

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/libya-court-lifts-travel-ban-on-ailing-25-08-2013,45099.html>

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Middle East/North Africa - Libya

Ruling welcomed

## Court lifts travel ban on ailing newspaper editor

25 August 2013

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Reporters Without Borders hails a 21 August decision by a special court in Tripoli headed by Judge Ali Zwai to return *Al-Umma* editor **Amara Al-Khitabi**'s passport and remove him from a list of people banned from leaving the country.

The decision was issued after Khitabi's lawyer, Ramadam Farag Salem, submitted a detailed medical report showing that his ailing client needed to travel to Tunisia to receive appropriate treatment.

Khitabi was arrested last December after publishing a [list of 87 judges and prosecutors](#) allegedly accused of corruption and embezzlement in November. Held for four months in Hadba prison, he was finally [released on 21 April](#) after a hunger strike that aggravated his poor health.

Following this week's belated court victory, Salem intends to ask the constitutional court (which is attached to the supreme court) to strike down article 195 of the penal code, which dates from deposed dictator Muammar Gaddafi's era and was used to arrest Khitabi.

The article says that "anyone who insults the popular authority or a judicial, defence or security institution" can be punished by three to 15 years in prison.

Reporters Without Borders points out that freedom of expression and freedom of information are of fundamental importance in any democratic society. Transparency and the role played by the media are essential in combatting corruption, in particular.

The media freedom organization therefore urges the Libyan authorities to apply the press code to all cases involving journalists and to decriminalize defamation in line with international human rights standards.

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