

**National Election Authority**  
**Decree No. 23 of 2019 of the National Election Authority on Creating a Media**  
**Coverage Database**  
**for Elections and Referenda Observation<sup>1</sup>**

**The President of the Authority**

Upon review of the Constitution;  
and Law No. 22 of 2014 on Regulating Presidential Elections;  
and the Law on Regulating the Exercise of Political Rights promulgated by Law No. 45 of 2014;

And the Law of the House of Representatives promulgated by Law No. 46/2014;  
And Law No. 198/2017 on the National Election Authority;  
And the Law Regulating the Press, Media and the Supreme Council for Media Regulation promulgated by Law No. 180 of 2018;

And upon the Approval of the Board of Directors of the National Election Authority in its session held on March 10, 2019.

Has decided:

**Article 1**

A database shall be established at the National Election Authority (NEA) for registering the local and foreign press institutions, media outlets and websites authorized to operate in Egypt and the crews authorized by the NEA to conduct media coverage, pursuant to the regulations set forth herein.

Registration or authorization may not be deemed a license or document to practice any other activities in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

**Article 2**

The database shall include the name of the local or foreign press institution, media outlet or website, the number and date of the decree issued on the acceptance and renewal of the registration request, the data of the operation notice or license from the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR), date of accreditation for foreign institutions, the elections and referendums covered throughout the term of authorization, names of the crew members, dates of issuing and renewing the authorizations of the crew members, the NEA feedback on the work of the press institution or media outlet and the crew thereof, the violations committed, the NEA decision on such violations, and any requests submitted during the term of authorization.

**Article 3**

Registration on the database mentioned in Article 1 herein shall be as per an application submitted to the NEA during the period when no election or referendum is being held. Registration shall be suspended as of the date of calling on voters (the call for election) until announcement of result.

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1.Unofficial translation- in case of any discrepancy between the English and Arabic text, the Arabic text prevails.

#### **Article 4**

The following documents must be attached to the registration applications submitted by local press institutions, media outlets and websites:

- 1- A recent certificate issued by SCMR to prove registration, continuation of activity, any committed violations of the applicable laws and regulations – if any, the type of content and editorial policy, address, name of the legal representative, the geographical range for service provision – if any, the expiry date of the authorization, and a summary of the previous experience in election and referendum observation – if any.
- 2- A list of the crew members nominated to take part in covering the elections or referendums in every governorate of the Republic's governorates.
- 3- Name of representative of the press institution, media outlet, website before the NEA.

The NEA may request any other documents that it deems necessary.

#### **Article 5**

Foreign media outlets, and the resident and visiting representatives thereof who wish to take part in the elections or referendums coverage, shall submit a request to the State Information Service (SIS), which provides the NEA with a statement including the requests and the number of codes needed for each request, supported by a letter to prove that the applicant is registered at SIS attached thereto.

#### **Article 6**

The NEA shall announce on a rolling basis the names of the registered press institutions, media outlets and websites, and grant each of them a one-year authorization for elections and referendums coverage and a number of unrepeatable unique codes equal to the number of authorized crew members to be used for registration via the NEA website ([www.elections.eg](http://www.elections.eg)) within no more than three days from the date of code receipt.

#### **Article 7**

The Egyptian member of the elections and referendums media coverage crew, nominated by the press institution, media outlet or website should meet the following criteria:

- 1- Have good conduct and reputation.
- 2- Is registered at the Syndicate of Journalists or Media Syndicate, whether the crew member is a journalist or media personnel.
- 3- Is no less than 18 years at the time of submitting the registration application.
- 4- Fill out all the data required in the registration form found on the NEA website.

#### **Article 8**

The NEA shall consider the forms of the crew members and issue coverage authorizations for those who meet the prescribed criteria. The authorizations shall be valid for the same period as the authorization issued for the respective press institution, media outlet or website.

**Article 9**

The NEA shall notify SCMR, Syndicate of Journalists, Media Syndicate and SIS as the case may be of approving the registration. These entities shall inform the NEA of any legal impediment or of the loss of any requirements set forth herein that may cancel registration or media coverage authorization.

**Article 10**

The representative of the press institution, media outlet or website or their delegate shall receive from the NEA headquarters the authorizations that allow the crew to participate in elections and referendums media coverage. The press institution, media outlet or website shall return the authorizations issued thereto and to the crews thereof in case of issuing a decree on removing them from the database. In case of excluding or replacing a crew member, the press institution, media outlet or website shall return the respective authorization.

**Article 11**

A press institution, media outlet or website may submit a request to exclude or replace any of the crew members registered on the database, with the respective authorization attached thereto. The substitute crew member must meet the registration criteria in order for the replacement request to be approved.

**Article 12**

The NEA shall consider the exclusion or replacement request within fifteen days from the date of submission and has the right to approve or reject such request. In case of replacement, the authorization issued shall be valid for the validity period remaining for the term of the former crew member's authorization.

**Article 13**

During the term of the authorization, the press institution, media outlet or website may request increasing the number of their crew members. In case of approving the request, the same registration process set forth herein shall apply. The new authorizations shall be valid for the validity period remaining for the authorization of the press institution, media outlet or website.

**Article 14**

The authorized press institution, media outlet or website that want to renew the authorizations issued thereto and to their crew members, shall submit a renewal request to the NEA fifteen days before the expiry date of the authorization. In order for the request to be approved, the press institution, media outlet or website and their crew members should meet the criteria set forth herein as well as any other criteria or controls that may be adopted at the time of renewal.

In all cases, the authorizations shall be deemed valid if their expiration dates coincide with holding elections or referendums.

**Article 15**

The NEA may invite whoever it deems necessary from the presidents, members and representatives of press institutions, media outlets or websites to take part in election or referendum coverage.

### **Article 16**

The authorized press institutions, media outlets and websites, and their crew members who can conduct media coverage of elections and referendums must consider objectivity according to the generally accepted professional principles and make the coverage through presenting the candidates' platforms or through holding an objective and neutral discussion about the subject matter of the referendum. They should particularly adhere to the following:

1. Do not confuse opinions with news, and news with advertisements.
2. Consider accuracy in information sharing and do not refer to anonymous sources
3. Use headlines related to the content.
4. Do not publish photos that are irrelevant to the covered topic.
5. Do not confuse terms, use impermissible generalization, or quote sentences from statements in violation of the context of these statements.
6. Do not carry out an opinion poll in front of the polling stations during elections or referendums or within the electoral premises, ask the voters about the candidates they will elect/ have elected, or ask the voters about the opinion they will express/ have expressed in the referendum.
7. Do not diminish the right of each party to respond or comment on criticism or praise.
8. Do not publish free or paid advertisements for candidates or those who announce their opinions about the referendum after the time legally scheduled for campaigning.
9. Do not use religious slogans to support or reject candidates or the subject matter of the referendum.
10. Do not ask leading questions with clear bias.
11. Reveal the guests' electoral identity or intellectual biases with respect to the subject matter of the referendum.
12. Do not accept any personal donations, aids or benefits, directly or indirectly, from any person or entity in return for the coverage works.

In addition, national press institutions, public media institutions and outlets, and their websites shall achieve equality among candidates when used for electoral campaigning.

The NEA may take the necessary measures in case of violating the provision of this Article and may specifically issue a decree to immediately stop such violation.

### **Article 17**

The authorized press institutions, media outlets and websites should ensure that the opinion polls broadcasted or published include full information about the entities that carried out and financed the poll, the questions asked, the sample size and location, the poll technique, the method of data collection, the poll date, the target group, the possible margin of error in the results, whether or not relative weights are used, compliance with the professional and ethical rules followed in conducting opinion polls, the approval of the competent state bodies to conduct the poll, and stick to the legally scheduled dates to publish or broadcast the polls.

**Article 18**

The authorized press institutions, media outlets, websites, and the crews thereof shall comply with all the provisions of the laws, regulations and decrees regulating the election or referendum process.

**Article 19**

Media coverage shall be limited to those authorized by the NEA. In order to enter to the polling stations, polling centers and general committees, the authorization must be held visibly and presented when needed.

Entering polling stations shall be as per a permission from the presiding officer and in a way that does not interrupt the polling or counting processes.

In all cases, no one may interfere in any way in the polling station work, make remarks or objections, hinder the voting process, influence voters, promote a specific selection, express personal opinions about the election or referendum process, or seek the opinions of voters.

It is prohibited to hold interviews with the poll workers, candidates' agents, observers or voters in the polling station.

The presiding officers and heads of general committees may, when necessary, limit the duration allowed for the presence of the coverage crew and their numbers in the polling stations to avoid overcrowding or obstructing the process.

In all cases, the instructions given by the presiding officers and heads of general committees in this regard shall be followed.

In case a coverage crew or any of its members commits a violation, the presiding officer shall prepare a memorandum to be attached to the papers of the electoral process and submitted to the general committee to be sent to the NEA.

**Article 20**

The authorized journalists and media personnel shall have the right to attend the counting processes and announce the numbers of votes results without prejudice to the work of these polling stations. It is banned to announce any results or indicators of elections or referendums before being announced by the NEA.

**Article 21**

Any concerned party may file a complaint to the NEA against any press institution, media outlet, website or the crew members thereof regarding the violation of the media coverage or opinion poll regulations or losing any of the criteria set forth herein. The NEA may summon the legal representative of the party complained against to respond to the complaints, memorandums or observation committee report submitted on the violations committed. The legal representative must respond in writing within twenty-four hours from the date of notification.

**Article 22**

A permanent committee shall be formed for media observation at the NEA, under the chairmanship of a member of NEA Board of Directors and with the membership of a

sufficient number of the Executive Body members. The Committee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Examine the registration and authorization renewal requests submitted by press institutions, media outlets and websites and present them to the Board of Directors to decide thereon.
2. Decide on the registration requests submitted by the members of media coverage crews according to the regulations set forth herein.
3. Decide on the requests of press institutions, media outlets or websites regarding the exclusion, replacement or increasing the number of media coverage crew members.
4. Oversee the system of registration on the NEA media coverage database.
5. Daily follow-up of media outlets, monitor and analyze what is broadcasted or published about the elections or referendums according to the professional principles, media coverage and campaigning regulations, and opinion polls stipulated in the Constitution, laws and the NEA decrees, and prepare a daily report on the violations committed and present it to the NEA Board of Directors.
6. Examine the complaints and memorandums submitted against any press institution, media outlet or website and the response of the legal representative thereto, and present to the NEA Board of Directors a memorandum on the opinion regarding the proposed action.
7. Examine and present to the NEA Board of Directors the notices received from SCMR, Syndicate of Journalists, Media Syndicate or SIS regarding any legal impediment or losing any of the criteria set forth herein that leads to the cancellation of registration or media coverage authorization for any institution or individual registered on the database, in order to take the proper decision in this regard.
8. Other tasks that the NEA Board of Directors decides to assign to the Committee.

The Committee may seek the help as it deems appropriate from media experts in carrying out its mission, based on the approval of the NEA Board of Directors.

### **Article 23**

Without prejudice to the penalties stipulated in the Penal Code, disciplinary liability and laws relating to the electoral processes and referendums, in case of proving a violation against the authorized press institutions, media outlets, websites or the crew members thereof, NEA Board of Directors may take any of the following decisions:

1. Consider only what the violating party mentioned in their response, in case they acknowledge the violation, and oblige them to publish an apology and a pledge not to commit any violations in the future, at the same time and with the same size as the violating coverage was published.
2. Oblige the violating party to publish a criticism of their editorial policy regarding what was published, to be written and published via the means identified by the NEA.
3. Oblige the violating party to not publish any coverage in any form, or opinion polls about the election or referendum, within the period identified by the NEA. The NEA decision shall be published in the manner it determines.
4. Exclude the journalist, media personnel or coverage crew member from the NEA media coverage database. In case of issuing an exclusion decree, the respective press institution, media outlet or website shall return the

authorizations, which are the subject matter of the exclusion decree, within three days from the date of notification.

5. Inform the Syndicate of Journalists or Media Syndicate of the violations committed by the members thereof to take disciplinary actions against them.

#### **Article 24**

Local and foreign press institutions, media outlets and websites and their crew members that took part in the media coverage of the Presidential Elections in March 2018 shall be registered on the abovementioned database whenever they are willing to as per a request submitted according to the rules stipulated herein on no later than 31 March 2019, unless a legal impediment should arise that prevents their continuation or requires the cancellation of the authorizations issued earlier thereto.

The NEA shall issue a one-year authorization to these press institutions, media outlets, websites and their crew members thereof, and they should adjust their status pursuant to the present Decree within no more than one week from the date of approving the registration request.

#### **Article 25**

This decree shall be published in the Official Gazette to be executed by the concerned authorities.

Issued on 10/3/2019

President of the National Election Authority  
**Judge/ Lasheen Ibrahim**  
Vice-President of the Court of Cassation

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