



RSF calls for release of six journalists sentenced to life imprisonment

Publisher [Reporters Without Borders](#)

Publication Date 30 September 2015

Cite as Reporters Without Borders, *RSF calls for release of six journalists sentenced to life imprisonment*, 30 September 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/560cfb9440a.html> [accessed 3 November 2015]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

While Egypt's president has just claimed on CNN that his country enjoys unprecedented freedom of expression, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) points out that tomorrow a court will begin hearing the appeals of six unjustly detained journalists who were given life sentences in April. RSF calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

Their appeals will be heard [at the same time as those of a group of Muslim Brotherhood leaders](#) with whom they were originally tried and [convicted](#) in what was known as the "Rabaa Operations Room"[trial](#).

The six journalists were convicted of disseminating false news, inciting violence and chaos, and being part of an "operations room" aimed at orchestrating attacks against the government during demonstrations in Cairo's Rabaa Adawiya Square in support of deposed President Mohamed Morsi.

The journalists worked for different media but all covered the demonstrations and all were critical of the government.

"The outcome of these journalists' appeals will be decisive for the future of media freedom in Egypt," said Alexandra El Khazen, the head of RSF's Middle East and Maghreb desk.

"The fact that their appeals are being heard at the same time as those of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood group is extremely disturbing. We urge the Egyptian authorities to quash their convictions and free them because they were arrested just for doing their job as journalists to report the news."

The six include two journalists with the [Rassd](#) news website - reporter **Abdullah Alfakharany**, who is one of the site's founders, and **Samhi Mostafa**, its executive director. They were arrested in August 2013 along with **Mohammed Al-Adly**, a presenter on *Amgad TV*, a religious TV channel.

Hany Salah Al-Deen, the former news editor of the pro-Muslim Brotherhood TV channel *Misr 25* and former editor of the *Youm7* news website, was arrested in December 2013 at Cairo airport. The authorities closed *Misr 25* after Morsi's overthrow in July 2013.

Mossab Al Barbary, the head of the pro-Muslim Brotherhood TV channel *Ahrar 25* and former *Misr 25* manager, was arrested at Beirut airport, where he had gone on a business trip, and was deported to Cairo. **Hassan Al Qabbani**, an editor with *Rassd* and with the newspaper of the Muslim Brotherhood party, Freedom and Justice, was arrested at his home in January 2015.

There are eight other journalists among those whose appeals will begin being heard tomorrow but RSF had not been able to establish any link between their arrests and their work as journalists.

Most of the journalists currently imprisoned in Egypt are directly or indirectly accused of supporting a banned organization, above all the Muslim Brotherhood, inciting violence and disseminating false information. The Muslim Brotherhood was declared a "terrorist organization" in December 2013.

With at least 20 journalists currently detained, Egypt is the world's fourth biggest prison for media personnel (after China, Eritrea and Iran) and is [ranked](#) 158th out of 180 countries in RSF's press freedom index.

Search Refworld

by keyword
and / or country

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Countries

- [China](#)
- [Egypt](#)
- [Eritrea](#)
- [Iran, Islamic Republic of](#)

Topics

- [Arbitrary arrest and detention](#)
- [Freedom of expression](#)
- [Freedom of information](#)
- [Freedom of speech](#)