

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/egypte-english-language-arabic-channel-31-01-2011,39436.html>

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Middle East & North Africa - Egypt

Five journalists held

## English-language Arabic channel targeted

31 January 2011

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Reporters Without Borders condemns the arrest by the military today of five journalists working for the English-language service of the Qatar-based television station *Al Jazeera*. Their detention comes the day after the decision by the Egyptian information minister Anas el-Fekki, to close the offices of *Al Jazeera* in Cairo and cancel the accreditation of staff working for the station.

A representative of *Al Jazeera* in Cairo told Reporter Without Borders by phone that he feared that the ban, which applied only to the Arabic-language channel, might affect the English-language section of the station.

The five journalists, Egyptians and foreigners, were arrested at the Hilton hotel in Cairo, where they are staying, as they were returning from a reporting mission and were trying to send their video material to the station from their laptop. They were questioned at the hotel for an hour and a half. They were released but their cameras and recordings were seized.

Their detention comes on the eve of a major day of mobilization in Egypt. An appeal for a general strike has been issued for 1 February and for a march "of a million" people

*Al Jazeera* had given full coverage of the uprising in Egypt until the government withdrew its license and the work permits of its journalists on 30 January. To get round the censorship the station appealed to Egyptians to send them news about the situation on the ground and pictures taken with mobile phones.

The production company *Cairo News Company (CNC)* confirms that it was subject to serious pressure from the authorities on 29 January not to supply pictures to *Al Jazeera*. It was also banned from filming outside.

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