

Analyzing Egypt's Constitutional Amendments: Process and Implications

On April 23, 2019, Egypt's National Election Authority announced that Egyptians had voted to approve a package of amendments to the constitution in a national referendum. The vote, which was announced as 88.8 percent approval with 44 percent turnout, was held just days after Egypt's House of Representatives had finalized and approved the text of the amendments package. The referendum lacked transparency, saw widespread reports of violations and voter disenfranchisement, and came after months of concerted efforts to suppress opposition to the amendments, going as far as to jail critics and restrict web access in order to block advocacy around a "no" vote.

The amendments fundamentally alter the structure of the Egyptian state by eroding judicial authority, defining the military as the "protector of the constitution," and restructuring presidential terms to allow President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi to remain in power until at least 2030, contributing to preexisting trends of an eroding rule of law, a shrinking public sphere, and a consolidation of executive and military authority. 

TIMEP COVERAGE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS:

- An infographic on Amending Egypt's Constitution lays out the process of deliberating on and approving amendments in the House of Representatives and in a national referendum.
- Issue briefs on Potential Changes to Egypt's Presidential Term Limits and on the Constitutional Referendum provide context and analysis on developments around the amendment process.
- Two law briefs—one of the draft and one on the finalized text of amendments—highlight the ways in which the package of amendments alter Egypt's legal landscape and dismantle the rule of law.
- Commentary from Nonresident Fellow Timothy Kaldas, *Doubling Down on Dictatorship*, explores the symbolic significance of Egyptians having the option to vote "no" on the amendments.
- Commentary from Resident Fellow Yasmin Omar, *Egypt's Constitutional Amendments: A Nail in the Coffin of Political Pluralism*, details potential implications of the amendments on political pluralism.
- In an op-ed for the *Washington Post*, Executive Director Nancy Okail analyzes the optics of a meeting between President Trump and Sisi, and how it will support efforts to consolidate power in Egypt, including measures like the constitutional amendments.
- Legal and Judicial Director Mai El-Sadany participated in a panel conversation on the amendments sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Project on Middle East Democracy.
- On the legal and political repercussions of Egypt's constitutional amendment process, TIMEP staff and fellows contributed their analysis to reporting by the *New York Times*, *El Pais*, *El Mundo*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Tribune de Geneve*, *La Presse*, Reuters, CNN, the *Guardian*, *Expresso*, *El Mundo*, *France24*, and the BBC World Service.