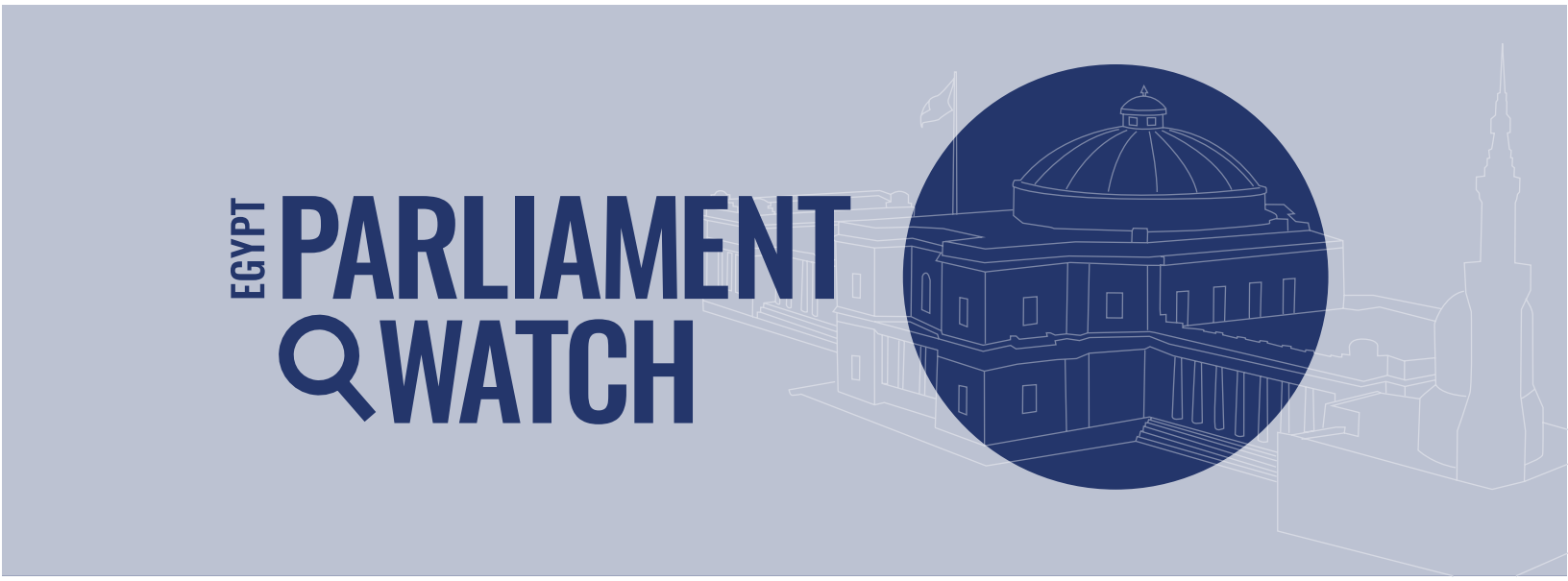
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy

EGYPT LEGAL & POLITICAL

# EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



## WEEK IN BRIEF MAY 30–JUNE 5, 2019

### Summary

- On Sunday, June 9, Egypt's House of Representatives is expected to discuss amendments to the laws governing several judicial entities and the amendments to the Supreme Constitutional Court Law. These bills were approved by the Constitutional Affairs Committee on May 22, and they are designed to alter existing laws to conform to the recently approved constitutional amendments.
- Representative Abdel Rahim Ali and his website, the Reference, engaged in a public dispute with Francois Deroche, president of the National Union for Federal Doctors in France. Deroche criticized a set of executions in Egypt in February 2019, prompting Ali's website to accuse Deroche of connections to the Muslim Brotherhood. Deroche subsequently filed a defamation lawsuit against Ali's website.

## Notable Developments

### Representative Publicly Disputes with French Professional Organization:

Representative Abdel Rahim Ali engaged in a public dispute with Francois Deroche, president of the National Union for Federal Doctors in France. Following the February execution of nine individuals for the assassination of Hesham Barakat, the prosecutor-general who was killed in a terrorist attack, Deroche publicly condemned the execution of the defendants in the case. Ali's website, the Reference, a Paris-based news source that reports on issues in the Islamic world specifically for a Western audience, subsequently accused Deroche of ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and questioned Deroche's record as a human rights advocate, which prompted Deroche to file a legal suit against the website alleging defamation. Ali has previously been involved in media scandals as he leaked information collected by the security apparatus on his television program "Black Box." Ali is also editor-in-chief of the state-aligned Egyptian newspaper and website *al-Bawabh*.

## Other Developments

### In Legislation:

As the House was not in plenary session this week, no notable legislation was approved or discussed.

### In Session:

The Constitutional Affairs Committee approved the revised budget pertaining to legal affairs for the upcoming fiscal year after recommending that it be increased by 1.7 billion Egyptian pounds.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee referred Representative Muhammad Hani Hanawi to Abdel 'Al for investigation after the committee voted to lift his parliamentary immunity on May 22. Hanawi is accused of financial impropriety stemming from fraudulent checks.

### In News and Statements:

Wafd Party Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa stated that the party is prepared to begin campaigning for local elections as soon as the electoral structure for campaigning is in place. Local elections have been repeatedly promised and delayed since the 2011 revolution, and they have not been scheduled.

Abdel 'Al hosted Rwandan Foreign Minister Richard Sezibera on June 3. The two officials discussed political cooperation and regional security.

Free Egyptians Party Parliamentary Chairman Ayman Abul Alaa praised President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's speech at the Arab Summit in Saudi Arabia, calling his position on politics and security "firm."

Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah described Sisi's speech as "historical" for his defense of national and regional security concerns against external forces.

The Protectors of the Nation Party will engage in civil outreach programs to educate citizens nationwide about "rumors" being spread about the Egyptian state.

Representative Yehia Kedwani of the Defense Committee claimed that all Human Rights Watch reports about Egypt have been intended to defame Egypt for the purpose of assisting Qatar and Turkey.

Defense Committee Chairman Kamal Amer described the extradition of former security official turned extremist Hesham Ashmawy as a significant endeavor for the Egyptian Armed Forces.

## Looking Ahead

- The House is expected to debate the proposed amendments to the laws governing multiple judicial bodies and the amendments to the Supreme Constitutional Court Law when it reconvenes in plenary session on Sunday. Both bills had previously been approved by the Constitutional Affairs Committee on May 22, and they allow the president to appoint the heads of multiple judicial bodies. The bills are designed to bring existing laws into accordance with the recently approved constitutional amendments.
- The Budget Committee will begin drafting its final report of the proposed budget for the 2019–20 fiscal year following Eid al-Fitr.

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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.