



Partners in the Nation **Municipal Election Monitoring Campaign, April 2008**

PRESS STATEMENT

Cairo, April 8, 2008

EASD OBSERVERS ARRESTED AND DENIED ACCESS TO POLLING STATIONS

The Egyptian Association for Supporting Democratic Development (EASD) and the Egyptian Center for Development and Democratic Studies (ECDDS) deployed 4,700 observers today to monitor the voting and counting process across 24 governorates, as the governorates of Fayoum and Ismailia were closed by acclamation. Since the early hours of the morning, the majority of EASD observers were denied access to polling stations on the premise that they did not have the proper accreditation from the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR).

On the eve of Thursday April 3rd at 20:00, EASD received a phone call from the NCHR requesting observer lists on Saturday April 5th, only two days before elections. We submitted the requested papers on Saturday morning. However, we were surprised when the NCHR requested additional documentation at 16:00 on the same day, in contrast to previous accreditation procedures for the Parliamentary and Shura Council Elections. EASD completed and submitted the requested information on the morning of Sunday April 6th. However, NCHR failed to provide accreditation badges by the Election Day, despite EASD's ability to promptly provide the additional requested information.

NCHR was the official entity to coordinate the accreditation for non-partisan election monitors. EASD believes that the entire process to accredit the observers deliberately aimed to hinder domestic organizations from monitoring the elections. Furthermore, the accreditation process did not provide an opportunity for organizations to challenge the administrative decisions in court.

This is considered a flagrant violation of all the relevant international conventions signed by the Egyptian government. Article 151 of the Egyptian Constitution stipulates that such conventions have become bylaws. The most significant one is the Paris Declaration issued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 1994 on criteria for free and fair elections highlighting the right of observers to monitor elections, let alone the judicial ruling issued by the Administrative Court 2005 on civil society observers' right to monitor elections.

Electoral Transgressions

Several violations against the law of Exercising Political and Civil Rights and the administrative instructions regulating the election process were reported until 10:00.

Arrest of several EASD and ECDDS observers

In Banha district, Governorate of Qalyubiya, the following EASDs were arrested: governorate coordinator Mahmoud Badr, in front the polling center in Susan Mubarak School in Shebin, assistant governorate coordinator Muhammad Ali Muhammad and observer Abdel Raauf Medhat Mukhtar in Umm El-Moumenien School in Banha, in addition to some other observers.

In El-Baddari district, Governorate of Assiut, EASD observers Sami Abdel Aal Ahmad and Badri Ahmad

Muhammad in El-Akkad El-Bahari School were arrested at 8:15 and released an hour later.

In Suhag center district, Governorate of Suhag, EASD and ECDDS observers Hossam Hammam and Negm Abdel Naeem were arrested.

In Dessuq district, Governorate of Kafr El-Shiekh, EASD and ECDDS observer Farouq Farouq Ibrahim was detained for an hour before releasing him and telling him to leave the polling station.

Prevention of EASD and ECDDS observers from following the procedures of opening polling stations

Most of our observers in several electoral districts were prevented from following opening procedures.

In Bulaq Abu El-Ella district, Governorate of Cairo, EASD and ECDDS observers Mahmoud Abdel Aziz Muhammad, Muhammad Yunes and Ramy Muhammad El-Said were prevented from entering their polling stations.

In Central Cairo district, Governorate of Cairo, EASD and ECDDS observers Iman Farag Ahmad, Ahmad Ahmad Mansour and Ahmad Hussien Awad were prevented from entering all the polling centers in the district.

In polling stations # 27 – 28 – 29, El-Tebien district, Governorate of Cairo, EASD and ECDDS observers Ahmad Essam El-Din Hanafi and Ragab Ahmad Abdel Atti were prevented from entering polling stations.

In El-Basateen School polling station, Governorate of Cairo, EASD and ECDDS observers Sahar Ali Mahmoud

and Sherif Yehia Abdel Hadi were prevented from entering polling stations.

In El-Nassr Elementary School, Giza Center district, Governorate of Giza, EASD and ECDDS observers Mustafa Abdel Hamid, Ahmad Ali Mustafa and Yassin Abdel Khaleq were prevented from entering polling stations and their forms were taken away from them.

In Abu Bakr El-Sedeeq, Taha Hussein and Refaa El-Tahatwi Schools, Imbaba district, Governorate of Giza, EASD and ECDDS observers Ali Samir, Ahmad Hashem and Hossam Ali El-Lithy were prevented from entering polling stations.

In Burtuss School polling stations, Ussiem district, Governorate of Giza, EASD and ECDDS observers Mahmoud Nagi, Magdi Abd Rabu, Islam Salah and Muhammad Abdel Hamid were prevented from entering polling stations.

In Al-Shaimaa School polling station, Banha district, Governorate of Qalubiya, our observers Muhammad Ali Eliwa, Said Muhammad Saber and Mustafa Abdel Qader were detained for 30 minutes in the school. The polling station police officer took their monitoring manuals and forms and kicked them out of the stations.

In El-Negilli School, El-Nubarreya district, Governorate of Behira, EASD and ECDDS observer Emad Anwar Attia was prevented from entering the polling station.

In El-Dawahi district, Governorate of Port Said, EASD and ECDDS observers Ramy Yussri Abdel Razzeq, Muhammad Abdel Aal and Ahmad El-Ghadban were

prevented from entering polling stations and were asked by the security to go to the security directorate to get official accreditation for monitoring.

*You can find more on EASD election website: www.egyelections.com
For enquiries and complaints, Please call on our hotlines: 0164087170 –
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