

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/egypt-five-year-jail-term-for-leading-23-02-2015,47612.html>

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Middle East/North Africa - Egypt

Harsh sentence

## Five-year jail term for leading opposition blogger

23 February 2015

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Reporters Without Borders condemns the five-year prison sentence that the well-known young opposition blogger **Alaa Abdel-Fattah** received from a Cairo court today and calls for the release of all news and information providers held by the Egyptian authorities.

A figurehead of the 2011 revolution that toppled President Hosni Mubarak, Abdel-Fattah was convicted of organizing an illegal demonstration in November 2013 and attacking a police officer.

Today's verdict and sentence were issued at the end of retrial because the original trial, at which he was given a 15-year sentence, was held in absentia.

*"We condemn this disproportionate sentence, which just underscores the increasingly authoritarian nature of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government,"* Reporters Without Borders deputy programme director Virginie Dangles said. *"Egyptian journalists and bloggers have repeatedly fallen victim to the crackdown pursued by the new regime since 2013 in the name of combatting terrorism."*

Twenty-one of Abdel-Fattah's fellow defendants received sentences ranging from three to five years in prison, while two others were sentenced in absentia to 15 years in prison. The court also ordered all of them to pay a fine of 100,000 Egyptian pounds (11,570 euros).

Relatives of several defendants shouted "Down with military rule" after the court announced the verdicts.

Ever since Islamist President Mohamed Morsi's removal in July 2013, the new authorities have cracked down relentlessly on all forms of opposition. In 2014 alone, at least 30 journalists were arbitrarily arrested on charges of organizing or participating in demonstrations or supporting a terrorist organization.

Egypt is ranked 158th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

(Logo Photo: AFP)

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