

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/palestinian-terr-concern-about-health-of-woman-06-04-2012,42271.html>

---

Middle East/North Africa - Palestinian terr.

Illegal arrests

## Concern about health of woman journalist held for Facebook comments

6 April 2012

---

Reporters Without Borders is concerned about an increase in arrests and prosecutions of netizens and journalists in the Palestinian Territories. The authorities are taking utterly disproportionate measures against journalists.

The organization is particularly worried about the health of **Asmat Abd Al-Khaleq**, a journalist who was transferred to hospital six days after being arrested by the Palestinian security services in Ramallah on 28 March in connection with comments on *Facebook*. Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities to free her at once and drop all the charges against her.

The prosecutor general in Ramallah refused her bail on 29 March and ordered her held for 15 days in solitary confinement, without any possibility of receiving visits. She is charged with posting insults and lies attacking national unity, the Palestinian Authority and President Mahmoud Abbas on her *Facebook* page. She denies the charges, insisting that the comments were posted by another person.

Both Khaleq's arrest and the detention order appear to have been illegal and to have violated the Palestinian constitution, as amended in 2005, which protects freedom of expression. Article 19 says: "Freedom of opinion is guaranteed. Everyone has the right to express their opinions in writing or in any other manner, including artistic, in accordance with the provisions of the law."

Reporters Without Borders has learned that the Palestinian security services arrested the journalist **Tariq Khamis** on the evening of 1 April and interrogated him for more than three hours about his journalistic activities, his sources and the comments in support of Khaleq that he posted on *Facebook*. He was then released.

The security services also arrested online activist **Jamal Abou Rahman** in Ramallah on 1 April in connection with his *Facebook* page called "The people want to put an end to corruption," which has more than 6,000 members.

Journalist and activist **Shahd Bani-Odeh** received a summons from a Palestinian intelligence service on 18 March in connection with a cartoon of Mahmoud Abbas on *Facebook*. The summons was withdrawn after various people, including a representative of the journalists' union, interceded on her behalf.

---

You can download those documents on our website :

- Concern about health of woman journalist held for Facebook comments - Arabic version, (PDF - 33.6 kb)
-