel Hadi al-Qasbi [praised](#) Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's visit to Egypt as a promotion of a stable and secure Middle East. Similarly, Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan [praised](#) bin Salman's visit to Egypt as an affirmation of the strategic relations between the two countries.

Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Karim Darwish [hosted](#) Finnish Ambassador to Egypt Laura Kansikas-Debraise to discuss bilateral relations between Egypt and Finland with an emphasis on the education and health sectors.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan [hosted](#) Cameroon's ambassador to Egypt, Mohamadou Labarang. The two officials spoke about the historic ties between their respective countries as African nations, improving cooperation in counter-terrorism measures, and joint economic ventures with an emphasis on the agriculture industry.

Abdel 'Al [stated](#) that government subsidies and programs often support those who are ineligible and undeserving.

Representative Ismail Nasser al-Din of the Housing Committee [warned](#) of the threat of homeless children in being convinced to join terrorist organizations, noting that the cabinet ought to address this growing issue. This discussion took place during plenary session in the presence of Madbouli and Social Solidarity Minister Ghada Wali.

Following his trip to China, Deputy Speaker of the House al-Sayyid al-Sharif [praised](#) relations between China and Egypt as historic for their mutual cooperation on economic ventures and regional concerns. Coalition in Support of Egypt Chairman Abdel Hadi al-Qasbi also participated in the delegation visit.

SME Committee Chairman Muhammad Marai **expressed** frustration with the absence of officials from the Ministries of Investment, International Cooperation, Planning, and Youth and Sports from a committee session this week.

Representative Margaret Azer of the Human Rights Committee **stated** that there ought to be legislation criminalizing domestic violence from a holistic perspective, with an emphasis on violence against women and children.

The African Affairs Committee **hosted** Burundian Ambassador to Egypt Soleiman Moussa as part of the committee's initiative to connect with other African countries.

The Arab Affairs Committee **expressed** its support for United Nations efforts to achieving a peaceful solution in Yemen and condemned Iranian involvement in the ongoing conflict.

Representative Essam al-Safi of the Housing Committee **asserted** that the government ought to stop importing and manufacturing supplies for tuk-tuk production given the failed attempt to regulate the auto rickshaws through licensing procedures. Similarly, Representative Said Taeema **stated** that reducing the number of tuk-tuks on the streets of Egypt is paramount to maintaining order. Taeema also linked the rise in the presence of tuk-tuks to an increase in the sale of drugs and crime.

Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed **stated** that the House of Representative does not seek to compete with the government but cooperate with the executive branch. The statement followed the submission of several briefing requests directed to various cabinet members, particularly Social Solidarity Minister Ghada Wali.

## Looking Ahead

- The Parliamentary Training Institute will **host** a delegation from the Omani Shura Council next week from December 2–5.
- Representative Mageda Bakri of the Education Committee **stated** that representatives from the committee will conduct field visits to schools that have integrated children with special needs into classrooms in order to assess how the classes adhere to the new education system.
- The House **concluded** general session and will reconvene as an entire body on December 9.
- The African Affairs Committee will **host** ambassadors from Canada, South Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti next week.
- The Foreign Affairs Committee will **meet** next week with Investment Minister Sahar Nasr to discuss further cooperation with the ministry.
- The Youth and Sports Committee will **gather** next week to discuss Olympic sports delegations.



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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.