

Alerts
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In Jordan, TV anchor charged under cybercrimes law for Facebook post

November 6, 2015 6:03 PM
ET

Washington D.C., November 6, 2015--The Committee to Protect Journalists calls on authorities in Jordan to release TV anchor Tareq Abu al-Ragheb

(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOCNZLpEQ9H_EzmVaX5G0Ig/search?query=%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%82+%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%A8+) who was arrested Tuesday for posting allegedly insulting comments on Facebook, according to reports.

Abu al-Ragheb (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOCNZLpEQ9H_EzmVaX5G0Ig/search?query=%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%82+%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%A8+) who works for the privately owned satellite (<http://www.factjo.com/pages/default.aspx>) channel Al-Haqiqah International (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOCNZLpEQ9H_EzmVaX5G0Ig/search?query=%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%82+%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%A8+), was charged with defamation under Jordan's cybercrime law (<http://www.shaabnews.com/text-58139.htm>), which bans abusive and provocative remarks that are made against a religion or promote hatred and threaten coexistence in the kingdom, according to his outlet (<http://www.factjo.com/pages/newsdetails.aspx?id=90840>) and other (<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/tv-presenter-detained-over-facebook-post%E2%80%99#sthash.kfYQ9C3X.dpuf>) reports.

Amman prosecutor general Rami Tarawneh ordered the journalist, who presents the TV show "Face the Truth" (https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A+%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9) to be held in pretrial detention for one week over a Facebook post that authorities described as "non-objective and full of libel and slander," reports that cited his Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/tareq.ragheb/posts/10153633708288563>) page said.

In a move criticized (<http://www.jp.a.jo/Inner.aspx?Ing=2&pa=Details&Type=1&ID=402>) by the Jordan Press Association, the government ruled last month that defamation charges can be brought against journalists, news websites, and social networking sites under the country's cybercrime law instead of its press law, which prevents journalists being imprisoned for press-related violations. Those found guilty of being in violation of the cybercrime law face a jail term of no less than three months and a maximum fine of 2,000

dinars (US\$2,800).

"Using Jordan's cybercrimes law to jail journalists is a disturbing development," said CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator, Sherif Mansour. "The government should reverse its decision about the cybercrimes law and release Tareq Abu al-Ragheb immediately."

According to reports, the prosecutor did not specify which post led to Abu al-Ragheb's arrest. An unnamed contact, said by reports (<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/tv-presenter-detained-over-facebook-post%E2%80%99%20>) to be close to the journalist, said he had shared several (<https://www.facebook.com/tareq.abualragheb/videos/vb.158716397615818/543753349112119/?type=2&theater>) posts (<https://www.facebook.com/tareq.abualragheb/videos/vb.158716397615818/543232859164168/?type=2&theater>) in recent weeks that were critical (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICR9XDgfa08&feature=youtu.be>) of Arab countries. One post, viewed by CPJ, shared a poem "I am Arab," in which the journalist tweaked the original lines to give his commentary on the current state of Arab countries, a critique of their leaders, and their inaction to the Palestinian cause.

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On Sunday, Abu al-Ragheb shared a video on his official page of his TV show from Saturday

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgl8OMX8cf8&feature=youtu.be>), which was titled "Corruption, Suspensions, but no Corrupt People." The episode covered the alleged use of dangerous chemicals in the farming industry and raised suspicions about an official news report into a fire in Amman international airport, which according to reports (<http://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2015/10/27/jodran-fire-egyptians>) left eight dead.

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July 11, 2017 2:12 PM ET

New York, July 11, 2017--Jordanian authorities should lift any restrictions on Egyptian Journalist Wael Mamdouh's ability to travel to the country, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today....

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