



Exploitation of Women's Voting Blocs by the Religious Movements in the First Round of the 2011 People's Assembly Council Election

The Egyptian Center Women Right's (ECWR) monitors elections from a gender perspective since 1996. Therefore ECWR is closely monitoring the first election in the transition period after the January 25 revolution. The 2011 People's Assembly elections are conducted in three rounds with each round including nine governorates. The governorates of the first round are Cairo, El-Fayoum, Port Said, Kafr El-Sheikh, Damietta, Alexandria, The Red Sea, Luxor, Assuit.

A total of 376 female candidates are participating as candidates in the elections; 164 women run as individual candidates and 212 women are on party-list.

During the first round of elections ECWR received a number of complaints from its observers, who were monitoring the polling stations, which had female candidates on their lists; the violations can be summarized as follows:

1) Spreading Rumors:

The Freedom and Justice Party and the Islamic powers spread rumors against some female candidates who are associated with the revolution movement and the liberal powers. The rumors claimed that these women withdraw the candidacy from the election and were solely to confuse the voters aiming at reducing the votes for the female candidates.

2) Influence on The Will of the Voters:

Al-Nour Party and The Freedom and Justice Party took advantage of the situation of poor female voters and persuaded them to cast their votes for them on the election day in some governorates including: Damietta in the second constituency, Cairo in the fourth constituency, the Polling station is Al-Kholafa'a School.

3) Continuation of Illegal Propaganda:

Some political parties especially religious parties in some governorates and constituencies conducted illegal propaganda on the election day including Cairo, Al-Marg district, Mohamad Fared School and Alexandria, Sedey Gaber district, Experiment Cleopatra School.

4) Lobbing Female Voters:

Al-Nour Party and the Freedom and the Justice Party used female candidates to lobby women in Microbuses to vote for these two parties, Cairo, first constituency Microbus No 212.

5) Administrative and Organizational Mistakes:

- Due to disorganization and the limited space and the high of the number of female voters a vast crowd assemble and there were no suitable places for female voters which. Therefore many female voters fell down on the floor in Alexandria, second district, Seedy Gaber and the polling station The El-Shahid Waleed Sobhi El-Ghays Primary School.
- Many polling stations didn't use curtains and many polling stations had only one curtain although due to the high number of voters waiting in line, 6 women had to

vote at the same time. This occurred for example in Polling Station No 41 and 42 Secondary School Aisha Hassanin for Girls in El-Fayoum.

6) Misleading Female Voters:

One of the female voters, from The Red Sea governorate, the Red Sea District, voting in the polling station Ibrahim El Ga'afary School, said that when she entered the polling station somebody told her " Put the sign on the individual list only" when she got out they told her " it is wrong, you should put a sign on the two lists" so she went to the head of the polling station who said to her "I can't open the box .. it is over". The women refused to mention her name and the name of the person who told her to sign the individual list only.

7) Fraud Cases:

One of the female voters called "Nazira Mohamed Abdel Hammed Mohana" found that someone already signed under her name, which is an indication that she already voted, as she wanted to vote. The judge refused to prove this fraud. This happened in the ninth district, Asma'a secondary school for girls, polling station No. 148 in Cairo.

8) Violation against women voters the polling stations:

Women were beaten and a gas tube was opened in order for them to either faint or run away. Full face covered women entered to the polling station in the name of other female voters in order to vote for them. Stones were thrown on female voters from unknown people, which lead to some being injured in the eye. The policeman refused to file a report caliming that "His mission is to secure the inside the school only and not outside". This incident was in the El-Sahel police station, Al-Obour School, Sharaby. Cairo.

9) Bribes:

The religious powers especially the Muslim Brotherhood in El-Fayoum and their party the Freedom and the Justice Party exploited poor of female illiterate voters in El-Fayoum, who represent a large number of voters, by giving them 50 pounds for their vote. They drew the symbol of the Freedom and Justice party on the women's hands and arms so they would vote for them, which angered many voters and the other parties. This incident happened in most of polling station in the governorate of El-Fayoum such as Gamal Abdel Naser secondary School for Boys, polling stations no 61, 62, 63, 64, and 65.

10) Electoral Tricks:

The Brotherhood designed a voting sheet resembling the real voting sheet but canceled three names of independent female candidates including a female lawyer called Samia Fathy Abdel Sadek leading to force complaints from the female candidate. This incident happened in Kafer El-Shiekh, third district, Al-Zera'a School in Desouk, polling stations no 51 and 52.

11) Preventing female candidates to enter their polling stations:

A female candidate called Nagwa Abbas Ahmed Eassa, from Cairo, an individual candidate in the third district, polling station Ahmed Zewal School, was prevented from entering the polling station, which is against the law.