



Egypt Democracy Compass

Coverage Period: December 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

The draft constitution was completed in early December 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 was submitted to interim president Adli Mansour on December 3 and was scheduled to be put before a popular referendum in January 2014. The document was a modest improvement over the former constitution, with increased protections for some civil liberties, but vague language left serious doubt as to whether such protections would be enforced. The draft's negative features included provisions that would guarantee the power and autonomy of the military and allow for military trials of civilians.

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. It was unclear for much of December which elections—presidential or parliamentary—would be held first following the referendum. However, Mansour stated at the end of the month that the presidential vote could legally be held first, increasing the likelihood that a military-approved candidate—such as current army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi—would win the presidency and then unduly influence the outcome of the parliamentary balloting.

3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The government's ongoing crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood intensified in December, when authorities designated the group as a terrorist organization, imposing harsh criminal penalties for membership and participation in its activities. Authorities also blamed the Brotherhood for the bombing of a police headquarters that killed 16 people, despite the fact that a known terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the attack.

4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Sectarian violence and political divisions continued to undermine religious freedom in December. Though there were fewer high-profile attacks on the Coptic Christian community than in some previous months, 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 persisted in restricting media outlets that convey support for ousted president Mohamed Morsi or criticism of the interim government. On December 29, police arrested four journalists from Al-Jazeera English on charges that they aired false news, were broadcasting illegally, and met with a terrorist group—the Muslim Brotherhood. The arrests were part of a broader effort to restrict all media coverage of the Brotherhood's ongoing political protests.

6. CIVILIAN CONTROL AND SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM

The military continued to dominate the political system, conduct trials of civilians, and operate with impunity. The final draft of the new constitution made it clear that the armed forces would enjoy maximum protection for their autonomy and freedom from civilian oversight. Public enthusiasm for a possible presidential bid by al-Sisi reportedly remained high, and the announcement that the presidential vote could precede parliamentary elections further raised the prospect of a new political system dominated by the general.

7. PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND CIVIC ACTIVISM

Confrontations between security forces and pro-Morsi protesters occurred on university campuses throughout Egypt during December. The authorities used excessive force, including in the shooting death of student Khaled el-Haddad at Al-Azhar University during a demonstration against the military-backed government. On December 18, security forces raided the office of the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, confiscated some of its supplies, and arrested several of its staff members, presumably to intimidate other organizations engaged in similar activities. In addition, at the end of the month, authorities sentenced three of the key organizers of the 2011 protests that brought down former president Hosni Mubarak to three years in prison for peacefully participating in demonstrations against the government.

8. JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND RULE OF LAW

The judiciary continued to play a leading role in political affairs, with Supreme Constitutional Court chairman Adli Mansour acting as interim president. Though the state of emergency stretching from August to November was no longer in place in December, the government continued to conduct mass arrests and mass trials of political activists in which the defendants are not afforded the rights of due process.



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.