



## People's Assembly Elections – First Round

### *Third Interim Statement*

November 28, 2011, 11:30 p.m

#### **Project Rakeeb Commends Voters on Participation, Patience; Urges HEC to Ensure Access of Accredited Observers to Polling Stations**

***Calls upon HEC officials to ensure consistency in application of procedures and exercise authority to stop to political campaigning at 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 reported long queues in many polling stations well into the evening and, while the voting process was slow, it largely proceeded calmly and without incident throughout the day. Delays in the opening of polling stations were problematic. Approximately 62 percent of polling stations where observers were deployed opened before 9 AM however 33 percent opened between 9 AM and 11 AM and approximately 5 percent of polling stations opened after 11 AM, most notably in Cairo.

The HEC's announcement of an extension of the voting process until 9 PM was a positive measure however in many cases judicial supervisors were not informed of the extension or did not make provisions to extend polling station hours. Overall, Project Rakeeb found that approximately 47 percent of polling stations closed before 9 PM; approximately 28 percent of stations closed before 8 PM.

Relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation were reported nationwide although sporadic incidents were reported. Two trends hampered the process throughout the day, specifically:

- Despite having received accreditation, 20 percent of Rakeeb observers were either denied access or expelled from polling stations, notably in Cairo, Alexandria and Fayoum. Two Rakeeb observers were physically assaulted in the process of being expelled from polling stations in Alexandria.
- Rakeeb observers reported 71 separate incidents of active political campaigning at polling stations. Most often, Rakeeb observers reported that active campaigning was conducted by representatives and supporters of Freedom and Justice Party as well as by members of different Islamist parties.

Moreover, Rakeeb observers reported inconsistent practices by judicial supervisors and polling officials due to the lack of clarity of HEC procedures. Specifically, observers noted the following:

- Changing the order of candidates listed on ballot papers;
- Issuing unstamped ballot papers to voters;
- 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 82 percent of observers who reported on voting and the closing of polling stations, Project Rakeeb found that where observers were deployed:

- In approximately 39 percent of polling stations, there were at least a few reported cases of individuals who presented a National ID card who were not found on the voters' list;
- In 70 percent of polling stations, polling officials always made a tick next to the names of voters on the voters' list, in accordance with procedures. However, in 21 percent of stations, polling officials did not make ticks next to the names of voters;
- In approximately 13 percent of polling stations, observers reported that individuals were permitted to vote despite failing to present a National ID card;
- In 84 percent of polling stations, all ballot papers issued to voters were stamped. However, in 16 percent of stations, there were reports of at least some ballot papers not being stamped;
- Voters were able to mark their ballot papers in secrecy in 83 percent of polling stations;
- In 75 percent of polling stations, polling officials inked the fingers of every voter after they voted; in 21 percent of stations, polling officials inked the fingers of voters most of the time; and
- Voters either signed or placed a fingerprint next to their name on the voters' list after they voted in 97 percent of polling stations.

### **Critical Incidents**

Although there were relatively few incidents of violence or intimidation, by the close of polls there were a number of critical incidents reported and verified by Rakeeb observers including:

- 29 incidents of political party or candidate campaign material present at polling stations;
- 20 incidents of political party representatives using religious slogans to influence voters;
- Nine verified incidents of violence and / or intimidation;
- 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;
- Three incidents of roads being blocked by political party supporters; and
- One incident of circular voting.

Prior to the second day of the first round of voting, Project Rakeeb calls 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; we also call upon the HEC to use their authority to prevent active political campaigning within polling stations. Finally, Project Rakeeb calls upon all political parties to refrain from campaign activities in accordance with Egyptian law.

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 who will take part in tomorrow's election will participate calmly and responsibly.

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*For more information about Project Rakeeb, please visit the website: [www.rakeeb.net](http://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 010060137246 or email [info@rakeeb.net](mailto:info@rakeeb.net).*