

MB Executive Bureau: Price Hikes Signal Regime Failure to Handle Economic Crises



Monday witnessed a battle ground in the Egyptian People's Assembly between NDP members and opposition as a controversial amendment to law no 147, 1984 was proposed and ratified by the majority of parliamentarians, who represent the ruling regime without giving independent and opposition members sufficient time to probe into the draft document.

The report was submitted to the parliament on Monday by the Plan and Budget Committee headed by the secretary of organization at the NDP Ahmed Ezz. It proposed an increase in the prices of fuel by 40-50% as well as new taxes on vehicles and tobacco and raising the price of public transportation tickets, to cover the 30% pay rise offered by president Mubarak last Wednesday.

Opposition MPs considered the amendments as a blow to Egypt's constitution, and said they are more catastrophic than the would-be anti-terrorism bill, since they will greatly increase the suffering of low-income citizens who represent the majority.

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) expressed deep shock at the hikes that come a couple of days after the president's promise of a public-sector pay rise.

Dr. Mohamed Morsi, MB senior Executive Bureau member, expressed his disappointment at the law, and said in a statement to Ikhwanweb that it indicates the failure of the regime to resolve economic problems. The government should have rather tried to eliminate corruption and monopoly, he said.

"The price hikes proposed today will consume any possible raise," he said. This will increase the suffering of citizens in their strive for decent food, medicine, and education.

"The PA decision reflects lack of real investments and transparency in Egypt, the spread of bribes, the blatant violation of the constitution, preserving personal interests without considering national interests, and sparing those involved in corruption," he added.

"This brings society to a standstill and creates much suffering among citizens especially the poor. It is a shame that before the raise finds its way into people's pockets, the price hikes come as a death knell to any hopes for an improvement in people's economic conditions," Morsi said.

What is more disappointing, however, is the fact that Egypt is providing Israeli occupation with low-price gas that helps improve the living conditions of Israeli settlers while increasing the prices of fuel inside Egypt, thus complicating the economic hardships suffered by the Egyptian people, he added.