

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/egypt-three-journalists-sentenced-to-16-04-2015,47779.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Egypt

Life sentences

Three journalists sentenced to life imprisonment

16 April 2015

Reporters Without Borders condemns the life sentences that an Egyptian court has passed on three journalists just for doing their job. The sentences are part of a continuing crackdown on freedom of information that has included more arrests and raids on news media.

The journalists who received life sentences are **Abdullah Alfakharany**, a reporter and co-founder of the *Rassd* news website, **Samhi Mostafa**, the website's CEO, and **Mohamed Al-Adly**, a presenter with *Amgad TV*.

They were convicted of putting out "false news" and trying to "spread chaos" in their coverage of the August 2013 demonstrations in Cairo's Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square in support of deposed President Mohamed Morsi. They can appeal against their conviction.

"The Egyptian authorities must stop persecuting journalists whose only crime is doing their duty to cover the news," Reporters Without Borders deputy programme director Virginie Dangles said.

"The authorities are using security and the fight against terrorism as grounds for targeting journalists who do not toe the official line. This arbitrary trial has just aggravated an already worrying situation for news and information providers, both professional and non-professional."

Alfakharany, Mostafa and Al-Adly were arrested on 25 August 2013 and have been held ever since. The [charges](#) against them and their news organizations included supporting the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

Around 50 defendants, who included other journalists as well as Muslim Brotherhood members and activists, were accused of contributing to the creation of an operations centre designed to orchestrate attacks on the government. As a result, the proceedings were dubbed the "Rabaa operations room" trial.

The Egyptian journalists [union](#) has formed a [legal committee](#) with the aim of examining the cases of these journalists and seeking their release. The Muslim Brotherhood members were sentenced to death.

Continuing offensive against journalists

Police without any search or arrest warrant [raided](#) *Horyetna*, a Cairo-based web radio station, on 4 April and arrested editor-in-chief **Ahmed Samih**.

After questioning employees about the station's editorial policies and seizing some of its equipment, the police submitted Samih to several interrogation sessions at a police station before releasing him on bail. The charges brought against him are all work-related and include running a radio station without a licence.

The police also raided *Al Ghad TV*, a Cairo-based Syrian TV station, on 7 April, confiscating equipment, arresting staff and closing it down. CEO Abdulhafiz Sharaf [pointed out](#) that *Al Ghad TV* only covered Syria and ignored Egyptian developments. He said the charges brought against the station included supporting the Muslim Brotherhood.

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