



People's Assembly Elections – Third Round

Final Statement

January 9th, 2012

Project Rakeeb finds voting mostly peaceful, unlawful campaigning widespread and unchecked *Denial of access to accredited observers to polling stations and counting centers of serious concern*

Project Rakeeb is joint collaboration between two Egyptian civil society organizations – the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE) and the Egyptian Association for Dissemination and Development of Legal Awareness (EADDLA). Drawing upon best practices of citizen observers from around the world, and adapting them to the unique Egyptian context, Project Rakeeb is combining statistical principles with state-of-the-art information and communications technology to implement an observation methodology known as “Parallel Vote Tabulation.”

For the three rounds of Egypt's first post-revolution People's Assembly Elections, Project Rakeeb is deploying 1,267 citizen observers across Egypt to a statistically-sound, random, and representative sample of polling stations. In the third round of the People's Assembly Elections, Project Rakeeb deployed 383 non-partisan citizen observers in all nine governorates where elections took place. Rakeeb observers were deployed to a statistically-sound, random and representative sample of polling stations and sent observation reports via text message to a Central Data Center in Cairo.

The objectives of Project Rakeeb are to: 1) evaluate to what extent the elections are fair and transparent in accordance with Egyptian law and international standards for democratic elections; and 2) enhance citizen participation in the political process. After each round of elections, Project Rakeeb is issuing statements on the quality of the voting process. At the end of all three rounds, Project Rakeeb will issue a final statement about the overall quality of the People's Assembly election process.

Summary of Findings

Rakeeb observers found that the third round of voting in Egypt's People's Assembly Elections was a meaningful democratic exercise. The voting process was mostly peaceful on both election days with relatively few reports of violence or intimidation. The main challenges were widespread active political campaigning by a wide range of political contests in and around polling center - which resulted in sporadic incident of violence between political party representatives and supporters - and the continued denial of access to accredited observers to polling and counting centers, notably by security officials.

On the first day of the third round of elections, Rakeeb observers noted long queues in many places, particularly in urban areas however such queues subsided in most locations as the day progressed. On the second day, Rakeeb observers noted smaller queues at polling stations. On both days, Rakeeb observers reported the voting process was largely peaceful nationwide, with relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation reported. However, on the second day some cases of violence were reported.

For more information about Project Rakeeb, please visit the website: www.rakeeb.net. Follow Project Rakeeb on Facebook (Project Rakeeb) and Twitter (RakeebEG) to receive updates. For questions about Project Rakeeb, contact Project Manager Sherif Alaa at 01007434708 or email s.abdulazim@mosharka.org.

Rakeeb observers reported 98 incidents of active campaigning, mostly attributed to Freedom and Justice and Nour, but also Al-Wasat, Egyptian Bloc, Egyptian National Party, Egyptian-Arab Union, Freedom, Wafd, and independent candidates.

Similar to the first round, observers noted the presence of party-sponsored booths in front of polling centers in a few locations, most often by Freedom and Justice. As a result, Rakeeb observers reported incidents of conflict between political party representatives and supporters including, but not limited to:

- A violent conflict between Freedom and Justice and Nour representatives in Dakhaliya, which resulted in an injury;
- A physical conflict between Nour and Freedom and Justice representatives in Qalyubia, which prompted the temporary closure of a polling center;
- A physical conflict between supporters of Wafd and Nour in Matrouh;
- A confrontation between an Egyptian Bloc candidate and Freedom and Justice representatives in South Sinai; and
- A confrontation between representatives of Freedom and Justice and Nour in Qena.

Rakeeb observers noted that, unlike during the second round when some efforts were undertaken to prevent unlawful campaigning, security and election officials rarely intervened to stop such activities.

Also of concern, Project Rakeeb observers continued to be denied access or expelled from polling stations despite having received accreditation from the Supreme Judicial Committee for Elections (SJCE). In total, 44 Rakeeb observers were either expelled or denied access over the two-day voting period. In some locations, Rakeeb observers, as well as party agents, were denied access to the closing process on the second day of voting by judicial supervisors, notably in Qalyubia. Moreover, 27 accredited observers reported being denied access to counting centers; in a few cases, party agents were also denied access.

In most cases, accredited observers were denied access by judicial supervisors however, in a few cases, Rakeeb observers were prevented from entering polling stations by security personnel. In one case, a Rakeeb observer was denied access to a counting center in Dakhaliya by a security official and threatened with arrest. The denial of access to accredited observers violates the SJCE regulations, the National Council for Human Rights Code of Conduct, and international election standards. Moreover, denial of observer access by security personnel constitutes flagrant interference in the electoral process and undermines the integrity of the process and independence of the election authorities.

Qualitative Indicators

Project Rakeeb was able to collect data from 95 percent of observers on the first day and 97 percent on the second day who reported on the voting process and closing of polling stations. On both days, Rakeeb observers reported that the vast majority of polling stations opened prior to 9 AM. On the first day, a few polling stations opened late due to the late arrival of polling officials or sensitive materials, including voters' lists and ballot papers. On the second day, a few polling stations opened late primarily due to the late arrival of polling officials. Below is a breakdown of the opening times on both days:

Opening Time	Percentage Day 1	Percentage Day 2
Before 9 AM	92%	92%
Between 9 and 11 AM	8%	8%
After 11 AM	0%	0%

While voting was largely peaceful, Project Rakeeb found some procedural inconsistencies where observers were deployed. Below is a breakdown of findings on the setup and voting processes:

Findings	Percentage Day 1	Percentage Day 2
Ballot Boxes Locked / Sealed	86%	95%
Presence of Indelible Ink	99%	99%
Security Personnel Inside Stations	37%	38%
Avg. # of Party / Candidate Agents	4-5	4-5

Findings	Percentage Day 1	Percentage Day 2
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Some Individuals Not Found on Voters' List	41%	34%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Some Individuals Permitted to Vote Without ID	4%	6%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Polling Officials Sometimes Did Not Make Tick Next to Voters' Names	10%	11%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Polling Officials Sometimes Issued Unstamped Ballot Papers to Voters	2%	2%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Voters Not Able to Mark Ballots in Secrecy	4%	8%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Polling Officials Did Not Put Ink on Fingers of Some Voters After Voting	19%	26%
Percent of Polling Stations Where Observers Reported Voters Did Not Sign / Ink Next to Their Name After Voting	1%	1%

As noted in the statistical indicators above, HEC officials continue to apply inconsistent practices for election administration due to the lack of clarity of the HEC procedures. Based on the statistical analysis, the following challenges can be noted on both days:

- In some polling stations, ballot boxes were not locked or sealed, increasing the potential for vote tampering;
- In many polling stations, security personnel were present inside of polling stations without due cause, possibly increasing the potential for voter intimidation;
- In many polling stations, some individuals were not found on the voters' list, either because they were uncertain of their polling locations or because voters' list contained errors;
- In a few polling stations, not all ballots issued to voters were not stamped or signed on the back signifying their validity, increasing the potential that such votes will be considered invalid;
- In a few polling stations, voters were unable to mark their ballots in secrecy, increasing the potential for voter intimidation;
- In many polling stations, polling officials did not ink the fingers of voters, increasing the potential for voter fraud; and
- In a few polling stations, polling officials did not properly mark voters' lists to note an individual had been permitted to vote or ensure that voters' inked / signed next to their names after they voted, increasing the potential for confusion in the ballot reconciliation and voter fraud.

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On both days, Rakeeb observers noted the vast majority of polling stations closed around 7 PM however some remained open late to accommodate voters in queue. Below is a breakdown of closing times:

Closing Time	Percentage Day 1	Percentage Day 2
Before 7 PM	8% ¹	12%
Between 7 and 8 PM	91%	88%
After 8 PM	1%	>0%

In some cases, Rakeeb observers reported that judicial supervisors did not complete ballot reconciliations prior to escorting ballot boxes to counting centers, notably in Dakhalia.

Critical Incidents

As mentioned earlier, both election days were relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation however there were a large number of some critical incidents reported over the two-day period:

- 44 Rakeeb observers have either been denied access or expelled from polling stations;
- 98 incidents of active campaigning by political contestants in and around polling stations;
- 44 incidents of the presence of campaign materials inside polling stations, often of Freedom and Justice Party, Nour Party and independent candidates;
- 24 incidents of political party representatives using religious slogans to influence voters;
- 20 incidents of violence, including one incident of physical conflict between supporters of the Democratic Peace Party and Nour Party in Gharbiya and another between an independent candidate and a Freedom and Justice representative also in Gharbiya;
- 14 incidents of vote buying; and
- 8 incidents of circular voting.

Project Rakeeb reiterates its request to the SJCE to uphold its commitment to rectify recurring mistakes in the remaining election days and future elections. Specifically, Project Rakeeb requests that the SJCE:

- Consider undertaking the counting process in polling stations to avoid the logistical and security problems that have occurred as a result of transporting ballot boxes before counting them;
- 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;
- 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. Interference by security officials has a negative impact on the credibility and transparency of the election process and undermines SJCE authority; and
- Ensure the consistent application of official election procedures by judicial supervisors and polling officials to reduce confusion and errors at polling stations.

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.

¹ One polling station in Matrouh closed at 2 PM once all 176 individuals registered on the voters' list had voted at the station.

Project Rakeeb commends Egyptian voters on their participation during the third round of elections for the People's Assembly. We hope that all political parties, contestants, and citizens will participate calmly and responsibly in the remaining election days and in future elections.

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