

Citizen's Guide

To the Referendum on Amendments to the Constitution

Monday, March 26 2007

An Invitation to Participation



The Constitution

Q: What is the Constitution?

A: The Constitution is the social contract between state and society, and the general legal framework that governs all aspects of political, economic and social life.

Q: What is important about the Constitution?

A: The Constitution is the "Father of Laws" that

establishes the identity and nature of the State and the political system. It governs the relationship between the three branches of government (Legislative – Executive – Judicial), establishes their authorities and defines the building blocks of society.

Q: How does the Constitution affect my life

A: The Constitution stipulates the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic environment and guarantees citizenship and equality to all members of society before the law, and provides for a government that strives for the



welfare of the citizen.

The Amendments

Q: What are the Amendments being referred to us?

A: The following are the 34 articles that are being referred to you:

- Article 1
- Article 4
- Article 5 (Add a third paragraph),
- Article 12 (Paragraph 1),
- Article 24
- Article 30
- Article 33
- Article 37
- Article 56 (Paragraph 2)
- Article 59
- Article 62
- Article 73
- Article 74
- Article 76 (Paragraphs 3 and 4)
- Article 78 (Add a second paragraph)
- Article 82
- Article 84 (Paragraph 1)
- Article 85 (Paragraph 1 and 2),
- Article 88
- Article 94

- Article 115
- Article 118 (Paragraph 1),
- Article 127
- Article 133
- Article 136 (paragraph 1)
- Article 138 (Add a second paragraph)
- Article 141
- Article 161 (Add a second paragraph)
- Article 173
- Article 179 (Chapter 6)
- Article 180 (Paragraph 1)
- Article 194
- Article 195
- Article 205

To read the full text of the Constitution and the text of the proposed amendments please visit the SIS Website:

Constitution.sis.gov.eg

Voter Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to vote?

A: You are eligible to vote in this referendum if you are registered to vote and no disenfranchisement rules apply to you.

Women and men Have an equal right vote

Q: Who is not eligible to vote?

A: Certain individuals are prohibited from voting in referendums and elections. The following



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people are not allowed to vote:

- Persons whose name does not appear in the Voters' List;
- Persons who are imprisoned at the time of elections;
- Persons who are in detention at the time of elections;
- Persons sentenced to confiscation of property, for a period of five years from the date of sentencing;
- Persons who have declared bankruptcy, for a period of five years from the date bankruptcy was declared; and
- Persons who are committed to a mental institution at the time of elections; and
- Person who have been convicted of a felony, and have not had their rights restored, and persons who have committed a misdemeanor related to honesty and integrity and have not had their rights restored.

Officers and personal of the Armed Forces and the Police Forces are excused from the duty of voting.

Voter Registration

Q: Am I registered to vote?

A: Your registration status depends on your age and place of birth:

- If you turned 18 on or before January 31st, 2007, you have been **automatically registered** on the basis of records maintained by the police station **in the area where you were born**. Your name will appear in the voter list there and you will be able to vote.

- If you were born after January 31, 1989, you are you are too young to qualify to be registered to vote.

Q: Where am I registered?

A: That depends on where you were born. If you turned 18 before January 31st 2007 then you were automatically registered in the police district of your birth.

Q: Can I check to see if my name is on the Voters' List

A: Yes, if you are not sure whether your name appears on the Voters' List, take the following steps to check:

- Visit the police station in your area where you were born.
- When you arrive at the police station tell official that you would like to check and see if your name is included in the Voters' List
- Before you leave the police station, remember to ask for information about the polling station where you can cast your ballot because there are a number of polling stations in each district.





Q: My name does NOT appear on the Voters' List, can I register now?

A: No, you cannot register to vote now. Registration to vote in elections and referendums for eligible voter takes place during a three month period every year. The official period is from November 1st to January 31st every year. The official period for voter registration typically occurs between 1 November and 31 January. The timing of the official voter registration period may be adjusted IF elections or referendums have been called during that period. In this case, the Voters' List is opened for a period of three months after the election or referendum results are announced .

Q: What If I want to vote in future elections?

A: Your next opportunity to register to vote will be from November 1st 2007 until January 31st 2008.

Q: How do I register to vote?

A: In order to register take the following steps during the official registration period from November 1 to January 31:

- Visit the police station in the area where you were born.
- Tell the official that you would like to register to vote and receive a voter card .
- Present your National ID Card or other form of identification.
- Receive a pink Voter Card to use in all future referendums and elections.

Registration is free of Charge

Voter Cards

Q: What is a Voter Card?

A: A Voter card is an identification document used to verify that a person's name has been registered in the Voter's list, to identify the district where he/she is registered, and provides his/her registration data. The following is a picture of the voter card.



Q: Do I need a Voter Card?

A: Yes, in order for you to be allowed to vote in the 2007 Constitutional Referendum you will need to have and present your voter card at the polling station in order to be permitted to cast your ballot. **BUT,** if you do NOT have a voter card you will be allowed to vote ONLY at the polling station where you are registered.



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Q: How do I get my Voter Card?

A: In order to receive a Voter Card take the following steps any time during the year:

- Visit the police station in your area where you were born.
- When you arrive at the police station tell the official that you would like to check and see if your name is included in the Voters' List
- Present your National ID Card or other form of identification.
- Check to see if your name is on the list and to receive voter card if it is.
- Receive a pink voter card to use in all elections and referendums.

Where to Vote?

Q: Where do I need to go to vote?

A: Voting takes place at polling stations. Every voter is assigned to a specific polling station where he/she can vote. There are several polling stations in each district. Voters are distributed among these polling stations.

Q: What if I am not sure where my polling station is located?

A: To determine your polling station take the following steps:

- Visit the police station in your area where you were born.
- When you arrive at the police station tell official that you would like know which polling station you have been assigned

Q: Can I vote outside the district where I am registered?

A: Yes, so long as you have a Voter Card you may vote at any polling station if you are outside your home city.

Q: When will the referendum take place?

When to Vote?

A: Voting take will take place on Monday March 26, 2007.

Q: What time does voting take place?

A: Voting will take place between 8AM and 7PM on referendum day. You can vote at any time during this period. If you are in line before 7PM you will be allowed to vote. If you arrive after 7PM you will not be allowed to vote.

The Voting Process

Q: Do I need to bring any documents with me to the polling station?

A: If you have a pink Voter Card, you should bring it with you along with a valid identification document such as your ID Card or your National Number Card. If you do not have your Voter Card, you will still be permitted to vote so long as you can show that you have a valid identification document and that your name is on the voter list.

Q: How do I cast my ballot?

A: Once you have arrived at your polling station, wait in line for your turn to enter.



Once you enter the polling station, you can expect the following:

1. You will be asked to present your Voter Card and/ or your ID Card to the Secretary of the Polling Station.



2. The Secretary will check your Voter Card and/ or your ID Card to make sure that they are valid and that you are the person whose name appears on the ID Card.

It is illegal to use another person's identity in order to vote. If you attempt to do so, you will be subject to imprisonment of up to one month and a fine of between EGP 500 and 1000.

3. Once the Secretary has verified your identity, he/she will check to see if your name is included in the Voters' List.



4. If your name appears in the Voters' List, the Chairman of the polling station will hand you a ballot paper. The ballot paper must be open, un-

marked, and stamped on the back with the seal of the polling station sub-committee.

In order for the ballot paper to be valid, the polling station sub-committee seal must appear. Be sure to check to make sure that the ballot paper you have been given contains this stamp. Do not accept a ballot paper from anyone other than the Chairman. Do not accept a ballot paper that has already been marked.

5. When directed, proceed to the ballot marking area. You must mark your ballot paper in secret. **Do not vote openly or in view of others. Your choice about whom to vote for is your own. Your vote is secret. No one is allowed to watch you vote or to ask you how you voted.**



6. The following is a picture of the ballot card that you will see. It will include the text of the proposed amendments.



- If you agree to the amendments make a clear mark in the green circle under the word "Agree"
- If you do not agree to the amendments make a clear mark in the black circle under the word "Disagree"

Mark your choice clearly so that there is no question about it. Mark only ONE circle. Do not make any other marks on your ballot and do not sign your name or your ballot will be declared invalid during the counting process.

7. Once you have finished voting, fold your ballot in half so that the side with your choices is on the inside and cannot be seen by others. Hand the folded ballot to the Chairman. Do not give your ballot to anyone other than the Chairman of the polling station/sub-committee.

8. The Chairman will immediately place the folded ballot in the ballot box.

9. Once your ballot has been deposited in the ballot box, you will be asked to dip your finger in a special, colored ink which cannot be washed out for at least 24 hours. This inking is done to prevent anyone from trying to vote more than once.



10. Once your finger has been marked with ink, you must sign your name or make your mark next to your name on the Voters' List.

11. The Chairman will then mark your Voters' Card to indicate that you have voted.

12. The Secretary will then place a mark next to

your name in the Voters' List to confirm that you have voted.

13. After you have voted, you must depart from the polling station premises.

Q: What if I need assistance to vote?

A: If you are blind, or have another physical impairment that impedes you from marking your ballot, tell the Chairman of the polling station committee that you require assistance. You have two choices:

1. You may tell the committee members, in private, your choice, and the Secretary of the polling station will mark your ballot for you, and the Chairman of the polling station will sign the ballot and indicate in the registrar, next to your name, that you voted in this manner;

OR

2. You can identify the person who you would like to assist you in marking your ballot.

Q: Who is allowed to be inside the polling station?

A: The only people who are allowed to be inside the polling station during voting are the members of the polling station/sub-committee, voters registered at that polling station, candidates and their registered representatives. Police personnel are only allowed inside the polling station premises if the Chairman of the polling station sub-committee has invited them in for the purposes of maintaining security and/or restoring order.

Q: What happens when the polling station closes at 7 PM?

A: At 7 PM, the Chairman of the polling station subcommittee will announce that the polls are closed. If you are already in line to vote at 7 PM, you will be permitted to vote. If you are not in line to vote at 7 PM, you will not be allowed to vote. Once the polls have closed, the Chairman will



collect and seal all the election documents and ballot boxes and send them, under guard, to the Chairman of the District General Committee for counting.



Voter Rights and Responsibilities

Q: What are my rights as a voter?

A: As a voter, you have a number of rights under the Constitution and the laws of the Arab Republic of Egypt. These are your rights whether you are a man or a woman; live in an urban area or a rural area; are literate or illiterate. Be aware of and exercise these rights. Do not allow anyone to violate these rights. Specifically, you have the right to:

- Cast a ballot in the referendum if you are registered
- Check to see if you are registered in the Voters List from the police station in the area where you were born.
- Receive a Voters' Card anytime before Election Day if you are legally registered to vote;
- Be informed of the location of your polling station by the police station where you were born;
- Gain entrance to your assigned polling station to cast your vote, or to any polling station so long as you have a voter card;

- Cast your ballot if you are in line at your polling station prior to 7 PM;
- To be free of any threat, intimidation, or bribes intended to influence whether or not you vote and for what;
- To receive an open, unmarked, stamped ballot directly from the Chairman of the polling station sub-committee;
- To mark your ballot in private and to keep your choice secret;
- To request and receive assistance from a person of your choice in casting your vote if you are blind, or have another physical impairment that prevents you from voting
- To hand your ballot directly to the Chairman and to what as he immediately deposits it in the ballot box;
- To report any violation of your voting rights or election misconduct to the Chairman of the polling station sub-committee or the relevant authorities.

Q: What if believe my voting rights have been violated or I have witnessed electoral misconduct?

A: If you believe that your rights have been violated or you have witnessed electoral misconduct, you must report this immediately. You have several options to report violations or misconduct. You can alert the:

- **The Chairman of your polling station sub-committee;**
- **A member of your District General Committee;**
- **An officer of the Election Affairs Department at your police station;**
- **The Directorate of Security in your area;**
- **The Office of the Prosecutor-General in your area;**
- **The Ministry of Interior - General Department;**



ment for Election Affairs

- Street Address: Police Academy Building, Abbassaya, Cairo
- Website: www.moiegypt.gov.eg/arabic/complaints/showcomplaints
- **The Ministry of Interior – Department of Public relations**
 - Street Address: Ministry of Interior Headquarters, El-Sheikh Riham St., Abdeen, Cairo
- **The Office of the Prosecutor General; The**

Q: What are my responsibilities as a voter?

A: Just as you have voting rights, you also have responsibilities. Specifically, you must:

- **Be legally registered to vote;**
- **Learn the location of your polling station;**
- **Arrive at the polling station between 8 AM and 7PM to cast your ballot;**
- **Present your Voter Card and/or a valid ID Card;**
- **Clearly mark your choice on the ballot;**
- **Sign the Voters' List once you have cast your ballot;**
- **Dip your finger in the special, colored ink after you have cast your ballot;**
- **Refrain from threats, intimidation, or bribery with the intent of influencing someone else's vote;**
- **Refrain from obstructing other voters from entering the polling station or disrupting the voting process;**
- **Refrain from voting on behalf of another person or violating the secrecy of another person's vote;**
- **Refrain from campaigning inside the poll-**

ing station;

- **Avoid tampering, damaging, destroying, hiding, or stealing ballot boxes or any election documents or materials;**
- **Avoid threatening or insulting members of the polling station sub-committee.**
- **Leave the voting station once you have cast your ballot; and**
- **Report any violation of your rights or if you witness election misconduct**

The Counting Process and Results

Q: Who is responsible for counting the ballots?

A: The Counting Committee within each District General Committee is responsible for counting the ballots. The Counting Committee in each district is comprised of the Chairman and Secretary of the General Committee and the chairmen of the polling stations/ sub-committees in that district. The Counting Committee checks each ballot to ensure that it is valid and then tabulates the results for each choice.

Q: Who is allowed to be present at the counting?

A: Only the members of the District Counting Committee are permitted to present during the counting of the ballots.

Q: How is the result determined?

A: If more than 50% plus 1 of the valid votes cast are for the amendments then the Constitution will be amended. If less than that number is cast for the amendments, then the constitution will not be amended.



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Q: When will results be announced?

A: The results will be determined by the Chairman of each District General Committee and communicated to the High Elections Commission which will announce the results.

Q: When will the results come into effect?

A: The result of the referendum will come into force from the date of the announcement of the result. If it is approved legislation must be adopted that will enact these new constitutional principles.