WEEK IN BRIEF AUGUST 28–SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

Summary

- A parliamentary delegation from the Budget Committee traveled to the United States to meet with various financial and budgeting agencies, as well as local organizations. The delegation is discussing Egypt’s economic reform program, anti-corruption measures, and the budgeting process.

- Secretary-General of the House of Representatives Ahmed Saad al-Din resigned from his position due to a dispute between him and Speaker of the House Ali Abdel Al. It is unclear at this time who will assume the open position in the House.

Notable Developments

Parliamentary Delegation Visits United States:
A delegation from the Budget Committee, led by committee chairman Hussein Aissa, arrived in the United States on September 7 ahead of its week-long visit with various federal and local officials. On Monday, the delegation met separately with officials from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to discuss the budgeting process and concerns specifically relevant to Egypt. The following day the group met with officials from DAI, a DC organization focusing on international development, to discuss anti-corruption measures, Egypt’s economic reform endeavors, and the budgeting process. The group is also expected to consult various budgeting and financial entities such as the Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Budget Office, the Maryland State Treasury, and the Pennsylvania State Treasury to discuss the budgeting process at both the federal and state levels. The group is also expected to meet with congressional officials, though details have not been announced or reported.
House Secretary-General Steps Down:
House Secretary-General Ahmed Saad al-Din resigned from his position in light of an ongoing dispute between him and Speaker of the House Ali Abdel ‘Al. Saad al-Din subsequently assumed a position in the State Council. Per parliamentary bylaws, the Speaker of the House appoints the secretary-general, though it is unclear who Abdel ‘Al intends to appoint if he retains the speaker position in the fifth legislative session in October.

Other Developments

In Legislation:
Since the House remains in its summer recess, no legislation was approved or discussed during the past two weeks.

In Session:
A delegation from the Transportation Committee led by committee chairman Hesham Abdel Wa-hid traveled to Matrouh to meet with the region's governor to discuss road conditions and other ongoing infrastructure projects in the governorate. As part of the committee's visit to Matrouh, the delegation also inspected the al-Salloum al-Bari Port in the governorate.

The House published a report about the importance and success of its YouTube channel during the past legislative session, though the report was not available in popular media or on the House's website. According to media outlet al-Youm al-Sabaa, the 38 percent of the channel's viewers were aged 25–34, 22 percent were 35–44, and 13 percent were 45–54.

In News and Statements:
Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah praised Sisi's role in the upcoming National Youth Conference for promoting youth empowerment.

Representative Anisa Hasouna of the Foreign Affairs Committee called upon the Ministries of Health and Social Solidarity to develop a more concrete plan to address the growing issue of addiction nationwide.

Egyptian Freedom Party Chairman Salah Hassiballah called upon the government to account for the needs of low-income citizens in ongoing land disputes between public building initiatives and private housing.

Representative Yasser Omar of the Budget Committee anticipates a decrease in the percentage value of the debt to GDP, with a target rate of 7.2 percent by the end of the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Representative Tariq al-Khouli of the Foreign Affairs Committee praised President Sisi's recent visit to Kuwait as an opportunity to expand bilateral relations.

Deputy Speaker of the House Soleiman Wahdan met with Pan-African Parliament Vice President Bouras Djamel on September 1 to discuss diplomatic relations and ongoing dynamics in the Pan-African Parliament.

The Wafd Party praised President Sisi's participation in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, describing it as opening the door to future economic cooperation opportunities.
Looking Ahead

- African Affairs Committee Chairman Tariq Radwan stated that the committee will continue its African diplomatic outreach during the upcoming legislative session by visiting other countries and promoting tourism, counter-terrorism initiatives, and anti-corruption measures; Radwan did not specify which countries the committee will visit.

- Constitutional Affairs Committee Chairman Bahaa Abu Shoqa said that the committee will conduct public forums to discuss prominent legislation before the committee in the upcoming legislative session, especially bills pertaining to election laws.