

Organizations condemn Mada Masr shutdown, stand with editor-in-chief Lina Attalah

We, the undersigned organizations, condemn in the strongest terms the [conviction](#) of Lina Attalah, editor-in-chief of the independent Egyptian news outlet Mada Masr, and the court's order to shut down one of the country's leading and last remaining independent newsrooms. This is the latest episode in a new and escalating [crackdown](#) on Egypt's independent media. We call on the Egyptian authorities to allow Mada Masr to operate freely.

This [unprecedented](#) attack on independent media began in late September with the [arrest](#) of six journalists from the investigative and fact-checking platform [Matsadaash](#), some of whom told prosecutors they were tortured and forced to record fabricated "confessions." The campaign has since widened: Journalist [Rasha Azab](#) was summoned for questioning, and the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate has been targeted by a coordinated defamation campaign.

In the latest incident, the New Cairo Misdemeanor Court [convicted](#) Attalah of managing an unlicensed website and imposed the maximum penalty: a fine of 3 million Egyptian pounds (about US\$54,000), the closure of Mada Masr's website and the confiscation of its devices and equipment. Attalah was taken into custody inside the courthouse immediately after the ruling and released after 7 hours.

During the release procedures, Attalah was surprised to discover an in absentia conviction issued against her in 2024—sentencing her to one year in prison on charges of disseminating false news and operating a website without a license. Her defense team has filed an objection to the in absentia judgment, and a hearing has been scheduled for November 11 to review the case.

Attalah's trial was marked by serious violations of her right to a fair trial. According to [reports](#) from the hearing, journalists were excluded from the courtroom during critical stages of the proceedings, and the defense was prevented from being granted adequate time to review the case file and from presenting key procedural requests, including requests to submit documents and hear witnesses.

The reports also describe how the court appointed a lawyer for Lina despite her objections and the presence of her eight-member legal team, and proceeded to announce its verdict regardless.

Mada Masr's legal team plans to appeal the ruling and pursue all available legal avenues to overturn it.

Attalah was interrogated and [referred](#) to trial shortly after Mada Masr joined other Egyptian and regional outlets [in standing up](#) a solidarity flash newsroom to fill the gap in coverage following the arrest of the six Matsadaash journalists.

The expanding arrest, closure and defamation campaign against independent media sends a clear message of fear and intimidation to newsrooms across the country.

We call on the Egyptian authorities to:

- Grant licenses to independent outlets without discrimination and allow them to operate freely, and end the use of licensing provisions under the media law to criminalize journalism.
- End the campaign of intimidation against journalists, independent media and the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate.
- Release the [25 journalists](#) currently held in Egyptian custody immediately and unconditionally.

Signatories:

1. 7amleh - The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media
2. Access Now
3. Agência Mural
4. Al Manassa
5. Al Qatiba
6. Alhudood
7. American Committee for Middle East Rights (ACMER)
8. Amnesty International
9. Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies (AITAS)
10. Arab and Middle Eastern Journalists Association (AMEJA)
11. Arab foundation for civil society and human rights
12. Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ)
13. ARTICLE 19
14. Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE).
15. Assafir Al-Arabi
16. Athr
17. AVAAZ
18. AWID
19. Babelmed
20. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, BIRN
21. Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)
22. Cartoonists Rights
23. Cedar Centre for Legal Studies
24. Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI)
25. Center for International Policy (CIP) Washington
26. Center for Media Research - Nepal
27. Centre for Law and Democracy
28. Coalition For Women in Journalism (CFWIJ)
29. Committee for Justice (CFJ)
30. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
31. Daraj Media
32. Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
33. Digital Action
34. Digital Rights Foundation
35. Drop Site News

36. DW Akademie
37. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
38. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)
39. Egyptian Front for Human Rights
40. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
41. EgyptWide for Human Rights
42. En toutes lettres
43. English PEN
44. EuroMed Rights Network
45. FactcheckAr
46. Factjaja
47. FactWatch, Bangladesh
48. FairSquare
49. Fareq Platform for Fact-Checking
50. Febrayer Network
51. Fondation Hirondelle
52. Gherbal Initiative
53. Global Center for Journalism and Trauma
54. Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)
55. Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)
56. Global Voices
57. Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
58. Hounna Feminist Platform
59. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
60. Human Rights Watch
61. Huquqyat
62. Informed
63. Inkyfada
64. International Fact-Checking Network
65. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the
Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
66. International Federation of Journalists (FIJ)
67. International Journalism Festival
68. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
69. International Press Institute (IPI)
70. Internews Kosova KALLXO
71. Intersection Association For Rights and Freedoms (IARF)
72. Jadaliyya
73. Journalisme & Citoyenneté / Sahafa Med
74. Jummar
75. Khateera
76. Khatt 30
77. Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF)
78. Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)

79. Lokman Slim Foundation
80. Maghreb Emergent
81. MARE. Collectif
82. Media Diversity Institute
83. Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
84. Jabal Amel Report
85. Meedan
86. MENA Prison Forum
87. MENA Rights Group
88. Middle East Matters (MEM)
89. Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)
90. Mnemonic
91. Najda for Human Rights
92. Nawaat
93. New Narratives
94. Nouvelles Rencontres d'Averroès (Marseille)
95. Overseas Press Club of America (OPC)
96. Orient XXI
97. Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA)
98. PEN America
99. PEN Canada
100. PEN International
101. Public Media Alliance (PMA)
102. Press Club Belarus
103. Rachma Media
104. REDWORD for Human Rights & Freedom of Expression
105. Raseef22
106. Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
107. RESURJ | Global south-led transnational feminist alliance
108. Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center
109. Rory Peck Trust
110. Rozana Media
111. Rural Media Network Pakistan
112. Rusted Radishes: Beirut Literary and Art Journal
113. Samir Kassir Foundation
114. Share3 Media (Syria)
115. Sinai Foundation for Human Rights
116. SMEX
117. Start Point
118. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
119. Syrians for Truth and Justice - STJ
120. TAFNIED
121. The Alternative Policy Institute (BADIL)
122. The Funambulist

123. The New Humanitarian
124. The Key Magazine
125. The Legal Agenda
126. The Markaz Review
127. The Public Source
128. The Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in South West Asia and North Africa (WHRDMENA)
129. The Syria Campaign
130. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
131. UMAM Documentation & Research
132. Union of Journalists in Lebanon
133. Verify
134. Vita-Activa.Org
135. Wasl Rights
136. Women for Justice Foundation (WJF)
137. Women Journalist Alliance
138. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
139. Zawia3