

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 22, 2011 7:35 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Egypt parties say polls must go on despite protests (Reuters)

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 22, 2011 06:29 AM  
**To:** NEWS-Egypt; NEWS-Mahogany  
**Subject:** Egypt parties say polls must go on despite protests (Reuters)

CAIRO, Nov 22 (Reuters) - Egyptian politicians demanded on Tuesday that parliamentary polls proceed on time, as a crisis meeting called by generals after days of protests against military rule got under way.

The ruling army council asked political parties and other actors to join the talks after the cabinet resigned over the violence that has cost at least 36 lives since Saturday. It has yet to accept or reject the government's resignation.

Egyptians are due to start voting for a new parliament on Monday in a staggered and complex election process for the upper and lower houses that will not be complete until mid-March.

"Elections must be held on time and we will push for a specific timetable for the transitional period," Saad el-Katatni, secretary-general of the Muslim Brotherhood, which expects to do well in the election, told Reuters by telephone.

The Brotherhood and four other parties, as well as four presidential candidates, were due to attend the talks.

The Brotherhood said on Monday it wanted a handover to civilian rule no later than mid-2012, adding that changing the government could wait until after parliamentary elections.

The liberal Wafd party also said there should be no delay, provided that the government gave guarantees that security forces were capable of ensuring the safety of voters.

"We demand that elections are held on time, no doubt to ensure the transitional period stays the course," said Emad Abdel Ghafour, head of the Islamist Salafi Nour (Light) Party. He said the party also wanted the removal of the interior and information ministers whose actions had been "disappointing".

Amr Moussa, a leading presidential candidate and former head of the Arab League, echoed the call for parliamentary polls to go ahead as planned, but said: "Presidential elections must follow suit within six months after that."

The military's timetable calls for the new parliament to choose a 100-member constituent assembly to draw up a new constitution within six months. Only after a referendum approves the document, does it envisage a presidential election.

The council, which has exercised presidential powers since former President Hosni Mubarak's overthrow in

February, would thus be likely to stay in control until late 2012 or early 2013.

Youthful protest groups were staying away from the meeting between politicians and generals.

"The revolutionary youth are not holding dialogue with the military council. The dialogue is going on in Tahrir square, not behind closed doors with the generals," said Khaled Mardeya, a spokesman for the Jan. 25 Revolution Coalition.

Anger against the military council exploded this month after a cabinet proposal to set out constitutional principles that would permanently shield the army from civilian oversight.

Opponents of military rule have demanded that the generals make way immediately for a national salvation government of civilians to manage Egypt's transition to democracy.

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