



Egypt Democracy Compass

Coverage Period: February 2014

The Egypt Democracy Compass is designed to provide a snapshot of the country's trajectory, either toward or further away from a truly democratic system, over the preceding calendar month. Each of the eight topical categories receives a status designation—**Backsliding, Stalled, Progress, or Achieved**—based on recent developments regarding the listed goals for that category. The reasons for each designation are explained in a brief summary of major events or trends. It should be acknowledged that while some of the specified goals could be achieved almost overnight, others may take years to accomplish. The purpose of this tool is simply to determine whether Egypt is headed in the right direction. *See next page for a full listing of the goals for each category.*



BACKSLIDING



PROGRESS



STALLED



ACHIEVED

1. CONSTITUTION

A new constitution, which was drafted by an unrepresentative committee chosen by the military-backed government, was adopted in a tightly controlled referendum in January. The document suffered from significant flaws, including provisions that granted expanded power and autonomy to the military and allowed for military trials of civilians. It contained some nominal improvements in the protection of women's rights, freedom of expression, and other civil liberties, but enforcement remained in doubt in February, as authorities continued a crackdown on such rights in practice.

2. ELECTIONS

There is currently no legislative body in place, and executive powers are shared by the unelected interim president and prime minister. A new election law was expected to be approved in March, paving the way for a presidential election. On February 24, the interim cabinet resigned, though at least 14 of the incumbent ministers were set to be reappointed. Some observers speculated that the move was linked to a planned announcement that Field Marshal Abdel Fattah al-Sisi would seek the presidency, though his candidacy had not been confirmed at the end of the month. The ongoing suppression of opposition groups and opinions would all but ensure his victory, allowing him to further shape conditions for subsequent parliamentary elections.

3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The government's December classification of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization enabled it to further marginalize the group in February. Suspected members continued to be arrested, and journalists who covered the Brotherhood's activities were accused of conspiring with terrorists. The government also continued to punish non-Islamist public figures who questioned its actions. Ahmed Maher, Mohamed Adel, and Ahmed Douma—all well-known activists and critics of the government—remained in custody after being charged in December with organizing illegal protests.

4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The new constitution made the right to freedom of religion “absolute” and was well received by religious minorities. However, an atmosphere of insecurity and repression persisted in February, with the government dictating weekly sermon themes at

mosques and Islamist militants continuing to target Christian places of worship.

5. MEDIA FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The assault on media freedom has now become a central feature of the interim government's efforts to create political stability. The trial of 20 Al-Jazeera journalists on charges of conspiring with a terrorist group and broadcasting false news began in February, with 8 defendants present and 12 in absentia, but the proceedings were quickly adjourned until March. Police detained Yemeni journalist Firas al-Shamsan for 15 days after arresting him at a book fair, claiming that he was spreading false news with the intent of disturbing the peace. Similar new arrests of journalists on dubious charges continued throughout the month.

6. CIVILIAN CONTROL AND SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM

Evidence accumulated during the month that al-Sisi, the current military chief and defense minister, would indeed run for president. Some analysts predicted that he would formally announce his candidacy in March, after the approval of a new election law. Public support for and popular expectation of a Sisi candidacy apparently remained high, increasing the likelihood that the military would remain politically dominant and resistant to accountability for human rights abuses.

7. PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND CIVIC ACTIVISM

Political activity at universities was formally banned, and police officers were granted permanent access to campuses as the new academic term began. Protests in support of deposed president Mohamed Morsi continued throughout the month, often ending in clashes with police and local residents. Two people were killed on February 14 when separate demonstrations in support of Morsi were dispersed. Hundreds of protesters who had been arrested on the January 25 anniversary of President Hosni Mubarak's 2011 ouster remained in detention.

8. JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND RULE OF LAW

The judiciary continues to play a key role in political affairs, with Supreme Constitutional Court chairman Adli Mansour acting as interim president and working closely with the military leadership. Protesters, journalists, liberal activists, and thousands of Muslim Brotherhood leaders and members—including Morsi—faced politicized charges and mass trials in which due process rights and basic evidentiary standards were routinely disregarded. A group of secular activists accused police of widespread use of torture against fellow activists in detention, a charge the government denied.



Egypt Democracy Compass – Goals



1. CONSTITUTION

- a. The constitution and constitutional amendments are the products of a fair process that reflects consensus among all major political factions.
- b. The constitution protects civil liberties, including the rights of women and minorities, in keeping with international standards and Egypt's existing treaty commitments.
- c. The constitution is in effect.

2. ELECTIONS

- a. National elections are conducted under electoral laws and procedures that meet international standards.
- b. National elections are monitored and deemed credible by qualified international observers.
- c. A directly elected legislature has been seated, and a directly elected executive authority has taken office.

3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- a. All major political factions participated in national elections.
- b. All political factions that won legislative seats participate in legislative activity.
- c. No public figures or activists are being detained for political reasons.

4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- a. All religious groups are able to preach and practice their faith without state interference.
- b. Specific religious beliefs and practices are not imposed, enforced, or favored by the state, including with respect to the construction of houses of worship.
- c. Individuals and groups are free to peacefully exercise their beliefs without interference or coercion from nonstate actors, and any communal or religious violence is vigorously and fairly prosecuted by the state.

5. MEDIA FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- a. The media collectively convey the views of all major political factions, and state media are editorially independent and free of obvious political bias.
- b. Journalists are able to work without facing violence, arbitrary detention, or unjustified interference with news dissemination.
- c. Journalists and other Egyptians are not subject to criminal prosecution for blasphemy, defamation, or insulting state officials and entities.

6. CIVILIAN CONTROL AND SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM

- a. The military is subordinate to the constitution and elected civilian authorities, playing no role in politics or trials of civilians.
- b. The military budget is subject to review and approval by an elected legislature.
- c. The police and military have been reformed and retrained to meet international standards on crowd control, criminal investigation, treatment of suspects in custody, and accountability for abuses.

7. PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND CIVIC ACTIVISM

- a. All political parties and segments of civil society are free to assemble peacefully without encountering violence or arbitrary arrest by state actors.
- b. All political parties and segments of civil society are free to assemble peacefully without encountering violence from nonstate actors.
- c. Nongovernmental organizations promoting democratic reform and human rights are able to operate without interference from state or nonstate actors.

8. JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND RULE OF LAW

- a. The judiciary is free of political influence or bias, and judges are appointed, promoted, and removed using apolitical procedures and criteria.
- b. The judiciary upholds and defends the constitution and the rights it guarantees.
- c. Criminal suspects and defendants are afforded full legal rights and due process, including access to counsel and transparent court proceedings.