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The Associated Press

Islamists win bulk of seats in Egypt's upper house elections

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CAIRO — The Muslim Brotherhood won 58 percent of the seats up for grabs in the Egyptian parliament's upper house, election officials said Saturday, further solidifying their role as the country's most powerful and organized political group.

The election commission said Sunday that the ultraconservative Al-Nour party came in second with a quarter of the seats in the upper house, known as the Shura Council, while liberal parties, including the Egyptian bloc and Wafd, came in third with a combined total of 12 percent of the seats.

Islamists also dominated elections that wrapped up earlier this year for the People's Assembly, the more powerful of the two houses of parliament. The Brotherhood, long banned under former President Hosni Mubarak, won nearly half of the seats in that vote — the first since last year's uprising that toppled Mubarak.

The 270-seat upper house has no legislative powers and enjoys only a consultative role. Two-thirds of the seats are filled by elections and the rest are appointed.

Also Saturday, police officials said they have arrested four suspects believed to be behind the carjacking and beating of one of Egypt's leading presidential hopefuls on Thursday. One of the suspects was an escaped convict and the other was wanted for a string of recent carjackings, the officials said.

Abdel-Moneim Abolfotoh, a former Brotherhood leader running for president as an independent, remains on bed rest after Thursday's attack on his car while returning to Cairo from a campaign rally north of the capital. Those working on his campaign said they fear the attack may have been deliberate, but made to look like a random carjacking.

Security officials also said Sunday that they have arrested the man suspected of a hit-and-run incident that landed a leading Brotherhood lawmaker in the hospital on Friday. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with police regulations.

During the 18-day uprising that toppled Mubarak, more than 23,000 prisoners were either let out or broke out of prison as his hold on power began to crumble. Police blame most of the violent crime in the country on roughly 5,000 escaped convicts who have yet to be caught.

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