



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE
الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

**PAM HIGH-LEVEL MISSION TO MONITOR
THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN EGYPT**

CAIRO, 21-24 NOVEMBER 2015

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Introduction:

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean has been closely monitoring the political development in Egypt since the 25 of January revolution, in 2011. Egypt, aside of its vital political role in the Mediterranean and Middle East region, is one of the founding members of the Assembly. In the absence of a functioning Egyptian Parliament in the last few years, PAM kept its close relations with the Egyptian government and political figures. A high-level mission was conducted to Cairo in 2014, and several meetings and encounters with top Egyptian politicians, including the President of Egypt, were held on the margin of the UN General Assembly Meetings in New York, in the last years.

The support of PAM to Egypt during its transition phase also involved a very strong position to support the Egyptian people in their fight against terrorism. PAM had condemned all the attacks that targeted Egypt in the last year, and confirmed its solidarity with the Egyptian People and Government. This position of PAM is based on its overall strategy and role to combat terrorism in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

Based on the above, PAM Bureau accepted the kind invitation, received from the Egyptian Authorities, to assist and observe the Egyptian Parliamentary elections. Due to logistical reasons, it has been agreed to focus the mission on the second phase of voting, which included Cairo.

Furthermore, PAM would like to express its most sincere thanks to Hon. Mohamed Abouelenein, PAM Honorary President, who generously provided the PAM delegation with all the required logistical assistance (accommodation and transportation) throughout the duration of the mission in Egypt.

The electoral observation mission to Cairo:

On the first day, 21 November 2015, PAM high-level delegation, led by Hon. Belal Qasem (Palestine), Vice-President of PAM 3rd Standing Committee, started the mission to Cairo by visiting the Headquarters of the High Elections Committee, for briefing and collecting the official badges for International Observers. **H.E. Judge Ayman Abbas, Head of the High Elections Committee**, welcomed the PAM delegation and expressed his appreciation to PAM for its participation, together with several regional and international organisations, in monitoring the Parliamentary Elections in Egypt. During the meeting, Judge Abbas highlighted the stages the political and democratic transition period in Egypt is going through. He emphasized the fact that this is the third and final stage in completing the democratic process following the Presidential elections, which was held in 2014, and the Referendum on the new Egyptian Constitution, in 2015.

The PAM delegation also met **H.E. Judge Omar Marawan, Deputy Head and Spokesperson of the High Elections Committee**. He briefed the delegation on the way the elections were conducted, the electoral law, the number of electoral committees, the number of candidates, the main political parties and coalitions participating, the requirements needed

for candidature, the monitoring of the elections by judges and international observers, among other aspects. He also highlighted the importance the new Constitution is giving to the Egyptian women, which is reflected in the quota allocated to them. The same level of attention was also afforded to all different sectors in Egypt whether religious (Copts), social (people with special needs), professional (peasants and workers).

The elections of the Egyptians abroad has been also discussed and the PAM delegation visited the control room at the HQ of the High Elections Committee assigned to monitor – live - by closed video circuit - the election in various Egyptian Embassies worldwide.

On the second day of the mission, 22 November 2015, which was the 1st day of the two-days electoral phase, PAM delegation visited several polling stations in the area of Garden City, allocated in Central Cairo. The process was conducted very smoothly with tight monitoring and security measures noted. The delegation also met with several representatives of different political parties at the polling stations.

More meetings were held on that day at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. PAM delegation met with **H.E. Amb. Ashraf Elmoafi, Assistant Minister for Parliamentary Affairs** who thanked PAM for sharing with the Egyptian such an important event, and also showed his great appreciation for PAM's invitations to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to attend PAM events.

With regards to the Parliamentary elections, Amb. Elmoafi said that the preliminary indications show that the new parliament will not be dominated by one political party, which is considered as a good sign to enrich the democratic process in Egypt. The PAM's delegation expressed its wish to have the new Egyptian Parliament participating at the upcoming PAM Plenary Session in Tirana, as has always been the case with the previous parliaments.

The PAM parliamentarians then met **H.E. Amb. Hamdy Loza, Deputy Foreign Minister responsible for the electoral process**. During this meeting, Mediterranean affairs were closely discussed. The threat of terrorism facing the region and the need to have a common position were highlighted. PAM's role in counter terrorism initiatives and the joint efforts with the UN, the EU and the National Parliaments in dealing with this threat and the issue of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) were also discussed.

Amb. Loza said that specific importance should be given by PAM and the international community to support the new political parties in the southern Mediterranean. In his opinion, supporting these parties is the only way to eliminate the secular/religious confrontation effecting the whole region, which is opening the gate for extremism and terrorism.

Following the meetings at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PAM mission resumed monitoring the electoral stations in the western part of Cairo. It has been observed the increase in number of voters compared to the morning hours.

On the third day of the mission, 23 November 2015, The PAM delegation concluded its round of high-level bilateral meetings with **H.E. General Refaat Komsan, Election Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister of Egypt**, at the Headquarters of the Egyptian Cabinet of Ministers. General Komsan shared with the delegation figures related to the number of candidates, number of polling stations, number of judges assigned to monitor the elections, method of counting votes and also the role of the Egyptian government to secure the transparency of the whole process.

PAM delegation was invited to visit the 24 hours crisis management unit, at the Headquarters of the Egyptian Cabinet of ministers, which was assigned to follow up the electoral process. During this visit, the delegation met with **H.E. Ahmed Zaki Badr, the Egyptian Minister for rural development**, and other representatives of different ministries related to the electoral process.

Following the meeting with the Advisor of the Egyptian Prime Minister, PAM mission visited more electoral stations in different areas of Cairo. It has been taken into consideration, while choosing the electoral stations, to cover areas in Cairo with different economical, educational and wealth levels.

Outcome and main observation:

- PAM delegation noted with great satisfaction the smooth environment that surrounded the whole process of the Parliamentary elections in Egypt. It was clearly monitored that the voters were given all the help, information and privacy they needed to submit their votes in a very positive atmosphere.
- The presence of Egyptian Judges in all electoral station, along with national and international observers in most of the polling stations visited by the delegation was positively remarked.
- Voters were assisted, in case of need, by independent representative of the civil societies and NGO's on how to find their polling stations and the administrative steps prior and after casting their votes.
- The strong presence of Egyptian and international Media in many polling stations was considered to be an extra measure of monitoring to the Electoral Process, in general. Member of PAM delegation were requested to conduct several TV interviews, some of these were broadcasted live.
- The percentage of Participation in most of the electoral stations, at the time visited by the delegation, was around 20%. This percentage is an accepted figure taking into consideration that Egypt follows the automatic registration system, not the voluntary registration system. This means that any Egyptian citizen who reaches the age of 18 is automatically added to the registered voters' list.
- The sole remark that the delegation would urge PAM to raise with newly elected members of Parliament in Egypt is the point related to selecting individual candidates; according to the current Egyptian electoral law, in case the voter is to select two candidates and he/she chooses only one, the vote is to be considered void. The voters who have only one person to select are forced, in this case, to

choose any random name to keep their votes valid. PAM delegation, and based on other electoral systems, find this as a obstacle to the freedom of the voter in choosing only one person from the list of candidates.

- This mission represented an excellent opportunity for the two PAM Libyan MPs to familiarize themselves with an electoral process, and for PAM to prepare itself to assist Libya on the occasion of the future elections.

The composition of PAM delegation:

- **Hon. Bilal Qasem**, Head of Delegation – Member of the Palestinian National Council and Vice-President of PAM 3rd Standing Committee
- **Hon. Chantal Guittet**, Member of the National Assembly France
- **Mr. Amar Omran Naser Said**, Member of the House of Representatives Libya
- **Ms. Sabah G. M. Alhaj Faraj**, Member of the House of Representatives - Libya
- **Mr. Mourad Youssry**, PAM Deputy Secretary General

Detailed Program

Friday 20 November 2015:

Arrival of members of the delegation - Pickups from Airport to Four Seasons Hotel - Cairo

Saturday 21 November 2015:

10:00 Preparatory meeting at the Hotel – Meeting at the Hotel Lobby

11:00 Meeting with Head of the High Electoral Commission in Egypt, Judge Ayman Abbas.
Venue: Dar el Kadaa – Down Town

13:00 Meeting at the Supreme Electoral Commission for briefing and receiving the badges.
Venue: Egyptian State of Information.

Sunday 22 November 2015:

10:00 Leaving the Hotel to polling stations in Central Cairo

11:30 Meeting with H.E. Amb. Ashraf Muwafy, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Parliamentary Affairs. Venue: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

13:00 Meeting with H.E. Amb. Hamdy Loza, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Venue: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

15:00 Resuming monitoring in Different Polling Stations

Monday 23 November 2015

10:00 leaving the hotel to polling Stations

12:00 Meeting with H.E. Genral /Refaat Komsan, the Advisor of the Prime Minister for Electoral Process

15:00 resuming monitoring at polling Stations

19:00 Leaving the Hotel for dinner hosted by PAM for all the delegation (Venue: Abu El seed Restaurant – Zamalek)

Tuesday 24 November 2014:

End of mission and Departure of delegates