

Egypt: New accreditation rules; military obstructs media

NEW YORK: Egyptian authorities have shifted their strategy for obstructing the press as protests enter their third week. The military has become the predominant force detaining journalists and confiscating their equipment rather than plainclothes police or government supporters, the Committee to Protect Journalists said on Monday, 7 February 2011.



Authorities have also put in place new bureaucratic obstacles for journalists covering the anti-Mubarak protests on Tahrir Square, with the military instructing reporters to seek new press credentials from the government.

"We hold the Egyptian military directly responsible for ongoing systematic efforts to restrict the work of journalists and for the mistreatment of journalists who have been taken into custody," said Mohamed Abde Dayem, CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator. "We call on the Egyptian military and the government to respect the work of the press, release any journalist in custody, and immediately investigate allegations of abuse and mistreatment."

Government confiscating press cards

Foreign editors in the US as well as reporters in Egypt have told CPJ that the government is confiscating press cards and other types of identification and are asking journalists to go to the Ministry of Information to apply for new temporary credentials. Multiple journalists told CPJ that they have been told to acquire accreditation from the government, including one who said he was told the same thing by the US Embassy in Cairo. (CPJ was unable to reach the embassy to confirm.)

"The sudden change in policy regarding press credentials is simply the latest effort to restrict the work of journalists, many of whom have already been beaten by mobs and detained by authorities," added Joel Simon, CPJ executive director.

Local journalists told CPJ that the military is obstructing journalists and refusing many entry into Tahrir Square. Al-Jazeera reported on the air that "individuals who have cameras or food are often prevented from reaching the square."

Journalists are also reporting that they have been mistreated while in custody.

Read [firsthand accounts](#), and [a roundup of new attacks on the press](#).

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