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Region: Egypt



The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) launched its third study on how inclusive and diverse Egyptian media content is, this time focusing on the period immediately preceding, and during, the country's Constitutional Referendum (November & December 2012).

The report monitored the private, independent and state-owned media. The MDI team, led by Dr Rasha Abdulla from the American University in Cairo, has concluded that diversity issues are still largely being ignored in the Egyptian media.

This is alarming, especially knowing that the figures in the previous two reports didn't demonstrate a good representation of the diversity within Egyptian society. The third report on diversity coverage in the Egyptian media shows that even the very weak representation of minority groups that did exist is getting slimmer.

For example, as dr Rasha Abdulla said at the launch of the third MDI study, in the period before the referendum in Egypt only 4.25% of stories in the media were related to women's

issues. In the first and second MDI studies that covered the periods of the Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Egypt, the percentage of women's and gender issues featured in the media was 6.5% and 6.8%. So the coverage of women's issues has decreased and none of these figures is consistent with the fact that half of the Egyptian population are women.



Other minority voices were almost non-existent in newspaper coverage. Only 3 people of different ethnic origins such as Bedouins or Nubians were identified within the 8,662 individuals featured in the stories. There were also a total of 4 people identified as persons with disabilities and 3 identified as elderly in stories discussing their issues. These figures are quite alarming, particularly given the actual percentages of these groups of people in Egyptian society.

Generally speaking, it seems that the heated political environment that Egypt is going through makes it much harder for newspaper to maintain their “objectivity” towards the issues – this is one of the conclusions of the MDI report.

According to the recently launched MDI study on diversity in the Egyptian media, about 40% of media content was fair and balanced to some extent.

The MDI monitoring team has concluded that while some private TV channels are trying their best to become more inclusive and are succeeding to varying degrees, generally speaking, a severe lack of representation of all minority groups was observed during November and December 2012.

The launch of the study took place in Cairo with the participation of leading media figures in Egypt. The third report press conference has attracted a large crowd of the Egyptian professionals coming from a large variety of press, radio and TV channels. Over 60 journalists and around 13 media VIPs attended and more than 5 TV channels covered the event along with live airing of the MDI study launch on state TV.

The third report "The media coverage diversity during the referendum on the Egyptian constitution, December 2012" was launched in the presence of the journalist and TV show host, Dina Abdul-Rahman, Journalist Yasser Al-Zayyat, the media professor in the University of Cairo Dr. Safwat Al-Alem, the editing manager of Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper Mr. Ihab Al-Zallaqi, media specialist Ayman Al-Sayyad, from the Egyptian T.V Ms. Nahla Al-Madani and the programmes general manager at MDI Ms. Hala Morgan.

The study is the third in a series of 4 studies that are being produced over the life of a two year MDI programme, '[Embracing Free Expression, Diversity and Inclusiveness: Rebuilding post-revolution Egyptian media](#)', funded by SIDA.

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The latest (third) MDI study on media diversity during Egypt's Constitutional Referendum can be downloaded in English here:

[MDI Diversity Observatory Report 3.pdf](#)

The second MDI study on media diversity in coverage of the Presidential elections in Egypt can be downloaded in English here:

 [MDI Egypt Media Monitoring Report 2 with Introduction.pdf](#)

The first MDI study on media diversity in coverage of the Parliamentary elections in Egypt can be downloaded in English here:

 [MDI Egypt Media Monitoring Report 1 EN](#)

All three MDI studies on media diversity in Egypt in Arabic language can be downloaded here:

 [MDI Egypt Media Report 1 Arabic](#)

 [MDI Egypt Media Report 2 Arabic](#)

 [MDI Egypt Media Report 3 Arabic](#)