



# EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



## WEEK IN BRIEF MAY 22–29, 2019

### Summary

- The Constitutional Affairs Committee approved amendments to laws governing various judicial bodies. The amendments bring these laws into accordance with recent amendments to the constitution which stipulate the president should appoint the heads of seven judicial entities. The House is expected to debate the bills when it reconvenes in plenary session on June 9.
- Following the extradition of Hesham Ashmawy—a former Egyptian special forces officer who became a terrorist and masterminded some of Egypt’s deadliest terror attacks—several officials within the House praised the entities that returned Ashmawy to Egypt from Libya. The House issued an official statement recognizing the national security efforts by the Egyptian government and its citizens.
- Human Rights Watch issued a report documenting human rights abuses perpetrated by Egyptian security forces in Sinai. Political parties and representatives condemned the report and described it as politically motivated to undermine counter-terrorism efforts.
- After Speaker of the House Ali Abdel ‘Al and Nation’s Future Party President Ashraf Rashad engaged in a public argument during plenary session on May 19 regarding the party’s legislative influence, Abdel ‘Al reconciled with the group at an iftar meal sponsored by the party on May 25. Both Abdel ‘Al and Rashad spoke about the comradery in the House and previous legislative efforts.
- Representative Muhammad Fuad submitted a memorandum to the Administrative Control Authority alleging \$450 million of financial impropriety by the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) and various economic entities under its jurisdiction. Fuad alleged that the GID used familial connections to secure multiple loans from several Egyptian banks without proper repayment policies.

## Notable Developments

### Constitutional Affairs Committee Approves Judicial Amendments:

The Constitutional Affairs Committee **approved** government-drafted amendments on laws governing judicial bodies, allowing the president to appoint the respective heads of the Supreme Constitutional Court, Administrative Prosecution, State Lawsuits Authority, Military Judicial Authority, Court of Cassation, Prosecutor-General, and State Council. These bills would bring existing laws into accordance with the recently approved constitutional amendments. The House is **expected** to discuss the bills when it reconvenes in plenary session June 9. .

### House Praises Extradition of Hesham Ashmawy:

The Libyan National Army (LNA) **extradited** Hesham Ashmawy, a former Egyptian special forces officer turned militant leader, and placed him under the custody of the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate. The LNA, which is led by Khalifa Haftar, has held Ashmawy since November 2018. The House and some of its members, including the **Free Egyptians Party** and Deputy Speaker of the House **Soleiman Wahdan**, issued various statements praising the extradition of Ashmawy. An official statement from the House **thanked** the government and Egyptian people for defending the country, while also recognizing the LNA and Egyptian security personnel for assisting in Ashmawy's capture.

### Representatives Condemn Human Rights Watch Report:

Human Rights Watch **issued** a report documenting human rights abuses perpetrated by Egyptian security personnel in Sinai during its war against terrorism. Officials in the House condemned the report, including the Wafd Party, which **issued** a statement alleging that the report sought to undermine the efforts of security personnel to combat terrorism. Human Rights Committee Chairman Alaa Abed also **criticized** the report, asserting that it represents the political agenda of Qatar and Turkey against Egypt.

### Abdel 'Al and Nation's Future Party Reconcile Differences:

Following a public **spat** between Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al and Nation's Future Party President Ashraf Rashad during plenary session on May 19, Abdel 'Al reconciled with the group during an iftar meal sponsored by the party on May 25. Speaking at the event, Abdel 'Al **thanked** the party for its previous legislative endeavors and asserted that the House is a brotherhood for all of its members. Similarly, Rashad **praised** Abdel 'Al's attendance as symbolic of political strength within the legislature.

### Representative Alleges Financial Corruption Against Intelligence Services:

Representative Muhammad Fuad **submitted** a memo to the Administrative Control Authority accusing former Investment Minister Dalia Khorshid, currently a prominent official within the General Intelligence Directorate and its economic branch Eagle Capital, of failing to repay over \$450 million in loans. Khorshid, the wife of current Central Bank Chairman Tarek Amer, reportedly pursued and assumed loans for the Egyptian Hydrocarbon Company, a group under Eagle Capital, exceeding \$450 million from several Egyptian banks, including those under the authority of the Central Bank, without repaying the loans in the allotted time. Fuad asserted that the delayed repayment and loan process represented one of the most severe instances of corruption for the Egyptian government.

## Other Developments

### In Legislation:

As the House was not in plenary session this week, the legislature did not approve any bills during the past week.

## In Session:

The Constitutional Affairs Committee **voted** to lift the immunity of Representative Muhammad Hani al-Hanawi at the request of the prosecutor-general. The request comes in light of a case from 2016 in which Hanawi is accused of committing fraud by knowingly writing bad checks exceeding 1.7 million Egyptian pounds (LE).

The Education Committee **submitted** its report of the proposed education budget for the upcoming fiscal year to the Budget Committee for review.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee **recommended** that the allocation for judicial bodies in the proposed budget for the 2019–20 fiscal year be increased by 15 percent, a LE1.3 billion increase pertaining to health and social support for judicial officials.

## In News and Statements:

Deputy Speaker of the House al-Sayyid al-Sharif **participated** in the International Moderation Values Conference hosted by Saudi Arabia focusing on Islamic values.

Representative Abdel Rahim Ali of the Arab Affairs Committee **stressed** the importance of Sisi's meeting with Sudanese Transitional Military Council Chairman Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as an opportunity to expand the "strategic" and "historical" relationship between the two countries.

Following the visit of U.S. Representative Ed Case, Media Committee Chairman Osama Heikal **stressed** the importance of diplomatic relations with U.S. officials and engagement with American media.

African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan **hosted** Michael Bock, the German special ambassador for rivers. The two officials discussed Egypt's historic and current utilization of the Nile River.

## Looking Ahead

- The Youth and Sports Committee will **conduct** multiple field visits to several locations nationwide in the coming weeks to assess preparation measures ahead of the Africa Cup in June.
- Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan **stated** that a formal conversation will be held with officials from political parties regarding future parliamentary election laws, adding that a law for the Senate, authorized under the recent constitutional amendments, is underway in the House, though he did not reveal a timetable for its approval.
- The Transportation Committee will **conduct** a field visit to Safaga and Hughsada following Eid al-Fitr to inspect various ports along the Red Sea.
- The Education Committee will **meet** with Education Minister Tariq Shawki following Eid al-Fitr to discuss the electronic testing system and complaints that the body has received about students using tablets.



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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.