People's Assembly Elections – Second Round

Second Interim Statement
December 14, 2011, 11:00 p.m.

Project Rakeeb notes largely peaceful voting process, continuing problem of campaigning by range of political contestants
Continued denial of access to accredited observers remains problematic

Project Rakeeb is joint collaboration between two Egyptian civil society organizations – the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE) and the Egyptian Association for Development and Dissemination of Legal Awareness (EADDLA).

On the first day of the second round of voting in the People's Assembly Elections, Project Rakeeb deployed 471 non-partisan citizen observers in all nine governorates where elections are taking place. Rakeeb observers were deployed to a statistically-sound, random and representative sample of polling stations and have been sending observation reports via text message to a Central Data Center in Cairo.

Throughout the first day of the second round of elections, Rakeeb observers reported the voting process was largely calm nationwide. Overall, few incidents of violence or intimidation were reported.

Of concern, active political campaigning by a range of political contestants was found to be problematic. In contrast to the first round, when the majority of incidents were attributed to Freedom and Justice Party and Nour Party, Rakeeb Observers reported active campaigning by a wider range of political contestants, including, the Egyptian Bloc, Reform and Development, and many independent candidates. Project Rakeeb acknowledges that security forces in a few locations sought to prevent campaigning around polling stations however this was not implemented uniformly nationwide.

Also of concern, Project Rakeeb observers continued to be denied access or expelled from polling stations despite having received SJCE accreditation. In a few cases, observers were denied access to polling centers by security personnel in violation of SJCE authority and the rights of accredited election observers under SJCE regulations and international standards for elections.

Judicial supervisors and polling officials continue to apply election procedures in an inconsistent manner, seemingly due to weak communication from the SJCE. For example, observers in some locations reported that polling stations closed at 7 PM with voters still in queue. In a few cases, pressure from disenfranchised voters prompted judicial supervisors to reopen the polling stations. In other cases, judicial supervisors insisted on closing polling stations on time despite the voters in queue. In addition, some judicial supervisors exercised their authority to prevent campaigning within polling center premises while others did not seek to address the problem.

Qualitative Indicators

Based on data gathered from 95 percent of observers who reported on the voting process and closing of polling stations, Project Rakeeb found some procedural inconsistencies where observers were deployed:

Findings	Percentage
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Some Individuals Not Found on Voters' List	47%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Some Individuals Permitted to Vote Without ID	11%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Polling Officials Sometimes Did Not Make Tick Next to Voters' Names	16%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Polling Officials Sometimes Issued Unstamped Ballot Papers to Voters	6%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Voters Not Able to Mark Ballots in Secrecy	18%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Polling Officials Did Not Put Ink on Fingers of Some Voters After Voting	19%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Voters Did Not Sign or Ink Next to Their Names After Voting	3%

Project Rakeeb found that the vast majority of polling stations closed on time or slightly after to accommodate voters in queue at 7 PM. Where polling stations opened late, the SJCE announced the extension of voting until 9 PM in those locations. Below is a breakdown of closing times:

Closing Time	Percentage
Before 7 PM	6%
Between 7 and 8 PM	78%
After 8 PM	16%

Critical Incidents

On the first day of the second round of voting, there were relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation, there were a number of critical incidents that Rakeeb observers reported:

- 49 Rakeeb observers have either been denied access or expelled from polling stations;
- 66 incidents of active campaigning by political contestants in and around polling stations;
- 36 incidents of the presence of campaign materials inside polling stations, often of Freedom and Justice Party, Nour Party and independent candidates;
- 12 incidents of political party representatives using religious slogans to influence voters;
- 6 incidents of political party or candidate agents being expelled from polling stations;
- 2 incidents of circular voting, both in Beheira; and
- 5 incidents of violence, including a physical conflict between security officials and voters in queue at a polling station in Beheira.

Project Rakeeb requests that the SJCE uphold its commitment to rectify mistakes encountered in the first round. Specifically, Project Rakeeb recommends SJCE:

- Ensure that observers who have been accredited by the SJCE are guaranteed access to polling stations in accordance with the Code of Conduct, international election standards and regulations of the SJCE itself;
- Ensure that security officials are acting in accordance with the law and not interfering in the work of the SJCE. Armed forces interference has a negative impact on the credibility and transparency of the election process and undermines SJCE authority;
- Ensure the consistent application of official election procedures by judicial supervisors and polling officials to reduce confusion and errors at polling stations; and
- Use its authority to prevent campaigning in and around polling centers and ensure that the period of campaign silence is upheld in accordance with the law.

Project Rakeeb also calls upon all political parties to refrain from active political campaigning and cease use of religious slogans in accordance with Egyptian law.

Project Rakeeb commends Egyptian voters on their participation during the first day of the second round of voting in the People's Assembly Elections. We hope that all political parties, contestants, and citizens will participate calmly and responsibly on the second day of voting tomorrow.