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President El Sisi Visits Capitol Hill and Meets U.S. Congressional Leaders

President Abdel Fattah El Sisi visited Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, where he held meetings with U.S. Congressional leaders, members and committees of both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

President El Sisi met with Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan, who underscored the strategic relations between Egypt and the United States and the need to strengthen them to counter the formidable challenges that the two countries are facing, particularly in light of the successive developments in the Middle East and the world. President El Sisi confirmed that Egypt looks forward to stepping up bilateral relations in the coming period at all levels, particularly parliamentary ties, which are important to enhance relations at the official and popular levels.

The President also met with Republican Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, and President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, Orrin Hatch, who commended President El Sisi's role in leading Egypt during the difficult period of the past years. They also lauded the achievements made, particularly restoring security and stability and courageously confronting terrorism and extremist thought. The meeting addressed ways to foster Egyptian-American relations and tackled regional and international issues as well as counter-terrorism efforts.

President El Sisi also met with the Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Devin Nunes, and members of the committee. President El Sisi reviewed Egypt's role in resolving ongoing crises in the Middle East as well as in combating terrorism and confronting the threat of extremist organizations in the region at the military, security, intellectual and cultural levels.

The President also met with Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ed Royce, and members of the committee as well as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Bob Corker, and members of the committee. President El Sisi stated that Egypt stands at the frontline of the war against terrorism. He reviewed Egypt's counter-terrorism efforts either through the war in northern Sinai or by supporting efforts to resolve ongoing crises in the region. The President emphasized the importance of concerted efforts by the international community to adopt a holistic approach that aims to reinvigorate the intellectual confrontation against the extremist ideology. This approach shall also include drying up sources of funding for terrorist organizations and combating the phenomenon of foreign fighters. President El Sisi reiterated Egypt's unwavering position with regard to preserving the unity of the region's countries and supporting their national institutions in a way that shall safeguard their peoples' resources and fill the vacuum that was exploited by terrorist groups to expand and threaten the safety and security of the peoples of the region and the world.

During his meetings with Congressional leaders and members, President El Sisi confirmed the importance of reaching a just and comprehensive political settlement to the Palestinian issue. He asserted that reaching such a solution shall effectively contribute to the stability of the Middle East and bring about security to all peoples of the region. In this regard, he underscored the U.S. role in reviving the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis.

In the meetings, President El Sisi also discussed the economic situation in Egypt. He reviewed the progress underway on effectuating Egypt's agreement with the International Monetary Fund. This envisaged economic and fiscal measures that required taking tough and unprecedented decisions, which led to positive signs of recovery for the Egyptian economy. The President referred to the mega economic projects that seek to realize comprehensive development, noting that most of these projects aim at upgrading the infrastructure.

The meetings also addressed efforts exerted to renew the religious discourse in order to reflect the tolerance and moderation of Islam which knows no extremism. They also tackled the government's efforts to entrench the principles of citizenship, equality and acceptance of the other. This is in addition to non-discrimination on religious bases. President El Sisi affirmed that all citizens in Egypt enjoy the same rights and have the same duties, regardless of their religion.

The meetings also touched on the political developments in Egypt. President El Sisi stressed that the state is keen on promoting the values of democracy and on entrenching its practice, in addition to protecting human rights. He added that this is based on the constitution, which upholds human rights and fundamental freedoms for the Egyptian citizen. The President noted that the state exerts all efforts to strike a balance between upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms on one hand and protecting Egypt's achievements in reinforcing security and stability on the other. President El Sisi confirmed that the state is committed to upholding the rule of law and respecting the independence of the judiciary and its rulings so as to strengthen the state's institutions.

The congressional leaders and members expressed their appreciation for President El Sisi's visit to Congress. They valued the partnership and cooperation between Egypt and the U.S. and affirmed that they will work on reinvigorating and further advancing them in the coming period. They also noted that they realize Egypt's key role in the Middle East as a cornerstone for stability in the region in addition to its leading role in establishing peace.