

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/egypt-two-more-journalists-to-be-tried-20-06-2011,40491.html>

Middle East & North Africa - Egypt

Army abuses off limits

Two more journalists to be tried by court martial over story about army

20 June 2011

Reporters Without Borders is disturbed to see that Egyptian journalists and bloggers are still being prosecuted before military courts, especially as this violates the principles for which Egyptians took to the street and brought down the Mubarak regime. The people want a different style of government. The use of military rather than civilian courts is endangering the future of democracy in Egypt.

Adel Hammuda, the editor of the newspaper *Al-Fajr*, and **Rasha Azab**, one of his reporters, appeared yesterday before a military prosecutor in connection with an article about torture that quoted an army officer. They are to be tried before a military court on a date that has not yet been set.

Azab is facing a possible jail sentence on a charge of publishing "false information liable to disturb public security" in the article she wrote for *Al-Fajr's* 12 June issue. Hammuda is facing a possible fine for alleged negligence in his role as editor.

The article was about a meeting between Cairo military commander Gen. Hassan Al-Ruwaini, a member of the Armed Forces Supreme Council, and representatives of a group called "*No military trials for civilians*" about the torture of demonstrators by civilian police. It quoted some of Gen. Al-Ruwaini's comments including the apology he reportedly gave to a woman demonstrator attending the meeting.

Gen. Al-Ruwaini denies making the comments attributed to him. Link to the *Al-Fajr* article: http://www.elfagr.org/DailyPortal_NewsDetails.aspx?newsId=16994&secid=1

Reporters Without Borders calls for the withdrawal of the charges against these two journalists and all the other media personnel and bloggers currently being prosecuted.

Reporters Without Borders wrote to [Field Marshal Mohamed Hussain Tantawi](#), the chairman of the Armed Forces Supreme Council, on 1 June expressing its concern at the harassment of journalists and asking him to guarantee complete freedom of expression.

"Egypt must guarantee basic rights, especially freedom of expression, whatever the targets of public criticism, to help its transition to democracy," the letter said. "If the army has a special status exempting it from criticism, it will stand in the way."

Blogger **Hossam Al-Hamalawy** and journalists **Rim Magued** and **Nabil Sharaf Al-Din** were interrogated on 31 May for nearly three hours about their [appearances on the station ON-TV](#). Speaking on Magued's programme on 26 May, Al-Hamalawy accused military police of violating human rights. The next day, Al-Din talked about the chances of an alliance between the Muslim Brotherhood and the army as part of a political transition.

Female blogger **Botheina Kamel** was summoned by the national military court on 15 May for interrogation after criticising the army on the station *Nile TV*.

Blogger and conscientious objector **Maikel Nabil Sanad** was sentenced to three years in prison on 10 April, making him the country's [first prisoner of conscience since the revolution](#).

He was convicted of insulting the army, putting out "false news" and "disturbing public order" for [posting a report on his blog](#) that questioned the army's apparent neutrality during the anti-

government protests in January and February and accused it of taking part in the arrests and torture of demonstrators.
