



Egyptian Association for Supporting Democratic Development

Registered no. (5469 – 2004)

Press Release (1)

The Egyptian Association for the Support of Democratic Development (EASD) is monitoring the voting process during the first phase of Parliamentary elections on November 9, 2005 with 145 monitors in 22 districts throughout 5 governorates. From the opening of the polling stations at 8:00am until 12:00pm, monitors located in the various governorates reported on numerous violations, including:

1. Judges are preventing monitors from entering the polling station in several cases, despite their possession of monitoring badges from the Upper Parliamentary Election Committee and official letter from EASD;
2. Numerous polling stations opened late;
3. In some cases, no measures are being taken to ensure the secrecy of the vote;
4. Campaign literature in support of ruling party candidates is present within polling stations;
5. Voters are being pressured to cast their ballot in favor of National Democratic Party (NDP) candidates in some polling stations;
6. Several polling stations are located in police headquarters and local councils in violation of the law;
7. Public transportation is being used being for NDP candidate campaigns and for transporting voters to polling stations;
8. Several cases of vote buying for different candidates were witnessed.

As a result of these reports and in support of the principles of democracy and transparency, EASD stresses on the critical need to allow the presence of civil society monitors within the polling stations to observe the voting and counting process without any restrictions or conditions, in accordance with the recent judicial ruling issued by the Administrative Court regarding this matter.

EASD would also like to highlight several positive developments, such as the neutral stance of security forces for the first time during parliamentary elections in Egypt, as well as increased voter turnout in various districts and judges' cooperation with civil society monitors in many instances.

During the preliminary hours of the Election Day, EASD monitors observed a number of violations, including:

Prevention of monitors from entering the polling stations

- In the Safiya Zaghoul Elementary School polling station in the Helwan district and in the Turah Elementary School polling station in the district of Bisateen in Cairo, the judges prevented EASD monitors from entering the polling station and insisted that they observe the process from outside.
- In the Bader Sheen Secondary School polling station in the Bader Sheen district of Giza, only 2 candidate agents were allowed inside. In another incident, candidate agents were prevented from entering a polling station located at a girls' secondary school in the governorate of Matrouh, unless their names were on the voter registry.
- In the Nagah Training School polling station in Giza, the judge allowed EASD monitors to enter only if they acted as candidate agents because no agents were present at the time and they are required to officially open the polling station.

Late opening of polling stations

- In some cases, monitors reported that polling stations opened one hour late: Safiya Zaghoul Elementary School polling station in the Helwan district in Cairo, secondary school for girls polling station in the governorate of Matrouh, the Nagah Training School polling station in Giza, and the Martyr Fakri School polling station in the Birka Sebaa district in Manoufiya.

Voter registry violations

- EASD monitors reported many instances where the voter registry was not posted outside the polling station or where the voter registry was inaccurate, such as in the Bader Sheen Secondary School polling station in the Bader Sheen district of Giza and the Aabour Elementary School polling station in Giza. In polling station 49 in the Astanha district of Manoufiya the voter registry included the name of woman passed away in 1974, Intisar Ahmed Hussein, number 677, voter ID 507. Also in the same registry, the name Mohamed Ahmed Hassanein was repeated many times.

Misuse of the indelible voter ink

- In the Safiya Zaghoul Elementary School polling station in the Helwan district of Cairo, an agent for the independent candidate Ismail Nasreddine filed a complaint with EASD monitors that the indelible ink was not being used. Also in the Manshiya School polling station in the Haram district of Giza, monitors reported that the ink was not being used.

Campaign material inside and outside the polling stations

- In the Bader Sheen Secondary School polling station in the Bader Sheen district of Giza, monitors reported that agents for independent

candidate Sherif Anani inside and outside the polling station were wearing T-shirts with their candidate's picture.

- In the Safiya Zaghoul Elementary School polling station in the Helwan district of Cairo, campaign material for all candidates was being distributed outside the polling station and active campaigning was taking place with loudspeakers.
- In the Abu Bakr Assadiq School polling station, in the Gharbi district of Matrouh, campaign material was posted in front of the polling station for the candidates: Abdallah Mastour Farag (Independent), Suleiman Aamal (Independent), Mamdouh Alder Bali (Independent).

Measures to protect voter secrecy

- EASD monitors observed that no measures were taken to protect voter secrecy in various polling stations, such as the Nagah Training School polling station in Giza, the Manshiya School polling station in the Haram district of Giza, and in the Salab Elementary School polling station in the district of Tabeen in Cairo.

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From 12:00pm until 4:00pm, monitors located in the various governorates continued to report on and follow-up with the numerous violations cited earlier, which clearly indicate a breach of the parliamentary electoral law and Upper Parliamentary Elections Committee's decisions. Moreover, the manner in which the voting process was administered underlines the lack of distinction between the role of the ruling party and the government.

EASD still commends the neutral stance of the majority of security forces. At the same time however, blatant interference by different government institutions in the electoral process is creating great concern over the credibility and integrity of the election.

During this reporting period, EASD monitors on the ground observed a number of violations, including:

Prevention of monitors from entering the polling stations

- Judges prevented EASD monitors from entering the following polling stations: Turah Elementary School in the district of Bisateen, the Anwariya School in the Maadi district, the Amariya Preparatory School – Dar Essalam in the Old Cairo district, the Safiya Zaghoul Elementary School in the Helwan district in Cairo, and in the Safat Alben Elementary School in the district of Kerdassa in Giza..
- In another case, EASD monitors were only allowed to step in and out of the Sayda Aisha Elementary School polling station and in the Salah Eddine Preparatory Girls' School in the Khalifa district of Cairo.

Voter registry violations

- In the Astanha Secondary School polling station in the Bagour district of Manoufiya, EASD monitors observed a multitude of mistakes in the voter registry, such as the repetition of voters' names. For example, the name Yasser Mahmoud Ahmed was listed three times with ID numbers 17 and 39 in polling station 6, and ID number 32 in polling station 3.
- EASD monitors found that the voter registry was not posted in the following polling stations: Nazel Alshabab in Matrouh, the Masheer Ahmed Ismail School in the Haram district of Giza, and in Safat Alben Elementary School in the district of Kerdassa in Giza.

- In the Munira School in the district of Embaba in Giza, EASD monitors found numerous misspelled names in the voter registry, which ultimately prevented citizens such as Mohamed Abdallah Marzouk from voting despite his possession of a voter ID card.
- EASD monitors also reported in the Othman Ben Affan Secondary School in the Boulaq district of Giza, some voters were unable to cast their ballots because their names were similar to other voters.

Misuse of the indelible voter ink

- In the Muassasa School polling station in the Bagour district of Manoufiya and polling station 40 in the Rashad Elementary School in the Tabeen district of Cairo, EASD monitors noted that the indelible ink was present but not being used. At the same time, the Muassasa School polling station witnessed intervention and voting in favor of the NDP candidate.
- Some voters in the Masheer Ahmed Ismail School in the Haram district of Giza did not use the indelible ink.
- The indelible ink was not present in polling station 45 in the Rashad Elementary School in the Tabeen district of Cairo.

Campaign material inside and outside the polling stations

- EASD monitors observed campaign material for NDP candidates inside and numerous candidates outside the Sayda Aisha Elementary School polling station in the Khalifa district of Cairo.
- Various campaign ads for NDP candidates were posted in front of the Astanha Secondary School polling station in the Bagour district of Manoufiya.
- In front of the Abtal Al-Abbour School polling station in the Matariya district of Cairo, a privately owned car with license plate number 87224 was carrying campaign ads supporting NDP candidates Atef Al-Ashmouni and Mahmoud Abda.
- Campaign material was also found within the Masheer Ahmed Ismail School in the Haram district of Giza, the Abu Bakr Assadiq School polling station number 86 in the Embaba district of Giza, polling stations 71 and 73 in the Munira School in the district of Bulaq in Giza (NDP candidates Walid Al-Maligi and Ismail Hilal).
- EASD monitors observed NDP voter guides being distributed in the Othman Ben Affan Secondary School polling station in the Boulaq district of Giza, as well as other campaign material for the Muslim Brotherhood outside the station.

Measures to protect voter secrecy

- EASD monitors reported the lack of measures to ensure voter secrecy in the following polling stations: Manawi Training School, Al-Tabeen Secondary Technical School, and polling station 7 in the Salab School in the Tabeen district of Cairo, as well as in the Abu Rowash Elementary School for Girls in the Kerdassa district, the Masheer Ahmed Ismail School in the Haram district and the Rashed Elementary School in the Tabeen district of Giza.

Incidents of violence

- In polling station 2 of the Muassasa School in the district of Bagour in Manoufiya, EASD monitors reported numerous acts of violence by ruling party loyalists towards agents for Wafd candidate Mohamed Kamel.
- Additional acts of violence were carried out by NDP activists against agents for independent candidate Tarek Hasanein in the Munira School polling station in the Embaba district of Giza.

Administrative interference

- EASD monitors noted that polling station officials in the Othman Ben Affan Secondary School polling station in the Boulaq district of Giza were filling ballots for voters who were allegedly illiterate.
- In another case, polling station officials in the Muassasa School in the district of Bagour in Manoufiya pressured voters to cast their ballots in favor of NDP candidates.

Voter intimidation

- In the Bab Al-Baher School polling station in the Bab Al-Shaariya district of Cairo, EASD monitors reported the presence of NDP loyalists who were pressuring voters to vote for ruling party candidates.
- In the Imam Ali School polling station in the Dirasa district of Cairo, NDP candidate Mohamed Ibraheim Suleiman was distributing money and gifts (clothes) to voters.

Electoral fraud

- In the Imam Ali School polling station in the Dirasa district of Cairo, NDP candidate Mohamed Ibraheim Suleiman brought voters from other districts to cast their ballots in his favor.
- In the Aziz Masri School polling station in the Haram district of Giza and in the Abu Rowash Elementary Girls' School in the Kerdassa district of Cairo, EASD monitors reported that some citizens were allowed to vote without any ID.

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The Egyptian Association for Supporting Democratic Development demands that the Upper Parliamentary Elections Committee ensures the integrity of each phase of the Parliamentary election

The Egyptian Association for the Support of Democratic Development (EASD) monitored the voting process during the first phase of Parliamentary elections on November 9, 2005 with 145 monitors in 22 districts throughout 5 governorates. EASD is producing a comprehensive report on the findings of their monitoring efforts throughout Egypt, which acknowledges positive developments such as the neutral stance of state security and their non-interference on behalf of any ruling party candidate for the first time in the history of Egyptian Parliamentary elections.

On the other hand, the report clearly points to violations that took place, threatening democracy and the integrity of the electoral process, and defying the electoral law and instructions issued by the Upper Parliamentary Elections Committee (UPEC). Consequently, EASD demands that the UPEC, in light of its authority, carry out the necessary procedures to facilitate the electoral process in the upcoming run-off election and in the remaining second and third phases of the Parliamentary election:

- Allow civil society organizations to monitor every stage of the electoral process, from voter registration to the vote counting and announcement of results;
- Apply the law pertaining to the electoral campaign expenditure ceiling, which is set at 70,000 EGP per candidate;
- Ensure election officials do not allow candidates to campaign inside or outside the polling station premises;
- Ensure election officials provide curtains or other measures to guarantee the secrecy of the vote;
- Make certain that election officials post voter registries in a visible location at every polling station;
- Make certain that election officials allow citizens to vote only if they have proper identification and a pink voter card;
- Ensure election officials obtain signatures or fingerprints from voters next to their name on the voters' list;
- Make certain that election officials require voters to dip their finger in indelible ink after casting their ballot;
- Ensure election officials prevent voters from using their mobile phones to take pictures inside the polling station, as this method was widely used in the vote-buying process;
- Ensure election officials allow the presence of candidate agents when transporting the ballot boxes from the sub-polling station to the general polling station for the vote counting;

- Make certain election officials at the general polling station allow candidate agents to monitor the counting of the votes;
- Ensure election officials at the general polling station count the votes in one ballot box at a time in front of the candidates or their agents;
- Ensure election officials at the general polling station announce the result of each ballot box by itself;
- Make certain election officials at the general polling station do not leave the room where the counting is taking place and that the counting process is not stopped for any reason until the results are announced.

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