



Photography is Prohibited

**A report about the violations against
journalists during the Council of
Representatives (Parliament)
Elections 2020**



EOJM

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Media Freedoms Unit

In September 10, 2020, the National Electoral Commission issued decision No. 52 of 2020 inviting voters to the Council of Representatives elections as the elections would take place inside Egypt in two stages from October 24, 2020 to December 8, 2020. The first stage elections took place in Egypt in 14 governorates on a daily basis. October 24 and 25, 2020, and the run-off was on November 23 and 24, 2020, while the elections for the second stage were held in Egypt in 13 governorates on November 7 and 8, 2020, and the run-off was on December 7-8, 2020, and the final results of the two stages were announced on November 30 and December 14, 2020 respectively⁽¹⁾.

In this kind of electoral benefits, mass communications work to cover the elections and transmit news and data related to the elections to the public, work on political awareness of the public, and urge them to actively participate in the electoral process on one hand. On the other hand, debates related to the electoral programs and goals of each candidate and political faction, in parallel with its role as a popular watchdog over the integrity and impartiality of the election process, which strengthens the media's roles in building a fair democratic society based on participation and the peaceful transfer of power.

In order for the media to play its roles, they must be free and independent. The authorities responsible for elections must provide a democratic environment that supports the media work, and obligate those in charge of them to adopt real practical practices that emphasize the need to enable media workers to perform their roles freely

1- Two seats were waiting for the decision as soon as the new parliament begins its first session, after the death of the winning candidate Gamal Haggag from the constituency of Benha and Kafr Shukr for the individual system, whose district is expected to hold by-elections after the new parliament speaker announces the vacancy of the seat. Also another seat for the member of parliament Fawzi Fati who died, was the winning candidate on the list system in the National List for Egypt for the Governorate of Dakahlia. It is expected that the reserve will be escalated for him, whose daughter Aya Fawzi Fati. The National Elections Commission Decision No. 52 of 2020 is [available on](#) Decision of the National Elections Authority No. 53 of 2020, regarding the schedule for the Council of Representatives elections, [available on](#)

Accordingly; “The Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media” has formed an operations room for monitoring the 2020 Council of Representatives elections, to monitor any difficulties that the journalists and media professionals faced, and any violations that might occur to them during the performance of their work on covering the 2020 Parliament elections, with the aim of assessing the extent to which journalists and media professionals can follow the election process and cover it smoothly.

This report deals with the findings of “The Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media” operations room concerned with monitoring the extent to which journalists and media professionals were able to cover the 2020 Egyptian Parliament elections and carry out their work freely without being exposed to difficulties or violations that affect the conduct of their work.

This report provides a comprehensive and detailed overview of all the violations that “The Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media” monitored against which journalists and media professionals were subjected to during the election period in the first and second stages, and the run-off two-stages. The “Observatory” relied on its own methodology for monitoring and documentation. This methodology is based on three main axes in monitoring violations. The first: field monitoring through the field teamwork on one hand, and communicating with a number of journalists and media professionals through the phone to ask them whether they were subjected to violations or not while performing their coverage work on the other hand. The second: Communicating with victims to verify violations of their rights and documenting their testimonies. The third: In the absence of field information or direct communication, through newspapers, channels, official statements, and electronic media.

First stage

54 Violations

Second Stage

18 Violations

During this period; The Monitoring and Documentation Unit recorded (72) cases against media outlets and their workers during their work implementation on covering the Parliament elections 2020, as the Monitoring and Documentation Unit recorded (54) violations during the first stage of the elections and (18) violations were recorded during the second stage.

Shape (1) Distribute violations in the first and second elections stages

The violations were distributed through number of variables: The type of documentation carried out by the observatory (direct and indirect documentation), the type of violation, the gender of the journalist who was subjected to the violation, the journalist's work authority, his/ her specialty, followed by the party responsible for this violation, and finally the Geographical violations distribution in all governorates as follows:

Distribute violations according to the type of documentation



72
Direct Documentation

The Monitoring and Documentation Unit has recorded (72) violations through direct documentation with the victims, during the 2 stages of the Parliament elections that took place during October and November 2020.

Shape (2) Distribute violations according to the type of documentation

Distribute violations according to the type of violation



69
Coverage prevention



1
Delete journalistic content



2
Inappropriate treatment

The cases of preventing the press and media coverage were the most recorded cases of violations (with more than 95% of the total cases) while two cases of inappropriate treatment of journalists, and one case was recorded for deleting a journalistic content.

Shape (3) Distribute violations according to the type of violation

Distribute violations according to the journalist's gender



27
Female



45
Male

The Observatory recorded (72) cases of violation during following up the parliament elections 2020, (45) violations occurred against males (63%) compared to (27) cases against females (37% of the total violations).

Shape (4) Distribute violations according to the journalist's gender

Distribute violations according to the journalist/ media professional's work authority



56
Online websites



3
National news-
papers



13
Private newspapers

The Observatory recorded the violations against a number of journalists'/ media professionals working in different media sectors. The largest number of them was for the workers in Online Websites (78%) with (56) violations, while (13) violations against the workers in private newspapers was recorded (about 18%) in contrast to three cases of violations against workers of national newspapers (about 4%) of the total number of violations that journalists and media professionals have been subjected to.

Shape (5) Distribute violations according to the journalist/ media professional's work authority

Distribute violations according to the journalist's specialty field



63
Photojournalist



3
Correspondent



5
Journalist



1
Editor-in-chief

Photojournalists were the most exposed to violations with 63 cases of violation (87.5% of the total violations), while journalists were subjected to 5 violations (about 7% of the total violations) and correspondents were subjected to 3 cases (about 4% of the total violations) while the editor-in-chief was exposed to 1 violation case.

Shape (6) Distribute violations according to the journalist's specialty field

Distribute violations according to the aggressor side



47
Ministry of Interior



1
Civilians

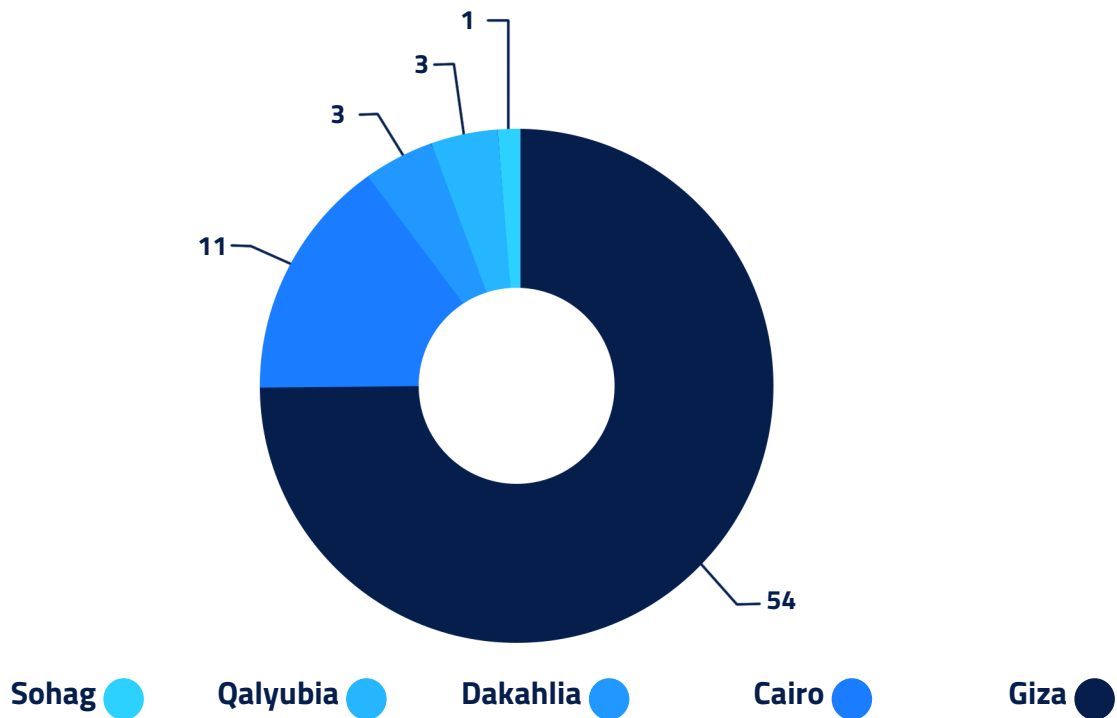


24
Judicial authorities

In terms of the aggressors; The Ministry of Interior ranked first (65% of the total violations) with 47 cases, followed by the judicial authorities with 19 cases (26.4% of the total violations) while one case was recorded in which the aggressor were civilians.

Shape (7) Distribute violations according to the aggressor side

Distribute violations according to the geographical area



On the geographical level, the observatory recorded (54) cases of violation within the governorate of Giza (72% of the total violations), while (11) cases were recorded within the area of the capital, Cairo (about 15.3% of the total violations). In addition, 3 cases were recorded in the Dakahlia governorate, and the same in Qalyubia governorate, while one case was recorded in Sohag governorate in Upper Egypt.

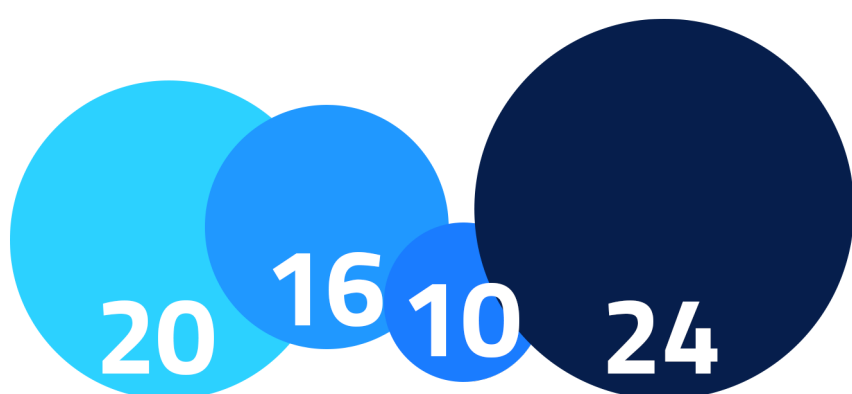
Shape (8) Distribute violations according to the geographical area

Cases of coverage prevention emerged as the only violation that journalists were subjected to in the various electoral commissions. This violation was accompanied by two cases of inappropriate dealing and one case in which press content was deleted from a journalist's device, by the security forces in charge of securing the committees.

During the process of documenting violations, the security forces in charge of securing the committees emerged as the most effective authorities that prevented journalists from implementing their work with (52) violations, (20) cases of them the "security forces" didn't give the journalists any clear reasons for the prevention, while in (16) of the total cases, the "security forces" demanded the journalists to bring permits issued by the "Ministry of

Interior'' stating their entitlement to cover the elections, despite the journalists 'possession of official permits issued by the National Elections Commission, which is an arbitrary and illegal action by the security forces. The only body entrusted with extracting permits is the "Commission'' according to the provisions of the articles of the Constitution and the relevant laws. Journalists were also prevented from photographing (10) cases, because of instructions whose source was not identified.

All in all, there were 24 cases monitored, of the total documented cases, in which journalists were prevented from photographing based on the instructions of the electoral commissions heads, which was considered an arbitrary measure. The decisions issued by the "National Elections Authority'' gives only the judges the right to determine the time length and number of coverage staff within the committees. This condition is associated with avoiding crowding, obstructing the committee's work or journalist's committing any violation, and in all cases the head of the subcommittee must write a memorandum must be received as a part of the electoral process papers for the General Committee and sent to the National Elections Authority.



Shape (9) The most prominent patterns observed in reading the violations of Parliament 2020

- Preventing journalists from coverage, based on instructions from judges responsible for electoral commissions
- Preventing journalists from photographing based on anonymous instructions
- Journalists were required to obtain permits issued by the Ministry of Interior
- Preventing journalists from photographing without giving any reasons



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