

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/saudi-arabia-journalist-prosecuted-for-23-02-2012,41918.html>

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Middle East/North Africa - Saudi Arabia

## Journalist prosecuted for “blasphemous” tweets

23 February 2012

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Reporters Without Borders is extremely concerned about **Hamza Kashgari**, a young journalist employed by the daily *Al-Bilad*, who is facing a possible death sentence for three tweets on the Prophet Mohammed’s birthday which the Saudi authorities regard as blasphemous.

“Saudi Arabia has again demonstrated its implacable intolerance of freedom of expression,” Reporters Without Borders said, calling for Kashgari’s immediate release. Aged 23, Kashgari was [arrested](#) on 9 February in Malaysia, to which he had fled in search of asylum after receiving many death threats, and was extradited back to Saudi Arabia three days later.

Reporters Without Borders condemns the summary nature of his extradition and accuses the Malaysian authorities of complicity.

“We also deplore Saudi information minister Abdul Aziz Khoja’s decision to literally ban this journalist from working for any Saudi news media,” Reporters Without Borders added. “The expression of a personal opinion by a journalist should have no professional impact.”

Listed as an “[Enemy of the Internet](#)” by Reporters Without Borders, Saudi Arabia is implacable in its censorship of the Internet, the only space where a degree of free speech has developed in recent years. Reporters Without Borders reaffirms its opposition to blasphemy laws of any kind, as they violate freedom of expression and are always abused.

Saudi Arabia is ranked 158th out of 179 countries in the [2011/2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#). Malaysia is ranked 154th.

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