

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/egypt-freedom-of-information-falls-prey-25-09-2013,45234.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Egypt

Alarming escalation

Freedom of information falls prey to military crackdown

25 September 2013

Egypt's new authorities continue to censor the media and arrest journalists following their recent proclamation of a two-month extension to a state of emergency that expands their powers and restricts fundamental freedoms.

"We are very disturbed by a renewed increase in violations of fundamental freedoms, including freedom of information, and by a wave of official statements displaying clear hostility towards media that fail to sing the army's praises," Reporters Without Borders said.

"It is unacceptable and dangerous for the future of democracy in Egypt that media and journalists that are affiliated or sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood are being constantly targeted by the authorities on the grounds of maintaining public order and national security.

"Arbitrary political decisions to close individual media are being systematically endorsed the courts, something that necessarily raises the question of the judicial system's current independence. The separation of powers is the cornerstone of any system that aspires to be democratic."

Closure of Muslim Brotherhood media

The latest Muslim Brotherhood news media to be closed is the newspaper *Al-Huria wa Al-Adala*. [Police raided its headquarters](#) last night, seizing equipment and sealing entrances. The raid was in response to a 23 September court decision banning the Muslim Brotherhood and ordering the seizure of its property, a decision of a political nature.

Previously, on 3 September, the administrative court of the State Council ruled that four TV stations – *Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr*, *Ahrar 25*, *Al-Quds* and *Al-Yarmouk* – should be closed for "[threatening social peace](#)," "disseminating rumours and false, misleading reports" and inciting hatred and public disorder.

That was also a political decision, one that endorsed previous arbitrary decisions about local and foreign media that supported or were affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood. On 3 July, the new authorities closed *Misr 25*, a TV station operated by the Freedom and Justice Party (the Muslim Brotherhood) and three local TV stations that supported the newly-ousted President Morsi – *Al-Hafiz*, *Al-Nas* and *Rahma*. *Ahrar 25* was a new Egyptian TV station that was launched in mid-July to replace the newly closed *Misr 25*.

Two days after the 3 July closures, the Egyptian telecommunications satellite operator *Nilesat* blocked three pan-Arab channels – *Al-Quds* and *Al-Aqsa* (Palestinian TV stations affiliated to Hamas) and *Al-Yarmouk* (a Muslim Brotherhood TV station based in Jordan).

In a similar development, the ministry of investment, information and communications technology and media [declared](#) *Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr* (Qatar-based Al-Jazeera's Egyptian offshoot) to be illegal [on 28 August](#) and banned it from operating in Egypt.

Following deterioration in relations between Turkey and Egypt, the Egyptian authorities have also targeted several Turkish media.

The police raided the Cairo offices of Turkey's state-owned *Turkish Radio and Television Corporation* (TRT) on 10 September, [seizing production equipment](#), computers and recordings. As a result, under pressure from the authorities, TRT has decided to temporarily suspend its operations in Egypt.

One of TRT's journalists, **Metin Turan**, was previously arrested on 16 August. Various Turkish officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç and foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, contacted the Egyptian authorities to request his release but the authorities [have continued to order two-week extensions](#) to his detention.

The police raided the Cairo bureau of the *Ihlas News Agency* (IHA), a privately-owned Turkish news agency [on 20 August](#), and arrested its bureau chief, **Tahir Osman Hamde**, the same day. He was held arbitrarily until [4 September](#).

Al-Faraeen, an Egyptian TV station that openly supports the army, was closed on 14 September for [violating journalistic ethics](#).

Continuing arrests

More than 10 journalists are currently detained in Egypt without being brought to trial. Their detention is renewed every 15 days, the legal limit for administrative detention.

Although most of the detained journalists work or worked for media affiliated or sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood (such as *Islam Today*, *Rassd* and *Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr*), they are all professional journalists who are the victims of the Egyptian government's repressive policies.

Ahmad Abu Deraa, a reporter for the Egyptian daily *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, was arrested in El-Arish, in North Sinai, [on 4 September](#) after writing several articles about the army's operations in Sinai. He is still being held pending trial before a military court. Originally set for 15 September, [the trial has been postponed twice](#), until 18 and now 25 September.

Two journalists with the daily *Al-Shorouk*, reporter **Azza Moghazy** and photographer **Sabry Khaled**, were arrested at their hotel in El-Arish on 22 September by police who thought they were *Al-Jazeera* journalists. Khaled was hit several times as they were being taken to Sinai provincial security headquarters.

The two journalists were released two hours later after the police realized their mistake and apologised. [In an interview](#) for the newspaper *Al-Ahram*, Khaled said: "*Being Al-Jazeera reporters or having [any other] affiliation does not warrant such treatment.*" Their arrest was very indicative of the oppressive climate in which journalists currently have to work.

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 23.8 kb)
-