

Egypt arrests 3 more journalists amid crackdown

Egyptian authorities should immediately release journalists Alaa Abdelfattah, Nasser Abdelhafez, Engi Abdel Wahab, and all others who have been imprisoned for their reporting, the Committee to Protect Journalists said.



On September 20, police in Cairo arrested Abdelhafez, an arts columnist at the government-owned *Akhbar Al-Youm* newspaper, after he allegedly took photos during protests at Tahrir Square, according to independent Egyptian news website [Mada Masr](#). On September 25, a Cairo national security prosecutor ordered Abdelhafez to be held in pretrial detention for 15 days on charges of supporting a banned group and spreading false news, *Mada Masr* reported. On the day of his arrest, Abdelhafez had posted [on Facebook](#) that he supported Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Also on September 20, police arrested Wahab, a reporter at the privately owned daily *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, while she was covering anti-government protests in Cairo, according to [news reports](#). On September 28, a Cairo criminal court ordered her to be jailed for 15 days in pretrial detention on the same charges as Abdelhafez, according to [a report](#) by the Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and the Media, local press freedom group.

Yesterday, National Security Agency officers arrested Abdelfattah, a blogger and *Mada Masr* columnist, while he was at his probation cell in the Dokki Police Station in Giza, according to [a report](#) by his employer. Today, a Cairo national security prosecutor ordered Abdelfattah to be held for 15 days pending trial on the same charges as Abdelhafez and Wahab, according to [a post](#) on Facebook by his lawyer, Fatma Serag.

“Egyptian authorities must stop arresting journalists on charges of spreading false news or joining a banned group; those charges have become nothing more than thin excuses to arrest journalists for their coverage,” said CPJ’s Middle East and North Africa program coordinator Sherif Mansour. “Taking even more vindictive measures against journalists will not help Egypt with its already stained record against the media.”

The protests, which started on September 19 in several cities throughout Egypt, have decried corruption in the nation’s army and, for the first time in years, included calls on President el-Sisi to resign, according to [news reports](#).

One of Abdelfattah’s lawyers, Mohamed el-Baker, was arrested while attending Abdelfattah’s questioning and was also sent to pretrial detention for 15 days on the same charges, according to [news reports](#).

Abdelfattah previously served a five-year prison sentence on anti-state charges, and was released on March 29 with the requirement that he spend every night in police custody for the following five years, according to [CPJ research](#).

Police have not disclosed the locations where any of the journalists are being held, according to those reports. CPJ’s emails to Egypt’s Supreme Council for Media Regulation, State Information Service, and Prosecutor General’s Office about the arrests did not receive any responses.

At least three other journalists have been arrested since the anti-government protests started on September 19, according to [CPJ reporting](#).

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