

EGYPT

ELECTIONS

HEC Issues Statement

Important election dates and regulations are publicized and stressed upon by the High Election Commission.

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Latest Election Statistics Provided by HEC

Over 75% of total registered candidates will run as independents in the November poll.

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Election Monitors Report on Candidate Registration Process

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Countdown to the Election

The High Election Commission (HEC) issued a statement on October 31 outlining important dates in the electoral process, and reiterating a number of regulations against the use of religious slogans, violence, and public, religious or educational facilities for campaigning. The Commission warned candidates against receiving aid from foreign organizations, and asserted that candidates must prove that they have an Egyptian father in order to be eligible to run for office.

Additional regulations included the number of candidate agents allowed in polling stations and rules related to the women's quota (namely that two separate ballot boxes will be used). In



Screen shot of the election monitors section of the HEC website www.elections.gov.eg taken on 11/7/10, merely three weeks before the scheduled People's Assembly election.

early November, the HEC launched a website, www.elections.gov.eg, which includes a reference section with relevant laws, HEC resolutions, and a guide for voters on the voting process. However, some important areas of the site, such as those pertaining to candidates and election monitors, remain incomplete. (See above screen shot of website.)



Meanwhile, the HEC has issued guidelines for domestic election monitors, while simultaneously reiterating its rejection of international election observation. This ban on international observers includes monitoring efforts by foreign diplomats, which has taken place on an informal basis during previous elections including the June 1 Shoura Council polls. Regulations on domestic election monitoring were equally harsh, and drew criticism both within Egypt and abroad. According to the HEC's October 31 decree, monitors are forbidden from making comments or asking questions of voters, polling officials, and candidate agents. Additionally, accredited observers may not enter polling stations without permission from polling station staff, effectively delegitimizing the monitors' accreditation.

The NCHR announced that as of November 9, 300 NGOs had submitted applications for 10,000 observer credentials and said that it will issue credentials to qualified observers on November 20.

According to the HEC, a total of 5,328 candidates registered for 444 non-quota seats along with 397 quota candidates competing for 64 seats. According to media sources, 1,223 of the non-quota candidates are representing parties, while 4,105 candidates are running independently, and 249 of the 397 quota candidates are independents.

In an effort to reverse the trend of unendorsed NDP candidates running as independents – and defeating their officially endorsed rivals – the ruling party has decided to run multiple candidates in some districts. In total, 311 of the party's 800 candidates have at least one opponent from the NDP. Meanwhile, some candidates not chosen by the party have protested outside governorate party headquarters' demanding that the NDP refund the donations that they made in order to be eligible for the party's electoral college. The NDP raised a reported 60 million Egyptian pounds

(approximately \$11 million USD) through this system designed to support its candidates. The relatively low number of NDP Copt candidates (10 in total) has also stirred a debate in the media between the Coptic Church, which claims no dissatisfaction, and the Evangelical Church, which claims that most of these Copts are running in districts where they will compete against other NDP candidates.

Ministry of media has empowered international media to cover the parliamentary election, accrediting **395 correspondents** and **22 foreign news agencies.** - *Al Ahran 11/11/10*

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES	
Candidate registration period (non-quota seats)	November 3-7
Candidate registration period (quota seats)	November 8-11
Final candidate list announced	November 14
Official campaign period begins	November 14
Deadline for candidate withdrawal	November 15
Ballot cards published	November 16-27
CSOs receive accreditation from NCHR	November 20-23
People's Assembly election	November 28
First round election results announced	November 29 - December 4
People's Assembly runoff election	December 5
Runoff election results announced	December 6-8
New parliament convenes	December 13



Doubts about the party's level of internal organization that were initially raised during the internal election process have been compounded by the decision on November 1 to postpone the party's annual convention. Originally planned for November 10; the conference was rescheduled for December 25 under the pretense of giving candidates more time to focus on their campaigns. This excuse rings hollow since party conventions are a campaign opportunity and Egypt typically used it as such. Therefore, the postponement has led to speculation that the president, who traditionally gives an hour-long speech on the last day of the convention, may be ill or that rifts within the party could have resulted in an embarrassing scenario prior to the election.

The latter reason is more likely, as, on November 11 in lieu of the party convention, President Mubarak presented the party platform to 500 party leaders, stressing on job growth, market reforms, and measures to combat corruption.

The Egyptian Center for Women Rights (ECWR) released a report stating that the recent allocation of parliamentary seats for women has opened women's appetite for political participation in Egypt. While only **127 woman candidates** ran in the 2005 parliamentary election, a total of **5,725 women candidates** will run for the 64 quota seats in the November 2010 polls; among them are 4,156 independents and 1,223 representing various political parties.



Having announced its list of candidates, the Wafd party began its campaign by running a pair of campaign ads on television. The ads were initially banned by the government, however after threatening to boycott the election the Wafd was allowed to run two of the four ads it had developed. After the ads aired, the Wafd was promptly sued by members of the so-called "Minor Opposition Parties Bloc," which includes several small opposition parties that are considered highly co-opted by the government, for exceeding the campaign expenditure limit. In response, the Wafd criticized the Bloc, asking why they had failed to criticize NDP candidates' reportedly huge spending on their campaigns.

News for Concern? Define imperative...

The Minister of Media prohibited any minister or state official running for parliamentary elections from appearing on TV **unless it is imperative**. He also forbid anchors who intend to run for elections to present their TV shows during the official campaign period. - *Rosa Al Youssef 11/2/10*

New Incidents of Harassment Targeting NDI

On October 28, a communications expert traveling to Cairo on behalf of NDI was detained for five hours at Cairo international Airport and deported from the country. Days later, an expatriate NDI staff member was told that her request for a visa extension was denied and that she had seven days to leave the country. NDI has also been informed that consultants and staff members who were scheduled to travel to Cairo to support NDI's programs in the lead up to the election may not be allowed in the country. In consultation with US government officials and peer organizations, NDI has concluded that this is part of the Egyptian government's effort to stifle activities by democracy strengthening organizations in advance of the elections. Nevertheless, the Institute will continue to implement programs during this period.

NDI Conducts First Election Monitoring Training in Coordination with NCHR



Between October 22 and 24, NDI worked with the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) to train 130 lawyers who will monitor the polls in Manoufiya on behalf of El Sadat Association, one of the Institute's civil society partners. NDI staff joined a team of three NCHR trainers to conduct workshops on international standards for election monitoring, Egyptian election laws and regulations, and elements of a democratic electoral process at the NCHR's offices in Cairo.



The workshops included presentations and practical exercises on the roles and responsibilities of election monitors, as well as a frank discussion of the challenges they can expect to face on election day. With support from USAID, NDI will continue to enhance El Sadat Association's efforts to observe the polls in Manoufiya, and is exploring opportunities for additional cooperation with the NCHR.

Women Candidates Share Experiences with Slovenian Activist and Former MP



As part of NDI's efforts to assist women candidates through a program supported by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), Slovenian activist and women's political participation expert Sonja Lokar shared her experiences and lessons learned in from Central and Eastern Europe with NDI partners from October 10 to 17. Lokar is the European Forum's regional coordinator for gender issues, a former parliamentarian and party secretary-general with extensive experience in advocacy, coalition-building, campaigning, election observation and monitoring political processes from a gender perspective. During her stay, Lokar met with men and women candidates,

NGOs and political party activists. Lokar spoke of her own campaign experiences, sharing the "unwritten rules of campaigning," and helped candidates refine their campaign speeches and practice handling tough questions from journalists. Speaking at a multi-party gathering of approximately 20 women candidates on October 17, she described what she wished she had known before entering politics, what she learned as a politician and above all the value of supporting other women before and after entering the parliament.

Lokar also met with the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) and the Alliance for Arab Women (AAW) to discuss similarities and differences between women's movements in Egypt and Central and Eastern Europe. Lokar shared examples of creative campaigning to increase women's political participation in countries such as Czech Republic, Poland and Ukraine which could be adapted to the Egyptian context. ECWR also invited Lokar to present the concept of women's coalition-building to a group of 50 NGO field coordinators in the larger organization's network.

"How do you create an athlete? You don't just pick one and say, 'be a champion,' you find him when he's a child and train and support him into adulthood so he can compete against someone with the same strength and skill. It's no different finding women candidates. It's the party's responsibility to find the women leaders, train them, support them and have a structure that makes the process of running as a candidate fair for them."

Sonja Lokar, Slovenian Activist and Former MP, to Reform & Development Party (RDP) candidates and leaders

EASD Releases Final Report on the Candidate Registration Process

On November 8, NDI partner the Egyptian Association for the Support of Democracy (EASD) published its final report on the candidate registration process. With support from USAID, EASD will deploy 5,000 trained volunteers to observe the 2010 People's Assembly electoral process. Compared with previous elections, the EASD report notes that the registration process was relatively smooth compared at least during the first four days. On the final day, numerous irregularities occurred, including candidates being barred from entering registration offices, the use of "fake queues" to prevent candidates from registering, and violence between supporters of different candidates and, in some districts, between candidates' supporters and the security services. EASD also noted that the NDP waited until one hour before the close of registration to officially register its candidates, in an effort to prevent those who were not chosen from running as independents.

President Mubarak affirmed in his speech to members of the Supreme Politics Council, along with senior NDP leaders, that the elections, which will be supervised and monitored by the HEC and Egyptian civil society, will be **free and transparent**. - *Al Ahram, 11/11/10*

EASD issued its first statement on the campaign period on November 13, before the date set by the HEC for the official start of campaigning. In doing so, EASD highlighted the fact that the vast majority of candidates had already begun campaigning before they were legally allowed to do so. In addition to early campaigning, the statement also mentions numerous examples of religious campaign slogans, the use of mosques, schools, and public buildings for campaign purposes, and instances of candidates distributing gifts of food to voters. Both reports are available on EASD's website www.egyelections.com.

Partners in Change Launch Candidate Debates and Street Theater Performances



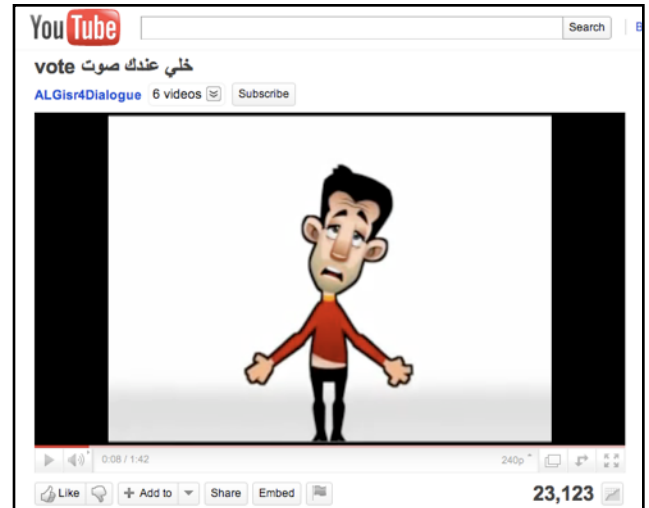
On November 18, the Partners in Change (PIC) coalition launched a series of candidate debates and street theater performances to encourage voter participation in the parliamentary election with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). PIC's effort expands upon the successful program that it conducted during the Shoura Council election in June, which included the first ever candidate debates in Egypt. For the People's Assembly elections, PIC is combining candidate debates with street theater performances to provide citizens in 27 governorates a uniquely informative and

interactive spectacle prior to the election. This voter education series kicked off in Manoufiya and 6 October governorates on November 19. Partners in Change will continue these events in Minya and Helwan in the week prior to the election. PIC will also be conducting a citizen monitoring effort on election day.



“Have a Voice” Campaign Gains Popularity

Over the past month and a half, and with support from the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), NDI partner the Bridge Center for Dialogue and Development (Bridge) has been implementing a highly successful campaign to encourage young people to vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The campaign, entitled “Have a Voice,” includes a website, www.vote4egypt.com, as well as an online marketing campaign and a YouTube channel that has drawn tens of thousands of hits. Bridge’s efforts have been so successful, in fact, that a recent story on Masrawy, a popular Egyptian news site, profiled an identical campaign being run by a provincial office of the Muslim Brotherhood. Bridge contacted Masrawy, and discovered that the Brotherhood office had copied the campaign’s branding for their GOTV effort. Bridge notified the organization’s national leadership, which is currently conducting an internal investigation. While it is unfortunate that a political party attempted to use the nonpartisan campaign for its own partisan gains, it is also a sign of success that the Muslim Brotherhood, with its formidable GOTV machine, attempted to co-opt the campaign. The article on Masrawy has since been redacted.



The “Have a Voice” campaign’s fourth spot ad to encourage Egyptian citizens to vote received over 23,000 hits on YouTube as of 11/20/10.

Creative Campaigning

To VEIL or not to veil? Heba Ali Mahmoud, an NDP women’s quota candidate in Giza has distributed two types of campaign posters (see right): one set where she is veiled and one where she is unveiled, to appeal to different sectors of the electorate. This has led to her being lampooned by the independent media, as seen in the cartoon below.



“For your sake*...in order to satisfy the tastes of all.”

*Note: “For Your Sake” was the slogan touted by the NDP at its 2009 party convention.

BACKUP Plan? Ongoing uncertainty over the identity of the NDP’s 2011 presidential candidate have led supporters of Gamal Mubarak to hedge their bets. The poster on the right proclaims “the campaign to support Gamal Mubarak for President in the event that President Hosni Mubarak does not run for president.”



The Election Enigma - Questions Waiting to be Answered

Ethical Dilemma: Ministry of Media Monitoring the Media?

Information Minister Anas El-Feqqi has ordered the formation of a committee to monitor election campaign activities on radio and TV. The committee is made up of journalists, academics, representatives of civil society and human rights organizations, and representatives of the political parties that will participate in the 2010 parliamentary election. Although the committee's mandate is to make sure that radio and TV campaign ads and programs abide by the standards and principles of media election coverage, the independence and credibility of its monitoring efforts are undermined by the involvement and role of the Ministry.

In a similar development, the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) announced the opening of a center to monitor the electoral process in collaboration with the Higher Election Commission (HEC). The Center will reportedly have an operations room equipped with 60 telephone lines for its hotline to receive complaints from candidate agents around the clock. Although the NCHR and HEC have long asserted their independence, the NCHR stated that it will allocate special places for representatives of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Media, and Legal Affairs inside the Council's monitoring centers (*Al Wafd*, 10/30/10) raising further questions about the roles of both institutions.

Colonel Refaat Komsan, the head of the General Elections Directorate at the Ministry of Interior Affairs, asserted that there are **40 million Egyptians who have the right to vote** in about 44,000 polling stations. (*Al Ahram*, 11/3/10) He also said that it is impossible to implement an electronic voting system because of the country's 29 percent illiteracy rate. Komsan added that Egyptian **expatriates will not be allowed to vote** in the coming elections. Since 2006, the Ministry of Interior has allowed Egyptian consulates in 140 countries to distribute voting cards to expatriates. The colonel mentioned that only one Egyptian expatriate from New York applied to the consulate requesting his voting card. (*Nahdet Masr*, 11/7/10)

Solution to "Islam is the Solution"?

Former Muslim Brotherhood (MB) Supreme Guide Mahdi Akef told *Rosa Al-Youssef* (10/27/10) that MB candidates will be using the group's motto "Islam is the Solution," although the Higher Election Commission (HEC) warned that it will ban the candidacy of anyone who uses religious slogans in their election campaigns. Akef explained there is a court ruling that allows the Brotherhood to use the slogan in question, and stressed that the HEC's decision is unrealistic and unconstitutional. *Al Ahram* (11/5/10) later reported that the Administrative Court supported the HEC's decision to ban candidates from using the catchphrase "Islam is the Solution" in their election campaigns. Although the MB is carrying on regardless, increasing numbers of their supporters have been arrested by state security forces while attempting to post campaign posters with the infamous mantra.

International Observers AND Embassy Staff?

Under constant pressure from both the local and international communities and press, senior officials from the government and ruling NDP continue to publicly reject international election observers on the basis that there are competent domestic observers in Egypt. In a new twist, officials have extended this rejection to specifically rejected embassy staff based in Egypt, who have traditionally toured the polls on election day. Dr. Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly, has been quite vociferous on this matter in recent weeks. The National Council for Human Rights, responsible for accrediting election observers, also announced that representatives of embassies will not be authorized to observe the election.