

## Mubarak responsible for intensified press attacks - CPJ

NEW YORK: According to press freedom organisation, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak unleashed an unprecedented and systematic attack on international media on Thursday, 3 February 2011, as his supporters assaulted reporters in the streets while security forces began obstructing and detaining journalists covering the unrest that threatens to topple his government.



### "Dark day for journalism"

"This is a dark day for Egypt and a dark day for journalism," said CPJ executive director Joel Simon. "The systematic and sustained attacks documented by CPJ leave no doubt that a government-orchestrated effort to target the media and suppress the news is well under way. With this turn of events, Egypt is seeking to create an information vacuum that puts it in the company of the world's worst oppressors; countries such as Burma, Iran and Cuba.

"We hold President Mubarak personally responsible for this unprecedented action," said Simon, "and call the Egyptian government to reverse course immediately."

### Record press freedom violations

In the past 24 hours, CPJ has recorded 30 detentions, 26 assaults, and eight instances of equipment having been seized. In addition, plainclothes and uniformed agents reportedly entered at least two hotels used by international journalists to confiscate press equipment. On Wednesday, [CPJ documented numerous earlier assaults, detentions, and confiscations.](#)

Mubarak forces have attacked the very breadth of global journalism: their targets have included Egyptians and other Arab journalists, Russian and US reporters, Europeans and South Americans, says CPJ.

"The attacks on journalists, which began last week, have now intensified to levels unseen in Egypt's modern history," said Mohamed Abdel Dayem, CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator. "We are concerned for the safety of our colleagues, and we're alarmed at the prospect of these witnesses being sidelined at this crucial moment in Egyptian history."

### Presenting foreign journalists as spies

Government officials, pro-government journalists, and commentators loyal to Mubarak have for the past two days been engaged in a systematic campaign to present foreigners, and particularly foreign journalists, as spies says CPJ. The organisation has documented at least seven instances on state-owned television or

private stations owned by businessmen loyal to Mubarak in which individuals described elaborate foreign plots to destabilise Egypt that centered on foreign provocateurs, including journalists. In several instances they were described as "Israeli spies." In one instance, a woman whose face was obscured "confessed" having been trained by "Americans and Israelis." She went on to say that the alleged training took place in Qatar, where Al-Jazeera is based.

See [round-up of recent attacks on the local and international press in Egypt](#).

***Article published courtesy of [CPJ](#)***

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