



2nd Floor, 92-94 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TH
Tel: 020 7260 2660 www.indexoncensorship.org

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Egyptian authorities must stop their attacks on media freedom

Leading international media freedom and human rights organisations call on the EU and US to demand Egypt's authorities drop charges against Al-Jazeera journalists and release those under arrest.

Article 19, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Index on Censorship and Reporters Without Borders today said the Egyptian authorities must stop their attacks on media freedom and freedom of expression. The deteriorating environment for journalists to operate safely and report freely is of grave concern. The deliberate chilling of media freedom and free speech through arrests and criminalisation of legitimate journalism has all the hallmarks of the authoritarian Egypt of the Mubarak era.

The organisations call on the leaders of the European Union and the US to demand that Egypt's authorities immediately release the Al-Jazeera journalists and end their clamp-down on media freedom, free speech and freedom of assembly without delay. The EU and US must support all those standing up for democracy, human rights and media freedom in Egypt.

Egyptian prosecutors have said that 20 journalists face charges though only 8 are currently under arrest. Four of these are believed to be foreigners and the other 12 said to be Egyptians.

Thomas Hughes, Executive Director, Article 19

Joel Simon, Executive Director, Committee to Protect Journalists

Kirsty Hughes, Chief Executive, Index on Censorship

Christophe Deloire, Secrétaire Général, Reporters Without Borders

Press Contacts

Article 19: Ayden Peach, 07973911993

Committee to Protect Journalists: Samantha Libby, slibby@cpj.org / +1 212 300 9032 ext 124

Index on Censorship: Pdraig Reidy, Pdraig@indexoncensorship.org / 0207 260 2660

Reporters Without Borders: Isabelle Gourmelon, press@rsf.org / +33 01 44 83 84 56