

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JOINT STATEMENT

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EGYPT: URGENT GLOBAL CALL FOLLOWING THE REFERRAL OF MADA MASR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF LINA ATTALAH TO TRIAL

We, the undersigned civil society organizations and independent media outlets from around the world, join together to condemn the unprecedented attack on press freedom in Egypt following the referral of Egyptian journalist and Editor-in-Chief of independent media outlet [Mada Masr](#) Lina Attalah to trial.

Just hours after Mada Masr [joined](#) seven other independent media outlets from across the Arab world in setting up a solidarity flash newsroom to fill the gap in coverage following the arrest of the entire newsroom of Egyptian investigative platform Matsadaash, on October 19, 2026, Lina Attalah [received](#) a summons to appear for questioning before the Supreme State Security Prosecution pending Case No. 9072 of 2026. The reasons for the summons were not disclosed.

At the interrogation, which took place on October 21 and lasted over six hours, Lina was questioned about [Mada's coverage](#) on the wave of protests happening in prisons across the country, as well as the legal status of Mada Masr's license. She was faced with charges of running a website without a license and of publishing false news with the aim of disturbing public peace and ultimately released on LE 100,000 bail. On October 22, Lina [learned](#) that she would be referred to trial on charges of establishing, managing, and operating a website without a license, with the first session set to begin on Tuesday, October 27.

Mada Masr has made every possible effort to register for a license and operate under Egyptian law. When [Law No. 180 of 2018 Regulating the Press, Media, and the Supreme Council for Media Regulation \(SCMR\)](#) was ratified, Mada Masr applied for a license in 2018. It received no response. After the law's bylaws were issued in 2020, the outlet again applied for a license. Once again, it received no response. Only in 2022 during an interrogation in which Lina had been summoned, Mada Masr learned that the SCMR had rejected the licensing application without proper notice or disclosure. The outlet then filed a lawsuit in 2022 to challenge the denial decision and the failure of authorities to provide notice and justification for the rejection. The latest application for a license has been pending without response since 2023.

Lina Attalah's referral to trial constitutes an unprecedented escalation that threatens the future of the entire independent media, knowledge production, and civil society space in Egypt. It occurs in the wake of another historical escalation which occurred at the end of September following the arrest of the [entire newsroom of Matsadaash](#). For the charges that Lina is facing in this case, there is a potential penalty of between LE 1 million and 3 million, subject to a doubling of the fine for recurrence. More alarmingly, the court can also order the closure of Mada Masr, which would constitute a death knell to one of the last remaining independent media outlets operating in Egypt today.

Though this is the sixth case brought against Mada Masr in six years, this is the first time that a case of this nature has been referred to trial. For years, Egyptian authorities have leveraged their repressive and restrictive tactics against independent media outlets to harass journalists, restrict their operations, and chill freedom of expression. To escalate to the step of referral to trial must be read as a clear intent to entirely shutter the independent media space and to permanently close what remains.

We, the undersigned, call on Egyptian authorities to immediately end its prosecution of Lina Attalah. We call on authorities to grant Mada Masr a license as the law stipulates and requires and in response to its numerous licensing applications. We call on authorities to halt any and all targeting directed at Mada Masr and at all independent media outlets operating in Egypt, including the [case of Matsadaash](#), where six journalists remain in pretrial detention after some were subject to torture. Finally, we call on Egyptian authorities to release all journalists detained or imprisoned for their work in Egypt.

What we are seeing unfold in Egypt today is an egregious escalation that cannot be allowed to stand. Should we remain silent in the face of such, we can only expect the permanent shuttering and closure of what remains of Egyptian independent media, civil society, and organizing. The stakes could not be higher.

Signatories:

Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)

Access Now
Aegis Safety Alliance
African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL)
AlJumhuriya Collective | Syria
Al Manassa
Almidan Association for Development and Human Rights
American Committee for Middle East Rights (ACMER)
Amnesty International
Arab Foundation for Civil Society and Human Rights
Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)
ARTICLE 19
Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE)
Athr
Caesar Files for Justice
Cedar Centre for Legal Studies
Center for Media Research - Nepal
Center for International Policy
CivilNet
Climate Activist Defenders (CAD)
Coalition For Women In Journalism (CFWIJ)
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
CUNY Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine
Daraj Media
Darfur Network for Human Rights
Dar Justice
Delfi (Lithuania)
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
Drop Site News
Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)
Egyptian Front for Human Rights
Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
EgyptWide for Human Rights
Electronic Frontier Foundation
El Nadeem Center
English PEN
En toutes lettres

Fact Check Cyprus
FactWatch
FAKARTANY
FairSquare
Fareq Platform for Fact Checking
Frontliners For Change (FFC)
Global Voices
Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
Hibrid.info
Houna Feminist Platform
Human Rights Watch
HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
Huquqyat
INSM Foundation for Digital Rights
Källkritikbyrå
Kawaakibi Foundation
India Today Fact Check
Inkyfada
International Fact-Checking Network
International Federation for Human Rights
Internews Kosova - KALLXO
Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms
Japan Fact-Check Center
Justice Center for Advocacy and Legal Consultations
Law and Democracy Support Foundation
Local Development and Small-Projects Support (LDSPS)
Masaar Foundation
Masaha
MENA Prison Forum
Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)
Migration and Human Rights Platform
Musawa
Najda For Human Rights
Nawaat Website Journalists Association
Newtral
Nest Center for Journalism Innovation and Development NGO, Mongolia
Orient XXI
Pagella Politica / Facta news

PEN International
People in Need
PesaCheck
Project 0 | Sifr
Public Works Studio
RACHMA
Rappler
Raseef22
Recoupement - Assafir Arabi
REDWORD for Human Rights & Freedom of Expression
Refugees Platform In Egypt (RPE)
Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights
Samir Kassir Foundation
Share3 Media
Sinai Foundation for Human Rights (SFHR)
SMEX
Soch Media
Sowt Media
Start Point
Syrian Center for Policy Research
Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ)
Taafi Initiative
Tafnied for OSINT Journalism and Fact-Checking
The Alternative Policy Institute (BADIL)
The Continental
The Key Magazine
The Legal Agenda
The Public Source
The Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in South West Asia and North Africa (WHRDMENA)
The Syria Campaign
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
Till the Last Prisoner
Union of Journalists in Lebanon
VERA Files
Verificat
Verify Media Platform
Wasl Rights
Women Journalists Alliance

Women Now for Development Lebanon
Women for Justice Foundation (WJF)
Zašto ne (Istinomjer/Raskrinkavanje)
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