

Foreign journalists have "hidden agenda" - Egyptian media

NEW YORK: As journalists face ongoing attacks and detentions in Cairo, they are increasingly concerned that state broadcasts are creating an atmosphere that is encouraging violence against the media, the Committee to Protect Journalists said on Saturday, 5 February 2011.



State television and radio, along with pro-Mubarak private stations, are giving frequent airtime to presenters and guests who claim that foreigners, including international journalists, have a "hidden agenda" against the government, according to CPJ research. Local journalists have been called "infidels" for working with international media while Al-Jazeera has been accused of "inciting the people."

"While officials in the Mubarak government publicly pledge to uphold the rights of journalists, state media are blaming the press for the unrest," said Mohamed Abdel Dayem, CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator. "In the current climate, such rhetoric is extremely dangerous, as it could be interpreted as a green light to violent forces that have engaged in a systematic campaign to intimidate journalists."

Gamal Eid, executive director of the Arab Network for Human Rights Information told CPJ that there have been "numerous instances of provocation against foreigners, including journalists, on state-run media." He added that scores of journalists have relayed their fears to him as a result of the state broadcasts. Thierry Thuillier, head of news at French public broadcaster France Televisions, said: "Egyptian state television has referred to foreign journalists as being responsible for what is happening," [Sky News reported](#).

Egyptians monitoring the broadcasts both inside and outside the country sent CPJ descriptions of what they were watching and transcribed quotes:

Sayyid Ali and Hanaa al-Simari, hosts of a program called "48 Hours" on Al-Mihwar, which is owned by a pro-Mubarak businessman, accused international media - Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya in particular - of having a hidden agenda and

falsifying facts in order to provoke and inflame demonstrators against the state and the president, multiple sources in Egypt told CPJ. The two also accused the BBC Arabic service of having a similar agenda. The same show has repeatedly aired a screenshot of [Al-Jazeera's hacked website](#), which showed a banner advertisement that was taken over and replaced with the slogan "Together for the collapse of Egypt" as proof of a conspiracy.

Ashraf Sadeq, a journalist working for the semi-official *Al-Ahram* daily, said on Egyptian TV's Channel One and the Egyptian Satellite Channel, both operated by the government, that "Al-Jazeera is inciting the citizens." He added that "at least eight individuals who don't look Egyptian are wearing army uniforms and are inciting the people" in accordance with "a plot by the West and the United States."

On Monday, Amr Kamal, a journalist for *Al-Akhbar*, another semi-official government daily, said on the morning show "Good Morning Egypt," which airs on Channel One and the Egyptian Satellite Channel, that any individual who cooperates with independent Egyptian stations or foreign satellite stations "is a traitor and an infidel." Numerous reporters in Cairo told CPJ that the mobs who attacked them repeated these and similar claims during the assaults.

In the last 24 hours, CPJ documented two anti-press assaults, 10 detentions, one attack on a newsroom, and two confiscations of material or equipment. In all, CPJ has [documented](#) at least 114 direct attacks on journalists and news facilities [this week](#), and it's investigating numerous other reports.

See [new attacks on the press](#).

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