



People's Assembly Elections – First Round

Second Interim Statement

November 28, 2011, 6:00 p.m

Project Rakeeb Reports Long Queues, Inconsistent Practices Applied by HEC Officials ***Large percentage of accredited observers denied access or expelled from polling stations***

For the first day of the first round of voting in the People's Assembly Elections, Project Rakeeb deployed 413 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 transmitting observation reports via text message to a Central Data Center in Cairo.

Rakeeb observers have continued to report long queues in many polling stations into the evening. While the voting process remains slow, it has largely proceeded calmly and without incident. Project Rakeeb commends voters on their patience and acknowledges positively the HEC's announcement of an extension of the voting process until 9 PM. It is incumbent upon the HEC to ensure that judicial supervisors are aware of this extension to ensure that no voters are unfairly disenfranchised.

Relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation have been reported nationwide although sporadic incidents have been reported. However two trends continue to hamper the process, specifically:

- Despite having received accreditation, Rakeeb observers have continued to be expelled from polling stations throughout the country; since this morning, 19 percent of Rakeeb observers have either been denied access or expelled from polling stations. Two Rakeeb observers were physically assaulted in the process of being expelled from polling stations.
- Rakeeb observers continue to report incidents of active political campaigning at polling stations, most often by representatives and supporters of Freedom and Justice Party, but also by members of different Islamist parties.

Project Rakeeb reiterates its call upon the HEC and judicial supervisors to ensure that observers who have been accredited by the HEC are guaranteed access to polling stations in accordance with the Code of Conduct, international election standards and regulations of the HEC itself. In addition, Project Rakeeb also calls upon all political parties to refrain from campaign activities in accordance with Egyptian law. Furthermore, Project Rakeeb calls upon the judicial supervisors and the HEC to use their authority to prevent campaigning within polling stations.

Rakeeb observers have also continued to report inconsistent practices by judicial supervisors and polling station officials due to the lack of clarity of the HEC procedures. Specifically, observers have noted the following:

- Changing the order of candidates on ballot papers;
- Issuing unstamped ballot papers;
- Allowing unauthorized personnel to assist voters finding their names on lists and/or explaining voting procedures, thus affecting the choice of voters; and
- Merging two polling stations to establish one polling station; in such cases, one ballot box was used to receive votes cast by voters on voters' lists in two separate stations.

Qualitative Indicators

Based on data gathered from 86 percent of observers who reported on the opening and set up of polling stations, Project Rakeeb found that where observers were deployed:

- Polling officials showed ballot boxes to be empty in 99 percent of polling stations before voting began;
- Polling officials counted the number of ballots received in 86 percent of polling stations before voting began;
- In 75 percent of polling stations, the number of ballots was found to be sufficient for the number of voters on the voters' list. In 22 percent of stations, observers could not verify whether the number of ballots was sufficient either because polling officials did not count the number of ballots or did not provide observers with the number of voters' on the voters' list.
- Polling officials sealed ballot boxes with a lock or wax seal in 91 percent of polling stations before voting began;
- Indelible ink was found to be present in 96 percent of polling stations;
- Security officials were found to be remaining inside 23 percent of polling stations, which goes against the law; and
- Only 30 percent of polling stations were deemed to be handicapped accessible.

On average, there were 3 or 4 party or candidate agents present at each polling station.

Critical Incidents

Although there have been relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation, as of 6 PM there have been a number of critical incidents that Rakeeb observers have reported:

- Eight verified incidents of violence and / or intimidation, including:
 - In Alexandria, Nour Party supporters clashed with supporters from the Egyptian Bloc in front of a polling center. Order was restored following intervention by armed forces.
 - In Assiut, a candidate was not included on the ballot prompting his supporters to attack voters at one polling center. This resulted in the forced closure of a polling station for one hour; the polling station was re-opened after order was restored by armed forces.
 - In Cairo, one judicial supervisor was reportedly attacked by a supporter of the Nour Party after being expelled by the judicial supervisor.
- 26 incidents of political party or candidate campaign material present at polling stations;
- 18 verified incidents of political party representatives using religious slogans to influence voters;
- Eight incidents of vote-buying in or around polling centers;
- Eight incidents of party or candidate agents being expelled from polling stations;
- Five incidents of sexual harassment of female voters; and
- Two incidents of roads being blocked by political party supporters.

Once again, Project Rakeeb commends Egyptian voters for turning out in large numbers to participate in the election process, despite the unsettled political and security situation. We hope that all political parties, contestants, and citizens will participate calmly and responsibly until the closing of polls.

Finally, Project Rakeeb reiterates its call upon the HEC to allow accredited observers and party candidate agents to perform their duties in conformity with the law. Moreover, Project Rakeeb also calls upon the HEC to ensure that security officials are only temporarily permitted to be present inside polling stations until order is restored in accordance with the law.

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.