

EGYPT

ELECTIONS

<p>HEC Issues Controversial Statement <i>NGOs are only allowed to “follow” election, not monitor.</i></p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>Election Monitors Report on Campaign Period <i>Candidates of all parties are violating the electoral law.</i></p> <p>Page 2</p>	<p>Website for Women Candidates Launched <i>New technology is used to increase the visibility of women candidates.</i></p> <p>Page 4</p>	<p>Youth GOTV Campaign Intensifies <i>New spot ads released to encourage citizens to vote.</i></p> <p>Page 7</p>
--	---	---	---

Countdown to the Election

The chairman of the High Elections Commission (HEC), Al-Sayid Abdel Aziz, issued a controversial statement on November 22 that there will be no monitoring of Sunday’s election. Civil society organizations will instead be allowed to “follow” them, since, according to Abdel Aziz’s statement, “monitoring” implies the right to ask questions of poll workers regarding the electoral process, which will be forbidden. Rather, the statement continued, monitors will be allowed to make brief visits to polling stations to observe election day proceedings. Video and still photography will also be prohibited.



This statement, combined with [HEC Resolution 57](#), which outlines the regulations pertaining to election monitoring, has stirred fears among NGOs that they will not be allowed inside polling stations at all. Article 6 is perhaps the most problematic part of the resolution:

Persons permitted to observe the electoral process may enter polling and counting committees with the permission of the chairperson of the general committee or the permission of the polling committee. She/he may not interfere in the work of the chairperson of the committee or its members, or address observations or questions to any of them, or conduct interviews or polls with voters or candidate representatives inside the committees, or undertake any form of campaigning for any candidate or party.

Persons with permits may report violations to the authorities based on credible information and tangible evidence.



By requiring accredited observers to seek the permission of polling station staff to enter, their accreditation is in effect superseded by the authority of polling center staff. Additionally, the clause prohibiting observers from interacting with polling station staff, voters, or candidate representatives is vague enough to allow officials to expel observers on a whim.

Meanwhile, the HEC failed to issue observer accreditations on time, and NGOs received only a small fraction of their requested number when badges were finally issued. NDI's election monitoring partner The Egyptian Association for the Support of Democracy (EASD) received 500 out of 5,000 requested accreditations, for example. To date, the HEC has not explained its decision to refuse most observers' accreditation requests.

In response to these events, EASD and six other election monitoring organizations¹ issued a joint statement on November 24 denouncing the restrictions placed upon election monitors by the HEC and the fact that the HEC has only issued a small number of the accreditations requested by the organizations. The organizations called upon the HEC to issue the requested observer accreditations by November 25 at 5:00pm in order to allow the organizations sufficient time to distribute them to their observers across the country. In the event that this demand is not met, the organizations said that they would not accept accreditation from the HEC and would observe elections as they have in the past, with no official accreditation.

EASD Issues Daily Reports During Pre-Election Period



NDI's domestic election observation partner the Egyptian Association for the Support of Democracy (EASD) has released daily statements on the pre-election period since November 13. The reports include the findings of 400 pre-election observers distributed throughout all of Egypt's 222 districts, and are available on EASD's website, www.egyelections.com.

EASD has observed that whether candidates represent the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), the Muslim Brotherhood, secular opposition parties, or are independents, they have been committing a broad range of electoral violations with impunity. The HEC appears to be unable or uninterested in stopping most violations.

The most common violations include the use of religious slogans and places of worship for campaign purposes (by candidates of every affiliation), the use of public buildings and schools for campaign purposes, and tearing down opponents' posters. As the campaign period has progressed, however, EASD has noted a disturbing rise in more serious violations, including violent clashes between supporters of rival candidates, authorities breaking up campaign rallies with supporters of Muslim Brotherhood candidates, and attempts by some candidates to bribe their rivals into withdrawing their candidacies.



Screen shot of EASD's election monitoring website www.egyelections.com, which was created and revamped with support from NDI.

¹ Al Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Non-Violence Studies, The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement, the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, The Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services, and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies.

Ministers running as professional candidates in the 2010 parliamentary election. - Rosa Al Youssef 11/2/10

CANDIDATE	MINISTRY	DISTRICT AREA
Youssef Boutrous Ghali	Finance	Cairo
Sameh Fahmy	Petroleum	Cairo
Mofeed Shehab	Legal Affairs & Legislative Councils	Alexandria
Adel Salam Mahgoub	Local Development	Alexandria
Aly Mouselhy	Social Solidarity	Sharkiya
Amin Abaza	Agriculture	Sharkiya
Fayza Abouel Naga	International Cooperation	Port Said - Quota Seat
Sayed Mashaal	Military Production	Helwan
Nasr El Din Alam	Irrigation & Water Resources	Sohag

According to EASD reports, the first casualty of the elections occurred on November 21, when a young soldier named Emad Ahmad Othman was killed by celebratory gunfire at a campaign event for an NDP candidate in Qena. Given this event, and escalating campaign violence around the country, EASD called upon the HEC to intervene and put an end to electoral violence.

Meanwhile, EASD also denounced the disturbing lengths that Hamdy Zahran, a Muslim Brotherhood candidate from Beni Sweif, went to in an attempt to keep his rally from being broken up by the security forces. According to an EASD observer who was present at one of Zahran's rallies, the candidate put a group of young children at the front of the audience in an effort to deter security forces from arresting him or his supporters. The human shield tactic did not work however, as security forces managed to separate the children from the candidate's adult supporters who were dispersed by force.


Despite widespread violations, EASD did highlight a few areas where local authorities enforced electoral laws. For example, every single candidate in Manoufiya was fined LE 5,000 for early campaigning, while authorities in Minya tore down campaign posters that had been hung on public buildings.

With support from USAID, EASD will continue to issue daily statements prior to election day, when it will field 5,000 observers across Egypt. EASD is also conducting a media monitoring effort, and will monitor the run off election that will take place on December 5. NDI will continue to provide technical assistance to EASD the election cycle.



Campaign banners in the Minya governorate

Creative Campaigning



CLEANING up corruption: A group of Alexandria university students launched a new campaign entitled "Let's Clean it Up", encouraging students to participate in the parliamentary election in support of reformers rather than corrupt candidates. - Nahdet Masr, 11/6/10

NDI Launches Website to Support Women Candidates

With elections for the People's Assembly and Local Councils just around the corner and a new quota law guaranteeing that more women will participate in elections than ever before, NDI has created the website www.AswatMasreyat.com – a gateway to women's political participation in Egypt – to increase the visibility of Egyptian women in politics. Supported by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), this site is a non-partisan, non-governmental resource for women interested in politics to learn, connect and get involved. The site offers space for candidates to profile their campaigns, links to local women's organizations, and online resources such as Aswat.com and iKNOWPolitics.com. Beyond the November poll, NDI will develop the site as a platform for networking and campaigning in advance of 2012's Local Council election.



Screen shot of women's political participation website www.AswatMasreyat.com.

A Day in the Campaign of Ina'am Mohamed Ali

NDI has been following and providing technical assistance to several women candidates. One such candidate is Wafd member Ina'am Mohamed Ali, who is running for the professional quota seat in Sharkeya governorate.

November 22, 2010, 10:00 a.m. – Ina'am Mohamed Ali and her campaign team (which include her son, brother, campaign manager, local endorsers from different political parties and a canvassing crew) arrive in the 10th of Ramadan industrial district. Led by a large truck adorned with posters, photos and campaign slogans, volunteers holler the many reasons to vote for Ali through a megaphone. Speakers blast a catchy tune whose lyrics illustrate Ali's sincerity and devotion to Sharkeya. For weeks, Ali has been traversing the country's second largest and most populated governorate with this eye and ear-catching caravan. Of the 17 districts in Sharkeya, 10th of Ramadan and the small villages of Belbeis, Sanafein, Mashtool and Zawalem were the last visited by the campaign.



11:00 a.m. – Ali and team visit a municipal building that houses social security, tax and electricity services. Ina'am meets the general manager of each division and shakes hands with employees and citizens while the campaign team distributes flyers and reminds voters to go to the polls on election day and look for Ali's symbol, the palm tree. Ali is allowed to campaign freely in the municipal building and faces no problems with security. Employees of one office chant "Yehya el Wafd! Hata law fecha el rafid!" ("Long live the Wafd! Even if I get fired!")



As Ali visits each department, citizens approach her to ask questions or share their problems. Two employees from the electricity department, impressed by Ali's campaign, volunteer to help out from today until election day. Another, who says he has connections to six very important families in Sharkeya, enthusiastically promises his vote for Ali. An owner of a small kiosk rushes to Ali to explain that his building owner has threatened to tear down his shop. A campaign volunteer who happens to be a writer for the Wafd party newspaper agreed to write about his problem in the next issue. Ali promised to do what she could to help mediate the dispute and reach a settlement that is fair for all.

12:00 p.m. – The team visits the bank across the municipal office to meet the general manager and employees, but is asked not to campaign as the manager is supporting the Muslim Brotherhood. Walking back to the campaign truck, a volunteer who belongs to the Nasserite party explains that he supports Ali because she is capable of building coalitions and can relate to the average citizen.

12:30 p.m. – Ali's campaign team returns to downtown 10th of Ramadan, with the campaign song blasting from the truck. Citizens rush to ask for posters and flyers to put in their car windows. Ali visits stores, coffee shops, restaurants, bakeries and the micro-bus station, talking to citizens and distributing flyers. While sipping sugarcane juice at a local stand, a citizen explains to Ali that he does not see the point in voting, because his vote will not make a difference in a corrupt system. She convinces him otherwise, telling him to take part in change, because if his ballot card is empty, it will be easier for someone to rig his vote. “*She’s an iron woman,*” says her campaign manager who returned to politics after years of disillusionment, because he believes in Ali’s leadership.



“Her team believes in her, and the people believe in her and we are giving her our utmost support.”



1:30 p.m. – Ali visits the local electricity council building whose manager is a Wafd supporter and offers his endorsement.

2:00 p.m. – The team arrives at a local social club, where it is turned away. A guard explains that the members hold a grudge against the Wafd party after they beat the club’s majority of NDP members in recent board elections.

2:30 p.m. – Ali and team continue to an area consisting only of factories. She is not allowed to campaign inside factories, but the team stays put with the vans in the parking lot, munching on some donated cookies and waiting for the workers who will soon clock out for the day. Soon they fire up the speakers and blast the “Ina’am Mohamed Ali” song while volunteers pass out flyers to the workers who shimmy and dance to the catchy beat.

4:00 p.m. – The caravan rests at a local youth club to upload the day’s photos to Facebook and review the Wafd party website, while volunteers who have taken time from their regular jobs make phone calls to check in with their employers. The team laughs and jokes and enjoys a rare opportunity to relax and eat sandwiches before pressing ahead into the evening.



5:00 p.m. – Back on the road, the truck’s speakers are at full volume as the caravan treks ahead to meet constituents in some of Sharkeya’s villages.

6:00 p.m. – The cars slowly pass through the villages of Belbais and Senafein, where Ina’am waves to voters, shakes their hands and volunteers distribute hundreds of flyers to excited crowds.



7:00 p.m. – Ali visits Mashtool, where she meets an independent worker’s candidate named Hussein Fahmy Abo Suleiman. Sitting in his roadside campaign tent, she secures his endorsement on behalf of his voters in Mashtool for quota race. Sulieman’s team hands out cold drinks to Ali’s volunteers who have been greeting even bigger crowds than at the last stop.

8:00 p.m. – The caravan reaches Zawalem and snakes through the crowded streets. Kids rush the cars and climb on the truck, taking handfuls of flyers for their parents. Women smile and wave at Ali and reach to shake her hands. A young man on a motorbike speeds up to Ali’s car and offers to help her campaign by beating anyone up who does not vote for her. She smiles and says that will not be necessary and is not the right thing to do, but asks for his vote in any case. Zawalem has come to life with people dancing in the streets, clapping and waving for more than an hour.

9:00 p.m. – NDI waves goodbye to the campaign team, which continues down the road to meet with more village families and gain some ground in the vast landscape of Sharkeya. The Ina’am Mohamed Ali song fades as the caravan pushes onward.



Partners in Change Prepare Election Day Monitors to Report Live on Radio



PIC conducts street theater in Minya to encourage citizens to vote on November 28.

With USAID support, NDI continues to provide technical assistance to the Partners in Change coalition. The Coalition recently launched the second phase of its National Endowment for Democracy (NED)-funded "Participation is Our Duty" program, to raise citizen awareness about elections. As part of this program, the coalition has been organizing candidate debates and interactive street theater shows in different electoral districts of ten governorates. The activities are intended to motivate citizens, increase their participation in the political process and improve their electoral knowledge.

Moreover, the coalition is currently finalizing its action plan for election day. Two hundred and seventy PIC monitors will be heading to polling stations to cast their ballots, and during this process they will register any irregularities they encounter and report them live on an internet radio station called Radio Mahrousa (<http://www.elma7rosa.net/index2.html>). The radio station will be hosting an expert lawyer to discuss the issue and offer legal recommendations. Although the HEC has issued decrees forbidding the use of video cameras near polling centers, PIC monitors will attempt to upload videos of electoral violations to the U-Shahid campaign's website (<http://u-shahid.org/live/>). U-Shahid is a new technology based monitoring campaign that is being managed by the Development and Institutionalization Support Center (DISC).

In addition to its citizen monitoring efforts, the PIC coalition has trained 27 lawyers on international standards for free and fair elections, the Egyptian laws governing the electoral process, and the different types of electoral violations that may occur on election day. These lawyers will deliver observers' reports of electoral violations to the HEC and its regional branches.

"Have a Voice" GOTV Campaign Intensifies With Release of New Spot Ads

With election day quickly approaching, NDI partner, the Bridge Center for Dialogue and Development (Bridge), has ramped up its "Have a Voice" media campaign, releasing the last of seven spot ads this week, and expanding its online marketing campaign to include ads on *Youm As-Sabea* (www.youm7.com), one of the most popular Egyptian news sites. The campaign's YouTube channel continues to draw thousands of hits, with affiliated bloggers and activists launching videos using the campaign's slogans to encourage voters to head to the polls.



Screen shot of local news site Youm As-Sabea www.youm7.com, featuring the "Have a Voice" campaign ad at the bottom of the page.

Through the campaign's website and Facebook group, Bridge has been encouraging visitors and members of the site to research candidates in their districts and to encourage their friends and family to vote. In the days before the election and on election day itself, Bridge will organize small groups to head to the polls together in order to help overcome any obstacles that the authorities may place in the way of voters.