

EGYPTIAN PRESS AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY: A STUDY OF THE CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES FACING NATIONAL PRINT MEDIA POST THE JANUARY 25TH 2011 REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

National press in Egypt has long been restricted and manipulated by the regime. For more than three decades it was the regime's mouthpiece. Paradoxically, the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011; which was supposed to bring freedom to all institutions, mired the Egyptian press resulting in its regression rather than progression. The press had begun facing a series of political and financial problems even before the January 25th 2011 Revolution due to declining leadership and advertising revenue. After February 11, 2011, with protestors jamming Tahrir Square, the induced democracy soon got stalled. Notably, all internal pressures for change were stifled. Political and legal challenges remained to be imposed on media professionals. Journalists systematically faced legal and financial pressures and other forms of intimidation hindering them from fulfilling their role in the democratization process. Indeed, a democratic state can't be built without a vibrant and independent media. (1) Surmountable causes can be linked to why the process of democratization in Egypt has been slow and retrograde, nevertheless. The question is: How can we possibly turn the Egyptian press into an independent institution whose main concern is to serve the people through providing information with accuracy and transparency? And whether there is a specific model that we can emulate to develop the Egyptian national press.

KEYWORDS: Press, Democratizing the Media, Egypt's Press, Mass Media