

Urgent Global Call Following the Referral of Mada Masr Editor-in-Chief Lina Attalah to Trial



October 2026



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We, the undersigned civil society organizations and independent media outlets from around the world, join together to condemn the unprecedented attack on press freedom in Egypt following the referral of Egyptian journalist and Editor-in-Chief of independent media outlet [Mada Masr](#) Lina Attalah to trial.

Just hours after Mada Masr [joined](#) seven other independent media outlets from across the Arab world in setting up a solidarity flash newsroom to fill the gap in coverage following the arrest of the entire newsroom of Egyptian investigative platform Matsadaash, on October 19, 2026, Lina Attalah [received](#) a summons to appear for questioning before the Supreme State Security Prosecution pending Case No. 9072 of 2026. The reasons for the summons were not disclosed.

At the interrogation, which took place on October 21 and lasted over six hours, Lina was questioned about [Mada's coverage](#) on the wave of protests happening in prisons across the country, as well as the legal status of Mada Masr's license. She was faced with charges of running a website without a license and of publishing false news with the aim of disturbing public peace and ultimately released on LE 100,000 bail. On October 22, Lina [learned](#) that she would be referred to trial on charges of establishing, managing, and operating a website without a license, with the first session set to begin on Tuesday, October 27.

Mada Masr has made every possible effort to register for a license and operate under Egyptian law. When [Law No. 180 of 2018 Regulating the Press, Media, and the Supreme Council for Media Regulation \(SCMR\)](#) was ratified, Mada Masr applied for a license in 2018. It received no response. After the law's bylaws were issued in 2020, the outlet again applied for a license. Once again, it received no response. Only in 2022 during an interrogation in which Lina had been summoned, Mada Masr learned that the SCMR had rejected the licensing application without proper notice or disclosure. The outlet then filed a lawsuit in 2022 to challenge the denial decision and the failure of authorities to provide notice and justification for the rejection. The latest application for a license has been pending without response since 2023.

Lina Attalah's referral to trial constitutes an unprecedented escalation that threatens the future of the entire independent media, knowledge production, and civil society space in Egypt. It occurs in the wake of another historical escalation which occurred at the end of September following the arrest of the [entire newsroom of Matsadaash](#). For the charges that Lina is facing in this case, there is a potential penalty of between LE 1 million and 3 million, subject to a doubling of the fine for recurrence. More alarmingly,

the court can also order the closure of Mada Masr, which would constitute a death knell to one of the last remaining independent media outlets operating in Egypt today.

Though this is the sixth case brought against Mada Masr in six years, this is the first time that a case of this nature has been referred to trial. For years, Egyptian authorities have leveraged their repressive and restrictive tactics against independent media outlets to harass journalists, restrict their operations, and chill freedom of expression. To escalate to the step of referral to trial must be read as a clear intent to entirely shutter the independent media space and to permanently close what remains.

We, the undersigned, call on Egyptian authorities to immediately end its prosecution of Lina Attalah. We call on authorities to grant Mada Masr a license as the law stipulates and requires and in response to its numerous licensing applications. We call on authorities to halt any and all targeting directed at Mada Masr and at all independent media outlets operating in Egypt, including the [case of Matsadaash](#), where six journalists remain in pretrial detention after some were subject to torture. Finally, we call on Egyptian authorities to release all journalists detained or imprisoned for their work in Egypt.

What we are seeing unfold in Egypt today is an egregious escalation that cannot be allowed to stand. Should we remain silent in the face of such, we can only expect the permanent shuttering and closure of what remains of Egyptian independent media, civil society, and organizing. The stakes could not be higher.

Signatories:

- Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)
- Access Now
- Aegis Safety Alliance
- African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL)
- AlJumhuriya Collective | Syria
- Al Manassa
- Almidan Association for Development and Human Rights
- American Committee for Middle East Rights (ACMER)
- Amnesty International
- Arab Foundation for Civil Society and Human Rights
- Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)

- Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)
- ARTICLE 19
- Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE)
- Athr
- Caesar Files for Justice
- Cedar Centre for Legal Studies
- Center for Media Research - Nepal
- Center for International Policy
- CivilNet
- Climate Activist Defenders (CAD)
- Coalition For Women In Journalism (CFWIJ)
- Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
- CUNY Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine
- Daraj Media
- Darfur Network for Human Rights
- Dar Justice
- Delfi (Lithuania)
- Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
- Drop Site News
- Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)
- Egyptian Front for Human Rights
- Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
- Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
- EgyptWide for Human Rights
- Electronic Frontier Foundation
- El Nadeem Center
- English PEN
- En toutes lettres
- Fact Check Cyprus
- FactWatch
- FAKARTANY
- FairSquare
- Fareq Platform for Fact Checking
- Frontliners For Change (FFC)
- Global Voices
- Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
- Hibrid.info
- Houna Feminist Platform
- Human Rights Watch
- HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
- Huquqyat
- INSM Foundation for Digital Rights

- Källkritikbyrån
- Kawaakibi Foundation
- India Today Fact Check
- Inkyfada
- International Fact-Checking Network
- International Federation for Human Rights
- Internews Kosova - KALLXO
- Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms
- Japan Fact-Check Center
- Justice Center for Advocacy and Legal Consultations
- Law and Democracy Support Foundation
- Local Development and Small-Projects Support (LDSPS)
- Masaar Foundation
- Masaha
- MENA Prison Forum
- Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)
- Migration and Human Rights Platform
- Musawa
- Najda For Human Rights
- Nawaat Website Journalists Association
- Newtral
- Nest Center for Journalism Innovation and Development NGO, Mongolia
- Orient XXI
- Pagella Politica / Facta news
- PEN International
- People in Need
- PesaCheck
- Project 0 | Sifr
- Public Works Studio
- RACHMA
- Rappler
- Raseef22
- Recoupement - Assafir Arabi
- REDWORD for Human Rights & Freedom of Expression
- Refugees Platform In Egypt (RPE)
- Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights
- Samir Kassir Foundation
- Share3 Media
- Sinai Foundation for Human Rights (SFHR)
- SMEX
- Soch Media
- Sowt Media

- Start Point
 - Syrian Center for Policy Research
 - Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ)
 - Taafi Initiative
 - Tafnied for OSINT Journalism and Fact-Checking
 - The Alternative Policy Institute (BADIL)
 - The Continental
 - The Key Magazine
 - The Legal Agenda
 - The Public Source
 - The Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in South West Asia and North Africa (WHRDMENA)
 - The Syria Campaign
 - The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
 - Till the Last Prisoner
 - Union of Journalists in Lebanon
 - VERA Files
 - Verificat
 - Verify Media Platform
 - Wasl Rights
 - Women Journalists Alliance
 - Women Now for Development Lebanon
 - Women for Justice Foundation (WJF)
 - Zašto ne (Istinomjer/Raskrinkavanje)
 - Zawia3
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ABOUT STJ

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) started as an idea in a co-founder's mind while attending the U.S. Middle-East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program (LDF) in 2015. The idea became a reality and flourished into an independent, non-profit, impartial, non-governmental human rights organization.

STJ's beginnings were more than humble; initially, it only reported stories of Syrians who experienced arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, or torture. Planted in fertile soil, the seed of this project grew into an established human rights organization licensed in the Middle East and the European Union. STJ today undertakes to detect and uncover violations of all types committed in all Syrian parts by the various parties to the conflict.

Convinced that Syria's diversity is a wealth, our researchers and volunteers serve with unfailing dedication to monitor, expose, and document human rights violations that continue unabated in Syria since 2011, regardless of the affiliation of the victims or perpetrators.

