

In response to the rumours of giving up politics



MB will participate in all elections

The new MB Chairman Dr. Mohamed Badie refuted the idea that the MB would lessen its political participation abandoning political work, describing this as baseless predictions.

”, prior to his appointing Badie stressed that the MB will participate in islamiyoon.net In an exclusive statement to “all the parliamentarian, trade union, teaching clubs, and local councils elections since “the Islam we represent is a comprehensive Islam which covers all aspects of life”.

When asked about the expected role of the group in the debate within the Egyptian society over the upcoming presidential elections and the fears of hereditary rule, the MB Chairman ascertained. “We will continue performing in our role” explaining that “the group was preoccupied during the last few months with its internal affairs. Badie emphasized that there will be no changes to their plans, goals or approaches”.

“In this regard, we encourage all social bodies and organizations in the community to support any movement for the good of society,” he added.

Fears of the separation of the group

Apprehension of a split came after raised concerns regarding the future of the political participation of the MB under a Guidance Bureau, which is dominated by the conservative trend. This raised debates on the possibility that the MB might turn from political work to charitable work and the concentration on the administrative and educational affairs within the group while marginalizing their presence in the public, which would lead to the isolation of the largest opposition forces in the country.

These predictions were supported under what the observers call “a long lasting struggle” within the MB between two trends. Each has its vision, approach and plans for the future of the MB. One is open to the society with all its power and parties while the other prioritizes dedication to reforming the internal affairs of the MB.

This was witnessed recently in what some called as “the decisive battle” during the recent elections of the Guidance Bureau in which the so-called conservative trend was victorious over the so-called reformist advocates such as Dr. Mohamed Habib, former member of the Guidance Bureau, and Dr. Abdel Monem Abul Fotouh, Secretary General of the Federation of Arab Doctors.

In the light of this result, rumours were spread about the political future of the MB and its participation in the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections, especially under the debate about the hereditary rule in Egypt.

Diaa Rashwan, a researcher and analyst on Islamist Movement affairs predicted that the MB would not participate in the upcoming election for the Parliament and the Shura Council in 2010, especially since the dominating trend was not enthusiastic about the Parliamentary elections.

In an interview on Al-Hiwar TV Satellite channel, Rashwan believed that the dominating trend would bring the MB back to the religious and educational fields, describing this as “agreeable” to the Egyptian government.

Dr. Rafiq Habib however, disagreed with this revelation as he saw that the change of the structure of the Guidance Bureau “could result in balancing between educational and political activities”, hence he did not expect any political

isolation of the MB, “perhaps in the intensity of this political and media presence it may vary in quantity and not in principles”.

In a statement to “islamiyoon.net”, the researcher on the affairs of Islamic movements considered the two trends debate in the MB. Limiting the case to two classes is inaccurate, the trends should be categorized to three “A trend that is focused on political work, and a trend that focuses on the importance of deployment in the society and a third trend that balances between both”. This is dominant within the MB, however for some reason it is not highlighted enough, as Dr. Habib stressed.

He pointed out that the three trends agree on the priority of the political work and public participation. These trends are still present and the appointing of a new guidance bureau and chairman “did not bring major or fundamental changes since some of the former members are still present”.

In the context of the struggle between reformists and conservatives, observers believe that reformists believe that all kinds of political and social involvement of the group as a necessity. Its participation in the activities of the opposition and engagement in the political life and its political and cultural powers through dialogue with different trends with the aim of reform which is the common factor between them.

However, the conservative trend sees that it is important to leave the political scene in order to focus on the structure of the MB, especially after the security attacks which the MB was subject to; in addition to the arrest campaigns which disrupted the activities of the MB and prevented it from inviting new members to the group especially from universities and trade unions.

In comparison to the modest results achieved by the MB in the Parliament where they won 88 seats, they were unable to stop any decisions by the government due to the domination of the ruling party (NDP) in the Parliament.

Participation is necessary.

Dr. Abdel Rahman El-Bar, a member of the executive bureau who is from the conservatives, criticized the researchers and analysts who spoke of the MB asserting that participation in all elections “is a decision which the

MB will not change”. He believed that the MB will not withdraw from participating in any of the activities’, especially since it derives its approach from the Quran and Sunnah.

The Professor at Al-Azhar University added that any Muslim who believes in Quran and Sunnah understands that “every Muslim should be interested in politics”. In general, all must care about the affairs of the nation, work for its well-being as well as being involved in economic, social and charity work. He rejected allegations that MB members might be preoccupied in their interests in their political participation forgetting their duties stressing that “To be a politician does not mean that one neglect prayers, fasting, pilgrimage or almsgiving.

El-Bar pointed out that it is incorrect to believe that the absence of both Dr Mohamed Habib and Dr Abdel Monem Abul Fotouh's from the executive bureau would change their principles. He stressed that Habib and Abul Fotouh participate in all matters of the MB because they are “in the hearts and minds of all the Muslim Brothers” and they are “distinguished and highly regarded figures” in the group.

He rejected the rumours, which claim that the group is under the control of one person or a group of people because the MB has plans and approaches which it does not change, saying, “We do not consider any change unless it is for the best”.

With regards to the differentiation between the educational and political work in the group, El-Bar, who is a renown Islamic lecturer on some satellite channels saw that the approach of the MB does not prioritize one trend over the other. Moreover, what the MB believe in is balance and this distinguishes the MB from other calls because “it puts all the good in one bag”.

El-Bar called all social powers to accept the outstretched hand of the MB, which seeks to help others through participation and cooperation saying “we love this nation and we would like to reform all of its bodies” adding the MB “does not accept to be excluded by someone or to exclude anyone”.