

Egypt Poll – Media Safety Advisory

Egyptians vote next week on Monday and Tuesday to elect a new President between former army commander Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and Hamdeen Sabahi. This will be the first Presidential poll since the ousting by the army of Mohammed Morsi last June.

His removal from office sparked violent protests, in which more than 1.000 protesters are believed to have been killed and up to 20.000 have been detained. Journalists also came under attack, with numerous incidents which resulted in 6 killings of media professionals. The media crackdown also led to the closure of many media organisations close to the Muslim Brotherhood and many journalists have been detained, including four Al Jazeera reporters.

The International Federation of Journalists has issued this media advisory, urging journalists and media staff who will be covering the Presidential election in Egypt to exercise greater care for their safety.

It offers important tips to assist journalists in the following ways, including:

1. Preparing for your trip:

It is important for journalists planning to cover the election to find out the current situation and determine the extent to which it can affect their work

There authorities have banned the Muslim Brotherhood as an organisation and protests but there are reports of nightly marches organised by Morsi's supporters. Violence may erupt during the elections pitching supporters of deposed President Morsi and the army, especially in movement's strongholds.

- *Journalists travelling to Egypt for the elections should establish a reliable contact in the country and draw a plan for their activities, including events to cover and places to visit.*
- *Consider carrying protective gear (flak jacket, helmet, goggles) for riot situations as well as a medical kit, at least for first aid.*

2. Media Accreditation

- *Journalists should ensure they obtain accreditation to work in Egypt and keep the official documents with them at all times while on assignment.*
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3. At the Scene

- **Stay in teams:** *Security is in numbers. Journalists should try to travel and work in teams to look after each other. In particular, female journalists must avoid working alone, especially among crowds and at night.*
- **Maintain contact:** *Journalists should have regular contact with their newsrooms and agree beforehand times to talk and discuss safety concerns and raise alarm quickly if their safety is in danger. In the same way, members of the team on the ground should*

agree on rendez-vous points and times of meetings if they have to be separated because of work.

- **Always carry press identification** but conceal it if it attracts unwelcome attention. In tense situations, keep a low profile and consider leaving the area when under threat.

4. On Site Reporting

- **Avoid reporting close to angry crowds:** *People may react angrily to a story such as the result (final or projection) of the vote, raising the risks to the journalist' safety.*

Always consider sending a live report on sensitive story from a safe distance or area.

5. In Case of Arrest

- **Avoid confrontation:** *Always pay attention to the behavior and mood of those making the arrest before engaging them in a discussion.*

In any case, remain polite at all times, state that you are a journalist and keep your credentials with you.

For more on IFJ Safety Guidelines, please visit <http://ifj-safety.org/en/contents/international-code-of-practice-for-the-safe-conduct-of-journalism>

Please also visit <http://www.ifj-arabic.org/> for safety guidelines in Arabic

6. Emergency Contacts

Journalists working in Egypt and needing urgent assistance are encouraged to contact:

7. The International Committee of the Red Cross

24-hour Hotline on +41 79 217 32 84; or +41 79 217 32 85

8. IFJ International Safety Fund

If you are a journalist in need of financial assistance for immediate medical, legal or security expenses, you can apply for the **IFJ Safety Fund**. The Safety Fund was set up to provide a lifeline to colleagues around the world who experience violence, threats and injury as a result of the work they do, ensuring help is at hand when most needed.

To apply, please visit the IFJ Safety Website on <http://ifj-safety.org/en/contents/ifj-international-safety-fund> or contact Ernest Sagaga, IFJ Head of Human Rights & Safety, on 0032 2 235 2207.