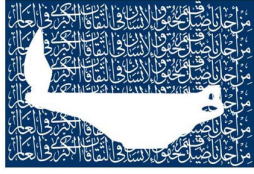




Second interim report on the performance of the media during the second phase of the referendum on the constitutional amendments

December 5, 2013 to January 8, 2014



**CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
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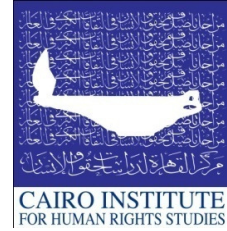
This project is supported by



Publisher:

**Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
(CIHRS)**

Specialized Reports



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January 2014



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Methodology:

This second interim report discusses the quantitative and qualitative assessment of media outlets¹ monitored daily² during the second phase of the referendum on the Egyptian constitutional amendments³ from December 5, 2013, when the final draft was released public debate, until January 8, 2014, the day which marked the end of campaigning period and the beginning of the referendum itself, with the polls opening for Egyptians living abroad.

The report, issued by the CIHRS' media monitoring team,⁴ is the second in a series, the first having addressed media coverage of the fifty-member Constitutional Committee tasked with amending the constitution, focusing on the first phase of the referendum from October 25 to December 4, 2013.⁵

CIHRS selected the media outlets for the study based on three primary factors: viewer ratings, diversity and fair representation of all views, and fair representation of the various media ownership models. After the closure of several Islamists television outlets that supported the 2012 constitution and rejected the new draft constitution, however, Egyptian media exhibits a distinct lack of diversity, which is necessarily reflected in the sample considered here.⁶ The unfortunate result is that the media outlets evaluated in this report do not constitute a balanced or representative sample of views in society.

The methodology used for the monitoring process assesses the professionalism of media outlets using international standards for media performance and international

1 A total of 20 media outlets were reviewed, divided as follows: seven newspapers (al-Ahram, al-Gomhouriya, al-Wafd, al-Hurriya wa al-Adala, al-Masry al-Youm, al-Shorouk, and al-Watan); eight television channels (the Egyptian Satellite Channel, Nile News, ONTV, CBC, al-Hayat, al-Nahar, MBC Egypt, and al-Jazeera Egypt); and five radio stations (Radio Egypt, 90:90, Hits Radio, Nugoum FM, and Quran Radio).

2 Monitoring was conducted at prime time, which for television is 7 pm to 1 am and for radio is 3 pm to 7 pm. For the newspapers, monitors reviewed the second edition. Monitors were trained in quantitative and qualitative methods and content analysis, in order to produce accurate data that reflects the biases of media outlets, positive or negative, toward all parties to the referendum.

3 For the purposes of monitoring media coverage, the referendum on the constitutional amendments was divided into three phases. The first began with the formation of the fifty-member constitutional committee and continued as it worked on the amendments until it submitted its draft to the president. In this period, the media covered the committee, and members of the committee were the primary media sources. The second phase covers the public discussion of the draft constitution, in which the media bears the primary responsibility to explain the text and manage the debate between different views. This period ends the night before the referendum, when a moratorium is imposed and all public discussions are halted in the media in preparation for the vote. The third phase involves coverage of the vote and the outcome, starting on the night of the moratorium through the vote, the ballot count, any challenges, and the announcement of the final result.

4 The CIHRS' interest in media monitoring began in 2005, when it first monitored the performance of Egypt media during the parliamentary elections, followed by a report on the media and presidential elections in January 2006. The media observatory in June 2009 prepared a report on Arab and Sudanese media coverage of the Darfur conflict, and it reported on Egyptian media coverage of the 2010 parliamentary elections and coverage of the 2011 parliamentary elections. CIHRS Media Monitoring issued three interim reports on media performance during campaigning, voting, and runoffs in the 2012 presidential elections, and was involved in monitoring coverage of the 2012 referendum on the constitution.

5 For the first report, see <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=7771>>.

6 For more information on the closures, see, "Closure of Islamist Media Channels and Arrest of Some of Its Staff: Clear Violation of Media Freedom, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=6913&lang=en>>.

treaties on the role of media during referendums and general elections. The methodology takes into consideration the differences between state-owned media, which should give voice, without discrimination, to all segments of the people, and private media, which are ultimately subordinate to the influences of capitalism and to their editorial policies and therefore adopt varying standards influenced by the market in their quest for material profit and social or political gains. The methodology also recognizes the specific nature of partisan media outlets as the organs of particular political parties with biases and stances on public issues. The methodology employs monitoring methods suited to the type of media (written, visual, audio) and its ownership structure.

Introduction: General context of the second phase of the referendum

A constitutional referendum does not begin at the ballot box and end with the declaration of results; nor does it take place in a vacuum. Rather, the general atmosphere of the poll casts its shadow over the process. In fact, when considering the constitution itself, we should not limit ourselves to its actual textual content but extend our view to the reality it expresses.

Like any vote, a referendum is an instrument for selecting one of multiple options. It derives its legitimacy from the fact that those who engage are the stakeholders—namely, the people. This necessitates a climate that allows for freedom of choice, which requires that all options to be put before the people. This, in turn, requires that the state and its apparatus remain neutral and refrain from showing bias for or against any particular choice. Instead, its role should be to ensure the freedom to choose.

The events of the past few weeks do not constitute a climate capable of fostering a free and fair referendum. Instead, the governing authorities have continually resorted to security measures and media policies that have exacerbated polarization, portraying one choice as the sole, correct option and labeling those who support other options, for whatever reason, as traitors of the nation.

In terms of media practices, which the interim report discusses in detail, the state media has failed to offer a balanced presentation of the choice between a “yes” vote, a “no” vote, and the boycott — which is also a legitimate political choice. Rather, the media has resorted to emotional and at times misleading⁷ appeals for a particular vote. Similarly, instead of securing an environment suitable for a public discussion of diverse opinions, the state’s security apparatus has harassed advocates of the “no” vote, charging them with possession of material calling for a rejection of the constitutional amendments and mounting a smear campaign against them in the media. This calls into question the very purpose behind holding a referendum at all if voting “no” is itself being portrayed publicly as an act of treason or a crime meriting punishment.

⁷ See the section on advertising and propaganda and the second on campaigning in the first interim report, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=7771>>.

Security forces have not addressed their failure to confront repeated terrorist attacks, nor have they acknowledged the repercussions that their own use of excessive force may have had on the tendency of some members of the Muslim Brotherhood to employ violence. Instead, the security forces have continued to find new targets for their violence and repression. Since the draft constitution was submitted to the president, the security forces have been given free rein to act, as if the completion of the constitutional text were some sort of signal. Since December 3, security forces have turned against activists and human rights organizations in an attempt to silence all dissident voices, at times by branding them as traitors and mobilizing public opinion against them and at other times by intimidating these activists through imprisonment or baseless charges.

At the same time, the security forces have failed repeatedly to contain terrorism. The violence that was initially confined to Sinai has spread to include the attempted assassination of the interior minister and the bombing of a security directorate.⁸ This raises legitimate questions about the competence of security forces and their willingness to secure the referendum and provide the protection necessary for citizens to cast a free vote.⁹

The period under review also saw the Cabinet declare the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization, imposing penalties on any person who promotes the group or terrorism, funds its activities, or joins the group after the decree.¹⁰ According to the prime minister, the decree is no more than a statement of position,¹¹ since the executive does not possess the authority to make such a declaration.¹² Nevertheless, the decree had consequences for media coverage, especially coverage of the referendum, as discussed in the report.

Media context for this phase of the referendum

In the period under review, some new developments took place which affected media outlets and influenced both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the report. On December 26, the *Ahram Press* suspended printing of *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala*, an organ of the Freedom and Justice Party, pursuant to the prime minister's decree declaring the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. Although the paper is published by a legal political party that as yet has not been dissolved by judicial order, as required by the interim constitution issued on July 8, 2013, the *Ahram Press*

8 For more information about rights organizations stance on these terrorist acts, see, "Munazzamat huquqiya tudin hadath al-Daqahliya al-irhabi," <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=7765>>.

⁹ These incidents were reflected in media coverage of the referendum, as the media used them to mobilize citizen support for the constitution, claiming that the adoption of the constitution would stop such criminal acts and that the goal of the incidents was only to obstruct the referendum. Therefore the actions would end as soon as the constitutional amendments were approved. The media did not, however, hold the security apparatus responsible for its failure to stop these incidents in the first place.

¹⁰ The decree as published by the State Information Service can be viewed at <http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Default.aspx>.

¹¹ The prime minister made this statement on a program on MBC Egypt on December 29. The segment can be watched at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS6sTJM9Vhk>.

¹² The prime minister's statements were aired on Dream on December 26, viewable at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJWcWRMK-98>

decided to confiscate the paper's right to appear, thus reducing the sample size and diversity of this study. With this move, no Egyptian outlets opposed to the referendum and the constitutional amendments remained in the sample. This left al-Jazeera Egypt as the sole outlet which adopted a stance of opposition to the referendum. The other outlets deliberately abandoned standards of diversity and balance, choosing instead to wholeheartedly support the referendum and leaving no space for opposition or ambivalent opinions, as will be discussed in this report.

The CIHRS emphasizes that the professional standards of diversity and balance are binding on state-owned media, which should give voice to all segments of society without preference or exclusion. While private and partisan media's adoption of specific stances or bias is acceptable in context where diverse media outlets are represented and varying opinions are given equal opportunities to reach the public, the lack of any diversity in the views presented across all outlets does undermine the concept of balance in the media coverage directed to the public. This raises suspicions that media outlets which do declare their biases are disseminating propaganda.

There were also changes in range of satellite programming during this period. The program "Jumla Mufida" on MBC Egypt was cancelled on December 10, 2013 and replaced by "Yahduth fi Misr," the first episode of which was aired on December 29. This led to less coverage of the referendum on the channel, as most days covered by CIHRS media monitoring following the beginning of the new program contained no reference to the referendum at all, with the exception of advertisements aired during the prime hours.¹³

On December 28, issue no. 295 of the Official Gazette carried the decree of the Supreme Elections Committee regulating the vote at home and abroad. The paper also published the SEC Decree 38/2013 regulating campaigning, which prohibited any person from campaigning by any means within 200 meters of a polling station. The decree did not set any other limits on media coverage of the referendum or regarding the use of negative campaigning, intimidation, the use of religious campaign materials, or any other violations related to the campaigning period.

Media interest in the constitution increased markedly during this period as compared to the previous phase, when the Constitutional Committee was preparing the text of the constitution, although a few outlets maintained their generally limited coverage of the referendum. Among radio stations, there was virtually no mention of the constitution on Quran Radio and Hits Radio, while the stations 90:90 and Radio Egypt carried the most radio coverage of the constitution. Among television stations, private channels showed similar levels of interest in the constitution, which was less than that displayed by Nile News and the Egyptian Satellite Channel. Among the the channels based elsewhere in the Arab region, MBC Egypt had carried very little coverage as compared to al-Jazeera Egypt during the first period under study, yet it showed a more marked increase in its interest in the constitution during the second phase.

¹³ This was the channel with the least coverage of the referendum; for a period of at least 15 days, no mention was made of the constitution at all, even during the ad segments. The quantity of coverage increased markedly when "Yahduth fi Misr" began to air on December 29.

Newspapers continued to carry the most coverage of the constitution. Even given their limited space, all papers without exception chose to prioritize news of the constitution and referendum throughout the period under study in the second report, though the aspects of the process focused on by each outlet differed, as will be discussed in this report.

During the second phase of the referendum generally, most media outlets clearly declared their position on the constitutional amendments, with all coming out in support of the document with the exception of *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* and al-Jazeera Egypt, which stated their rejection of the amendments. Of interest are the methods used by news outlets to express their stances, whether through statements made by program presenters, newspaper editorials, the logo chosen by the channel or paper to accompany its content or coverage,¹⁴ or the production of channel promos that reflected the outlet's biases.

Most significant features of media coverage of the second phase of the referendum

International standards define three roles for the media during campaigns preceding referendums and general elections.¹⁵ The first is to inform citizens about the electoral process and the voting rules issued by the supervising bodies. The media plays an important role in reassuring citizens about the integrity of the process, including the integrity of their vote, by presenting the measures taken to secure polling stations and including information about what individuals are permitted to be in the polling stations, the voter's right in the station to ascertain the integrity of his vote, and the bodies to which voters should turn in the event of any violations. The media should also explain the statutory framework governing the electoral process, as well as the vote-counting process and how the ballot boxes are secured, all of which reinforces citizens' faith in the process.

The media's second role is to moderate a substantive debate around the subject of the vote (in this case, the constitutional amendments) in order to help citizens make an informed, free decision. The discussion should go beyond the text itself to touch on guarantees for its implementation, any legislative or non-legislative reforms it will require, and challenges facing these reforms. The media should also raise questions about the validity of these guarantees and any contradictions liable to mislead the electorate. Here the media's only bias should be in favor of the voter, and it should not adopt any particular view. The fulfillment of this role is therefore a test of the media and affects the extent of citizens' trust in it.

¹⁴ While some channels and papers chose phrases such as "yes to the constitution," or pictures of a poll box with a sign saying "yes," the paper *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* chose "your constitution is illegitimate; boycott the military's constitution" to be their slogan on all pages starting on December 15 (as soon as the president announced the dates of the referendum).

¹⁵ For more details on the role of the media during general elections, see "Ay dawr li-l-i'lam fi taghtiyat al-intikhabat al-'amma," CIHRS, 2010, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=3617>>.

The third role of the media is to provide a diverse, balanced representation of all parties of various affiliations and views. In this case, the media bore the primary responsibility of discussing whether these amendments would meet the needs of all segments of society without discrimination, in all their geographic, religious, racial, ethnic, political, and ideological diversity. It should also consider the rights of those who have reservations about electoral promises to express their opinions and the reasons for their reservations, leaving it to the voters to make their decision based on their convictions and interests.

Using these three roles to assess the media under review here, it is clear from the daily monitoring activities that the media has deliberately failed to perform its proper role. This failure was reflected in the features of coverage discussed below.¹⁶

1. Dearth of content for educating voters about the referendum process

All the media outlets under study – newspapers, television, and radio stations – worked to mobilize support for the constitution by all means at their disposal, but they failed to explain to media consumers the reasons for this support and did not attempt to strengthen citizens’ confidence in the referendum process or improve their knowledge of it. Most media devoted very little coverage to issues of voter education, which was limited to a few public service announcements broadcast or published at a relatively late date about the preparations of the Supreme Elections Commission (SEC)¹⁷ to inform citizens about the importance of reviewing their information on the voter rolls and to familiarize them with the content of the constitution. However, the space allotted to these ads was limited as compared to the ads aired in support of the constitution.

Similarly, talk shows hosted very few discussions regarding the logistics of the referendum, the rules governing it,¹⁸ guarantees for the integrity of polling stations, and information about the bodies tasked with supervising the vote or the rules governing media coverage of the referendum.¹⁹ Coverage of these issues was limited to short phone-in statements from members of the SEC, who emphasized that the

¹⁶ The report will discuss the coverage of al-Jazeera and *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* in a separate section since these two outlets’ editorial policies and violations differed from those of the other media under discussion.

¹⁷ Most newspapers and television channels featured the ad campaigns prepared by the SEC, the Social Contract Center, and the National Council for Women, with the ads going into heavy rotation starting on December 10.

¹⁸ To its credit, the fourth episode of the MBC Egypt program “Yahduth fi Misr” was the first to feature the new official spokesman of the SEC discussing the referendum procedures. On December 10, “Akhira al-Nahar” on Nahar hosted a member of the general-secretariat of the SEC to discuss voting procedures; on December 23, the same program invited the minister of administrative development to appear in a segment on voting procedures and the voter rolls. CBC’s “Huna al-Asima” featured a few phone-in interviews with members of the SEC in the period under review.

¹⁹ Despite the significance of this topic for the media, the only mention of it was on MBC’s “Yahduth fi Misri” on January 5.

voter rolls had been “purged” of fraud perpetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood or that MB-affiliated groups had been prohibited from monitoring the referendum.²⁰

The press simply published the text of the revised constitution.²¹ This was not motivated by a sense of duty to readers but rather to refute the fraudulent text allegedly distributed by the MB to mislead citizens or to highlight articles that had been dropped from the December 2012 constitution. The media also released inaccurate information about polling stations. While most outlets reported on the presidential decree revising some provisions of Law 73/1956 to allow voting in precincts outside voters’ areas of residence, they did not discuss or analyze the decree. This was liable to mislead voters, as the decree did not permit non-resident citizens to vote at any polling station, but only at special stations in each governorate.

2. Emphasis on the army and police in providing security during the referendum

The media contributed to the spread of the fear that the Muslim Brotherhood would use violence to obstruct the referendum,²² regardless of whether such reports were based on verifiable information,²³ mere opinions, speculations, or conclusions of media presenters presented to citizens as fact,²⁴ based on information from anonymous sources,²⁵ or leaks or exclusives by an outlet using their own sources.²⁶

²⁰ CBC’s “Huna al-Asima” focused the most on this issue. See episode 10 of December 21.

²¹ *Al-Gomhouriya* published the text of the constitution in a free insert accompanying the issue of December 13. *Al-Wafd* published the text on December 26 and again on January 2 accompanied by the slogan, “Yes to the constitution.”

²² The report draws this conclusion based on a sizeable number of examples that cannot all be cited here. In short, virtually every radio or television talk show carried this message. The examples cited here are thus illustrative and not comprehensive. The January 4 episode of ONTV’s “Nuss Sa’a,” hosted by Gamal Fahmi, is exemplary of the rhetoric used. “The most important step is to confuse and obstruct the scene,” Fahmi said in his introduction. “The closer we get to the date, the crazier things become. This madness will reach epic levels. It will be unprecedented criminal insanity...The traffickers in blood want the most bloodshed possible, but when everything turns out fantastic, they’ll be finished.”

²³ On December 20, “Akhir al-Nahar” aired two short news segments, one stating that the pro-Morsi alliance had called on supporters to storm squares and surround polling stations and the other noting that Ansar Beit al-Maqdis threatened the army and police with a massacre if the constitution passed. But none of the program presenters remarked on or attempted to verify these news items. The news was read in a matter of seconds and sourced to statements made on Facebook.

²⁴ For example, on December 22, the announcer on Nugoum FM’s “Nuqtat Liqa” said, “Let’s talk about the big stuff. What are the Muslim Brotherhood doing? They’re following the same scenario, the same idiocy: to spoil referendum day. They’re saying, We’re going to terrify you, we’re so strong, we’re tough guys—you know what I’m talking about. They’re acting like they’re Atris. But what are they doing? They’re calling for demonstrations. They’re saying: I’m going to create chaos, I’m going to make violence, I’m a hood.”

²⁵ On January 1, 2014, MBC Egypt aired a breaking item on its news ticker; sourcing “sovereign sources,” it reported that a terrorist group had been apprehended plotting to target polling stations in Cairo and Giza. Significantly, none of the channel’s news programs or talk shows discussed this news, and no other outlet reported it. MBC Egypt itself dropped the item from its ticker less than two minutes later and did not repost it. *Al-Watan* on December 6 carried a story on the Brotherhood’s plot to thwart the referendum, based entirely on security sources and other unnamed informed sources; the paper reported the same story on December 12. The host of CBC’s “Mumkin” opened the show on December 18 by stating, “I’m going to expose the Brotherhood’s plots using the group’s official documents, and this includes their plot to spoil the referendum.” But the announcer did not reveal the source of the documents or give any evidence for their authenticity.

The emphasis on possible violence on the two days of the poll was used to highlight the role of the army and police in securing the vote and to encourage citizens to take part as a way to challenge this security threat. This explains the heavy coverage devoted to the issue and repeated questions about the ability of the army and police to secure the poll posed to guests on talk shows even when the topic under discussion was not related to the referendum or the constitution.

Al-Ahram and *al-Gomhouriya* newspapers both stressed the role of the army and police in securing the vote, highlighting news of security preparations on the front page.²⁷ *Al-Wafd* also devoted part of the front page²⁸ of at least five separate issues to affirming the role of the police and army in securing the referendum, along with various other stories on the topic scattered throughout the paper in most other issues. The private press, too, showed marked interest in the role of the army and the police in securing the referendum.²⁹

Among television channels, the Egyptian Satellite Channel (ESC) devoted the most coverage to the role of the army and police in securing the referendum. In fact, there was virtually no newscast or talk show monologue that did not daily affirm the efforts of the security forces.

MBC Egypt's "Yahduth fi Misr" hosted the prime minister on its first episode on December 29, but the minister's only mention of the referendum was to refer to the efforts of the Interior Ministry and army to secure the voting process. *Al-Hayat*³⁰ and *al-Nahar*³¹ both raised the issue of police and army security efforts more than once.

²⁶ *Al-Ahram* turned over page 2 to journalist Mustafa Bakri on December 22 to allow him to expose "secret Muslim Brotherhood documents in the coming period." The long feature dealt with five Brotherhood scenarios for the coming period, but Bakri made no mention of whether these scenarios were simply expectations or if there were documents to back it up and verify his story. Nevertheless, the headline and content both presented the information as indisputable fact. The front page of *al-Wafd* on December 5 carried a story titled "Details of the plot by the international Brotherhood organization to mobilize against the constitution," but the story quoted no specific source for this claim, presented as confirmed fact. *Al-Wafd* on December 10 carried an investigative piece on page 9 titled "Rabid Brotherhood campaign to smear the constitution," which presented this statement as confirmed fact rather than the author's opinion. The author proceeded to pose various questions taken from different sources as proof of his theory. The same paper carried another investigative piece titled, "The Brotherhood threaten: violence, suicide attacks, and demonstrations."

²⁷ *Al-Ahram*, December 5, 8, 9, and 26; *al-Gomhouriya*, December 23 and 31.

²⁸ *Al-Wafd*, December 10, 13, 16, and 18 and January 1, 2014.

²⁹ See for example *al-Masry al-Youm*, December 10 and 19, 2013, and January 1, 2014.

³⁰ See "al-Hayat al-Youm" on December 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, and 29 and January 2. Notably, the program presenter consistently linked the efforts to secure the poll with Brotherhood attempts to spoil the referendum, raising such pointed questions as "When this is what happens today, what should we expect the day of the referendum?" and "What do you think of the general climate and the Brotherhood's attempts to thwart the constitution?"

³¹ See, for example, the show of December 24, 2013.

3. Lack of diversity and balance in the selection of sources, guests, and interviews

Over all three types of media, little diversity was displayed in terms of the views presented³² as well as the guests and sources invited to participate. Diversity was lacking even among guests expressing the same view.

Among pro-constitution talk show guests, monitors found that different shows repeatedly hosted Mervat al-Tellawi and Tehani al-Gebali³³ as representatives of women³⁴ and Father Boula, part of the 50-member constitutional committee, as a representative of Copts³⁵; Essam al-Islambouli was the most frequently hosted legal expert. The media also frequently featured other members of the constitutional committee, whose presentation and discussion of the constitution was naturally biased, but presenters showed no interest in asking questions that challenged their views or conclusions. The ESC hosted members of the constitutional committee more often than any other channel. In addition, most media outlets produced promotional ads in support of the constitution that featured quips from members of the constitutional committee taken from various television appearances; these promos were in heavy rotation in the period under consideration.

Needless to say, diversity of opinion was entirely absent. Most media coverage demonstrated unqualified support for the draft constitution, and vox pops segments,³⁶ phone-in callers,³⁷ and text messages selected for broadcast featured no opinions which differed from the generally pro-constitution stance.

With the exception of some episodes of “Akhir Kalam” on ONTV,³⁸ one episode of MBC Egypt’s “Khutout Arida,”³⁹ a handful of episodes of “al-Hayat al-Youm” on al-

³² It is to the credit of al-Hayat that it hosted an opponent of the constitutional amendments, Magdi Qorqor, on “al-Hayat al-Youm” on December 7. On December 24, the same program invited an expert in Islamic affairs to comment on the designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. An argument ensued between the expert and the other guest, who said that the Brothers “are not men, they’re not patriots, they’re not human.” The presenter attempted to allow space for the airing of both views.

³³ Mervat al-Tellawi had more than 50 media appearances in the period under review, while Tehani al-Gebali was a close runner-up. The two women also appeared in pro-constitution promotional materials aired more than once daily on most media outlets.

³⁴ Other women who made repeated appearances in the media include Hoda al-Sadda, Azza Ashmawi, and Nihad Abu al-Qumsan, but they appeared much less frequently than the others mentioned here.

³⁵ Overall, church sources were not frequently featured, limited to a handful of conversations with Pope Tawadros and statements from Father Boula. See, for example, CBC’s “Huna al-Asima,” January 5 and *al-Watan*, December 31.

³⁶ The ESC carried the most biased man-in-the-street segments in the monitoring period, with most of them lacking any diversity and balance and reflecting a clear bias. The correspondents for these segments, presented as part of the newscast, also provided overly florid, biased commentary. See, for example, the newscasts for December 17 and 18, 2013.

³⁷ Some of the phone-in segments featured on live television and radio broadcasts did contain some diverse views—some were even critical of the media’s performance—but the way in which media presenters engaged with them was non-professional. See the section on the confiscating the audience’s right to an opinion in this report.

³⁸ The 7 by 7 segment on “Akhir al-Kalam,” which began on December 31, 2013, was one of the few that featured guests opposed to the constitutional amendments, offering a debate with proponents of the constitution that gave equal time to both sides. This segment only lasted ten episodes, however.

³⁹ Episode of December 6, which featured different viewpoints on the article on workers and farmers in the parliament.

Hayat,⁴⁰ the December 19 episode of CBC's "Mumkin," and the January 1 episode of "Lazim Nifham" on the same channel, no talk show featured any viewpoint that opposed or expressed reservations on provisions of the constitution.

The op-ed pages of newspapers reflected this lack of diversity,⁴¹ with virtually no essays or columns in the state-owned or private press expressing any reservations on the constitution. Overall, the featured articles mobilized readers to support the amendments and lauded the achievements of the 50-member constitutional committee. Most of the headlines were variations on the following: "Egypt awaits a yes from Egyptians,"⁴² "The letters of the crossing,"⁴³ "Why say yes to the constitution,"⁴⁴ "Yes to the constitution,"⁴⁵ "Yes to a constitution that forsakes no part of the nation,"⁴⁶ and "The popular will and voting yes to the constitution."⁴⁷

Al-Wafd made the most frequent use of opinion articles as a means of encouraging support for the constitution. In the period under study, all the paper's articles supported the amendments, lavishing praise on the amendments and the constitutional committee.⁴⁸ In contrast, *al-Shorouk* demonstrated the most effort to achieve balance on the opinion page, carrying some articles that expressed reservations to some constitutional provisions, particularly the article on military trials for civilians.⁴⁹

Editorial cartoons were similarly unbalanced. In the period under study, no state-owned paper published a single cartoon that did not explicitly or implicitly encourage support for the constitution.⁵⁰ Privately owned papers⁵¹ also carried pro-constitution cartoons.⁵²

⁴⁰ Episodes of December 9 and 14, 2013.

⁴¹ While newspapers are not responsible for the content of opinion articles and their authors' views, they are obligated to strive for a minimum level of diversity and balance in the views they present on the opinion pages; the selection of what to publish can itself be a form of bias.

⁴² *Al-Ahram*, December 8, 2013, article by Sakina Fouad.

⁴³ *Al-Ahram*, December 8, 2013, article by Magda Hussein, p. 10.

⁴⁴ *Al-Ahram*, December 14, 2013, article by Abd al-Azim al-Basil, p. 10.

⁴⁵ *Al-Ahram*, December 23, 2013, article by Samia Abu al-Nasr, p. 10, and an article by Zinat Ibrahim of the same title in *al-Gomhouriya*, December 5, 2013.

⁴⁶ *Al-Gomhouriya*, December 5, 2013, article by Samia Abd al-Razeq, p. 10, one of five articles carrying similar titles in the same edition.

⁴⁷ *Al-Gomhouriya*, December 22, 2013, p. 18, in addition to other articles in the same paper with the same message.

⁴⁸ For example, see issues of December 5, 6, 7, 9, and 20, 2013.

⁴⁹ For example, see page 6 of the December 21, 2013 issue.

⁵⁰ For example, see the cartoons in *al-Ahram* and *al-Gomhouriya* in the issues for December 17 and 31 and January 2, 2014.

⁵¹ *Al-Shorouk* again showed the most diversity in its cartoons and was careful not to take a specific stance on the constitutional amendments. For example, see the cartoons of December 4 and 9, 2013.

⁵² *Al-Masry al-Youm*, December 10 and 21, 2013.

4. Infringement of viewers' right to express their opinions

In addition to the lack of diverse guests and sources, some media outlets attempted to confiscate the right of viewers to differ with their editorial policies,⁵³ oppose their lack of diverse, balanced content,⁵⁴ or remind the media of its true role.⁵⁵ This demonstrated both citizens' awareness of the obligations of the media⁵⁶ and the media's insistence on propagating a negative image of anyone who disagreed with their stances.⁵⁷

Notably, many anchors and program presenters affirmed viewers' right to freely express his opinion,⁵⁸ noting also that it is not the media's role—especially that of state-owned media—to tell citizens what to do⁵⁹ but rather to explain. Nevertheless, the same media workers who affirmed these rights violated them in numerous ways,⁶⁰ often flagrantly.⁶¹

⁵³ On December 29 on al-Nahar's "Akhir al-Nahar," the presenter stated, "Citizens have the right to say yes or no, but frankly, they need to say yes because of Egypt."

⁵⁴ When a guest on CBC's "Huna al-Asima" on December 9 told viewers, "I'm not saying you should vote yes or no," the presenter interrupted to say, "I'm telling you. Go down and vote yes. I'm saying this frankly, to be clear. If you want to say no, you're free, but I'm telling you to go out and vote yes."

⁵⁵ One listener told the presenter on "Mekammilin wa Antu Merawwihin" on Radio 90:90, "Who are you and your colleagues to tell people how to vote?" The announcer responded, "We're patriotic Egyptians. Enough terrorism, let's take matters into our own hands." Another announcer responded, "Egypt will confront terrorism with a yes to the constitution. All of Egypt will go out on January 14 and 15. Egypt will move forward. You go ahead and say no and encourage the terrorists you're encouraging. No one will be able to stand in the way of Egypt and its revolutions."

⁵⁶ In a poll of citizens' views of the constitutional amendments on December 14 on CBC, citizens, without stating an opinion, asked the media to discuss the provisions of the constitution, their proper role.

⁵⁷ While an announcer on ESC's "Ifhamuna" was reading the script on December 11, he said, "The editor has written here that I should say that those who vote yes are Egyptian and so are those who vote no. But I disagree. Those who vote no want to obstruct the country. They certainly aren't Egyptian or sincere or a lover of their country."

⁵⁸ For example, the presenter of "Min al-Qahira" on Nile News on December 26 asked his guest, "What can we say to Egyptians so they'll participate feeling reassured, without offering any instruction. Perhaps you and I approve the constitution, but we do not impose this agreement on others." In the episode of December 8, the presenter of "Mubashir min al-Qahira" said, "Our role is to raise awareness of the need to participate in the [referendum on the] constitution, without telling participants what to do."

⁵⁹ The presenter for ESC's "al-Din al-Hayat" asked her guest on December 19, "No, Mr. Ahmed, I beg your pardon, but we don't want anyone to say that the Egyptian media or Maspero is giving instructions to anyone. What we care about is people going out to the ballot boxes for the referendum."

⁶⁰ Many media presenters affirmed these rights, but then proceeded to instruct citizens to vote a particular way. On December 15, the presenter of al-Hayat's "al-Hayat al-Youm" said, "Egyptians must take part in the referendum, whether with a yes or no. The important thing is to participate." But on the episode of December 24, she explicitly asked viewers to vote yes.

⁶¹ The introductory monologue by the host of ONTV's "25/30" on December 17 was shocking for its disregard for the viewer's rights. "Are you actually interested in knowing the constitution? Really?" the host said. "For my sake, let's be honest with each other. Forget about these other people and stay with me. Honestly, are you going to say yes or no to the constitution based on its articles?! People who say yes to the constitution will say yes to a future without the rule of the [Brotherhood] general guide, yes to a nation of citizenship, yes to standing together as a nation, without reading or studying the articles, or even knowing them. Sorry, but let's be honest here. Those people who say no would say no even if it was made up of Quranic verses. Why? Because they want to say they're against June 30, against Egypt's revolution against the Brotherhood, to say they're with the Brotherhood, to say I'm sympathetic to the Brotherhood, I'm a Brother, I'm with the West and the Americans, I pretend to care about human rights, I'm just using this article from the constitution refusing to see anything else

There were some cases, unfortunately, in which the media's attempt to persuade others of their opinion resulted in insults or belittlement of the audience or mockery of viewers' opinions.⁶²

For example, on December 9, the presenter of "Umm al-Dunya"⁶³ on the state-owned station Radio Egypt said of a caller who objected to the way the media was using indoctrination to mobilize support for the constitutional amendments, "You've got your opinion—I'm not against that—but you're not with June 30 or the goals of June 30." On December 18, he responded vehemently to another listener who had decided to boycott the referendum, saying, "Don't go, you're free. There are millions going out to say yes. I'm talking to those millions...you said your two cents and I listened to you. We're talking to our great people, telling them to go out and say yes. You, sir, if you don't want to do that, you're free. I know who I'm talking to. If you want to go out, do it. You want to sit at home, I say thank you. Leave a space for someone who'll go out and say yes. Don't go out—stay at home. People are going out to say yes because of terrorism, because of espionage, because of the murderous butchers, so our country can move on and be stable."

Al-Ahram pursued the same tack through its editorials and in concluding news stories, which should have no introductions or conclusions. The editor of a news item on page 13 of the December 29 issue wrote, "I call on Egyptians to vote yes to the draft constitution." He noted that there was heavy applause for Amr Moussa when he concluded the story by commenting on Moussa's appeal to Egyptians to vote for the new national charter. He wrote, "We tell him that all Egyptians will vote yes to the constitution. This is the first step to reclaiming Egypt."⁶⁴

As for the satellite channels, the introductory segment of "25/30" on December 29 exemplified the trend of the attacks on opponents of the constitution or those with reservations on some articles seen on many other channels as well. Speaking of opponents of the constitution, the host of the program said, "Anyone who tries to question the enthusiasm of Egyptians, Egyptians' devotion to this constitution or the referendum, or their support for the yes vote has not read the document. Even those who parrot such claims are political amateurs. Everyone has the right to express his

and blinding myself with it. You're sitting there telling me, Oh this article or that article while you're shuffling through the stack of papers in front of you, but we both know the score. Whether we say yes to June 30, no to June 30, it has nothing to do with the 247 articles of the constitution. This handful of people who are citing specific articles just want to justify a yes or no vote to themselves, like they're in a debate club."

⁶² For example, on December 25, 2013 on the program "Huwa Kazalik" on Radio 90:90, the announcer took a call from a listener who said, "The Brotherhood are just regular people and the government wants to exclude some of the people." The announcer asked incredulously, "That's what you think?" When the listener rejected the media's description of the Brotherhood as a terrorist group, the announcer said sarcastically, "You sure do read a lot. Why don't you pass by Daqahliya and walk around there then get back to me." She later commented, "I can't believe there are still people who talk this way." She laughed and added, "Can you believe what he said? Who's the source of this information?"

⁶³ On December 18, the announcer did not allow the listener to express his reservations to the constitutional amendments and quickly shut down the call, saying, "I want you to think a bit before saying no. Why are you saying no? Not just because you've heard a couple of Brothers. Goodbye, Mr. Mohammed, after what I've said to you, you'll say yes."

⁶⁴ The editor flagrantly mixed opinion and fact in the news story, made false generalizations, and imposed his opinion on the reader, all major flaws in what should be a straight news story with no opinion.

opinion, to dissent, and to say no however they please. But this is just a throwing a temper tantrum, honestly. Even those who say they're afraid the old regime will return—that's silly, stupid talk and is being said by people who are intimately acquainted with ignorance. And I'm not even talking about the Brotherhood here—those people, may God help them, represent a matter for the psychiatric hospital, that's a whole different mindset—I'm talking about those who pretend [to have real objections].”

5. Failure to explain or debate the provisions of the constitution beyond a few select articles

Most media outlets heaped praise on the provisions of the constitution, as guests and media workers took it upon themselves to stress and defend the high quality of the draft text,⁶⁵ but they did not adequately explore the content of articles or discuss the arguments of opponents. The ESC⁶⁶ aired a daily program titled “Our Country’s Constitution” devoted to discussing articles of the constitution with guests, to enable citizens to take a stance. However, the program’s presenters usually affirmed their support for the constitution and joined the guest—also typically a supporter—in praise of its provisions. For example, on December 8 in a long introductory segment, the presenter called it “the best of all Egypt’s constitutions.” The presenter opened up the show on December 11 by asking large numbers to go out and vote “yes”, while on December 16 he remarked at the outset of the episode that this was a new referendum on the June 30 revolution. Finally, on the program of December 17, the host stated, “Some people may wonder why the media is calling on the electorate to vote yes. Because it’s a promising constitution, the best in Egypt’s history of constitutions. Yes to the constitution because it was produced in a consensual manner.”

Nile News also broadcast a daily program about the constitution, and the media in general carried a massive number of interviews, ads, news items, and topics devoted to the constitution. Nevertheless, a close assessment reveals that most program guests were either members of the constituent assembly or supporters of the constitutional

⁶⁵ Some media figures defended the constitution on behalf of the experts, responding to the questions and comments of viewers and listeners. For example, the presenter for Radio 90:90’s “Kalam bil-Masri” attempted to persuade a listener who had reservations about Article 234 on the defense minister: “Keep in mind, this is a transitional article, in effect for eight years only. Put yourself in the place of the military establishment. Is it right for a president to come and sit with other people, like we saw in the past...I’m just starting a debate—I’m not for or against.” He then asked the listener, “What if a president comes and says, that Sisi, he’s the one who gets rid of presidents, so the first thing he does is get rid of current defense minister Gen. Sisi. Is this permissible?!” The presenter of “Akhir al-Nahar” on al-Nahar said in the opening segment of the show on January 1, in response to viewer messages, “I was excited about the immunity granted to the defense minister, and not just for Sisi. We were in the sewer. Someone might see you in the sewer and just speak and that’s it, but someone else could throw you a rope. They saved us.”

⁶⁶ ESC carried the most television coverage of the constitution, but most of its programs and newscasts flagrantly promoted a yes vote, with the exception of “Mubashir min Misr,” whose host attempted to maintain a minimum degree of professionalism by avoiding mixing opinion with news and attempting to present diverse views on the constitution. See, for example, the episodes of December 9, 11, 14, and 16.

amendments, and these segments carried no alternate views or critique of the articles under discussion.

Among newspapers, *al-Shorouk* demonstrated the most effort to maintain balance and should be credited with its attempts to include dissident or ambivalent opinions on its pages, both on the opinion pages and as sources in feature stories.⁶⁷

Based on space or time allotted during the period under study, the topic which received by far the most media attention was the order of presidential and parliamentary elections, followed by issues of Egyptian identity, the abolition of parliamentary quotas for farmers and workers, military trials, and the electoral system.

In the context of discussions about the presidential and parliamentary elections, the media deliberately linked support for the constitutional amendments with support for the presidential candidacy of Gen. Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi.

Radio Egypt's program "Umm al-Dunya" most frequently linked the passage of the constitution with al-Sisi's success in the presidential poll. Most of the announcer's appeals to get out the vote also urged listeners to demonstrate on January 25 in support of Sisi's run for president. For example, on January 1, the presenter commented on news that the Lawyers Syndicate had urged Egyptians to take part in the referendum, saying, "Yes to Egypt's great constitution. Yes to stability in Egypt. We're all one hand against Brotherhood terrorism. This is a terrorist organization. I beg you, focus on the referendum days in order to later demand that Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi run for president."

On MBC Egypt's program "Jumla Mufida", Sisi's presidential candidacy occupied the larger part of the interview with Nagib Sawirus on December 9. Sawirus opined that voting for the constitution was a vote for Sisi's candidacy, asking the presenter, "Wouldn't he win big if he runs?" The host responded, "Obviously, he'll definitely win if he declares his candidacy."⁶⁸

On the January 2 episode of "Akhir al-Nahar," nearly half the show was devoted to a discussion of Sisi. It was said that he must "accede to the wishes of the people, run in the presidential elections, and declare it now. The electoral map will change as soon as he declares, and people will settle down. As they say, you'll swallow rocks for your lover and for your enemy...I don't know what else."

The host of "Yahduth fi Misr" on MBC Egypt asked guest Ziad Bahaa al-Din on January 6, "Ahmed al-Borai has stated that he would have no problem working with President Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi. Can the same thing be said of you?"

On December 8, the host of "al-Hayat al-Youm", commenting on a statement by guest Mohammed Abu al-Ghar that the parties in the National Salvation Front would all individually nominate al-Sisi for president, said, "Frankly, your position is no

⁶⁷ See *al-Shorouk*, December 14, 2013.

⁶⁸ On this episode, the program discussed views of Article 230 on the order of presidential and parliamentary elections, using street reportage and an internet poll. The show made an effort to maintain a balance of views.

different from that of the street. Al-Sisi doesn't need you parties. He's popular, so I'm sure you'll support him instead of oppose him."

6. Use of emotional appeals and incitement to violence and hatred as a means of mobilizing support for the constitution

The media used all possible events to mobilize support for the constitution, even those wholly unrelated to the matter.⁶⁹ For example, *al-Ahram* linked the passage of the constitution with the issue of homeless children on page 5 of the December 24 issue in a headline proclaiming, "700,000 homeless children are waiting for a yes to the constitution." *Al-Gomhouriya* carried a headline declaring, "[Support] the passage of the constitution to end strikes and realize legitimate demands."⁷⁰

The media also used all available programming and newspaper sections to support the constitution. One paper's arts section was thus devoid of any arts news and instead covered the positions of various pro-constitution artists.⁷¹ In other outlets, the religion pages⁷² and religious programs⁷³ were used to cover fatwas that declared participation in the referendum to be obligatory as an act of bearing witness to truth. The referendum was even covered in the crime pages: the crime-page insert issued by *al-Gomhouriya* on December 7 carried an opinion column titled "Without introduction," in which the author urged support for the constitution and Sisi.

Amid the climate of support for the referendum and the draft constitution, some media workers went so far as to incite hostility against citizens due to their dissenting opinions. In the December 30 episode on Radio Egypt's "Umm al-Dunya," the announcer, encouraging citizens to vote for the constitutional amendments, said, "Before, we knew our enemy and what he looked like. Today, our enemy is riding on the bus with you, sitting with you at the coffee shop. You don't know from where he'll coming after you tomorrow. He's escalating things because his only objective is to obstruct everything you're working for. We're all one hand. We're going out [to vote] despite anyone. Why is he trying to scare you? Because it's a matter of him and his future. Today, he's become a terrorist. I don't want you to worry. We're all one hand, with one goal: the referendum of the 14th and 15th."

⁶⁹ The only article to comment on this trend was published in *al-Wafd* on December 17, page 10, titled "A constitution: words and more words." The article was not opposed to the constitution, but criticized how it was being invoked as the solution to all problems, writing mockingly that it would "heal the mute and the lepers, make the blind see, and wipe out poverty and ignorance."

⁷⁰ *Al-Gomhouriya*, December 18, 2013, p. 2.

⁷¹ For example, see the arts section (page 20) of *al-Gomhouriya* on December 9, 10, and 14.

⁷² See the religion section (page 22) of *al-Gomhouriya* on December 19, 2013, for the article titled "Voting on the constitution is bearing witness."

⁷³ The host of al-Hayat's religious program asked her guest on December 26, "There are tireless attempts to frighten the average citizen into staying at home, away from the referendum. Is it my right in religious law to prevent citizens from voting?" She later added, "As al-Sisi said, we won't leave those who harm Egyptians on the face of the earth. That's a man who knows the Lord. He works for the sake of the nation and we believe him."

Al-Wafd found that the aim of destroying the Muslim Brotherhood offered the best incentive to participate in the referendum, writing on its pages more than once, “Yes to the constitution is a popular holocaust of the Brotherhood devils.”⁷⁴

In its editorial the day after the bombing in al-Daqahliya, on December 9, *al-Gomhouriya* titled its editorial, “*Gomhouriya* says the will of the people is stronger than the front for extremism.” The paper called on readers to vote for the constitution, saying, “We have faith that the people will go to the referendum ballot boxes to pass the constitution, to deal a crushing blow to the [Brotherhood] organization and its allies who have rebelled against the people’s will, and to affirm that the roadmap is moving toward a better future, God willing and by order of the people.”⁷⁵

In the episode of December 18, the presenter of “Umm al-Dunya” on Radio Egypt attempted to persuade listeners to vote saying, “Do you want us to remain in the grip of terrorism? You want terrorism to govern us? Do you want the scenes we saw the day before yesterday in Mansour to be repeated? We as a people do not want this. The people want to get past these tribulations. They want to get through it. Those who want to move through this phase should go out on the 14th and 15th and vote with a clear, unambiguous yes, a thousand yesses to our great constitution.”

7. Lack of diversity in the presentation of party stances; change of media coverage depending on the position of each party

One of the most significant changes observed by the second interim report was the shift in the media’s coverage of the Nour Party, not only quantitatively—the space allotted to statements from the party doubled—but also qualitatively, particularly by those media outlets who attacked the party’s stances most fiercely, such as *al-Watan* and the program “25/30.” The shift coincided with the party’s declaration of support for the constitution, at which point the media began covering its election rallies,⁷⁶ praising its activities,⁷⁷ and labeling its positions “patriotic” and “mature,”⁷⁸ having only recently described the party negatively. Most media outlets began covering the

⁷⁴ See, for example, the issue of December 14, 2013.

⁷⁵ The paper printed nearly the same content in its issue of December 21 in an editorial titled “The unity of the people,” which said, “Any observer of events will have seen an escalation led by the Brotherhood and their supporters, to block the results of the map of the future and the referendum on the constitution. As this escalation is expected to continue, we must bet on the unity of all Egyptians and their mutual support in order to take Egypt to the shores of safety. This will not be realized but by mobilizing to vote on the constitution with the highest possible turnout, so that the entire world will see how the Egyptian people act when they possess the power to make decisions and choose their path.”

⁷⁶ See *al-Watan*, December 12, 19, and 20, 2013; “Khutout Arida,” MBC Egypt, December 5, and “Akhir al-Nahar,” *al-Nahar*, December 7 and 18.

⁷⁷ ONTV’s “25/30,” December 15, 2013.

⁷⁸ The presenter of “Awraq Iqtisadiya,” Nile News, December 21, 2013.

party's activities and its statements,⁷⁹ and media appearances by party head Younes Makhyoun⁸⁰ and media spokesman Nader Bakkar⁸¹ became more frequent.

The media also covered the stance of Strong Egypt, led by Abd al-Meneim al-Futouh, and its rejection of the constitution,⁸² but without seeking comment from party members.⁸³ The media simply reported the party's position or occasionally belittled⁸⁴ and mocked it,⁸⁵ without reporting details or reasons for this position.

The media showed very little interest in the other parties, giving only limited coverage to some leaders of al-Tagammu, the Free Egyptians, and the Wafd; Islamist parties such as al-Asala, al-Wasat, and al-Watan were virtually absent. Advertisements also increased media time for some parties. The media carried the Free Egyptians Party's pro-constitution ad campaign, for example, while *al-Wafd* newspaper helped increase coverage of the Wafd Party.⁸⁶

8. Disregard of professional standards for advertising material

Most media outlets violated professional standards for the publication or broadcast of advertisements. Most significantly, they did not consistently inform viewers that promotional materials were advertisements⁸⁷ or disclose the party behind the ad. Some ad campaigns also contained inflammatory rhetoric and scenes of bloodshed that should have required warnings and qualifications to avoid promoting violence.⁸⁸

This phase saw the use of new types of political promotional campaigns. The Supreme Elections Commission produced a series of dramatic public service ads. State-owned satellite channels and radio used songs to encourage citizens to take part in the

⁷⁹ For example, CBC, December 7 and 15; Nile News, December 6 and 7; ESC, December 18; and al-Hayat, December 22.

⁸⁰ For example, "Yahduth fi Misr," MBC Egypt, January 1, 2014, and ESC, December 23, 2013.

⁸¹ Bakkar was a guest on "Akhir al-Nahar" on December 24 and gave a phone-in interview to al-Hayat's "al-Hayat al-Youm" on December 5 and 7 and January 2, as well as on January 7 with CBC's "Huna al-Asima."

⁸² See, for example, CBC's "Huna al-Asima, December 9, 2013, when the host attacked the party saying, "We know that Strong Egypt's base is not that big. I don't know how many members it has—I only know of three or four. We just want to analyze why Abu al-Futouh and his party—I always forget its name—said no to the constitution." The presenter went on to draw various conclusions about the party's stance, all of them negative.

⁸³ "Al-Hudu" on CBC was the only program to host Abd al-Meneim Abu al-Futouh and get a direct statement from him, but the program aired after prime time and, hence, the monitoring period.

⁸⁴ A cartoon in *al-Shorouk* on December 20 showed a person who resembled Abu al-Futouh saying, "Our position on the constitution is clear: we will vote yes and we will vote no and we will boycott."

⁸⁵ The ESC's "Ifhamuna" on December 11 saw the host ask, "What do you think about what Abu al-Futouh is doing?" The guest responded mockingly, "Who's Abu al-Futouh?" to which the host said, "I don't know. He's sometimes a little Freedom and Justice and sometimes a little Strong Egypt, it depends." On "Mubashir min Misr" on December 18, the guest criticized Abu al-Futouh's stance saying, "He goes with the flow." The presenter interrupted the guest to say, "Let's not talk about someone who doesn't deserve to take much of the people's screen time."

⁸⁶ *Al-Wafd*, December 16, 18, 21, and 25.

⁸⁷ MBC Egypt and al-Hayat were among the few channels that consistently labeled paid advertisements as such; al-Nahar gave the most time to the campaign "Egyptians love Egypt" while ONTV devoted the most time to ads from the Free Egyptians Party.

⁸⁸ See the section on advertisement campaigns in the first interim report.

referendum and vote for the constitutional amendments. The song “Get Out and Participate” was put on high rotation and several videos were produced to accompany it, one of them made by the morale department of the armed forces.⁸⁹

Ad campaigns in this phase made heavy use of public figures and members of the fifty-person constituent assembly in order get out the vote and mobilize support for the charter. This is typical during campaign periods, as channels take taped statements and soundbites from popular public figures and use them to build support for their positions among the citizenry.

Existing campaigns produced new ads with clearer messages. As part of the Egyptians Love Egypt campaign—whose financial backers remain anonymous—a new 50-second ad appeared with the following text: “He wants you to disagree with your brother until you finish him off or he finishes you off [shows images of the events at al-Ittihadiya and the officer who was dragged around Nahda Square]. He incites to the burning of your mosques and churches, your security, your flag, and your country [images of demonstrations, burning of the flag, and burned out churches]. He bets on the fact that you’re sympathetic [image of an elderly woman], kind [image of an elderly farmer], naïve, and don’t know your own interest. Have you ever asked yourself why he’s smiling [smiling images of Morsi, al-Beltagi, Erdogan, and Sheikh Hamad, the former prince of Qatar]? Go out, participate, say yes to the constitution—that will be the response to all of this [image of army soldiers helping a woman enter a polling station, images of citizens voting, followed by images of crowds on June 30, followed by the phrase “yes to the constitution” in red and the sentence “Egyptians love their country”].

There was a notable spike in the time allotted to this ad and those from the No to Terrorism, No to Darkness campaign after the Cabinet declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. CBC also affixed the logo “Egypt Fights Terrorism” to its screen.

The press followed a different model, declaring their stances with logos that reflected their position. *Al-Ahram* published these more than once in the period under review, in addition to the regular advertisements published daily in different pages of the newspaper.⁹⁰

Al-Gomhouriya was the first to publish letters in support of the constitution from citizens, without clarifying whether these were paid ads or something closer to reader mail. On the front page of December 6, the paper printed a letter from Samia Abd al-Mardi Sayyed Ahmed Ahmed, an Egyptian girl, congratulating the great Egyptian

⁸⁹ Among the satellite channels under review, al-Nahar aired constitutional promotionals the most frequently and boasted the most diversified selection. In addition to the “Egyptians Love Egypt” and “No to Terrorism” campaigns, it broadcast ads produced by the SEC, the Social Contract Center, and the National Council for Women.

⁹⁰ *Al-Ahram* created this model with a logo showing a hand holding a piece of paper inscribed with “We meet on January 14 and 15.” On the right side of the ad was the phrase “We make the future by participating in the referendum on the constitution.” At the bottom, the logo showed a ballot box with a flag inserted in the opening. The ad was printed on different pages of the paper, but usually on the first or last page.

people on the completion of the 2013 constitution. “I would also like to express my great happiness with the committee’s success in completing and affirming the articles of the constitution for the referendum and adoption,” she wrote. “I thank God as I follow the committee proceedings, and I grew happier and more impressed when I followed the committee proceedings and found a representative of the disabled, Dr. Hossam al-Din, al-Massah.”

The same newspaper carried a similar letter on its front page on December 14, this time signed by the League of Arab Tribes, a new association still under formation.⁹¹ *Al-Wafd* also placed pro-constitution ads on its front page.

9. Al-Jazeera and al-Hurriya wa al-Adala: The same violations from the other side

All of the violations discussed in the evaluation of media coverage above were committed by al-Jazeera and *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala*, with the difference that the latter two outlets were biased against the constitutional amendments. It should be noted that *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* was suspended in the last week of December.

Al-Hurriya wa al-Adala consistently used biased language to describe the amended constitution and the constituent assembly, calling the charter “the black document,”⁹² “the constitution of blood,” “the bastard constitution,”⁹³ and “the bastard document”⁹⁴; guests on al-Jazeera called it a bastard, illegitimate document⁹⁵ and described the roadmap as “Satan’s roadmap.”⁹⁶

Al-Hurriya wa al-Adala used all the editorial tools at its disposal to buttress its stance rejecting the referendum, including headlines, cartoons,⁹⁷ layout and design, and the articles themselves. The paper vied with *al-Wafd* to host the least diverse opinion page and the most bombastic language: Whereas *al-Wafd* featured the most laudatory coverage of the constitution, *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* carried the most negative and aggressive.⁹⁸

⁹¹ The letter/ad called on citizens to vote in the referendum to demonstrate their approval of the roadmap established by the armed forces “under the leadership of the man of the hour, Gen. Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, deputy prime minister and defense minister. We also thank the fifty-member committee that drafted a constitution for all Egyptians under the leadership of veteran diplomat Mr. Amr Moussa. We especially thank the honorable policemen led by Gen. Mohammed Ibrahim, the minister of interior.” The letter concludes, “Long live our Egypt, dear and safe.” It was signed by the general coordinator of the League of Arab Tribes, Sheikh Ibada Nafel Neam.

⁹² Issue of December 6, 2013, p. 5, a story titled “A boycott of the black document exposes the coup.”

⁹³ Issue of December 18, 2013.

⁹⁴ Article on page 2 of December 14, 2013 issue.

⁹⁵ “Siyasa fi Din,” December 7, 2013; the program presenter just smiled and signaled approval of the description.

⁹⁶ *Al-Hurriya wa al-Adala*, December 18, 2013.

⁹⁷ See, for example, the issues of December 7, 15, and 20, 2013.

⁹⁸ See, for example, the opinion pages on December 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14, 2013.

The Nour Party was specifically targeted for attack in the pages of *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* after declaring its support for the constitutional amendments.⁹⁹ Al-Jazeera broadcast the positions taken by Nour leaders, particularly Yasser Borhami,¹⁰⁰ during the debate on the 2012 constitution, to demonstrate that the party and its leadership had flip-flopped. Guests on the channel used various slurs to describe the party, comparing it to a dancing girl and a justifier of illicit conduct.¹⁰¹

Al-Jazeera highlighted Strong Egypt's participation in the referendum and its mobilization for a "no" vote on its news ticker, but it did not put the issue up for discussion. It also covered Abu al-Ghar's statements about the "forged" draft charter following the vote on December 17, with presenters referring to the statement in various contexts.

Al-Hurriya wa al-Adala used religious and emotional appeals to mobilize citizens against the constitution. It reported that the constitution limited the provisions regarding Islamic law so that religion would not govern, that the constitution dropped the article prohibiting the defamation of God and the prophets, and that it removed a section declaring Egypt to be part of the Arab nation. The paper also declared that participating in the referendum—even with a "no" vote—made the voter complicit in the coup and that participation betrayed the revolution.¹⁰² It stated that the constitution contained articles permitting unbelief, obscenity, and moral depravity and that if it passed, it would be an explicit declaration of war on the Islamic mission.¹⁰³

Al-Jazeera invoked inflammatory, sectarian rhetoric if it could be used to mobilize opposition to the constitution but showed support for Christians if they opposed the charter or the constituent assembly. It repeatedly hosted the founder of Christians Against the Coup¹⁰⁴ and gave him airtime to promote a boycott of the referendum. At the same time, it permitted guests to gravely insult the Church and Christians in connection with the Church's participation in the amendments and mobilization for the referendum.¹⁰⁵

Promotional material aired on al-Jazeera reflected the channel's support for the Muslim Brotherhood. The channel repeatedly aired the song "We're All One," with the lyrics: "Our constitution is being cooked, people are burning, freedom is choking." Another song declared, "Our country's constitution is suspended by arms in the hands of a shameless gang." The channel also carried news reports from the Egyptian¹⁰⁶ and

⁹⁹ See issues of December 7 and 12, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ See the stories on the party on December 7 and 8, 2013.

¹⁰¹ The Nour Party was viciously attacked and defamed on the December 17 episode of "Misr bayn Tariqayn." The guest Essam Teleima described the party as a dancing girl and mocked its members, saying they cut off their noses. He described the party's performance in slanderous terms, to which the presenter simply smiled. In the December 21 episode of "Siyasa fi Din," Tareq al-Zumor said that the party works with State Security.

¹⁰² December 5 and 14, 2013.

¹⁰³ December 18, 2013, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ "Misr bayn Tariqayn," December 7, 2013 and January 8, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ December 8, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ The channel highlighted news that referred to the invalidity of the referendum or discussed reservations to some articles of the constitution while ignoring important news about the Muslim Brotherhood from the same newspapers and even the same pages.

foreign¹⁰⁷ press that demonstrated conflict or disagreement between parties supporting the constitutional amendments or reservations on some articles of the constitution. It also aired promotional videos between news segments expressing opposition to the constitution and the constituent assembly.¹⁰⁸

Both *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* and al-Jazeera focused primarily on the clauses related to Egyptian identity in their rejection of these amendments, linking these to the Church's position on the constitution and insinuating that the changes were introduced to meet Christians' demands.¹⁰⁹ Al-Jazeera presenters highlighted the clauses related to the defense minister and military trials for civilians when hosting a member of the liberal camp.

Notably, al-Jazeera was careful to host parties supporting the constitution, and channel presenters repeatedly stressed their efforts to present diverse, balanced viewpoints.¹¹⁰ However, this balance was merely formal and superficial, as the debate between the differing views revealed the moderator's bias. Presenters would interrupt and cut off guests with differing views, distort their words, and attack them, placing these guests on the defensive or otherwise demonstrating a lack of professionalism that emptied the formal diversity of any real meaning.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Many media workers are familiar with professional standards and the role of the media during electoral campaigns, and they affirm the right of citizens to make a free choice without interference.¹¹² Nevertheless, they deliberately chose to abandon these professional standards for various reasons. Some did so voluntarily on the grounds that presenters have the right to express an opinion as long as they are not news anchors.¹¹³ Others were compelled to do so by editorial policies or the positions of the

¹⁰⁷ The channel aired headlines from the foreign press that referred to a coup.

¹⁰⁸ The most prominent was a video with a satirist, Mohammed Bakous, that concluded with the sentence "Write any constitution you want on a cigarette rolling paper." It was broadcast on December 14, 2013 during the program "Ibda al-Ihtijaj."

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, al-Jazeera's "Misr bayn Tariqayn" on December 17, 2013.

¹¹⁰ The channel implied that by doing so it was being more professional than other media outlets that excluded dissenting opinions.

¹¹¹ See, for example, "Misr bayn Tariqayn" on December 16, 17, and 20, 2013.

¹¹² On ONTV's "25/30" on December 23, the host stated, "Of course, you'll decide if you're going to say yes or no to the constitution, but let's not beat around the bush. I'm going to say yes. Don't sit there and tell me, but it's your right to say yes or no. I know that! It's your right to say yes or no. Did anyone say otherwise or take away your right? But I'm telling you, I'm going to say yes. There's no use beating around the bush." Similarly, Mahmoud Saad stated on more than one occasion that the people required no instruction (December 18) and expressed his dismay at the ads aired in support of the constitution (December 11). Yet both of these presenters explicitly instructed viewers to vote a certain way on most of their program episodes.

¹¹³ So commented Mahmoud Saad, the host of "Akhira al-Nahar" on December 29, 2013, when he said, "People, we're not newscasters who should be held accountable if we state an opinion. We're journalists, and if we have an opinion, we write it." The CIHRS recognizes that every individual has the right to express his or her opinion in the context of opinion articles or programs, but on news shows and talk shows, the role of the media is to moderate the dialogue between various viewpoints and put various views from diverse sources before the viewer to enable her to make a choice based on her convictions. Moreover, monitors observed news anchors

media outlet's funders. Others attempted to maintain a degree of professionalism, but their editors intervened to undermine their work, writing provocative headlines with little relation to news stories or using production and layout elements to send a message not intended by the author.¹¹⁴ More seriously, some media workers disregarded these standards out of a sense of patriotic duty¹¹⁵ or with claims that wartime makes such standards irrelevant.¹¹⁶ Indeed, some even spun theories to support their biases, offering them as justifications to media consumers who objected to the media indoctrination that infringed their right to consider and make their own decisions.

The CIHRS reiterates that media coverage based on mobilization and indoctrination, without dialogue, debate, or explanation, could have negative repercussions and spark a backlash. Media consumers may feel that the outcome has already been decided and that their participation is unnecessary, or they may suspect that the media's failure to discuss controversial articles or give space to dissident views is a result of collusion between the media and other bodies. More seriously, citizens may feel that the media, particularly the state-owned media, does not represent them and is completely divorced from their beliefs and ideas. Some citizens may conclude that media figures who should serve the public are instead vying to confiscate their opinion and smear them as unpatriotic traitors simply because they hold a view that is at odds with the majority. Finally, this type of propagandistic coverage, which disregards all professional standards and principles, reinforces the gaps between the audience and the media and, in turn, widens the gap between media viewers and public policy. It undermines political participation based on persuasion and conviction and instead encourages all parties to use emotional and religious appeals and material incentives to counter-mobilize.¹¹⁷

stating opinions related to the referendum and steering citizens toward a particular choice during street reports aired during newscasts, especially on state-owned satellite channels.

¹¹⁴ Safa Hegazi, the head of the news section in the Egyptian Radio and Television Union, said in a statement published in *al-Watan* on December 14, "When interests are under threat, there is no room for differing opinions."

¹¹⁵ "Akhir al-Nahar," *al-Nahar*, December 24, 2013.

¹¹⁶ The presenter of Radio 90:90's "Mkammilin wa Inna Mrawwihin," commenting on correspondence that opposed the media's mobilization of citizens for a yes vote, said, "We believe that yes to the constitution is right. As a media figure, I don't want to say, okay, yes or no. Today we're at war as the referendum approaches, because the referendum means Egypt's success." Responding to a message from a listener who said, "The people who are saying yes to the constitution—people are upset about this, let people choose freely," the same announcer said, "It's no longer about freedom of choice. It's a war that Egypt is waging. Think about why the Brotherhood is intent on threatening bombings before the constitution, because passing Egypt's constitution is a lethal blow to Egypt's Brotherhood in front of the whole world." He continued, "Yes to the constitution is the natural point of view. It will make them—this despicable, contemptible terrorist group will do whatever it can to obstruct Egypt's constitution." He added mockingly, "Please spare us the talk of these people who have no stake in this."

¹¹⁷ For example, *al-Hurriya wa al-Adala* of December 6, 2013, opined that "the early yes campaign for the constitution shows contempt for citizens and reflects an intention to rig the results of the referendum." The paper consistently questioned the fairness of the referendum in light of the massive media mobilization in support of the constitution without debate or an attempt to persuade citizens. Guests on *al-Jazeera* also repeatedly referred to the campaigns in support of the charter, comparing them to campaigns in totalitarian regimes and conferences of the old National Democratic Party.