



## Press Release

# **EISA DEPLOYS ELECTION WITNESSING MISSION TO THE 2012 RUN-OFF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

Cairo, 12 June 2012

Having received accreditation from the Higher Presidential Elections Commission (HPEC) a week before the first round of the presidential election, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) is pleased to announce the launch of its Election Witnessing Mission in Egypt for the run-off Presidential election scheduled to take place on 16 and 17 June 2012.

Led by His Excellency, Honourable Cassam Uteem, the former President of the Republic of Mauritius, the Mission is composed of 31 witnesses drawn from the five sub-regions of the African continent.

EISA launched a Mission to witness the first round of the presidential election that was held on 23 and 24 May 2012, deploying 33 witnesses to 15 governorates on election days. The Mission's assessment of the process was limited to the election phase as it did not receive accreditation early enough to enable it witness much of the pre-election phase. There were other forms of restrictions introduced by the HPEC that further limited the work of the witness Mission. Specifically, the 30 minutes time limit for witnesses to remain in a given polling station, restriction of access to witness at the closing procedures and the counting process at some polling stations and restriction of access to witness the vote aggregation process.

The Mission to the first round released a preliminary statement of its findings based on consultations with stakeholders and witnessing of the voting and counting processes, which were the key processes witnessed by the Mission as a result of its late accreditation. It concluded that, 'Egyptians on 23 and 24 May 2012 turned out in their numbers and they were able to cast their votes in an atmosphere devoid of violence and intimidation. This historic Presidential election in the Arab Republic of Egypt, has been conducted in a manner which allowed the people of Egypt to freely express their will.'

After the departure of its short term witnesses on 26 May 2012, eleven long term witnesses remained in Egypt to witness the post-election phase and the pre-election phase for the runoff. During this period, long term witnesses were deployed to 19 governorates where

they consulted with stakeholders and followed the campaigns for the second round. Short term witnesses for the second round of the election started arriving Cairo on 11 June and will remain on the ground until the 19 June 2012. EISA's long term witnesses will remain on the ground until 25 June 2012 to witness the post election phase of the second round of the presidential election. It is important to mention that though EISA witnesses were on the ground to follow the events in the period between the first and second round, its overall assessment of the presidential elections will very much be limited to the period shortly before the elections to the period after the announcement of results.

While the Mission notes with regret the violent demonstrations that ensued in some governorates in reaction to the announcement of the results of the first round of the presidential election and the court ruling on former President Mubarak and police officials; it hopes that Egyptians will again show their commitment to the transition process by turning out to vote in the run-off elections as expressed by EISA in its preliminary statement to the first round presidential election

During the period of deployment, members of the Mission will interact with key electoral stakeholders, including the Higher Presidential Elections Commission, representatives of political parties, the media and civil society organisations as well as other witnessing Missions. On the election days, witnesses will visit polling stations across 15 governorates to witness the polling and counting process. The Mission hopes to observe the aggregation of the results and subsequent steps. It will issue and disseminate written assessments of the electoral process detailing its findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### ***About EISA***

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*Formed in 1996, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable democracy in Africa (EISA) has established itself as a leading player in the field of elections and democracy in Africa. EISA has evolved from an election NGO servicing Southern Africa into a more diversified organisation working throughout the continent with national, regional, Pan-African and global partners. The Institute's work covers not only elections but also other Democracy & Governance fields like political party development, conflict management, legislative strengthening, the African Peer Review Mechanism and local governance and decentralisation. With its headquarters in Johannesburg (South Africa), EISA has current and past field offices in countries including Angola, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sudan and Zimbabwe, a reflection of its broader geographical mandate.*

#### **Contact details of the Mission:**

Justin Gore Doua, Field Director  
EISA Election Witnessing Mission, Egypt  
Cairo, Nile City Towers - North Tower, 22nd Floor  
Office: +202 24618521  
Mobile: +2 01014587159  
Email: [justin@eisa.org.za](mailto:justin@eisa.org.za) Website: <http://www.eisa.org.za>