

JOINT ACTION: Twenty-two IFEX members call for end of persecution of human rights activist, journalist

Country/Topic: Tunisia

Date: 12 October 2007

Source: Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR)

Person(s): Mohammed Abbou, Abdallah Zouari (Al-Zawary)

Target(s): journalist(s) , human rights worker(s)

Type(s) of violation(s): other , harassed , banned

Urgency: Bulletin

(EOHR/IFEX) - The following is a joint statement by 22 IFEX members and one other organisation:

Call for freedom of movement for Tunisian activists and journalists
Mohammed Abbou, Tunisian lawyer and human rights activist, who was released from prison on 24 July 2007, was told that he is "banned from traveling" when he went to Tunis-Carthage airport to travel to London for an interview in Al-Jazeera's London studios for a programme on free expression and human rights. Abbou said there are no legal grounds for such a ban. In another case, journalist Abdallah Zouari continues his extended internal exile for his former work with "al Fajr", the official newspaper of the Islamist movement Ennahda. As Zouari reached the 5 June 2007 date which should have ended his internal exile, he had an extra 26 months added to his banishment, without any justification. Zouari was unable to obtain any explanation from the police chief in Zarzis, 500 km from the capital, where he is under close surveillance, while his wife and five children live in Tunis where he was arrested. The police chief simply told him that his orders came "from above".

The undersigned organisations, members and partners of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) gathering in Montevideo, Uruguay, call upon the Tunisian government:

- to allow Mohammed Abbou to travel freely, especially when there is no legal basis to deprive him of his right to free movement.
- to end Zouari's forced exile away from his family and to allow him to move freely.

Signatories:

Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), Indonesia

Arab Network for Human Rights Information (HRinfo), Egypt

Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Bahrain

Canadian Journalists for Freedom of Expression (CJFE), Canada

Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), Philippines

Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP), Liberia

Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR), Egypt

Free Media Movement (FMM), Sri Lanka

Freedom House, United States of America

Index on Censorship, UK

Initiative for Freedom of Expression, Turkey

Institute for Reporter Freedom and Safety (IRFS), Azerbaijan

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Belgium

International Press Institute (IPI), Austria
IPS Communication Foundation (BIANET), Turkey
Maharat Foundation, Lebanon
Norwegian PEN, Norway
Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA), Palestine
Observatoire pour la liberté de presse, d'édition et de creation (OLPEC),
Tunisia
Sindicato de Periodistas del Paraguay (Paraguayan Union of Journalists,
SPP), Paraguay
Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), Thailand
World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), USA
World Association of Newspapers (WAN), France
MORE INFORMATION:

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