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Country: Egypt



Many Egyptians count down the days to vote in a public referendum for the new constitution that is being drafted behind closed doors. Specially, the wording and outcome of the articles in the constitution related to media have generated so much expectation and heated discussions.

The Media Diversity Institute gathered the prominent figures in Egypt in order to discuss freedom of the media in the new constitution. Influential media and political figures attended the debate, such as Amr El-Shobaky, one of the 50 members of the committee in charge of reviewing the drafted Constitution.

The centre of the discussion was to analyse how the new constitution would affect the principles of transparency and accountability on freedom of the media. El-Shobaky stated that the new version of the media articles in the constitution was good and that it should be approved. But most of the most of the speakers at the roundtable organised by MDI disagreed with him.

The debate has created a great opportunity to hold an opened and constructive discussion on what Egypt needs exactly from the constitution regarding media. Several recommendations

were presented during the debate and they will be submitted to the 50-member constitutional Committee.



Among the participants were Yasser Abdel Aziz, media expert and in charge of restructuring media at the Presidency, Raga'i Marghany, general coordinator of the National Coalition for Media Freedom, and Khaled El-Balshey, Member in Press Syndicate Council.

Stephen Hickey, the British Deputy Ambassador, who also attended the event said: *"This was an important discussion about the challenges facing media freedoms in Egypt. These include access to information, diversification of ownership and the protection of media freedoms in the constitution.*

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MDI's roundtable received a broad coverage from national but also international media such as El-Masery El-Youm, Middle East News Agency, Reuters, Sky News and UN Press.

This event is part of the project ['Inclusive Parliament: Building citizen participation in the political process in Egypt through better media, parliamentary and civil society interaction'](#), funded by the UK through [the Arab Partnership](#)