



## Press Review City, Mobility, Environment – May 2023

### Urban Development

#### *New Administrative Capital*

The transfer of government departments and agencies continues, bringing their number to fourteen. This is the case for the Ministry of Local Development and 600 of its employees. President Abdel Fattah al-Sissi emphasizes that this is also a way to modernize the state apparatus. The second phase of the transfer began in mid-May. The government district covers 1.5 million square meters. It will house 34 ministries, the Senate and the House of Representatives. An article in *Al-Shorouk* presents the People's Square. The government is due to start working on it full-time from June 15. Eventually, some 50,000 employees will work there.

*Mada Masr* reports, however, that employees complain about spending 4 hours in transportation and not really working until the ministries are fully installed. A transportation allowance has been put in place. The article reviews the commuting strategies of government employees.

Once completed, the city should be home to between 8 and 10 million inhabitants.

#### *Gardens of Cairo*

A committee was formed to identify the architectural heritage of the Giza Zoo and Orman Garden in order to preserve it, following fears expressed at the beginning of winter (see January 2023 Press Review). As for the Giza Zoo, an inventory of animals, plants and furniture is underway. The zoo should continue to welcome visitors until Eid al-Adha before closing its doors. MP Maha Abdel Nasser requested more information on the impact of the work.

The 90th edition of the Spring Flowers Festival is held this year at the Museum of Agriculture in Doqqi, instead of the Orman Garden under renovation. The festival starts on May 13 and lasts for a month.

#### *Cairo cemeteries*

The City of the Dead is once again an object of a controversy on social media (see April 2023 Press Review). The rumored demolition of the tomb of Sheikh Muhammad Rifaat to make way for the Salah Salem axis caused a scandal. The Cairo Governorate, however, denied the rumor.

An article in *Al Manassa* reports that 44 tombs have already been demolished, and that hundreds are at risk, particularly in the Sayyeda Nafissa and Imam Shafi'i areas. Images are circulating on social media. The government denied this information. The Egyptian Center for Economic and

Social Rights, supported by a number of heritage researchers, filed a complaint with the Administrative Court of the Council of State to halt demolition work in the cemeteries. The Socialist People's Alliance party (حزب التحالف الشعبي الاشتراكي) condemned the destruction of the graves and called for social dialogue on the issue.

### *Urban Rhythms*

With the time change (see April 2023 Press Review), shops and malls now open at 7 am and close at 11 pm, midnight on Thursday and Friday nights. Cafes and restaurants are not affected. The time change is expected to save the state \$25 million.

### *Others*

The Maspero Triangle is in the news again: relocated residents had to start making payments in April, even though they have not yet received their homes.

In a move to rationalize spending to focus on existing projects (see January 2023 Press Review), the Urban Communities Authority is postponing two tower projects in New Al-Alamein.

The Minister of Housing and UN-Habitat are preparing to host the World Urban Forum in 2024 (see February 2023 Press Review). The Minister emphasizes that it will be an opportunity to present the Egyptian urban experience. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly says Egypt's hosting of COP27 (see November 2022 Press Review) is proof of its ability to host other major international events. The Forum will be held on the African continent for the first time in over 20 years.

## **Transport**

MPs are interested in transportation issues in Alexandria, including the development of train stations, entrances and exits to the city and the construction of highway bridges.

Despite the economic crisis, the Minister of Transportation is committed to not increasing the price of public transportation. He points out that 10 million people use public transportation every day.

## **Tourism**

The Minister of Tourism and Antiquities has announced that he wants to increase the budget dedicated to the development of the 40 museums and some 2,000 archaeological sites in the country.

The new Great Egyptian Museum is expected to open no later than November 2023 in Giza and will house more than 50,000 artifacts. Half of the main works are already installed. Its construction, which began in 2003, will have cost 1.03 billion dollars, financed in part by a loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The archaeological museum of the Saffron Palace at Ain Shams University has just opened. The Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria should reopen in June.

The U.S. development agency, USAID, announces \$1.5 million in funding to protect cultural heritage and promote tourism in Luxor and Sohag. This second phase brings the total investment to \$4.15 million.

The city of Nuweiba has opened a large tourist market.

## **Environment**

The Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation gave an update on the coastal protection projects in Alexandria, particularly concerning the Qaitbey Citadel. He stressed the effectiveness of these projects in combating the effects of climate change.

The Environment Minister points out that the presence of 3,400 plastic bag factories in Egypt makes it difficult to combat their use, which is crucial to her Ministry's policy. For example, the Ministry launched a two-day training program for waste workers in the governorate of Menoufeyya.

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