

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsfs.org/egypt-journalists-and-bloggers-among-12-09-03-2012,42045.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Egypt

Military justice

Journalists and bloggers among 12 people who could face military trial

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Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns the referral of the cases of two journalists and two activist bloggers to military courts for trial on charges of harming the army's image and seeking to overthrow the state.

"The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has demonstrated once again its willingness to muzzle media workers, who are repeatedly the victims of military oppression," the press freedom organization said.

"This organization openly condemns the use of military courts to try journalists and bloggers and demands these proceedings be dropped immediately."

As a result of more than 700 complaints from a group calling itself "Young Men and Women for an Honourable Egypt" against 12 well-known figures, the public prosecutor decided on March 7 to refer the cases to military courts. Among the 12 are two journalists from the station *ON TV*, **Rim Magued** and **Yosri Fouda**, activists such as the bloggers **Nawara Nagem** and **Wael Ghoneim**, as well as the writer Alaa Al-Aswani.

They could face charges of attempting to overthrow the state and damaging the reputation of the armed forces, which was seen as the reason for referring the prosecutions to a court martial. Section 9 of the country's martial law allows for any offence related to the armed forces to be tried by a military court, which seriously undermines the right to a fair trial. The use of this procedure constitutes a denial of justice under international law. We demand that civilian law be strengthened and all legal provisions allowing for referrals to military courts be scrapped.

Magued was previously summoned before the military prosecutor on 31 May 2011, after he criticized the Council. The journalist **Nabil Sharaf Al-Din** and the blogger **Hossam Al-Hamalawy** appeared on his talk show where they accused the military police of abuses and human rights violations during the crackdown on demonstrations.

Last October, the journalist Yosri Fouda decided not to broadcast his programme on *ON TV*, which was devoted to an interview with the writer Alaa Al-Aswani, as a protest against growing censorship.

The authorities have tried several times to censor and intimidate *ON TV*. On 4 October last year, the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones issued a [formal warning](#) to the satellite station, accusing it of violating the terms of the Investment Guarantees and Incentives Act as regards programme content.

On 19 December, the station's head office was [raided](#) by armed troops while it was broadcasting a

report on the violence in Tahrir Square. Several video cameras were seized.

Reporters Without Borders also deplores acts of violence against a number of journalists on 4 February while they were covering a demonstration outside the interior ministry.

Mahmoud Al-Ghazaly, a correspondent for the station *Nile News*, lost an eye when riot police opened fire at face level. **Mohamed Jawdat**, a photographer for the news website *Rassd News Network*, was attacked by police when he started filming the demonstration. He immediately showed his press card to the security forces, who confiscated his camera and his mobile phone.

Mustafa Ala'a-ed'din, a photographer for the same network, was also held for questioning when he tried to obtain news of his arrested colleague from officers at the ministry. His mobile phone was smashed and his camera confiscated. The police officers severely beat both journalists with their rifle butts.
