

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/tunisia-state-media-independence-03-07-2012,42937.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Tunisia

Public or government media?

State media independence threatened by non-transparent appointments

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Reporters Without Borders condemns the lack of provision for consultation before public broadcasting bosses are appointed and dismissed in Tunisia, where the dismissal of state-owned *Watanya 1 TV* director-general **Sadok Bouabène** and the appointment of nine state radio chiefs have just been announced.

The appointment of Bouabène and other public radio station directors without prior consultation on 9 January already [prompted an outcry](#). The heads of all the public radio stations were subsequently fired.

"In the absence of clear legislation respecting international standards, senior public broadcasting personnel are being appointed in a way reminiscent of the old regime's methods," Reporters Without Borders said. "The lack of transparency not only threatens the public media's independence but also raises questions about the government's intention of implementing decree-laws 115 and 116 on the media in the near future.

"We are very worried by the repeated use of such methods, which suggest a return to the past. What was portrayed in January as an exception justified by the 'urgent need to replace those who resigned,' seems to have become an established procedure. **Habib Belaid's** summary removal as head of the Tunisian National Radio Corporation [on 24 April](#) already sounded the alarm. The latest appointments constitute further evidence that the government wants to reinforce its control of the public media by not implementing these media laws."

Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities to heed the report they received on 30 April from the National Body for the Reform of Information and Communication (INRIC), in particular, its recommendation that they should push ahead with reform of the Tunisian media.

The INRIC plans to give a news conference tomorrow on the role that civil society should play in promoting reform in the information and communication sector. Reporters Without Borders will attend.
