



Egypt

Last update:	15 December 2011
Author:	Gerard Ritsema van Eck
Population:	82,079,636 (July 2011 est.)
Prime minister:	Kamal Ahmad El-Ganzouri
President:	-
Governemental type:	interim military government (Supreme Council of Armed Forces)
Ruling coalition:	-
Last election:	Parliamentary elections (ongoing, between 28 Nov. 2012 and 10 Jan. 2012)
Next election:	Shura Council (Between 29 Jan. 2012 and 12 Mar. 2012)
Sister parties:	None



After 18 days of violent protests and losing the support of the military, former Egyptian leader Mubarak resigned on 11 February 2011, ending 30 years of autocratic rule. The military stepped forward and took over power, until a new government and parliament will be installed. Elections for a People's Assembly have started on 28 November, but due to complicated voting procedures, they will last until at least January 2012. A 100-member council, elected by the Assembly, will then draft a new constitution and based on this document presidential elections will be held in June 2012.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a country in the North-Eastern corner of the African continent bordering the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Gaza Strip and Israel to the northeast, the Red Sea to the east, Sudan to the south and Libya to the west. Its geographical position, size and population, its intellectual achievements and its control of the Suez Canal and its position towards Israel have made Egypt a strategically important country. Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world and has often taken or attempted to take the lead among Arab nations.

Until the uprising in January 2011, Egypt was considered a presidential republic where executive power was vested in the president, who was also Head of State. Widespread anti-government demonstrations in January 2011 eventually lead to the ouster of long term Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Currently, the military is in charge and three stages of elections for the People's Assembly are due to be finished in January 2012.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The legislative branch in Egypt consists of a bicameral system which in turn is composed of the currently dissolved People's Assembly (PA) (or Majlis al-Sha'b), and the advisory Shura Council. The number of seats in the PA is 508. 498 of those are elected by popular vote and 10 will be appointed by the president. The members serve a five-year term. The Shura Council, which functions mostly in a consultative role, is made up of 264 seats; 176 of which are elected by popular vote for a six-year term, and 88 who are appointed by the president. Ultimate judicial power lies within the Supreme Constitutional Court.



Egyptian revolution, 2011

The Tunisian revolution that broke out in December 2010 sparked the Egyptian people to take to the streets as well. Starting from the 25th of January large scale demonstrations were organised in different cities in Egypt calling for an end to President Hosni Mubarak's three-decade rule. Dissatisfactions over corruption, lack of freedom of speech, economic issues as food price inflation, high unemployment, low wages and the enrichment of the ruling elite were the reasons for the protests.

Rumours were spread on the 10th of February that Mubarak would announce his resignation that evening. Instead, he repeated he would remain in power until September. Angry that Mubarak did not step down, protests resulted in a nationwide escalation dubbed 'Farewell Friday' on the 11th of February. At 16.00 hour the same day the Egyptian Vice-president Omar Suleiman announced in a televised address that President Hosni Mubarak had stepped down and had handed over authority to the SCAF.

Interim government

After the resignation of Mubarak in February 2011, the SCAF announced that it will remain in charge of the country until an elected government takes over. The military, headed by de facto Head of State Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the People's Assembly and the Shura Council. On 30 March 2011 the SCAF issued a Constitutional Declaration setting out the constitutional provisions that will be in effect until a new constitution comes into force. The Constitutional Declaration was approved by referendum and contains 63 articles, compared to 211 articles in the suspended Constitution.

Emergency Law

Despite the revolution in 2011, the emergency law is still being implemented in Egypt. In May 2010 the Emergency Law, that has been in force since 1981, was renewed by the government for two years. The controversial law allows the Egyptian authorities to detain persons without charge for long periods and to execute searches without warrants. According to the government, the law is necessary in order to fight terrorism. Opponents of the law, however, say that the law is used by authorities to arrest anyone who challenges the government and to imprison their political enemies. In the recent past the law was used to arrest members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was considered by the government as a political threat. But also opposition leader Ayman Abd al-Aziz Nour, of the Al-Ghad party became victim to the emergency law. Although he was released in February 2009, he was in prison for almost four years due to his oppositional activities.

ELECTIONS

Parliamentary elections 2010

On 28 November (first round) and 5 December (second round) 2010, elections were held for the People's Assembly (PA). In this election the NDP of former President Mubarak demolished the opposition. The NDP won 420 out of 518 elected seats, or 81%. 68 of the remaining seats went to independent candidates and 16 to other political parties, including the liberal Wafd Party (6 seats) and the Tagammu Party (5 seats). However, out of more than 100 renowned opposition leaders and independent parliamentary deputies in the outgoing parliament, no one could maintain his seat. Results of four seats were not announced due to "violations during the voting process", according to a commission official. The Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's best and biggest organized movement, managed to keep only 1 out of 88 seats and was nearly wiped out of parliament.

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Wafd Party, however, decided to boycott the elections and refused to take up any of their seats. They claimed that fraud was committed in favour of the NDP, which won nearly all of the seats in the first round and described the process as "scandalous."

During and after the elections, Egypt witnessed heavy protests. Irregularities between the police and protesters killed at least eight people. The head of the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, Hafez Abu Saada, said that the voter turn out was no more than 15%. Analysts already expected that the turnout would be very low, as many people were sceptic about the elections and had lost their interest.

Constitutional referendum 2011

Around one month after the revolution in February, on 19 March 2011, Egyptian voters overwhelmingly approved a



referendum on constitutional changes that will usher in elections. In total, the Egyptians voted in favour of a package of nine amendments to the constitution.

The changes included a restriction of the presidential terms from six years to four years and a limitation of two terms for the president. There will also be less restrictions for the nomination of a presidential candidate, and judicial supervision of the entire election process. The highest court will get the authority to arbitrate disputed election results and there will be restrictions on when the President can declare a state of emergency.

Under former President Hosni Mubarak, elections were state-managed affairs with pre-determined results and low turnouts. However, on the day of the referendum, more than 14 million voters, or around 77%, approved the constitutional amendments. 4 million, or around 23%, voted against them. According to the Egyptian government, the turnout of 41% among the 45 million eligible voters broke all records for recent elections.

People's Assembly elections 2011

The elections for the new PA are taking place in multiple stages. On 28 November, about one third of the Egyptians have voted for the PA in the first-round elections (the second and third round are to be held on Dec. 14 and Jan 3 consecutively). On each ballot, voters have to vote for a national party list and a local candidate in a first-past-the-post-system. If no candidate manages to win more than 50% of the votes, re-runs are held one week later. Two-thirds of the 498 elected seats will be filled based on the party lists and a proportional system, and the last one-third through the local candidates.

In January 2012 Egyptians will vote for the Shura Council, the upper house, in elections that will again be staggered in three rounds. The PA and the Shura will then appoint a 100-member council that will draft a constitution; a constitutional referendum will be held and, eventually, elections for a new president will take place, based on the new constitution. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has announced that it foresees presidential elections for June 2012.

First round

Turnout for the elections on 28 November was 59,1%, the highest ever in Egypt. The left-wing Egyptian Bloc Alliance, which has campaigned as the secular – or as it states in its official propaganda “civic” – alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party, has secured 13.4% of the votes for the party lists. Whether these results can be emulated in the more rural (and religious) areas of Egypt remains to be seen.

The Salafist Nour Party is the big winner of the elections so far. It was expected to do good in the rural areas where voting will be held later, but it also managed to secure one fourth of the votes in the first round, which mainly took place in the cities. The party strives for the installation of a stringent version of Sharia law, and has announced that most of its more radical positions (such as a ban on alcohol and the position of females) are not up for negotiations. This line might put the party in an isolated position. The Freedom and Justice Party did particularly well in the run-offs, winning 31 of the 44 seats that were up for grabs.

Party	Votes for the party list	%	Candidates that won a seat through the first-past-the-post-system
Freedom and Justice Party	3,565,092	36.3%	33
Nour Party	2,371,713	24.4%	4
Egyptian Bloc Alliance*	1,299,819	13.4%	2
Wafd Party	690,077	7.1%	1
Minor left-wing parties			
Revolution Continues Alliance**	335,947	3.5%	2



Freedom Party	136,784	1.4%	0
Other parties/candidates	1,335,081	13.9%	6
Total valid votes	9,734,513	100%	

* The Egyptian Social Democratic Party is a leading member of the Egyptian bloc Alliance. The Nationalist Progressive Unionist Party (commonly referred to as “Al-Tagmmu”) is a minor partner in the alliance.

** The Revolution Continues Alliance is a splinter from the Egyptian Bloc Alliance that includes the Socialist Popular Alliance Party and the Egyptian Socialist Party.

The results for the party lists can not be translated into seats yet, as the calculations are dependent on the turnout in the districts where voting has not taken place yet.

Second round

On 14 and 15 December 2011, the first phase for the second round of the elections for the People Assembly have taken place. In this round, voting is mainly taking place in districts around the Nile Delta, traditionally a stronghold of Political Islam. Observers noted many breaches of the election law, which stipulates that campaigning is prohibited in- and directly outside of polling stations. The Freedom and Justice Party handed out leaflets explaining how to vote for them to voters entering polling stations. In at least two voting districts, re-runs will be held as a result of violations of the election law.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Brief history

During the period between 1922, when Egypt formally gained its independence from the British mandatory power, and the revolution of 1952, Egypt experienced an era of relative political openness in which a certain measure of party pluralism was developed. The most famous party in this period was the Wafd party, which was founded in 1918 as an Egyptian delegation that pleaded for complete Egyptian independence from the British. In January 1953, all political parties were disbanded and a one-party system was officially adopted. The ruling party would be called the Liberation Group (1953–1956), the National Union (1956–1962) and the Arab Socialist Union (1962–1976), respectively.

In 1976, Sadat called for the Arab Socialist Union to be split in three parts. The left wing was to be called the National Progressive Unionist Organisation (now usually known as Tajammu), the central wing would be the Egypt Arab Socialist Organisation (later the NDP), and the right wing would be known as the Liberal Socialist Organisation (now al-Ahrar, the Liberal Party). In 1977, a new law stated that parties should not be formed on ethnic, racial, geographical or discriminatory bases due to sex, origin, religion or creed. Two parties that did obtain legal status were the Wafd Party (now known as New Wafd) and the Socialist Labour Party. One more party, the Nation Party, was legalised in the 1980s, while the last 20 years have seen the creation of around 14 new parties, bringing the total at the end of Mubarak’s rule to around 20. This system has allowed presidents Sadat and Mubarak to claim that Egypt enjoyed political pluralism and even democracy, while at the same time it manipulated the system to ensure continued supremacy of the NDP. All the other parties were relegated to a role in the very margins of Egyptian politics by the state’s (i.e. NDP) playing them off against each other, harassing them, or freezing them as the situation warrants.

As a result of this history, many of the parties in Egypt were not real political parties in the Western sense of political movements developed by certain segments of society with a particular ideology or programme. After the fall of Mubarak, many parties that more closely resemble this western model sprang to life. Also, many formerly dormant parties came back to the political scene with renewed vigour. In total, over 50 parties and more than 6000 independent candidates are participating in the elections, many of them forming alliances – that are often, but not always, based on ideology – in order to cut campaign budgets and optimize electoral gains. With the elections for the People’s Assembly under way, the post-revolutionary political landscape is taking shape and the most important parties are described below.



Social-Democratic and left wing parties

Egyptian Social Democratic Party
Party Leader: Mohammed Abou-ElGhar

The Egyptian Social Democratic Party was founded shortly after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak by the merger of two minor parties, the Egyptian Democratic Party and the Liberal Egyptian Party. The party straddles a fine line between free enterprise and social justice. It is the largest member of the Egyptian Bloc Alliance in the 2011/2012 parliamentary elections, which positions itself as a secular, left-wing alternative to the Islamist parties.

Site: <http://www.egysdp.com/>

Tagammu Party
Party leader: Mohamed Rifat Al-Saeed

The Tagammu' Party, or the Nationalist Progressive Unionist Party, was created in 1976 out of the left wing of the Arab Socialist Union. It is a leftist party which calls for the establishment of a socialist society free of exploitation. It believes in a class struggle that should be resolved peacefully and bases its programme upon the goals of the 1952 revolution. The most important goals are rejecting religious extremism; building the character of the Egyptian citizens; ending the state monopoly over the media; raising awareness of environmental issues and developing Egyptian industries. While the party once enjoyed strong support from the working class, professional unions, universities, and intellectuals, its influence among these groups has since waned. It is a minor partner in the Egyptian Bloc Alliance for the 2011/2012 parliamentary elections.

Site: <http://www.al-ahaly.com/>

Other Main Parties

Freedom and Justice Party
Party leader: Mohammed al-Mursi

On 30 April 2011 Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (MB) officially announced the formation of the Freedom and Justice Party to contest up to half the seats in the parliamentary elections and to become a major force in the country's post-revolution politics.

Mohammed Hussein, the Brotherhood's secretary general, said at a press conference that the party will be independent from the MB, but will "coordinate with it." Mohammed al-Mursi described the platform of the Freedom and Justice party as civil, but with an Islamic background that adheres to the constitution. "It is not an Islamist party in the old understanding, it is not theocratic." He intended to allay fears that the Freedom and Justice Party would be dominated by religious ideology and Islamic conservatism. Furthermore, the Muslim Brotherhood also declared that it does not object to the election of women or Copts in cabinet, but it said that both are unsuitable for presidency. The group supports free-market capitalism, and the party's political program includes tourism as a main source of national income.

The Muslim Brotherhood struggled for more than eight decades to form a legitimate political party. Under the regime of former President Hosni Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood was barred from politics and mentioned as a terrorist organization that threatened the country's democracy. In 2005, the MB became the largest group in the opposition bloc by its independent candidates winning 20% of the parliamentary seats. However, in 2010 the group did not win more than one seat in the November election that was regarded as rigged in favour of Mubarak's ruling party NDP.

Site: <http://www.hurryh.com/>

Al-Nour Party
Party Leader: Emad Abdel Ghaffour

Al-Nour is a Salafi political party founded after the January 2011 uprising. Salafism is an orthodox branch of Islam which sees the first generations of the followers of the prophet Muhammad as examples for how all aspects of life should be organized. The party advocates gradual reform under the slogan: "The only reform we desire is the



reform we can achieve.” This slogan is based on a view of the principles of Islam as a comprehensive framework for religion and state. The party surprisingly came in second with over 20% of the votes in the first round of voting in the elections for the People’s Assembly in 2011.

Site: <http://www.alhourparty.org/>

The New Wafd

Party leader: Sayyid al-Badawi

The New Wafd, created in 1978, is essentially a continuation of the pre-1952 Wafd Party. It is a liberal capitalist party that calls for public freedoms and a maximum reduction of the economic role of the state. It encourages Arab and foreign investment, the liberalisation of foreign trade and the exchange rates, privatisation of certain parts of the public sector. Most of the Wafd economic ideas had been taken over by the former NDP. On the issue of political freedom and democratic reform, however, the Wafd is much more liberal than the NDP used to be. Although the party has lost influence over the last 20 years, the New Wafd is often regarded as a strong opposition party. This is due to the legitimacy of the old Wafd, the possession of greater financial resources than other parties, and the several offices throughout the country. The New Wafd is attempting to portray itself as an alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Site: <http://www.alwafd.org/>

The recently dissolved National Democratic Party

Former party leader: Hosni Mubarak

The National Democratic Party was officially founded in 1978 as a continuation of the central part of the Arab Socialist Union. According to its program the party was committed to the ideals of the 1952 revolution. Apart from ending the monarchy and British dominance, these ideals were the implementation of agrarian reform, nationalization of key industries, a one-party state, and closer ties with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It is clear that the NDP’s proclaimed continuing loyalty to these ideals existed on paper only. The NDP was officially committed to political freedom, social justice, and implementing democracy. However, the party was ideologically extremely weak. It lacked further ideological direction which could define it as either left or right, and it did not even live up to its own rhetoric. It was, thus, more a framework of regime domination than a traditional political party.

On April 16 2011, Egypt’s Supreme Administrative Court officially relegated the once-supreme National Democratic Party to history, ruling that the party would be dissolved and its assets seized by the government.

BIOGRAPHIES

Mohamed Hussein Tantawi

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Minister of Defense, and chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF)

As head of the executive and military, Tantawi is considered Egypt’s de facto interim president. He joined the Egyptian army in 1956 as an infantry officer. He has served in five armed conflicts and held various commands before being appointed defense minister in 1991. He was appointed to the position of deputy prime minister after anti-Mubarak protests erupted in January 2011 and remained in that post until Mubarak transferred power to then-Vice President Omar Suleiman and the SCAF on February 11. He is an unlikely individual to guide the transition, having served as an important minister and close confidante to Mubarak for 20 years. Tantawi enjoys some popularity as a strong leader and various groups are calling for him to run for the presidency in 2012, but so far Tantawi has refused from any comments on the matter.

Kamal Ganzouri
Prime Minister

On 25 November 2011, Ganzouri was appointed as Prime Minister by the SCAF after renewed protests led to the



resignation of the government and he was sworn in on 7 December. Ganzouri formerly served as Prime Minister during the Mubarak-era from 1996 to 1999, but emerged relatively unstained from any corruption charges. He is best remembered for overseeing the economic privatization program. In a series of interviews, he said that if the people demanded it from him, he would run for Presidency. Since then, several facebook-groups in his support have emerged, and it is said that the liberal Wafd party will back him up as its candidate.

Ganzouri is married and has three daughters.

Amr Moussa
Former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States

Amr Moussa, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and former foreign minister of Egypt, is considered as a front-runner in the 2012 Egyptian presidential race. Moussa's popularity comes from his sharp criticism of U.S. support for Israel and his strong opinions. Moussa was born in 1936 and began his diplomatic career after earning a law degree at the Cairo University in 1957. From 1974 to 1990 he worked at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 1990 he served as Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations. From 1991 till 2001 Amr Moussa was Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Mubarak regime. In 2001, Moussa was elected as Secretary General of the League of Arab States.

Amr Moussa is married and has two children.

Mohammed ElBaradei
Egyptian law scholar and diplomat

Mohammed Mustafa ELbaradei, born in 1942 in Cairo, is an Egyptian law scholar and diplomat. ELbaradei studied at the University of Cairo and holds a doctorate in international law from the New York's University law school. He started his career at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1964. In 1980 ELbaradei became a senior fellow in charge of the International Law Programme at the UN's Institute for Training and Research. From December 1997 to November 2009 he worked at the International Atomic Energy Agency and became Director-General. In 2005, ELbaradei won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

ELbaradei, who was a critic of Mubarak's regime, has emerged as a leading voice for political reform in Egypt. He has a lot of supporters who are all hoping that he can lead Egypt toward democratization. During the 2011 revolution in Egypt, he was seen as a leading figurehead of the opposition. ELbaradei stated that he was motivated by the prospect of liberating Egypt from generations of autocracy.

Mr ELbaradei is married to Aida Elkachef, a teacher, with whom he has two children.

Hosni Mubarak
Former Egyptian President

The 82-year-old former President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, ruled Egypt for almost three decades. Mubarak was born in 1928 in a small village near Cairo. Under Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat, Mubarak was Deputy Minister of War from 1972 to 1975. In 1975, he became Vice-President and after Sadat was assassinated, on October 6, 1981, Mubarak became President.

Hosni Mubarak ruled as a quasi-military leader when he took power, and kept the country under emergency law. He won three elections unopposed since 1981, but for his fourth contest in 2005 – after a firm push from the US and other countries– he changed the system to allow rival candidates. However, Mubarak was often accused of suppressing opposition groups and holding unfair elections. In 1995, he escaped an assassination attempt at an



African unity summit in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Abeba.

In 2011, after 18 days of massive protests and demonstrations against the government, Hosni Mubarak resigned on 11 February. After his resignation, he and his family fled to a villa at the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Mubarak is married to half-British Suzanne Mubarak, and they have two sons: Gamal and Alaa.

-