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مؤسسة حرية الفكر والتعبير

Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression

Freedom of Media Program “Semiannual Newsletter”

A periodical newsletter on the state of media and press in Egypt

(January- July 2017)



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(January - July 2017)

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Introduction: No voice other than that of the government

On May 24, the government began blocking a number of sites. Most of the blocking operations were directed against news sites and satellite channels broadcasting from outside Egypt. The number of sites blocked until 25 June - the date covered by the report - reached 75 sites. Press sites were not the only ones to be blocked. Sites of political campaigns and proxies have also been subject to block, increasing the total number of blocked sites until the date of this report at least 113.¹

The blocking of the sites coincided with the beginning of the discussions in the Egyptian parliament of the agreement on the demarcation of the maritime border with Saudi Arabia, the block being a practical implementation of what the Egyptian president said in April last year, during his meeting with the representatives of Egyptian groups: “No one should bring up this subject again” commenting on the escalation of opposition against the agreement in political and media circles. The block of websites was the most accurate expression of the government’s intentions to close most platforms or outlets that carry voices of opposition.

The block was not the only measure to prevent the press and the media from carrying out their roles. It was preceded by preventing journalists and media personnel from covering various events. During the first half of this year, AFTE’s Monitoring and Documentation Unit documented 49 cases of mass preventions of journalists from doing their work.

June came on top of the list in terms of the number of violations committed against the press community, and government agencies and government officials came on top of the list of perpetrators.

The newsletter details the violations against the press and media community in Egypt, which affected their professional performance and breached the rights, which were granted them by the Constitution, law and international covenants. The newsletter also reviews the number of violations, the bodies most exposed to them and the bodies that commit the greatest violations against press and media freedom.

It also reviews the number of journalists imprisoned for their press work, whether sentenced or still in pre-trial detention, indicating the criteria on which AFTE relied to include cases in the list of imprisoned journalists.

¹. The full list of blocked websites can be accessed in the following AFTE report: Decision by an unidentified body. <https://goo.gl/OD01qV>

Methodology of Monitoring and Documentation

AFTE depended in its monitoring on the follow up by the institution's teams in addition to postings on social networks and news websites as well as publications by human rights organizations and initiatives concerned with the situation of the press and media in Egypt. The research team then validates the information through direct communication with victims, their families or eyewitnesses, or via statements by victims on their personal social media pages, or through statements released by the media institutions, in which they work.

Timeframe of the report: 1 January – 25 June 2017

Geographical scope: Egyptian governorates

An act was considered a violation of the freedom of the press and the media if all of the following conditions were fulfilled:

- 1- Verification of the identity of the journalist:** A press ID, a work permit or a delegation issued by a press institution, a press portfolio in a press institution, an official certificate by the press institution or its media platforms.
- 2- Verification of the press institution:** at least one of the following: a page, a website or a publication by the press institution in addition to a means of communication.
- 3- Evidence that the journalist was on a professional mission during the time of the violation:** at least one of the following conditions: work permit or authorization to carry out that professional mission, testimony by victim or eyewitnesses, confirmation by officials at the press institution on its media platforms.

Notes

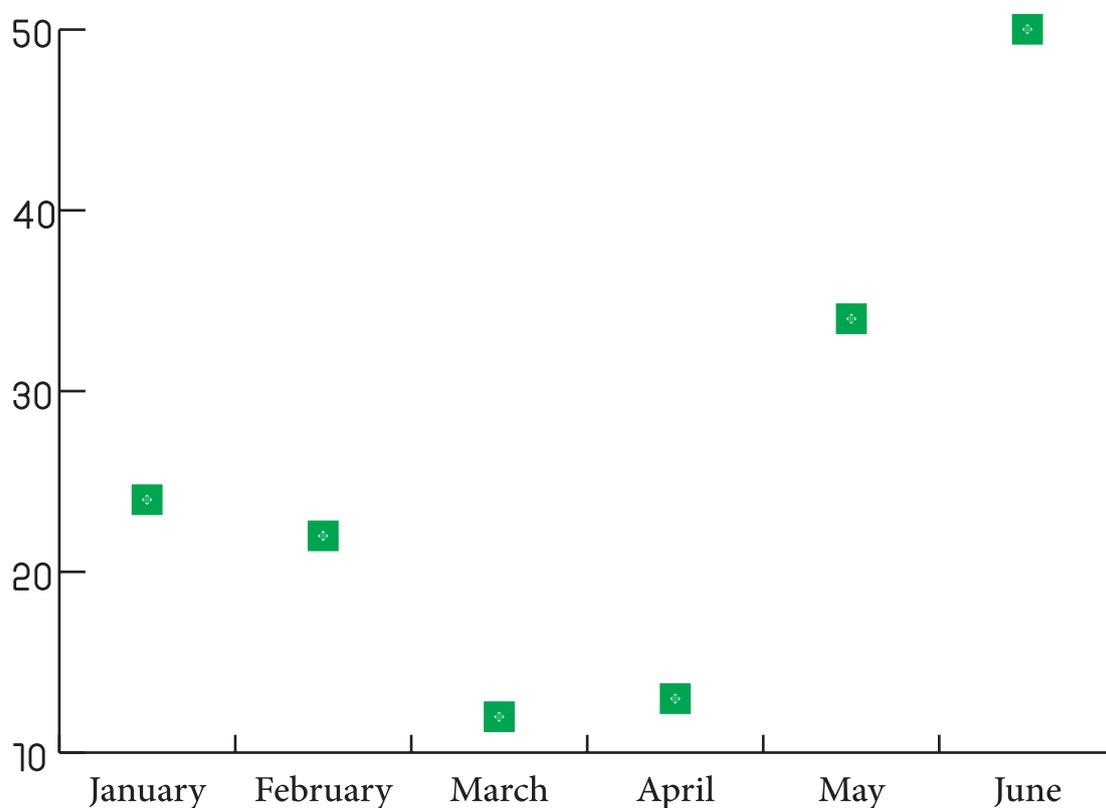
- **Private Egyptian channels:** refers to private channels, which have their main headquarters in Egypt.
- **Multiple:** refers to various press or media bodies

- **Not identified:** Victim could not be contacted
- **Security bodies:** including sectors of the ministry of interior, defense, military; also included in cases of attacks by “supporting or unidentified civilians” when in the presence of regular forces.
- **Guards or private security:** includes any private security or guards whether they work independently or are appointed by companies. In case they acted upon direct orders from an official body, e.g. government official, to commit the violation, the perpetrator will be considered “government officials”
- **Judicial bodies:** all civilian or military judicial bodies.
- In case of diversity of press activities of the same institution, the reference will be made to the most structured and organized body. For example, “publication” will be used to describe the institution which produces a newspaper or an electronic website.
- **Arrest:** is the process of restricting freedom of the journalist, taking him/her to a police station and making a report.
- **Illegal detention:** is the process of restricting freedom of the journalist, taking him to a place of detention and then releasing him/her without making a report.
- **Definition of a violation:** Any violation that happens to an individual journalist in a specific place and time, to be determined by 4 main factors: place of violation, time of violation, type of violation and the person of the victim. For example: if 3 journalists were arrested in a certain incident and one of them was beaten and another verbally abused, this will be taken to indicate 5 violations (3 for arrest, 1 for physical assault and 1 for verbal assault).
- In the case of collective violation (prevention from coverage) it will be considered as a single violation, since it aimed at collective prevention from coverage rather than a violation against a particular journalist. It is also difficult in those daily incidents to accurately determine the number of journalists involved.

Violations against press and media freedom according to timeframe

The main violation in the month of June was the block of websites, which began in May, and greatly escalated during the June, when the unit documented 59 cases of violation, followed by May (34) and January (24) and finally March (12 cases of violation)

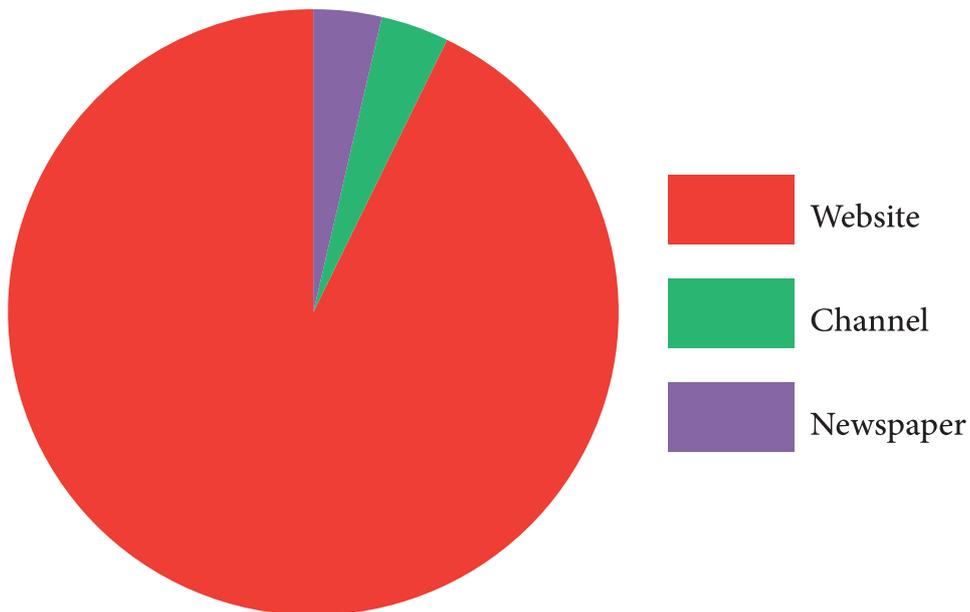
Violations against press and media freedom during the first half of 2017 according to timeframe	
January	24
February	22
March	12
April	13
May	34
June	59
Total	164

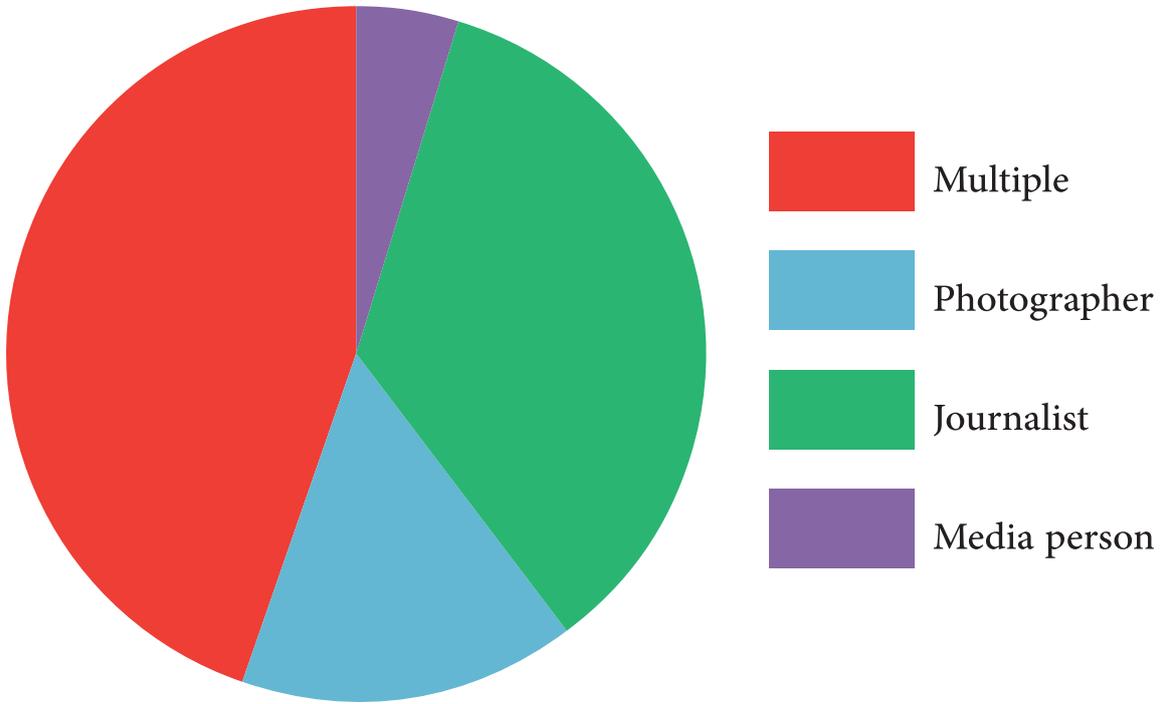


Violations against press and media freedom according to victim

Media personnel were subjected to 4 violations, while 29 journalists suffered and 13 photographers were subject to violations, in addition to 37 collective violations against journalists, photographers and media personnel. At the level of institutions, violations were recorded for 3 newspapers, 3 channels and 75 websites during the timeframe of the newsletter.

Violations against press and media freedom during the first half of 2017 according to victim			
Media person	4	Newspaper	3
Journalist	29	Channel	3
Photographer	13	Website	75
Multiple	37		
Total	83	Total	81

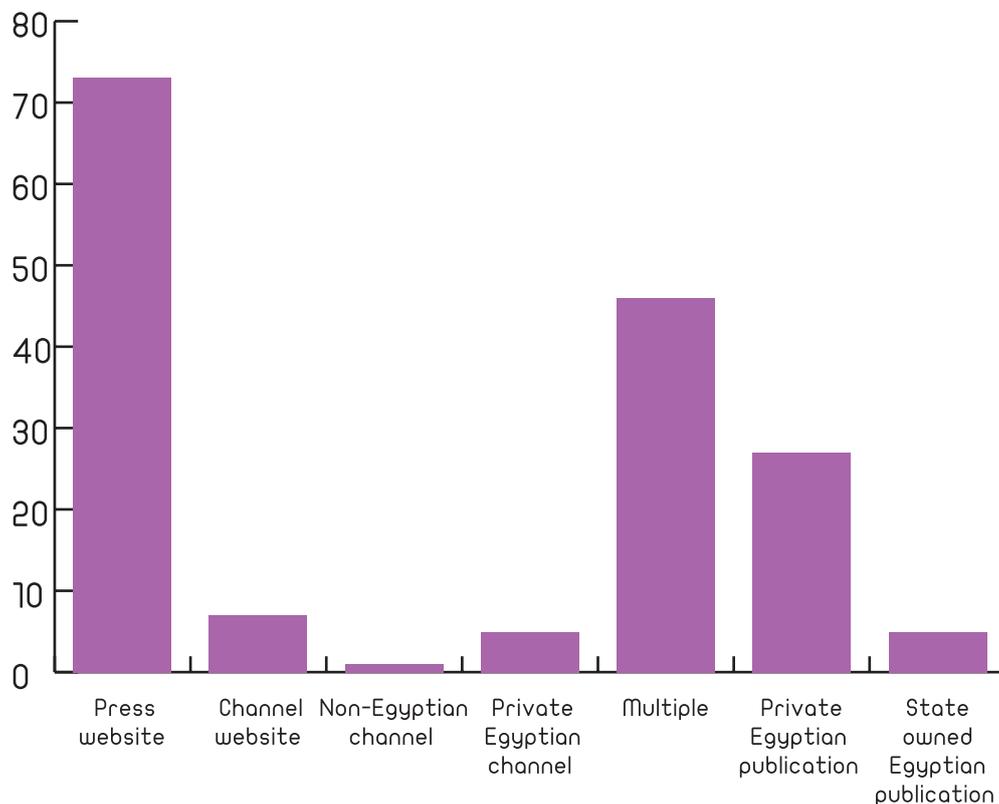




Violations against press and media freedom according to victim's institutional affiliation

Press websites and those affiliated to satellite channels and their staff of journalists were subjected to the highest number of violations (80) followed by 46 collective violations against various institutional journalists in addition to 27 violations against journalists and photographers in private Egyptian publications.

Violations against press and media freedom during the first half of 2017 according to victim's institutional affiliation	
Press website	73
Channel website	7
Non-Egyptian channel	1
Private Egyptian channel	5
Multiple	46
Private Egyptian publication	27
State owned Egyptian publication	5
Total	164

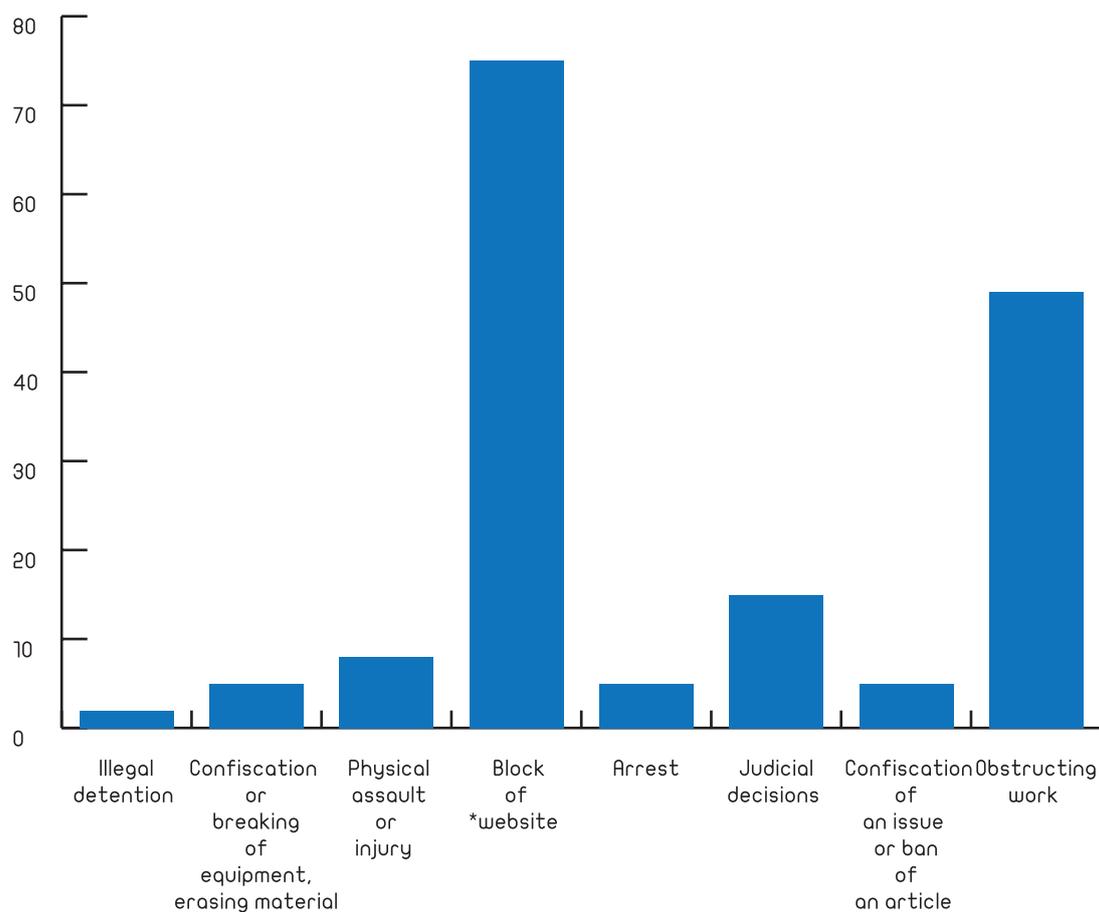


Violations against press and media freedom according to type of violation

Blocking of news and channel websites were subjected to the highest rate of violations as documented by the monitoring unit at AFTE (75 block cases) followed by preventing journalists from performing their job (49 cases), in addition to 15 cases of judicial persecution

Violations against press and media freedom during the first half of 2017 according to type of violation	
Illegal detention	2
Confiscation or breaking of equipment, erasing material	5
Physical assault or injury	8
Block of website*	75
Arrest	5
Judicial decisions	15
Confiscation of an issue or ban of an article	5
Obstructing work	49
Total	164

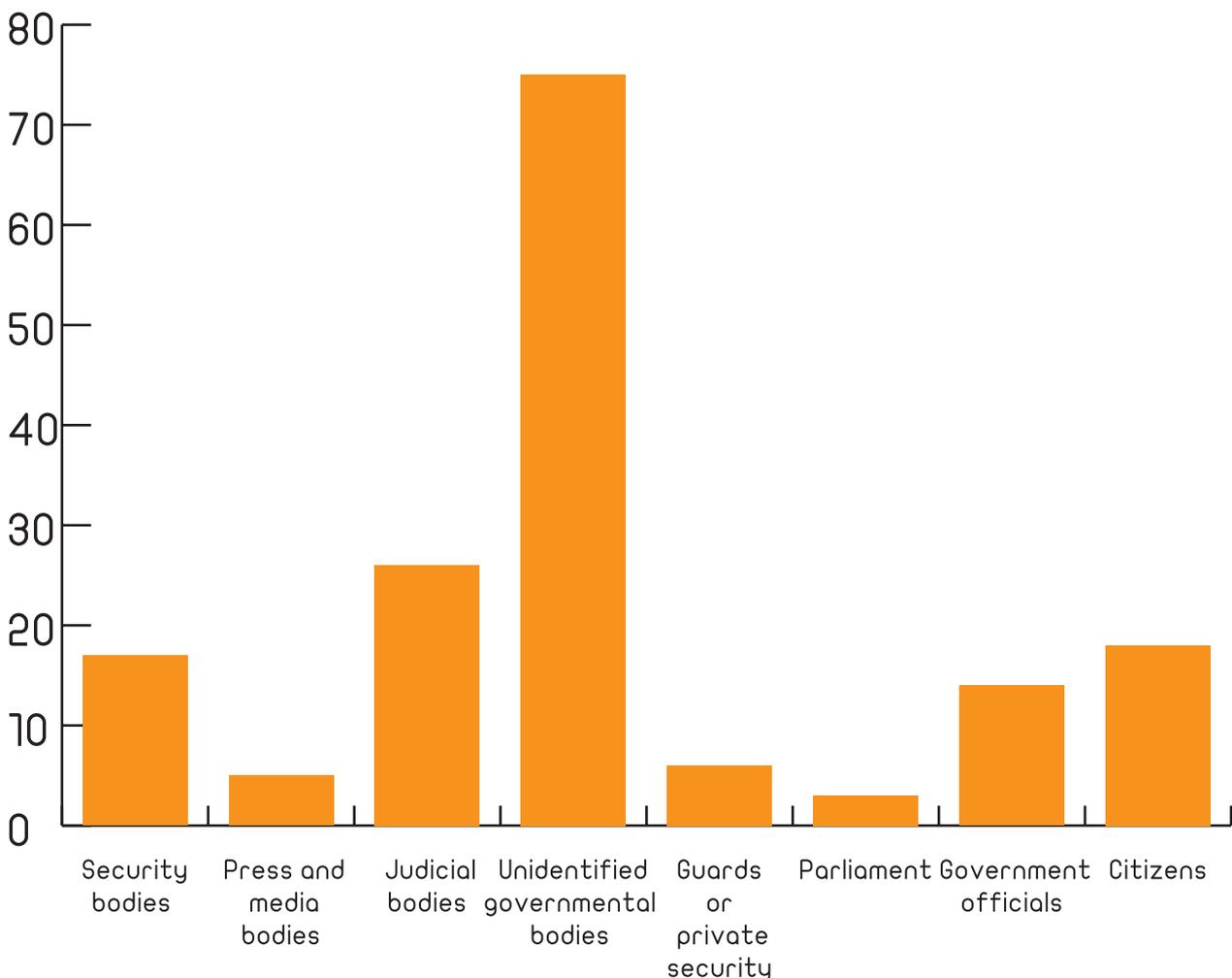
* the number of sites mentioned in the newsletter are those blocked between the 1st of January until the 25th of June 2017. The number is increasing until the time of producing this report



Violations against press and media freedom according to perpetrator

Unidentified governmental bodies blocking websites committed the highest number of violations against press and media freedom during the first half of 2017 (75 violations) followed by judicial bodies (26), citizens (18) and security bodies (17 cases of violations).

Violations against press and media freedom during the first half of 2017 according to perpetrator	
Security bodies	17
Press and media bodies	5
Judicial bodies	26
Unidentified governmental bodies	75
Guards or private security	6
Parliament	3
Government officials	14
Citizens	18
Total	164



Detained journalists

No.	Date of arrest	Name of journalist	Profession and institution	Judicial body	Sentence	Case no.
1	14/8/2013	Mahmoud Abdel Shakour Abu Zeid	Photographer, Demotex press agency	Cairo criminal court, south no. 28	Not	15899/2013
2	25/8/2013	Samhi Mostafa Ahmed Abdelalim	Executive director, Rassd news network	Cairo criminal court after acceptance of appeal by court of cassation	Not	2210/2014 Agouza criminal case and 317/2014 high state security prosecution
3	25/8/2013	Mohamed Mohamed Mostafa Eladli		Cairo criminal court after acceptance of appeal by court of cassation	Not	2210/2014 Agouza criminal case and 317/2014 high state security prosecution
4	25/8/2013	Abdallah Ahmed Mohamed	Founding members, Rassd news network	Cairo criminal court after acceptance of appeal by court of cassation	Not	2210/2014 Agouza criminal case and 317/2014 high state security prosecution

5	3/7/2013	Mahmoud Mohamed Abdelnabi		Alexandria criminal court, chamber no. 8	Not	50666/2014 Montaza 1 st criminal case, 4214/2014 East Alexandria
6	29/11/2015	Ismail Elsayed Mohamed Omar Taufik	Journalist	High state security prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	569/2015 high state security case
7	26/9/2016	Hamdi Mokhtar El Zaim	Elnabaa newspaper	Kasr El Nil prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	15060/2016 Kasr el Nil misdemeanor
8	26/9/2016	Mohamed Hassan	Elnabaa newspaper	Kasr El Nil prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	15060/2016 Kasr el Nil misdemeanor
9	26/09/2016	Osama Gaber Mohamed	Journalist, Baladi news agency	Kasr El Nil prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	15060/2016 Kasr el Nil misdemeanor
10	23/12/2016	Mahmoud Hussein Gomaa	Journalist, Aljazeera channel	High state security prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	
11	21/2/2016	Sabry Anwar Mohamed Abdelhalim	Journalist, Elbadil website	Damietta prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	205/2015 high state security case
12	22/1/2015	Hassan Mahmoud Ragab Elqabani	Journalist, Elkarama newspaper	High state security prosecution	Case not referred to court yet	718/2015 high state security case

For more information <https://goo.gl/r6t7PH>