



Egypt Democracy Compass

Coverage Period: September 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

A 10-member committee of judges and law professors, the first group to work on the new constitution under a plan set out by the military-backed interim president, was not transparent about its deliberations or voting procedures. The draft now resides with a 50-member committee that is far from demographically or politically representative, with only five women, four Copts, and two Islamist members. One Islamist member walked out of a committee session in September, complaining that the group was not inclusive of all political perspectives. Though the draft could be changed quite dramatically before being put to a referendum, it apparently retains overly broad language—for example, forbidding political parties that “undermine public order”—that has been used in the past to severely restrict political participation.



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 on September 11. However, given the ongoing political violence and repression, there is virtually no space for constructive public debate or other normal preelection activities, dimming the prospects for free and fair balloting.



3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The crackdown on supporters of deposed president Mohamed Morsi continued throughout September, culminating in a court's official ban on the Muslim Brotherhood and the possible seizure of all of its assets. Most Brotherhood leaders remain in jail, and new detentions during the month included that of Gehad el-Haddad, the group's spokesman.



4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The political crisis continued to exacerbate religious divisions in September. The Coptic Christian community suffered further physical attacks, torture, vandalism, and arson. Meanwhile, as part of the government crackdown on conservative forms of Islam associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, approximately 55,000 unlicensed imams

were banned from delivering sermons, and training from Al-Azhar University or certification by another state-supervised institution will now be required for a license. The move aimed to silence preachers whom the government considers extremist.



5. MEDIA FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The government took a number of television channels off the air in September, and although some of them broadcast pro-Morsi views, at least one stridently opposed Morsi and supported the military. Several journalists remained in prison or were arrested during the month for critical coverage of the government or the military. Police also raided the Cairo office of the Turkish public broadcaster TRT, which the government has accused of siding with Morsi, and offices of the Muslim Brotherhood's party newspaper.



6. CIVILIAN CONTROL AND SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM

The military continues to dominate the Egyptian political system, conduct trials of civilians, and operate with impunity. The country's security forces have not been held accountable for the shooting deaths of more than 1,000 protesters since the July 3 coup. Although the draft constitution is not yet complete, the current version does not appear to ensure civilian oversight of the military.



7. PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND CIVIC ACTIVISM

Political protests persisted in September, though not on the same scale as before the military's violent crackdown in August. The authorities continued to arrest Morsi supporters, members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and some non-Islamist activists. The new court ban on the Brotherhood could significantly curtail its social programs and other activities.



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. On September 10, the government issued a two-month extension of the state of emergency, which grants security forces great leeway to crack down on political opposition and suspends due process rights. Mansour also amended a law to allow indefinite detention of defendants facing possible sentences of death or life in prison. In early September, 63 civilians were tried in a military court for supposed involvement in street violence. They were not granted full access to their attorneys and were sentenced after two brief sessions.



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.