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## **EGYPT UPDATE: President el-Sisi Wins Reelection in Landslide**

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### **KEY POINTS:**

1. In last week's election, **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi was elected to another four-year term** according to official results announced yesterday, securing 97 percent of the vote.
2. This result was **widely anticipated** after Sisi sidelined viable opposition figures to run practically unopposed. In the runup to the election, **authorities focused on boosting turnout, which reached 41 percent**, 6 percent less than four years ago.
3. In his second term, Sisi is likely to **continue efforts to improve Egypt's security situation and investment climate**, which have resulted in a concerning rollback of civil and political liberties but have finally begun to yield positive economic results.
4. Congress and the State Department have repeatedly expressed concerns with the human rights situation in Egypt, but the **US-Egypt relationship remains on solid footing**. President Trump called Sisi yesterday to congratulate him on his election victory.

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### **RESULTS**

Egypt's three-day presidential election concluded last Wednesday. **As expected, incumbent President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi won in a landslide with 97 percent of the vote, securing 21.8 million votes according to official results announced yesterday.** His only challenger Mousa Mostafa Mousa won just 656,534 votes. Mousa's tally was notably less than 1.8 million ballots that were counted as invalid, many of which resulted from Egyptians who wrote in popular soccer player Mohamed Salah. Amid widespread efforts to boost turnout, **41 percent of voters went to the polls, 6 percent less than the number who turned out four years ago.**

### **CAMPAIGN**

Sisi's reelection was guaranteed over the course of the presidential campaign as **his administration systematically sidelined every candidate who tried to oppose him.** Egyptian lawyer and labor activist Khaled Ali, former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq, and former army chief of staff Sami Anan were among the candidates who were detained, threatened, or discouraged from running for office, despite posing a minimal threat to Sisi's election chances. Alongside this effort, Sisi ran a **nationalist, pro-military campaign** message touting his infrastructure projects, tough stance on Islamist groups, and focus on security. His only rival, Mousa Mostafa Mousa, leader of the liberal Ghad ("Tomorrow")

Party, submitted his paperwork for candidacy just minutes before the deadline, which many saw as a thinly veiled attempt by Sisi's campaign to legitimize the election.

With his victory all but certain, **Sisi focused his campaign on producing high enough voter turnout to demonstrate a broad mandate for his second and final constitutional term.** In the runup to the election, authorities employed numerous means to boost turnout by bribing and coercing voters to go to the polls. And as the campaign progressed, Sisi intensified a **clampdown on media freedom** as part of ongoing efforts by security forces in Egypt to silence opposition movements, which human rights groups say have worsened over the course of Sisi's first term.

## **CONCLUSION**

While turnout was noticeably lower than four years ago, **41 percent is likely enough to give Sisi a mandate to keep up his program to improve the security situation and investment climate in Egypt.** This includes a military campaign against the Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula as well as broader efforts by security services to stifle opposition groups throughout the country. And Sisi is expected to continue making structural economic reforms that have depressed purchasing power for millions of Egyptians but are finally beginning to turn the economy around. Nevertheless, lower turnout in the face of such a sustained effort to drive voters to the polls suggests that **Sisi's popular support is not as strong as he would like**, raising the specter of broader unrest over the course of his second term. It could also make it more difficult for his allies to secure the constitutional changes needed to allow him to stay in power past 2022.

**The US government has grown increasingly concerned with human rights abuses in Egypt** and Congress and the State Department have sought to make parts of the \$1.3 billion in annual military assistance to Egypt contingent upon improvements in this regard. **Nevertheless, the administration will continue to rely on Egypt's cooperation** as the US pivots to counter Iran's regional influence and comes closer to presenting a plan for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Indeed, President Trump called Sisi yesterday to congratulate him on his victory and the White House said that both leaders "look forward to advancing this partnership and addressing common challenges."

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