

Egyptian Government Announces Voters Approve Constitution



Cairo, January 16 (RHC)-- Egyptian officials say voters have overwhelmingly approved a constitution drafted by the military-installed government and boycotted by the opposition. The Interior Ministry said on Wednesday preliminary results showed that 95 percent of participants approved the draft.

Major General Abdel Fattah Othman, director of public relations for the ministry, told reporters: "Turnout so far may exceed 55 percent and the approval of the constitution is perhaps more than 95 percent." The result could pave the way for the army chief to announce his candidacy for president.

The two-day referendum which ended on Wednesday evening was marred by violent clashes between security forces and protesters. At least 11 people were killed and nearly 450 people, mostly Muslim Brotherhood supporters, were also arrested in the past two days.

The official results of the constitutional referendum are expected to be announced on Sunday. Some 53 million Egyptians were eligible to vote in the referendum. If passed, the constitution will replace the country's previous one, approved under former President Mohamed Morsi in December 2012.

A coalition led by the Muslim Brotherhood has boycotted the vote on the constitution and called on the Egyptians to vote against it.

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