



## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The death of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi on 20<sup>th</sup> October also signalled the death of one of the greatest “predators of press freedom”. This is the name of a list published annually by Reporters without Borders on which Gaddafi has been something of a fixture. The list also includes many other rulers who suppress all forms of freedom of opinion and freedom of press in their countries and who are often quite prepared to use violence to keep journalists in line. Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe is listed, along with Cuba’s Raúl Castro and Ali Abdallah Saleh, the president of Yemen. The “Arab Spring” has shaken things up, and it now seems likely that President Saleh may soon also join Gaddafi in being crossed off the Predators of Press Freedom list. It remains to be seen whether the list will get remarkably shorter or whether new names will simply replace the old ones.

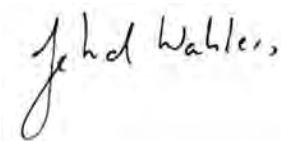
But even after all the upheavals in the Arab world—rightly construed and welcomed as being a mighty push for freedom—there are still no guarantees for freedom of the press in the region. This month Egypt will be holding its first free elections, but human rights experts are already warning that the country may be sliding back towards the era of deposed President Hosni Mubarak. According to the German Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces—the country’s de facto rulers – have already begun to censor newspapers and imprison journalists who express critical opinions. In April the Coptic blogger Michael Nabil Sanad was sentenced to three years imprisonment on charges of “insulting the military” and at the end of October the military referred him to a mental hospital. The hunger strike begun by Sanad in protest against his detention was obviously viewed by

Egypt's interim rulers as a sign of mental illness. Another Egyptian blogger, Alaa Abdel Fattah, was arrested on 30<sup>th</sup> October on charges of inciting Coptic Christians to violence during a demonstration.

The Vienna-based International Press Institute has recently warned that the fall of Arab dictators in other countries of the region has until now failed to lead to any lasting guarantees of press freedom. It is true that the governments of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have made concessions to their countries' reform movements, but so far the position of journalists has not improved to any obvious extent. There have, however, been some positive developments. The recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Yemeni blogger and human rights activist Tawakkul Karman, co-founder of Women Journalists Without Chains has been a very positive sign.

The Arab states need free and responsible media to help them on their path to democracy; indeed without a free press there *is* no democracy. Journalists must be allowed to do their work and report on things they perceive as wrong. They need to be given free access to all relevant information in order to report on complex issues and hold the government to account for its actions. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, well aware of the relationship between press freedom and democracy, has been running media programmes all over the world since the early 1970s. Over the last few years the foundation has also successfully set up German-Arab Journalist Academies where young journalists from the KAS Journalist Scholarship Programme (JONA) come together with their young Arab colleagues to produce internet sites and printed magazines. In October

this collaboration resulted in the publication of a magazine in Cairo entitled "Tahrir"—named after the Egyptian capital's square which became the symbol of the Arab desire for freedom.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'G'.

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Deputy Secretary General

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