

Opposition conference skewers Egypt NDP

Contributed by Egypt News
Monday, 02 November 2009

Participants at an opposition conference -- held to coincide with the National Democratic Party's (NDP's) sixth annual congress -- squarely blamed the government for corruption in Egypt, which, they said, continues to be ruled "by a small handful of autocrats."

They also lashed out at NDP Organizational Secretary Ahmed Ezz for harshly criticizing the opposition in recent statements. Ezz, they said, was simply flexing the ruling party's muscles after the abolition of judicial supervision of elections. They went on to say that his only reason for attacking the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) was because it represented the country's strongest opposition movement.

"The NDP's description of the opposition as 'a handful of fifth-columnists' isn't true," said Democratic Front Party President Ossama Harb. "It is the opposition that reflects the views of the majority."

Opposition MP Hamdin Sabbahi pointed to the unprecedented spread of corruption in Egypt, which he attributed to the regime's policy of marginalizing the middle class and concentrating power in the hands of a small elite.

Nasserist Party Secretary-General Ahmed Hassan wondered why Ezz had focused his attack on the MB. "He made a deal with them in 2002 and gave them 88 seats in parliament," he said.

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