

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/djibouti-website-technician-gets-45-days-in-29-05-2013,44685.html>

Africa - Djibouti

Hounded

Website technician gets 45 days in jail, big fine for defaming police

29 May 2013

Reporters Without Borders regards the jail sentence and heavy fine passed yesterday on news website employee **Maydaneh Abdallah Okieh** as typical of the way the government hounds critics, including journalists, media employees, social networkers and opposition activists.

The prosecutors had nothing on Okieh, who handles the technical aspects of the *La Voix de Djibouti* website and is in charge of media relations for the National Salvation Union (USN), a coalition of opposition parties. All he did was post images online that embarrassed the police and, by extension, the government.

A Djibouti court yesterday sentenced Okieh to 45 days in prison and a fine of 200,000 Djibouti francs (860 euros) for posting photos on his Facebook page of police breaking up an opposition demonstration. It also ordered him to pay 2 million francs (8,600 euros) in damages.

27.05.2013 - La Voix de Djibouti journalist held for past two weeks over Facebook photos

Reporters Without Borders calls for the release of **Maydaneh Abdallah Okieh**, a technician responsible for the news website *La Voix de Djibouti*, who has been detained since 15 May.

Okieh is due to appear in court tomorrow on charges of "insulting a police officer" and "defaming the police."

"The charges against Okieh are baseless," Reporters Without Borders said. "There is nothing in the prosecution file. All he did was post photos of the police using excessive force to disperse a peaceful demonstration. His arrest is a sign of the regime's paranoia. We call for the journalist's immediate release and the withdrawal of all the charges held against him."

Arrested at his Djibouti home, Okieh spent four days in police custody before being transferred to Gabode prison under a court detention order. He was detained for posting photos on his Facebook page that showed police breaking up an opposition protest.

The charge of "insulting a police officer" concerns Elmi Daher Miguil, also known as Elmi Gess, who heads the police station in Balbala, a suburb of the capital.

When Okieh appeared before a judge for the first time on 21 May, he identified himself both as a journalist with *La Voix de Djibouti* and as an opposition activist.

After his transfer to Gabode prison, *La Voix de Djibouti* posted this note on its [website](#) on 19 May: "We have learned that Maydaneh Abdallah Okieh was the victim of violence during his detention at the police criminal brigade. Maydaneh was subject to inhuman and degrading treatment of an extreme and savage nature for 48 hours."

Djibouti is ranked 167th out of 179 countries in the [2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

More information about media freedom in [Djibouti](#).

Photograph : Djibouti City (ALEXANDER JOE / AFP)

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