

Media Monitor Egypt - 09

Bi-monthly report on the media situation
(November- December 2013)



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During November and December 2013



Al Sawt Al Hurr
Arab Network for Media Support
www.asahnetwork.org



Media and Press Situation in Egypt: Ninth Report

**During November and December 2013
General Developments in the Egyptian Media**

Preface

The Research Section of al Sawt al Hurr, the Arab Network for Media Support, produces the Media Monitor on a bi-monthly basis. These reports document and describe developments in the Egyptian media, such as the emergence or disappearance of media outlets (including satellite channels, newspapers and news websites), as well as developments pertaining to the enabling environment for Egyptian media, such as legal, economic, political and social developments that affect the dynamism, quality and diversity of the media landscape. With these reports, al Sawt al Hurr aims to provide media workers, researchers, academics and anyone interested in the field of media in Egypt with a systematic description and analysis of the rapid developments that take place in this sector.

Each Media Monitor consists of two parts:

Part 1: General Developments

The first part of the Media Monitor monitors recent developments in the Egyptian media sector, presented to readers with an interest in and some knowledge of the Egyptian media landscape.

Part 2: Research Results

This second part focuses on a single specific issue or subject relevant to media and development, and presents a summary of an analytical study conducted by al Sawt al Hurr during the same period. In this edition, research was carried out on “**Female journalists and their perception of their position in the Egyptian press: the advantages and disadvantages**”.

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Please send any reactions, suggestions or other relevant information to info@asahnetwork.org

Part I

General Developments in the Egyptian Media



General Developments in the Egyptian Media

This report monitors and documents developments in the media in Egypt that took place during November and December 2013.

This report is produced by al Sawt al Hurr, the Arab Network for Media Support, and forms part of a bi-monthly series of publications that aims to provide media professionals, researchers, journalists and anyone who is interested in the Egyptian media with a comprehensive review and analysis of significant developments.

The first part of this Media Monitor provides a description of recent developments within specific sections.

1. Developments in the Media Sector in General

The draft constitution was completed, and the Council of Ministers decided to hold the referendum on the constitution on January 14 and 15, 2014.

Major violations took place against media professionals and journalists, and there was an increase in arrests of media professionals and journalists by security forces.

The performance of media organizations and some satellite channels in particular was criticized from several sides for their biased and unbalanced presentation of news. This brought about a demand for re-adherence to professional standards and codes of ethics.

2. Newspapers

President Adly Mansour signed a new amendment to law no. 96 of 1996 on the organization of the press, mandating a new Supreme Press Council to appoint editors in chief and chairmen of the boards of state-owned newspapers and websites. This will enable the replacement of positions filled under the Morsi government. The council can make these appointments only once, since its status is provisional. Once the draft constitution is approved a new independent council shall be created.

General Developments

No new newspapers were brought onto the market during this period. Some newspapers, e.g. *al Fatah*, appear irregularly due to financial problems.

Hurriya wa Adela, the newspaper affiliated to the Freedom and Justice party, was banned following a decision by the Ministry of Internal Security on December 28 after the Muslim Brotherhood was declared a terrorist organization. Officially, a court verdict is needed to ban a newspaper. Some 200 editors and journalists work for this newspaper. Diaan Rashwan, the Chairman of the Egyptian Journalism Syndicate, stated that the Syndicate must support the former journalists of *Hurriya wa Adela*, as the “30 June Revolution is not a revolution against freedom of expression”.

The interim Supreme Press Council was given more structure following a new cabinet decision. It has 15 members and is headed by Galal Aref. It reviewed 12 candidates' files for the positions at state-owned media outlets, and prepared nominations for management positions of state-owned media; these positions will be filled following a secret ballot.

Dr. Soheir Osman, professor in the Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University, discussed the differences between printed newspapers and their online versions, due to the heightened competition between newspapers and news websites. During a seminar hosted by Tahrir Lounge in November 2013 with the title "Will print newspapers close their doors?" Osman said that many newspapers now have electronic versions which bring news to readers more quickly and free of charge. She also mentioned that readers complain that newspapers use complicated terms, which is not the case with websites.

During the same meeting Fouad al Masry, the executive managing editor of *al Masry al Youm*, stated that the printed press will continue to exist for at least another 150 years. At the same time, however, he indicated that print media face problems, e.g. increasing printing costs, decreasing sales and advertising revenue and high taxes, but many readers still prefer printed newspapers over their online versions.

Youm7 won the investigative journalism award given by the AREEJ Foundation of the Arab Press in collaboration with the Washington-based International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), and International Media Support (IMS), the Danish Foundation to support media.

Editorial changes, policies

On December 8, the Supreme Press Council decided on the appointment of the following persons as chairmen of governing boards state-owned media houses: Ahmed Sayed al Naggar (*al Ahram*); Yassr Rizk (*al Akhbar*); Ghaly Mohamed (*Dar al Hilal*); Galaa Gaballah (*al Gomhurriya*) and Alaa Hedar (*MENA*). Appointments will be for a period of two years.

The first circuit of the administrative court, headed by Judge Mohammed Qeshtah ruled that the renewed appointment of AbdulNasser Salama as editor-in-chief of *al Ahram* newspaper by the Shura Council under Morsi's presidency was invalid. The case was brought to court by *al Ahram* editors Hisham Younis, Mahmoud Manaawi and Mohamed AbdulMotelab, who questioned the Shura Council's authority to prolong the appointment of two editors in chief whose legal terms had both ended on March 17, 2012, before standards for the appointment of new editors-in-chief of state owned media had been developed.

The Young Journalists' Union of *al Ahram* demanded the dismissal of *al Ahram*'s editor-in-chief and its board of directors. Member Adel al-Alfy asserted that AbdulNasser Salama lacked ethical and professional standards and had been loyal to the MB but was now loyal to the current regime. The Union has 675 members and its main aims are to promote the freedom of the press and adherence to professional standards of journalism. On December 9, Khaled al-Balshi, a member of the board of the Journalism Syndicate, who attended the protests of the *al Ahram*'s Young Journalists' Union, said that the policy of national (state owned) newspapers had not changed since the Mubarak era, stating that: "they are loyal to any regime that rules Egypt, not to the Egyptian people". He added that the Supreme Council will not have any substantial role as long as it has a limited mandate, transitional status and its members are appointed instead of elected.





Members of the General Assembly of the *al Ahram* Foundation Emad Hegab, Fatma al Desouqi and Mohamed Zaki submitted their resignation to the Supreme Council of the Press, because they felt that they had been unable to monitor the financial situation and transactions, income and expenditures of the Foundation for more than a year and a half.

Editor in chief of *al Fagr* Manal Lashin announced that the privately-owned newspaper has created an award in honor of al Hussein abuDeif, a journalist who died in December 2012 during clashes between groups of demonstrators in front of the federal palace. The 10,000 EGP award comes from a contribution of all abuDeif's colleagues and the editors in the newspaper, and young reporters under 35 years of age will be eligible.

Financial and management problems

The Ministry of Electricity cut off the power supply to *al Alam al Youm* and removed the electricity meters from the office of the independent newspaper in Dokki. Journalists expressed their irritation at newspaper management for stalling negotiations with the Ministry of Electricity over payment of about six months' worth of arrears. A number of journalists from the newspaper also blamed management for prolonged delays in or only partial payment of their salaries despite regular income from advertisements from banks and major companies. The journalists further complained that management had the Tuesday November 19 edition of the newspaper prepared in an undisclosed location, and another edition was prepared by people who did not belong to the Egyptian Journalism Syndicate, noting that this trend may be a way for management to avoid the payment of salary arrears to the journalists.

The union of the revival of *al Wafd* announced the start of an open-ended sit-in until Mohammed Sherdy, chairman of the board of the party-affiliated newspaper is dismissed, because of his failure to develop the institution over the last year and a half.

Six journalists of privately-owned newspaper *al Shorouk* were sacked. These journalists filed a complaint with the Labor Office because they had worked at the newspaper for two years and believed they had been sacked arbitrarily.

A group of 12 journalists of *al Masry al Youm* started a sit-in in the premises of the Journalism Syndicate to protest against the decision to arbitrarily dismiss them, confirmed by official letters that the administration had sent to them. Furthermore, the management of *al Masry al Youm* decided not to publish any news about the sit-in, which the journalists deem as a decision that is harmful to their future and a violation of their rights as workers of the newspaper. The group stated that the chairman of the board of the Syndicate, Diaa Rashwan, had told them that the law gives the management the right to sack journalists, and that they should continue the sit-in to improve their position during negotiations.

Legal entanglements

Hatem abulNour, a journalist at private newspaper *al Watan*, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment and forced labor by a military court on charges of impersonating an army official.

The military misdemeanor court in North Sinai sentenced Mohamed Sabri to six months suspended imprisonment for taking photos of military property without prior permission.

The Attorney-General decided to open investigations into editor Mohamed al Sheikh and editor

in chief Magdy al Galad of *al Watan* for violating a publication ban on investigations related to the assassination of Mohamed Mabrouk, a police officer in the Department of National Security.

Lawyer Dr. Samir Sabry filed a report with the Attorney-General, Mr. Hisham Barakat, against AbdulNasser Salama, editor in chief of *al Ahrām*, in which he accused him of wasting public funds for not suspending the printing of *Hurriya wa Adela* or exerting pressure on it to pay for printing. Acting chairman of the board of *al Ahrām*, Omar Samy, said that the Freedom and Justice Party-affiliated newspaper owes the *al Ahrām* Foundation more than 8 million EGP: 2.5 million in printing costs and 5.5 million in advertising costs, the highest debt owed to the *al Ahrām* Foundation by any newspaper. Omar Samy proposed that the Supreme Press Council and the Journalism Syndicate decide on a suspension.

In December, security forces arrested Australian journalist Peter Greste, producer Mohamed Fahmy and cameraman Mohamed Fawzy, all of whom had been working for *al Jazeera*, on accusations of illegally broadcasting from a hotel suite in Cairo. Their equipment was also confiscated.

Acts of violence against journalists and media institutions

A report of the Committee for the Projection of Journalists (CPJ) stated that Egypt was the third most dangerous country for journalists in 2013, after Syria and Iraq. Six journalists were killed in Egypt in 2013, including three on a single day, 14 August.

Security forces arrested journalist Amr Mahmoud Salama, one of the founders of *Rassd Network* on undisclosed charges. He is still being held.

On November 4, 2013, a court case was held at the headquarters of the Police Academy in Tagammu al Khames, against Muslim Brotherhood leaders accused of inciting violence against five reporters, four photographers and four members of television crews during the clashes that took place in front of the Federal Palace. The verdict will be published on January 8 2014.

3. Multimedia and interactivity of newspapers

During recent months, media organizations took few initiatives to expand the multi-media sides of their newspapers.

Al Masry al Youm launched a new version of their website.

The website *al Shorouk* published its editorial guidelines. It apologized in advance for the possibility of mistakes resulting from the speed of news-gathering, and invited readers to report any incorrect information found, or to share their reactions in general.

Al Watan and *Youm7* asked their readers to propose candidates for 'Man of the Year'. General AbdelFatah al Sisi won by a landslide.



Al Masry al Youm and *al Shorouk* both reduced their staff and increased their advertisement space on their websites.

Abdallah abdalSalam, managing editor of the Arabic version of *al Ahram Online*, addressed the situation of news websites in Egypt during a seminar at Tahrir Lounge. He said that news websites cannot replace printed newspapers, but there is a possibility of complementarity, with newspapers concentrating on investigative journalism. He pointed out that the websites face a lot of problems, including the lack of a legal or professional framework to deal with mistakes made by journalists, and the online journalist had become a news-hunter in an endless race. He also said that the Journalism Syndicate does not recognize staff working for news websites, and that printed newspapers are: "digging their graves with their own hands".

4. Independent news websites

The Media Monitor counted ten new independent websites during the second half of 2012, whereas in all of 2013 only six new websites appeared.

New developments

A new online newspaper has appeared under the name of "Egypt Now": <http://masrelan.com/> News website *el Wady* (www.elwadynews.com) was re-launched under a new editor in chief, Khaled El-Balshi.

www.shamel24.com is a new news website, about which no further information is currently available.

www.mubasher.info specializes in news about the economy and the stock market. The editor-in-chief is Amr al-Iraqi.

5. Egyptian Radio and TV Union

With debts to the National Investment Bank reaching 22 billion EGP and debts to other institutions estimated at 300 million EGP, ERTU's financial problems are still growing.

General Developments

The Minister of Information appointed Mr. Ahmed Lashin as the new head of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union.

The Economic Sector of Maspero is preparing for the sale of "Megahits" radio channel, part of Nile Radio Network and supervised by the broadcasting agency "Cairo Voice". Officials explained that the sale does not imply a waiver of the Union's own rights related the two broadcasters, and that the bid's requirements will include maintaining all the legal, moral and financial rights of the union.

The Economic Sector will also revive ERTU's marketing with Ministries in order to obtain advertising and sponsorship for television programs, especially the much-viewed talk shows of the news sector, such as "Sabah al Kheir ya Masr" and "Hiwar al Khas". Many state bodies, including the Ministries of Industries, Investments, Oil and Electricity, the tax authority and a number of state-owned banks, currently advertise on private satellite channels.

The revolutionary movements and coalitions of the ERTU have requested the Minister of Information, Doria Sharaf al-Din, to officially sack ministerial advisers. This would save more than 100 thousand pounds annually which is currently spent on these (often honorary) positions, which the revolutionary movements feel do not have any benefit for the union, especially at a time when ERTU staff are repeatedly suffering from delays of several months in their salary payments due to the financial crisis.

Maspero officials are considering sending a proposal to Prime Minister Hazem El-Beblawi in order to seek his approval on decreasing the pension age for all Maspero staff to 55 years for men and 50 years for women. This proposal, if approved, will cause problems within Maspero, as it would make 15,000 employees pensionable within a single one year, and it is therefore opposed by many Maspero staff. However, this proposal is being considered by MASpero officials due to the financial crisis and the desire of officials to decrease the number of the staff and therefore the size of their monthly payments.

Program Developments

Safaa Hijazi, head of the News Sector of Maspero, has announced a special bonus for all staff of ERTU's News Sector and Nile News Channel because of the successful coverage of the trial of Mohamed Morsi on November 4. Both channels' footage from the trial and the reactions of Morsi's supporters and opponents in all governorates were used by Arab and international satellite channels.

Abdel Fattah Hassan, head of Specialized Channels in Maspero, has decided to review the programming of the cultural channel because some 60 of its programs are similar in aim and ideas and lack innovation. A committee will be formed to evaluate these programs and select the best for continued broadcasting. Workers have been asked to produce ideas for the development of the channel in time for the new program season in January 2014.





ERTU management has asked its Television Sector to revise the programming of the timeslot following the 9pm news. Management has requested the inclusion of new talk shows, e.g. “Beetna Kebir”, “al Akher” and “Mubasher Masr”, so as to make the channel; more appealing. The number of breaking news segments will also be increased.

ERTU has begun to prepare for the referendum on the constitution and will feature a set of programs to urge Egyptians to participate and cast their vote. The program “The Constitution of our Country” will be aired every evening after the nine o’clock news bulletin. The program will host politicians and members of the Committee of Fifty Members, and will discuss the new and the controversial articles in the draft constitution.

A Special Committee has been charged with the copying of more than half a million tapes with unique and historical footage from ERTU’s archives onto modern technology to protect them for posterity. A large number of tapes date back to the beginning of Egyptian radio in the 1930s. So far, nearly 30 thousand hours of radio have been converted, of a total of 250 thousand hours.

Financial management

According to the Radio and Television Union, the accumulated deficit in the Union’s budget reached 19 billion EGP by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2013.

The Ministry of Finance sent a letter including a set of recommendations to the Minister of Information Dr. Doria Sharaf alDeen with regard to the restructuring of the Radio and Television Union and the funds required for this, as well as to clarify the amount sent from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Information to pay the salaries of employees for July 2013, which has been a matter of dispute. The letter stated that 118 million EGP had been approved to be sent directly to the Union for July 2013, including 86 million EGP for media and broadcast services performed for state agencies and 32 million EGP from the public Treasury, which is the maximum that can be borne by the Ministry of Finance. The Minister of Finance stated that speedy action is needed to solve the Union’s financial problems, including working on the amendment to Law No. 77 of 1968 on audio and video fees so that the audience could bear part of the costs for media services.

The Economic Sector of Maspero is seeks to reduce or reschedule Maspero’s debts, which have increased and accumulated over recent years, particularly since the January 25 revolution. Some of these debts are in the form of taxes, while others result from Maspero’s non-payment for co-production of dramas with private channels.

6. Commercial / satellite TV

New Satellite Channels

Raba’a, a new satellite channel, was launched with Turkish funding and will broadcast from Ankara. It represents the first new channel to have an Islamist voice since the disappearance of six similar channels following the events following 30 June 2013.

Tahrir satellite channel changed its ownership. The new chairman is Emad Gad, and Akran al Alfy is its executive manager.

In a meeting with staff of satellite channel *MBC Masr*, Eissa al-Haq, the deputy president of the channel, announced the termination of the employment contracts of 50 workers, including presenters, reporters, editors and directors.

Sky News Arabia and CBC announced the signing of a media collaboration and partnership agreement, in which both foundations will use one another to expand their spread in the Arab world and beyond. Both channels will exchange media materials and broadcast from offices affiliated to both channels in different areas.

The seventh circuit of the administrative court, headed by counselor Hasona Tawfik, decided to refer to the Board of State Commissioners the case filed by al Jazeera network, which requested the reversal of the decision issued by the General Authority of Investment to revoke the accreditation of the channel's contract. Al Jazeera is also requesting compensation as the Investment Authority ended the contract in violation of the law.

7. Freedom of Expression

The New York-based Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) in a recent report wrote about the dwindling of hope that the margins of media freedom will expand in Egypt, due to its sharp polarization.

The new draft constitution

was published, containing a number of articles relevant to the media. In particular:

- **Article 70** deals with freedom of the press, and states that: “Freedom of press and printing, along with paper, visual, audio and digital distribution is guaranteed. Egyptians – whether natural or legal persons, public or private -- have the right to own and issue newspapers and establish visual, audio and digital media outlets. Newspapers may be issued once notification is given as regulated by law. The law shall regulate ownership and establishment procedures for visual and radio broadcast stations in addition to online newspapers.”
- **Article 71** deals with freedom of publication, and states that: “It is prohibited to censor, confiscate, suspend or shut down Egyptian newspapers and media outlets in any way. Exception may be made for limited censorship in time of war or general mobilization. No custodial sanction shall be imposed for crimes committed by way of publication or the public nature thereof. Punishments for crimes connected with incitement to violence or discrimination amongst citizens, or impugning the honor of individuals are specified by law.”
- **Article 72** deals with the independence of press institutions, and states that: “The state shall ensure the independence of all press institutions and owned media outlets, in a way that ensures their neutrality and expressing all opinions, political and intellectual trends and social interests; and guarantees equality and equal opportunity in addressing public opinion.”
- A CPJ report said that the increase in media freedom after the January 25 revolution had been followed by a restriction of these freedoms after June 30 2013 due to polarization and government censorship, as demonstrated by the closure of private channels affiliated to political Islam. These seven religious channels are still closed following a state decision



- On 23 November 2013, the Attorney General ordered a ban on publications related to investigations undertaken by the Supreme State Security Prosecution in four cases against former President Mohamed Morsi and other leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, the death of General Nabil Faraj, Assistant Director of Giza Security during the storming of Islamist strongholds in Kerdassa village, the assassination of National Security Sector Officer Mohammed Mabrouk, and the burning of the Church of Warraq. This media blackout applies to all audio, visual and print material. Human rights groups have stated that such decisions have only been used in the past for sensitive personal issues, such as those relating to divorce; they fear that the prosecutor is attempting to use these bans as a general tool to muzzle the media.

Following the first episode of the new series of “al Bernameg” on October 25 2013, during which Bassem Yousef joked about cabinet ministers and criticized some of the leading media figures for their sudden change of opinion on domestic politics, was subject to investigation on charges of insulting state figures, in particular Abdulfatah al-Sisi and Adly Mansour.

Al Ahram Weekly published a page long feature, written by Gihan Shahine criticizing major the most viewed satellite channels for their biased coverage of the news during their talkshows.

Satellite channels

In a study published by the Institute of Arab Studies for Freedom of Expression in Egypt, researcher Akram al Alfi concluded that the events following June 30 2013 had prompted the Egyptian media, both public and private, to launch a campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood’s and to respond to attempts to describe the events of July 3 as a “military coup”. In contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood used *al Jazeera Mubasher Masr* as a mouthpiece. Other opinions have been absent from the media, as representatives of the Islamic movement have not appeared on private or public Egyptian channels, while *al Jazeera Mubasher Masr* became a closed area for Muslim Brotherhood supporters and opponents of the deposal of Morsi.

According to al Alfi’s article, the “big six” group has dominated the privately-owned satellite media in Egypt since the revolution of January 2011. This group includes business tycoons Naguib Sawiris, owner of *ON TV*, Mohamed al Amin, owner of *CBC*, Ahmed Bahgat, owner of *Dream TV*, Hassan Rateb, owner of *Mehwar*, Alaa al Kahky, owner of *al Nahar* and al Sayed al Badawi, owner of *al-Hayat*. The interests of these six individuals are reflected in the orientation of their channels. Sawiris was doubtful in relation to SCAF and its alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood, which gave space to media professionals opposed to SCAF such as Yousri Fouda and Reem Maged. Both of these individuals were off air during the second stage of the presidential elections due to Sawiris’s support for Ahmed Shafiq, and were again off air after the events of 30 June 2013.

Ahmed Bahgat’s attitudes toward the SCAF were varied, which gave greater freedom, especially to Mona El-Shazly, before she moved to *MBC Egypt*. After Morsi was elected president, *Dream* began to be openly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood, spearheaded by Wal Ibrashi and Johan Mansour. Thus *Dream* was one of the leading channels in supporting of Morsi’s deposal and subsequent events. In parallel, *Mehwar* also supported the SCAF and the nomination of Mohamed Morsi, and was the private channel most in support of the Muslim Brotherhood, as shown by Amr El-Litithy’s interview of Mohammed Morsi, the only interview Morsi gave to an Egyptian private satellite channel. The channel reversed its position overnight after July 3, and Amr El-Litithy was taken off air.

Alaa al-Kahky of *al Nahar* gave media professional Mahmoud Saad freedom to support Mohamed Morsi in the second round of the presidential elections. Saad's program was then terminated before 30 June 2013 because of al-Kahky's support for Morsi's deposal. Following 3 July, *al Nahar* began to support the new regime.

Al Hayat has reflected Mr. Badawi's support for the *al Wafd* party, with moderate speech adopted towards SCAF, while allowing for an attack on the Council in moments of apparent alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood. During the first round of elections, the channel supported candidate Amr Moussa, supporting Ahmed Shafik in the second round. Following the victory of Mohammed Morsi the channel adopted a position of moderate opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood, which became strong opposition after the Constitutional Declaration in November 2012.

CBC has made the largest private investments in the history of Egyptian satellite channels. Within a few months of the 2011 revolution the channel had attracted a large number of Egyptian media stars such as Lamis al Hadidy, Khairy Ramadan and Emad alDeen Adib. It was clear that the channel supported the SCAF, while remaining critical of the administration of the country's affairs. During the second round of the presidential elections the channel supported Ahmed Shafik, and the channel was one of the first to strongly oppose the Muslim Brotherhood. Bassem Yousef's popular program opened a new area of criticism and ridicule of the Morsi regime.

8. Infringements on Freedom of Expression

Egypt has seen a dramatic increase of violence throughout 2013, and violence against journalists has been no exception.

On 6 November 2013, a number of journalists launched a new media observatory called Journalists against Torture to counter the spread of torture and violations of freedoms. The founding document was signed by 60 journalists and media professionals, representing 35 press and media institutions. The new organization published a report entitled «A Year and Half of Repression of Freedom», which enumerates violations and attacks against journalists and media professionals from the appointment of Morsi until October 31, 2013. It presents testimonies of journalists who suffered violence or attacks.

Support for Information Technology Center (SITC) stated in a press release that on November 26 2013, security forces arrested Mohamed Amer, a reporter of *Hurriya wa Adela* newspaper at his house in Assyut and confiscated his laptop. The police also arrested Rasha al Azab, a journalist for *al Fagr* newspaper, while covering protests organized by the Jika movement, named after an activist killed in 2012. The police also arrested 74 protesters in front of the Shura Council building, including a number of media professionals covering the protests against the article on military trials for civilians in the new constitution. A total of 15 violations were monitored, five violations against female media professionals and ten against male media professionals. 14 arrests were made, one person was beaten. A camera of an *ON TV* reporter was also confiscated.





9. Access to Information

Article 68 of the draft constitution deals with access to information, and states that: “Information, data, statistics and official documents are owned by the people. Disclosure thereof from various sources is a right guaranteed by the state to all citizens.

Article 68 continues with ... The state shall provide and make them available to citizens with transparency. The law shall organize rules for obtaining such, rules of availability and confidentiality, rules for depositing and preserving such, and lodging complaints against refusals to grant access thereto. The law shall specify penalties for withholding information or deliberately providing false information. State institutions shall deposit official documents with the National Library and Archives once they are no longer in use. They shall also protect them, secure them from loss or damage, and restore and digitize them using all modern means and instruments, as per the law.” However, Article 31 states that: “the security of information space is an integral part of the system of national economy and security. The state commits to taking the necessary measures to preserve it in the manner organized by law.”

SITC in a response to the proposed articles on freedom of information stated that:

- The constitutional provision acknowledges the right to access information but limits it to Egyptian nationals with identification. The law excludes non-resident citizens, non-citizens, foreigners and companies from the right to information, and thus does not recognize it as a universal human right;
- The draft constitution does not provide the scope of applying the law; according to SITC, it should include all information kept by public and governmental bodies, in addition to information about public services executed by special bodies (such as telecommunication, electricity and water);
- There are three exceptions from the right to information; these are the sanctity of personal life, the rights of others and national security. However, national security is not defined clearly in any Egyptian legislation, which allows for broad interpretation of ‘national security’ to be used for information blackouts;
- The constitution should encourage bodies to share information proactively, rather than just responding to requests.

10. State and government institutions

In the absence of a parliament, political decisions about the media have been stalled for months. State-owned media legally falls under the Shura Council, which is currently suspended and will cease to exist under the new constitution.

The Supreme Press Council

Article no. 211 of the draft constitution deals with the media. It provides for the creation of an independent authority, the ‘Supreme Media Council’, in charge of: “organizing the affairs of the media, whether audible or visual, printed newspapers, digital news”. This council will have a legal personality and enjoy technical, financial and administrative independence. The Supreme Council shall be responsible for ensuring and guaranteeing the freedom of the press as well as its neutrality, independence, pluralism and diversity. It will act against banning monopolization practices, monitor sources of funding of newspapers and media institutions, develop controls and quality standards and ensure newspapers and media comply with professional standards of ethics and national security requirements. Procedures for its establishment, its system of work, selection of members, etc. will all be regulated by law.

In the meantime, law 96 of 1996 on organizing the press is in force. In August, the cabinet prepared the basis of a new council. Article no. 68 of the 1996 law was amended in December by cabinet decision no. 76 of 2013, to give the Supreme Press Council a limited authority to ensure that urgent action can be taken during the transitional period, e.g. the replacement of management of state-owned media appointed under the Morsi government. This decision also disconnects the council from the now dismantled Shura Council, of which it was an organ.

According to Deputy Head of the Council Salah Eisa, the approved amendments of the press law provide for the creation of a National Press Council and a National Broadcast Council after the presidential and parliamentary elections.

Other developments

Doria Sharaf alDeen, the Minister of Information, said she cannot forbid media professionals from exercising their political rights and privately expressing their political and intellectual affiliations. During a telephone conversation on November 27 on “Masr al Gadedah”, she said that the performance of many media professionals on satellite channels was close to political activism and in complete disregard of neutrality and objectivity. She indicated that media work is in transition and its situation is not yet stable, requiring an expert council to evaluate the performance of media professionals.



The Egyptian satellite company *Nilesat* asserted that its satellites do not carry or broadcast the new channel Raba’a, and said in a press release that it does not air “channels calling for sedition and inciting violence, hatred and intolerance”.

11. Journalism Organizations

The Journalism Syndicate has been actively contributing to the media paragraph of the draft constitution and is generally satisfied with the articles in the draft constitution that deal with the media.

Diaa Rashwan, Chairman of the Board of the Journalism Syndicate said that the proposed constitution is: “the first document in the history of Egypt that clearly defines the rights of the citizen in general and of the media in particular”, noting that it introduces an article related to



the national press, ensuring its independence, which means that it will not be privatized. He also remarked on other articles that ensure the freedom of the press and the media, and which prevent their banning, which are not present in any other constitution. Rashwan believes that the proposed constitution will guarantee that state-owned media houses will be neutral and objective; he also stated that the Ministry of Information will disappear and a National Authority for the Media will be installed.

Following the request of the Online Journalists’ Syndicate, article no. 48 of the suspended constitution of 2012 was amended to include the online press, due to their important and vital role.

Abeer Saady, Deputy Chairperson of the Journalism Syndicate, commented on the arrest of seven journalists from *al Wady*, *al Masry al Youm* and *al Mal* during the dispersal of the demonstrations in front of the Shura Council on November 26, 2013. The Syndicate will do his best to ensure their release.

Gamal AbdelRahim, the undersecretary of the Journalism Syndicate, said after a meeting of the Council of the Journalism Syndicate on December 8, 2013, that the Committee of Five that had been formed to investigate the incidence of journalists travelling to Jerusalem during their visit to Palestine, had acquitted the journalists of charges of normalization with Israel, and the Council approved the report of the Committee.

The Committee for the Defense of the Independence of the Press condemned in a statement the continued violations of the rights of journalists. The Committee holds the Journalism Syndicate responsible, in that it does not defend the rights of journalists sufficiently and does not take decisive action against assaults on journalists.

The Journalism Syndicate reactivated its Disciplinary Commission, preventing a number of journalists from working as journalists from periods ranging from three to six months. These journalists had been charged with violating the law or the Press Charter.

Tens of journalists and syndicate members demanded the Journalism Syndicate intervene to resolve the crisis of the *al Masry al Youm* journalists who were dismissed on an arbitrary basis. The Independent Journalism Syndicate issued a press release to show solidarity with the journalists of *al Masry al Youm* newspaper. The statement mentioned that the journalists had worked for *al Masry al Youm* for periods of between one and three years, during some of the most important and dangerous times in the country.

The Committee to Defend the Independence of the Press expressed its fears about the negative consequences of the expansion in the membership of the Journalism Syndicate, which is witnessing unprecedented numbers of applicants at a time when there are no clear standards for registration that guarantee the rights of journalists for most news organizations that are controlled by private owners. The Committee called for the Syndicate to disclose the new standards for admission to the Syndicate.

The General Syndicate of Workers in the Media, headed by Mr. Shady al Shazly, works to protect the rights of workers in the media and has seven branches in Egypt: in Alexandria, Minya, Luxor, the Red Sea, Asyut, Beni Suef and Qalyubia.

12. Attention for the media from civil society organisations

The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) condemned the ruling issued on November 3, 2013 from the military misdemeanor court in North Sinai against journalist Mohamed Sabri of imprisonment with six months with suspension.

SITC published a Bibliography of Press and Media Freedom which sets out the crimes committed against the press from the perspective of civil law, and includes all reports, studies and pieces of academic research which appeared during the year.

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information issued a series of simple legal manuals related to the cases in which journalists, bloggers or writers are imprisoned. Every manual includes basic legal information with regard to each crime and sets out how to deal with cases from the first moment they are brought.

A collection of Egyptian human rights groups filed complaints to the Prosecutor General's office demanding investigations into the broadcasting of private telephone conversations on the program "al Sanduq al Iswid" on *al Qahira wal Nas* satellite channel. The program aired recorded conversations allegedly made by several important political activists. These human rights groups also want the Prosecutor to investigate the role of service providers Etisalat and Vodafone in recording and leaking this information.





Part 2

**“Female journalists and their perception of
their position in the Egyptian press:
the advantages and disadvantages”**

Field Study

Introduction:

In 2013, Thomson Reuters conducted a study on the situation of women in Arab countries. According to the results of this research, Egypt was in first place as the worst place for a woman to live. The results of the study also show that 99% of Egyptian women experience sexual harassment. The study noted that laws discriminating between the two genders and the increase of the rate of the trafficking of women contributed to making Egypt the worst of the 22 Arab countries studied for women.

Regardless of the accuracy and validity of such results, no one can deny that Egyptian women suffer from several social problems as a result of economic, social and political conditions, in addition to the rapid changes that society is experiencing. This has led to the emergence of several practices that are characterized by discrimination and violence. The violations of women's rights impede her development and her social and political participation; moreover, these violations also directly undermine her human dignity.

Working in the press is referred to as the “profession of looking for trouble”, and so in addition to the problems mentioned above, female Egyptian journalists face additional problems and pressures due to the nature of their work. Therefore, al Sawt al Hurr, decided to conduct a field study related to women working in the Egyptian press. The aim of this study is to identify the challenges women face in society in general and as a woman working in the press in particular, in order to combat violence and end discrimination against women in Egypt, and to enhance the practice of the press and promote professional work.

Methodology:

The study aims to identify the significant advantages and disadvantages for Egyptian women working in the press, the extent of the professional, social and family pressures that women journalists suffer because of their work, the extent of their satisfaction in how their managers and colleagues treat them, and their personal, internal visions of themselves and their work in relation to Egyptian society.

The subjects of this study are the female journalists who have received training in various areas from al Sawt al Hurr, and the study used a purposive sample to select 100 female journalists.

A focus group was conducted with journalists from different background to identify the significant advantages and disadvantages in relation to their work in the press, in order to specify the questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed online using drive.google.com, and was sent to the journalists via their emails.

Main Results:

- Female Egyptian journalists are proud of their profession. The results show that the vast majority of female journalists (86%) would choose again to work in the press if they had the chance to do so, compared to 14% who would not choose journalism as a career if they had the chance to choose again.
- With regard to the restrictions and pressures that journalists face in the performance of their work, half of the journalists responded that they believe that they are subject to the same



restrictions and pressures faced by men working in the field of journalism. However, 47% of respondents felt that they are subject to more restrictions and pressures than men.

- The most popularly mentioned restrictions and pressures were those caused by the type of ownership and orientation of the newspaper, which was chosen by 53% of respondents; restrictions imposed by the security forces and political authorities, which was chosen by 48% of respondents; and restrictions related to press laws and legislation, which was chosen by 28% of respondents. None of these restrictions or pressures link directly to these journalists being female. However, for those respondents who feel that they are subject to more restrictions and pressures than men, it is likely that they feel that they are subject to other restrictions and pressures linked to their gender, in addition to those faced by male journalists.
- Generally, female Egyptian journalists consider themselves to be the equals of male journalists in all aspects of their work. When they talk about their work as journalists, they do not tend to value their work significantly differently to male journalists, but many female journalists still believe that they face specific challenges related to being female.
- The majority of the respondents stated that they were satisfied, at least to some extent, with the way they were treated by their male superiors or colleagues, with very few stating that they were unsatisfied. This indicates that the treatment of female journalists by male colleagues is not seen as a major impediment for the female journalists. However, it is worth noting that the respondents were more satisfied with the treatment they received from their colleagues than from their managers; this is likely to link to the idea, expressed in various parts of the research, that some female journalists felt that male journalists were given preferential treatment with regard to promotions and access to interesting work.
- The political section is the section that is the most attractive for Egyptian female journalists with 64% of the vote. This is likely to relate to the fact that the majority of journalists, whether male or female, see this section as the most prestigious area in which to work. However, the women and society section also attracted the interest of 37% of the sample, indicating that a significant minority of the sample were interested in writing about women's issues.
- When asked why they had chosen to enter the field of journalism, the most popular reasons were those that related to feelings of social responsibility and the importance social role of journalists, with the most popular reason being to defend the concerns and interests of the public.
- The respondents were able to identify certain characteristics of female journalists that added value to the profession, as follows:
 - o Female journalists are better able to understand women's problems;
 - o Female journalists as women are able to address daring topics related to Egyptian women; and
 - o Some entities prefer to give statements to female journalists rather than male journalists.
- Female journalists are exposed to high rates of harassment, with more incidences of physical harassment than verbal harassment, which demonstrates the prevalence of this shameful phenomenon in Egyptian society. However, the respondents did not indicate that they were subject to higher levels of harassment than Egyptian women in general.

- The respondents also identified certain disadvantages related to their position as female journalists. These included:
 - o Social pressures on women, particularly restrictions imposed by women's roles as wives and mothers;
 - o Preferential treatment of male journalists in terms of promotions and interesting work; and Harassment, as mentioned above.
- The results indicate that the Egyptian family accepts and values the profession of journalism, but a problem frequently cited by respondents in several parts of the research is the lack of familial consent to stay out late or overnight at work, a problem related to the nature of Egyptian society in general. This indicates that although families may accept and value the idea of their female members working as journalists, they do not yet accept the realities of what the professional requires. It is possible that some of these restrictions, in terms of being less able to work long or unusual hours, may affect female journalists' prospects for promotion, as mentioned elsewhere in the study.



Results in Detail

Part 1: Reason for choosing to work in the media (*)

Table 1

	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
To defend people's concerns and interests.	91	0.91	8	0.08	1	0.01
Because it corresponds with my ambitions and dreams	91	0.91	7	0.07	2	0.02
To publicize the facts that the responsible attempt to hide	85	0.85	15	0.15	0	0
To freely express my views	74	0.74	19	0.19	7	0.7
To be open to society and to establish different relations	70	0.70	24	0.24	6	0.6
Because it is a prestigious profession and well-respected by people	33	0.33	52	0.52	15	0.15
To get a distinguished social position among my friends	14	0.14	49	0.49	7	0.7
To be famous	12	0.12	36	0.36	52	0.52
To achieve the dream of my family	11	0.11	36	0.36	53	0.53
To access the privileges that journalists obtain	9	0.9	39	0.39	52	0.52

This table shows the awareness of the participants of the role and the importance of the press, in addition to their own roles within the media. The strongest motivating factors behind the participants' choice to work in the media related to their sense of social responsibility, i.e. "to defend people's concerns and interests", which came at the top of with 91% of respondents agreeing, and only 1% disagreeing. This was followed by "because it corresponds with my ambitions and dreams", with which 91% of respondents also agreed, although 2% disagreed. "To publicize the facts that the responsible attempt to hide" – another point relating to social responsibility – was agreed with by 85% of respondents. Another three motivating factors scored relatively high: "to freely express my views", with 74% of respondents in agreement; "to

(*) All the answers are presented in the tables arranged from highest to lowest. The questionnaire can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/JHwBGU>

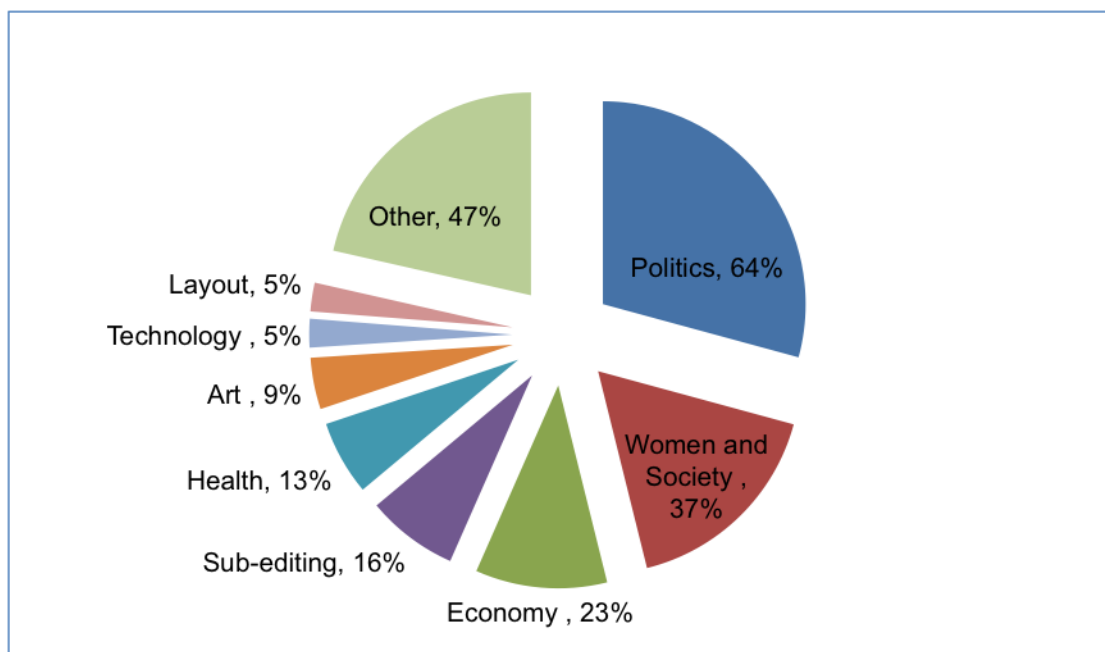
be open to society and to establish different relations”, with 70% of respondents in agreement; and “because it is a prestigious profession and well-respected by people”, with 33% of respondents in agreement.

Thus, it can be seen that the motivating factors that were deemed most important were those that relate to the important role of the press and its message in society, as well as the opportunity that working in the media gives journalists to express their views and establish a network of sources and contacts.

The other reasons that motivated the female journalists in the sample to work in the field of the press are as follows: “to get a distinguished social position among my friends”, with 14% agreement; “to become famous”, with 12% agreement; “to achieve the dream of my family”, with 11% agreement; and finally, “to access the privileges that journalists obtain”, with only 9% agreement.

Part 2: The sections of the press the female journalists wanted to work in

Chart 1:
NB respondents were able to choose more than one option,
so the numbers do not add up to 100.

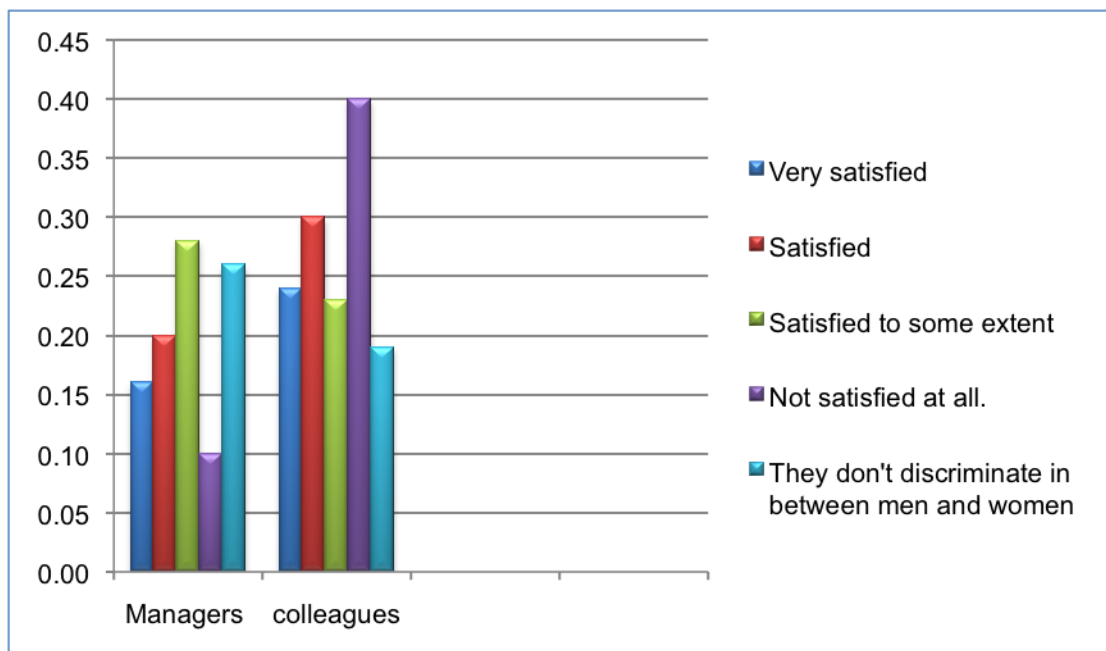


The chart above shows that the political section of newspapers is most attractive for Egyptian female journalists, as it was preferred by 64%. This is in keeping with the widespread preference among journalists to work in the political section, as it is seen as the most prestigious. Politics was followed by women and society with 37%, economics with 23%, sub-editing with 16%, health with 13%, arts with 0.9% and finally technology and layout, with 0.5% each.

In the ‘other’ category, the most popular divisions mentioned by the respondents were investigative journalism, which was mentioned by 15%; culture, mentioned by 6%; humanitarian stories, photography, and translation, which were mentioned by 3% each, and finally international, labor, accidents, education, environment, society and field coverage were all mentioned by 2% of respondents.

Part: Levels of satisfaction in how their managers and colleagues treat them

Chart 2



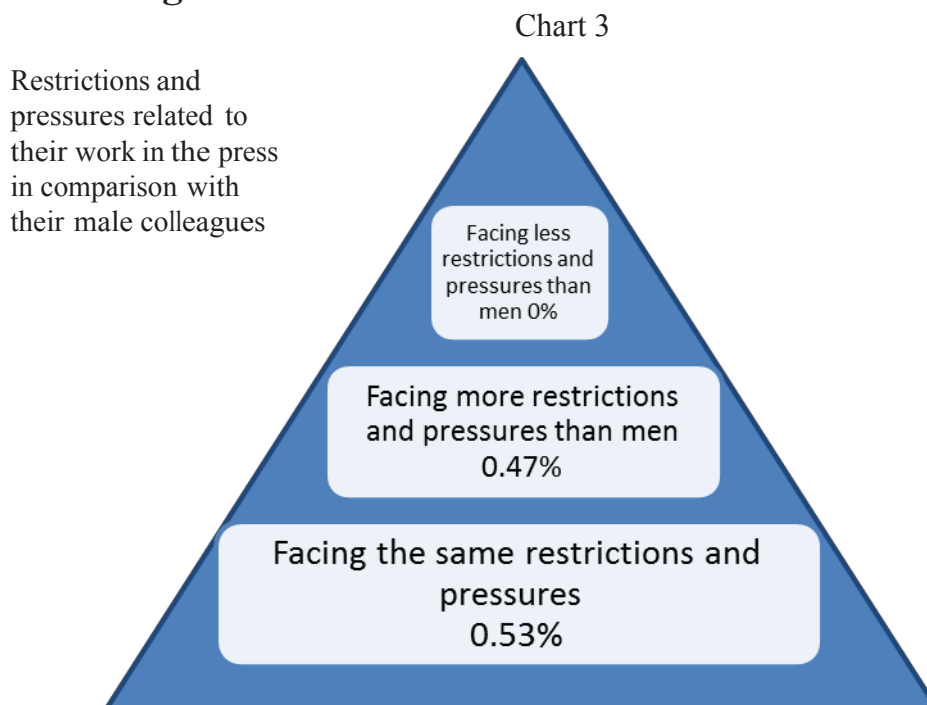
The results of the study show that 28% of the sample is satisfied ‘to some extent’ in how their managers deal with them, while 26% believe that “their managers don’t discriminate between men and women at work”. 20% were satisfied, and 16% answered were very satisfied, with only 10% saying that they were not satisfied at all.

These results indicate that while many female journalists are relatively satisfied with the way they are treated by their managers, there is significant room for improvement, as demonstrated by the relatively low number of respondents claiming to be ‘very satisfied’, while the largest group claimed to be satisfied ‘to some extent’, thus indicating that there were some areas with which they are not satisfied.

The results also show that the largest percentage of female journalists were satisfied with the way their colleagues dealt with them: 30% claimed to be satisfied, while 24% claimed to be very satisfied, and 23% claimed to be satisfied to some extent. 19% of the respondents said that their “colleagues don’t discriminate between men and women”, and only 4 respondents said they were not satisfied at all with the way they are treated by their colleagues.

When comparing satisfaction levels between the journalists' treatment from management and from colleagues, it can be seen that on the whole, the respondents were more satisfied with the treatment they received from their colleagues than the treatment they received from their managers. This is shown in the higher numbers in Table 4 stating that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the way they are treated by their colleagues in contrast to the lower numbers in these categories seen in Table 3; correspondingly, fewer respondents stated that they were not at all satisfied with the way their colleagues treated them than those who stated that they were not satisfied at all with the way their managers treated them. However, both of these tables indicate that the respondents were more satisfied than unsatisfied, which shows that their treatment by managers and colleagues is not a major limiting factor for female journalists in Egypt – or it is now acknowledged as one.

Part 4: Assessing the restrictions and pressures the female journalists faced in relation to their work in the press in comparison with their male colleagues:



The responses to this question were quite evenly split: the study reveals that just over half of the respondents, 53%, believe that they face the same restrictions and pressures as male journalists, while just under half, 47% felt that they were subjected to more pressures and restrictions than male journalists. None of the respondents felt that they felt less restrictions and pressures than male journalists.

The respondents were then asked about the nature of these restrictions and pressures. They were able to choose more than one answer, as shown below:

Table 2

Pressures	F	%
Constraints resulting from the type of ownership and orientation of the newspapers	53	0.53
Restrictions imposed by security forces and political authorities	48	0.48
Press laws and legislation	28	0.26
Some press sources refuse to conduct interviews with female journalists, and prefer male journalists	18	0.18
Laws and legislation relating to women's work	11	0.11
Pressure exercised by advertisers	10	0.10
Other	20	0.20

The most popular answer related to the restrictions and pressures resulting from the type of ownership and orientation of the newspaper, which was chosen by 53% of respondents. This was closely followed by the restrictions imposed by security services and political authorities, with 48% of respondents, and then restrictions resulting from press laws and legislation, chosen by 28%. Restrictions specifically related to the journalists' gender came only fourth and fifth in order of popularity, "some press sources refuse to conduct interviews with female journalists, and prefer male journalists", chosen by 18%, and "laws and legislation relating to women's work", chosen by 11%. In final place came "Pressure exercised by advertisers", with 10% of respondents choosing this option. These results show that although there are some restrictions linked to journalists' gender that are seen as relevant, the restrictions that were most often chosen by the respondents did not relate to gender.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to give suggestions of other restrictions they faced. It is interesting to note that the most popular suggestion was specifically related to gender, while a number of the other suggestions could be seen as having a gendered aspect.

Other pressures mentioned by the respondents were:

- Social pressures on women (restrictions imposed by women's roles as wives and mothers): 4%
- Some managers are biased in favor of male journalists and unfairly criticize the work of female journalists. (3%)
- Harassment from some sources: 3%
- Egyptian society, culture and customs that hinder my freedom to work in the press in different times and places: 3%
- The lack of real freedom with regard to the exchange of information: 2%
- Family restrictions (such as the family's fear): 2%
- Restrictions related to personal safety in areas that require night work or in the areas of clashes: 2%

Five: Opinions of the female journalists regarding the advantages and disadvantages related to the environment of the press in Egypt:

To understand the views of the journalists with regard to the advantages and disadvantages they face within the organizations in which they work, a tripartite scale was designed to measure the extent to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with a series of positive and negative statements. The positive statements could refer to positive things working as a journalist brought to the lives of the participants, or positive things that the participant could bring to the profession of journalism. The following are the results of the study:

Chart 4

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in the press has made me more daring and courageous • Working in the press has made me more able to achieve and to prove myself • Female journalists can better understand the women's problems • Female journalists are better able to address daring topics related to Egyptian women • Female journalists are more disciplined and committed • Some entities prefer to give statements to female journalists rather than male journalists • The presence of female journalists can protect her male colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scarcity of women's representation on the Board of the Journalism Syndicate • The scarcity of female role models, either journalists or writers • The inequality in promoting female journalists compared to male journalists • My superiors at work assign the male journalists to the harder jobs • My superiors at work don't consider my family circumstances • Subjected to verbal harassment from superiors and colleagues • Subjected to physical harassment from superiors and colleagues

This chart shows that the most popular advantage of working in journalism from the point of view of the study sample is «working in the press has made me more daring and courageous», with 94% of the sample agreeing, followed by “working in the press has made me more able to achieve and to prove myself”, with 88% of the sample in agreement. “Female journalists can better understand women’s problems” had 73% in agreement, and “female journalists are better able to address daring topics related to Egyptian women” had 68% in agreement. On the lower levels of agreement, “female journalists are more disciplined and committed” had 46% of the sample in agreement; “some entities prefer to give statements to female journalists rather than male journalists” had 30% agreement; and “the presence of female journalists can protect her male colleague” had only 18% agreement.

In light of all these positive phrases, we find that the journalists in the study sample do not tend to look at themselves from the perspective of gender, as the idea that female journalists are particularly able to deal with women’s topics had lower rates of agreement than those topics related to their own internal abilities. This result is consistent with the findings of the earlier section of this study that the majority of female journalists would prefer to work in the political section of their newspaper.

Regarding the negative aspects of the journalists’ internal working environment, the most popular statement was «the scarcity of women’s representation on the Board of the Journalism Syndicate», with which 56% of the sample agreed, followed by «the scarcity of female role



models, either journalists or writers”, with 45%. 39% of the sample agreed that there was “inequality in promoting female journalists compared to male journalists», while 25% agreed that «my superiors at work do not consider my family circumstances».

It is worth noting that the statements regarding physical harassment from the superiors or colleagues and verbal harassment from the superiors or colleagues received the highest levels of disagreement, with 75% and 55% respectively.

Six: Opinions of the female journalists regarding the views of society of their work in the press:

While the previous question sought to establish the advantages and disadvantages that may exist for female journalists within the media environment, this question sought to tackle broader aspects of Egyptian society and their advantages and disadvantages for female journalists. The results were as follows:

Table 3

Phrase	Agree		Neutral		Against	
	K	%	K	%	K	%
My work as journalists ends the idea that there are occupations suitable for males only	81	0.81	13	0.13	6	0.06
Communication with the public regarding women's issues, such as marriage and intimacy, is easier than it would be for a male journalist	60	0.60	35	0.35	5	0.05
Working as a journalist gives me a distinguished social status	31	0.31	53	0.53	16	0.16
Cinematic and television drama contribute to a positive image of female journalists	26	0.26	46	0.46	28	0.28
Exposure to physical harassment common in the street like any Egyptian woman	52	0.52	31	0.31	17	0.17
The bad reputation of the female journalists	30	0.30	33	0.33	37	0.37
Cinema and TV drama participates in presenting a negative mental image about the female journalists	28	0.28	44	0.44	28	0.28
Exposure to verbal harassment common in the street like any Egyptian woman	20	0.20	40	0.40	40	0.40

The table shows that the vast majority of the sample believe that their “work as journalists ends the idea that there are occupations suitable for males only”, with 81% agreement. 60% of the sample agreed that “communication with the public regarding women’s issues, such as marriage and intimacy, is easier than it would be for a male journalist”, while 31% agreed that “working as a journalist gives me a distinguished social status”. These results indicate that

the female journalists involved in this research see the profession of journalism as one area in which women can demonstrate their excellence.

With regard to the disadvantages from the perspective of wider Egyptian society, “exposure to physical harassment in the street” was the most popular answer, with 52% of the sample agreeing. Following this came “the bad reputation of female journalists”, with which 30% of the sample agreed. Surprisingly, “exposure to verbal harassment in the street” only had 20% agreement.

There was no clear agreement with regard to the role of cinematic and television drama, as the phrase “Cinematic and television drama contribute to a negative mental image of female journalists” was agreed with by 28% of the sample, while “Cinematic and television drama contribute to a positive image of female journalists” was agreed with by 26% of the sample.

From this section it can be concluded that female journalists are subjected to more physical harassment than verbal harassment. This demonstrates the continued prevalence of this shameful phenomenon in Egyptian society.

Eight: the positives and negatives that Egyptian female journalists encounter

The questionnaire included two open questions to give the chance for the journalists to express their points of view about the advantages and disadvantages of working in the press. It is worth noting that despite the relatively positive responses to the rest of the questionnaire, in this section the participants listed many more disadvantages (28) than advantages (15). Their answers are summarized as follows:

• Advantages of working in the press:

Many participants mentioned the advantages of working as a journalist, seeing it as dynamic, interesting and prestigious, giving them access to information they would not otherwise be able to access. Some mentioned the opportunities that working as a journalist can bring, such as the chance to travel abroad or to interview leaders and public figures.

Many participants also stressed the aspect of social responsibility, the ability to contribute to society, help to solve social problems and exercise freedom of expression.

Some mentioned advantages that related to opportunities to improve themselves, such as becoming more courageous, confident and analytical.

Only two respondents mentioned advantages specifically related to gender, with one saying that female journalists are better able to address issues relating to women and other important social issues, while the other said that working as a journalist demonstrates that women are just as committed, efficient and competent as men. One other respondent listed as an advantage the opportunity to break free from family restrictions, which could be seen as having a gendered aspect.



• Disadvantages of working in the press:

Many of the participants mentioned disadvantages relating to the stress of the journalistic profession, including physical risks, poor working conditions, heavy workloads, and low salaries, often leading journalists to have to work multiple jobs. In this context, a number of respondents mentioned the specific stresses that come from trying to balance their work as a journalist with their responsibilities to their families.

A number of respondents mentioned the frustrations of working as a journalist, including difficulty in accessing information and training, lack of organization within media outlets, the effects of editorial policy and advertising on journalists' freedom of expression, and the inequities that exist between state-owned newspapers and party-affiliated newspapers.

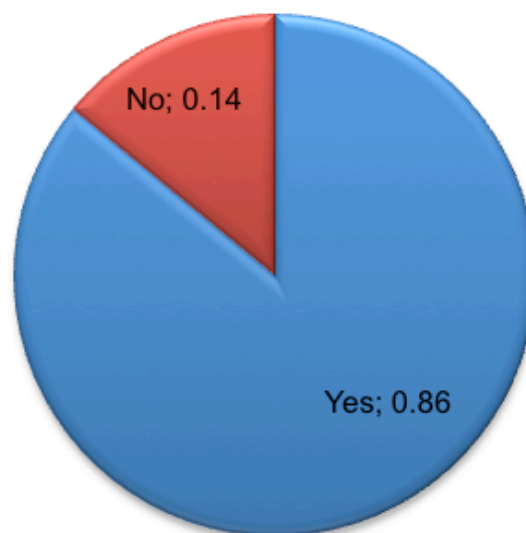
A number of respondents also mentioned disadvantages related to people's perceptions of journalists, for example the negative perception that people in Upper Egypt have of journalism as a profession, or the distrust that the public have for journalists, particularly those working for organizations seen to be affiliated with political or social movements. One respondent specifically mentioned an assumption that she faces in her family that she is unmarried because of her job as a journalist, even though she has many friends of the same age who are not journalists and who are also unmarried.

Some respondents mentioned the perceived inequality of opportunity between male and female journalists in the context of promotions, interesting work and payment. One respondent stated: "no matter how hard a female journalist works throughout her career, she remains at the bottom of the list of nominations for any leadership position, regardless of her experience and talent.

One respondent mentioned the specific threats of humiliation and rape received when in risky situations.

Choosing to work in the press

Chart 4



The participants in this study were asked: “If you had the chance to choose again your field of work, would you choose to work in the press?” The answer of the vast majority of journalists was yes, at 86%, compared to 14%, who would not choose to do so.

This result demonstrates the love and pride that the majority of Egyptian female journalists have for their profession, and their willingness to face the challenges and negative aspects that this entails. Social problems such as harassment or the male-dominated work culture, family problems and social views that see certain professions as for men only are seen as part of the burdens related to the profession of looking for trouble.

The characteristics and the features of the sample

About half of the sample (56%) were younger than 30, while 32% were between 30 and 40, which means that the vast majority of the study sample are of a young age. This could be because the sample was drawn from journalists who had attended trainings with al Sawt al Hurr, which targets younger journalists so as to help them develop their skills and professionalism.

61% of the sample had graduated with a degree in mass media, while 39% are from other disciplines. This is an expected result, as many successful journalists and columnists did not graduate from mass media faculties.

60% of the sample work for privately owned newspapers, followed by 29% who work for state-owned newspapers and 11% who work for party-affiliated newspapers.

50% of the sample were ‘worker’ members of the Egyptian Journalism Syndicate, while 19% were ‘trainee’ members and the remainder were not members of the Syndicate.

39% of the sample had one to five years of experience working as a journalist, while 36% had five to ten years of experience and 25% had ten to 15 years of experience. This fits with the age profile of the sample, as discussed above.

