



Egypt Democracy Compass

Coverage Period: November 2013

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

Under a plan set out by the military-backed interim president, the draft constitution was undergoing revision throughout November by a 50-member committee that was far from demographically or politically representative, with only five women, four Copts, and one Islamist member. The final draft had yet to be approved and presented to the president at the end of the month, but it was known to include a number of troubling features, including provisions that would protect the power and autonomy of the military and allow for military trials of civilians. Over a dozen members of the committee suspended their participation on November 26 to protest the arrest of demonstrators who objected to a harsh new assembly law.

2. ELECTIONS

There is currently no legislative body in place, and executive powers are shared by the unelected interim president and prime minister. The Supreme Electoral Commission, which will oversee the constitutional referendum and the parliamentary and presidential elections to follow, was created in September, and political parties have begun forming alliances and identifying candidates. However, given the ongoing political violence and repression and the increasing likelihood that military chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi will run for president, there was virtually no space during November for constructive public debate or other normal preelection activities, dimming the prospects for free and fair balloting.

3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Hopes for reconciliation between the current government and the Muslim Brotherhood were virtually extinguished in November, as deposed president Mohamed Morsi's trial began. In his first public appearance since just before the July coup, Morsi spoke from the courtroom's dock, lambasting the government as illegitimate and declaring himself the rightful president of Egypt. The authorities' crackdown on his supporters, including a ban on the Muslim Brotherhood and the seizure of its assets, continued throughout November. Most Brotherhood leaders remained in jail.

4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Sectarian violence and political divisions continued to undermine religious freedom in November. Though there were fewer high-profile attacks on the Coptic Christian commu-

nity, an atmosphere of insecurity and repression prevailed, with Islamist militants striking government targets and Muslim clerics facing arrest for alleged incitement of unrest.

5. MEDIA FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The authorities continued to restrict media outlets that convey support for Morsi or criticism of the new government. Comedian Bassem Youssef's popular satirical television show was suspended on November 1 after an episode that poked fun at the military regime. Among other cases, a military court handed journalist Mohamed Sabry a suspended six-month jail sentence on November 3 for photographing a military area, and Ahmed el-Sioufi, of Al-Ahram and the Iranian channel Al-Alam, was arrested on November 7 after police raided his home.

6. CIVILIAN CONTROL AND SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM

The military continued to dominate the political system, conduct trials of civilians, and operate with impunity. It appeared increasingly likely that the armed forces would enjoy maximum protection for their autonomy in the final draft of the constitution. Public enthusiasm for a possible presidential bid by General al-Sisi reportedly remained high.

7. PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND CIVIC ACTIVISM

On November 24, the interim president signed a law that gives police broad discretion to ban and forcibly disperse gatherings of 10 or more people, prohibits all protests at places of worship, and requires protest organizers to inform police at least three days in advance. Protests against the new law were violently suppressed on November 26, with police assaulting, sexually abusing, and arresting dozens of non-Islamist activists. On November 27, a group of 21 female Islamist protesters were sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges related to an October demonstration. Also during November, confrontations continued between security forces and their allies on the one hand and pro-Morsi protesters on the other, including on university campuses, though fatalities were rare compared with previous months.

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. However, on November 12 an administrative court ended the state of emergency in place since August, which had granted security forces great leeway to crack down on political opposition and suspended due process rights. A related curfew was lifted on the same day.



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.