

## **Maikel Nabil Sanad's two-year jail term "insults spirit of Egyptian revolution"**

PUBLISHED ON 14 DECEMBER 2011

Reporters Without Borders roundly condemns the two-year jail sentence that the supreme military court of appeals in Cairo imposed today on **Maikel Nabil Sanad**, a blogger who has been held since March on a charge of insulting the military in a blog entry.

The court had been due to pass sentence tomorrow, but brought the hearing forward with the apparent aim of taking advantage of the ongoing elections to reduce media coverage of the case. The court also fined Sanad 200 Egyptian pounds (30 dollars) and ordered him to pay another 200 Egyptian pounds in defence costs. Citing administrative delays, the court did not identify the exact charges on which he was convicted.

"We are appalled by this sentence, which is an insult to the spirit of the Egyptian revolution, and we are outraged by the military court's cowardice in using the elections to sentence Sanad surreptitiously," Reporters Without Borders said.

"On top of everything, Sanad will have to pay the fees of lawyers who did absolutely nothing to defend him during this unfair political trial. We urge the authorities to overturn this verdict and free Sanad at once, especially as his physical condition is worsening by the day."

Aged 26, Sanad has been on hunger strike for more than 100 days. He was arrested on 28 March after posting an [article](#) in his [blog](#) in which he disputed the idea that the military had taken the people's side in the revolution. This is the second time he has been convicted on the same charge. The verdict handed down at the end of the first trial was quashed on appeal. Last week, he refused to apologise publicly to the armed forces.

His brother, Mark Nabil, today told Reporters Without Borders that Sanad would not appeal because "he contests the military court's legitimacy." Nabil said he would refer to the case to an international court on his brother's behalf. Explaining that he was very concerned about Sanad's state of health, he added: "Our family will hold the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces responsible for anything that happens to him in detention."

Egypt's first prisoner of conscience after President Hosni Mubarak's removal in February, Sanad is emblematic of the situation since the revolution, in which the armed forces continue to regard themselves as off-limits for journalists and bloggers and are using the same methods as the former regime to censor and intimidate them.

A [Sanad support site](#), a [Facebook group](#) and a [petition](#) are available online. Internet users can also post on Twitter using the [#FreeMaikel](#) hashtag and follow the case at [@freemaikel](#).

In a 1 December [report on the Arab revolutions](#), Reporters Without Borders analyzed the methods used by governments to prevent the free flow of information during the six popular uprisings in the Arab world from December 2010 to mid-November 2011. One of the chapters is about Egypt.

## Military court postpones verdict, presses blogger to apologise

PUBLISHED ON 7 DECEMBER 2011

Reporters Without Borders condemns the latest adjournment in detained blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad**'s retrial on a charge of insulting the military. The Cairo military court had been expected to issue a verdict at today's hearing but instead the judge postponed the verdict until 14 December without explaining why.

During today's hearing, Sanad was offered the use of a computer in his cell in Cairo's El-Marg prison so that he could post an apology on the Internet. After he rejected the offer, he was escorted back to the prison to await next week's hearing.

"This trial is just a sham," Reporters Without Borders said. "By systematically postponing its verdict without giving any grounds, the military court is playing for time in order to keep Sanad in detention and force him to confess to a crime he did not commit. We urge the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to free him without delay."

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## Two bloggers who symbolise the revolution are still behind bars

PUBLISHED ON 6 DECEMBER 2011

Reporters Without Borders deplors the continued detention of the Egyptian bloggers **Alaa Abdelfattah** and **Maikel Nabil Sanad**, in custody respectively for one month and eight months. Almost 10 months after the end of Hosni Mubarak's rule, the Egyptian authorities are still pursuing a policy of repression towards bloggers and the Internet.

### *Verdict looms in trial of Maikel Nabil Sanad*

Reporters Without Borders condemns the political trial of the blogger and prisoner of conscience Maikel Nabil Sanad.

Since [hearings have been postponed many times](#), the netizen has so far been in prison for more than eight months. The military court announced two days ago that the military will announce its final judgement tomorrow, after once again rejecting his application for bail.

Sanad was confined to the El-Khanka psychiatric clinic in Qalubiyah province on the orders of a judge on 18 October. He was subsequently transferred to Cairo's El-Marg prison after a favourable medical diagnosis. His family was allowed to visit him yesterday as he began the 105th day of a hunger strike. He is also suffering from kidney stones.

The blogger recently highlighted the crackdown carried out by the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in a [blog post](#) on the NGO website Mideast Youth.

Reporters Without Borders published a report on 1 December entitled "[Upheaval in the Arab world: Media as key witnesses and political pawns](#)", which analyses the methods used by the authorities to prevent the flow of information in six countries where there have been popular uprisings, from 17 December 2010 to mid-November this year. It includes a section on Egypt.

During rioting on the eve of the elections in late November, [many netizens were arrested or assaulted by troops](#).

The press freedom organization again urges the Egyptian authorities to halt threats of any kind towards netizens and media workers and to end the political trials of Alaa Abdel Fattah and Maikel Nabil Sanad, who should be exonerated and released unconditionally.

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## Situation for netizens worsens in post-Mubarak Egypt

PUBLISHED ON 27 OCTOBER 2011.

Although the United Nations special rapporteur for freedom of expression, Frank La Rue, reiterated the importance of protecting online freedom of expression in a report to the General Assembly last week, Egypt is pursuing increasingly repressive policies towards the Internet and bloggers.

### *Jailed blogger given 45 days in psychiatric clinic*

Reporters Without Borders also deplores the fact that the imprisoned blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad** has been confined to El-Khanka psychiatric clinic in Qalubiyah province for 45 days under a court order issued at a hearing in his retrial on 18 October. The next hearing is scheduled for 1 November.

His lawyer, Mahdouh Nakhla, the header of the Al-Kalema Centre for Human Rights, fears that Sanad could be subjected to electroconvulsive therapy, which he describes as “legalized torture.” Detained since March, Sanad is already suffering from renal and neurological problems, anemia and other complication from his hunger strike. ECT could prove fatal.

“Sanad, who has been on a hunger strike for two months and has serious health problems, will not get the treatment he needs in a psychiatric establishment,” Reporters Without Borders said. “He must be freed as a matter of urgency and given appropriate medical care. If he dies in detention, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces will be held entirely responsible for the death of the first prisoner of conscience since the revolution.”

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## Jailed blogger’s retrial adjourned again as military plays for time

PUBLISHED ON 19 OCTOBER 2011

Reporters Without Borders deplores the latest adjournment yesterday of jailed blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad**’s retrial by court martial on a charge of insulting the armed forces in his blog. After Sanad’s original conviction was overturned on appeal, the retrial was initially scheduled to have begun on 13 October.

“We condemn this persistence in persecuting Sanad and call for his immediate release,” Reporters Without Borders said. “This military court should dismiss the charges against him. The repeated postponement of the hearings and the refusal to release him on bail are being used to prolong his detention. The original trial was unfair and violated the principles of justice. After its verdict was rightly quashed, the retrial must not be used to repeat the first trial.”

Reporters Without Borders is very concerned about Sanad’s state of health. He has been detained for nearly seven months and has been on hunger strike for 57 days. His relatives say they are alarmed about the deterioration in his physical condition and fear he could die. The authorities are still refusing to hospitalize him.

Sanad told his brother Mark on 17 October that he intended to boycott the retrial. Neither he, nor his family nor his lawyer went to the military court yesterday for the scheduled start of the new trial. According to his brother, Sanad does not want to participate in “this soap opera that the military has cooked up.”

A campaign in support of Sanad as well as campaigns in support of jailed bloggers and conscientious objectors in other countries is available on this [website](#).

## **Authorities urged to free blogger at military court appeal**

PUBLISHED ON 3 OCTOBER 2011

Reporters Without Borders reiterates its call for the release of the blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad**, whose appeal against his jail sentence is to be heard by a military court on 4 October. Arrested on 28 March for criticizing the armed forces, Sanad was sentenced to three years in prison by a military court on 10 April. He has been on hunger strike for more than 40 days.

“The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces must free Sanad,” Reporters Without Borders said. “The health of this netizen, Egypt’s first prisoner of conscience since Hosni Mubarak’s overthrow, is getting worse.

“This appeal is the last chance for the authorities to show a commitment to human rights, justice and democracy. The court must recognize that he was unfairly convicted by a court martial because of his views and his articles.”

Sanad’s health is deteriorating steadily as a result of the hunger strike. He is now suffering from serious renal problems, anemia and scabies. He has requested a medical examination in vain.

Reporters Without Borders wrote to the attorney-general in Cairo on 26 September requesting permission to visit Sanad in prison. No reply has so far been received.

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## **Jailed blogger’s brother harassed for supporting him**

PUBLISHED ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2011

Reporters Without Borders condemns attempts to intimidate detained blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad**’s brother, **Mark Sanad**, who says he has been threatened with imprisonment because of his public support for Maikel.

The press freedom organization reiterates its call for the detained netizen’s immediate release and urges the authorities to renounce the use of intimidatory methods worthy of the Mubarak era.

After visiting his brother in prison on 20 September, Mark Sanad said: “I was threatened with being detained if I do not keep quiet and stop defending my brother. I will not stop. Let them detain me. I have no problem with that.” The authorities also allegedly hid drugs in his bag with the apparent aim of charging him with drug trafficking.

Mark Sanad said that his brother’s health is worsening, that he has already lost more than 12 kilos in weight after going on hunger strike, and that he is refusing to go to the prison infirmary. Mark added that he feared his brother will not hold out until his appeal, which is due to be heard on 4 October.

A peaceful march was staged on 19 September to demand Maikel Nabil Sanad’s release and an end to trials of civilians before military courts. The march started at Cairo’s Tahrir Square.

The blogger’s father, Nabil Sanad, has received no reply to the seven letters he has so far sent to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to request his son’s release. He says he will take the Egyptian authorities before the International Court of Justice if his son dies in detention. Reporters Without Borders would encourage such an initiative.

## Jailed blogger resumes hunger strike, in critical condition again

PUBLISHED ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2011

While the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces [threatens](#) to use the state of emergency law against all journalists who “endanger social peace,” the blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad**, Egypt’s first prison of conscience since the revolution, is still in prison, has reportedly resumed his hunger strike and is in a critical physical condition again.

“We urge the Supreme Council to release Sanad and all the other prisoners of conscience at once,” Reporters Without Borders said. “A security policy involving the jailing of journalists and bloggers convicted by military courts is steadily undermining hopes of a democratic transition in Egypt.”

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, Sanad has resumed his hunger strike and is again refusing to drink. In messages to his brother on [13](#) and [14](#) September, he reportedly said he was “unable to leave bed now” and suffered “loss of vision” as soon as he stood up.

Sanad has also denied telling the prison authorities that he wanted no more visits. “Do not believe so much the army officers or the military judges, because they lie too much,” he wrote. “I am not refusing visits and I strongly need them.” His brother and presidential candidate Bothaina Kamel are among the people who have repeatedly tried to visit him in Cairo’s Al-Marg prison. “I wanted to see [you], but the prison administration were the ones to refuse.”

Arrested on 28 March for denouncing human rights violations and the military’s close relationship with the government in his blog (<http://www.maikelnabil.com>), Sanad was sentenced to three years in prison by a military court on 10 April. He began a hunger strike on 23 August and stopped drinking a week later. He was rushed to the prison infirmary on 3 September.

After being hospitalized, Sanad let it be known that he was determined to resume his hunger strike and stop drinking against regardless of the outcome.

Reporters Without Borders urges the Supreme Council to free Sanad without delay, so that it is not held responsible for the blogger’s death in detention.

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## Hunger-striking blogger hospitalized

PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2011

**Maikel Nabil Sanad**, the jailed blogger who has been on hunger strike since 23 August, has been transferred to a prison infirmary after suffering serious heart problems, while **Imad Bazzi** ([@TrellaLB](#)), a Lebanese blogger and cyber-activist who had been in contact with Sanad, was denied entry at Cairo international airport on 5 September.

Bazzi, who is the executive director of [CyberACT](#) and has written the [Trella.org](#) blog since 1998, said he was questioned by three men in plain clothes at Cairo airport about his online activism before being put on the first plane back to Beirut.

He told Reporters Without Borders: “I am convinced that I was deported because I visited Maikel Nabil Sanad two months ago. He has long been a good friend of mine. Several organizations have said I was on an official blacklist since then, on the orders of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, because of my activism on behalf of civil liberties and media freedom.”

Sanad, who is still serving a three-year sentence in Cairo’s El-Marg prison, was rushed to the prison’s hospital with heart problems on 1 September, two days after he stopped drinking liquids on the

eighth day of his hunger strike. He says he plans to resume his hunger strike regardless of the outcome.

Reporters Without Borders deplors the stubbornness of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. The situation of bloggers now is reminiscent of the repression that prevailed before Hosni Mubarak's overthrow in February. Reporters Without Borders reiterates its appeal to the authorities to free Sanad at once and to stop obstructing the free movement of news and information professionals.

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## Unjustly detained blogger, on hunger strike, could die in prison

PUBLISHED ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2011

The international press freedom NGO Reporters Without Borders is very worried about the fate of the blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad** and calls for his immediate and unconditional release in order to preserve the democratic nature of Egypt's political transition.

Freeing the first prisoner of conscience since the revolution would be a powerful symbolic gesture, one that the entire international community would see as a sign of a commitment to openness.

Sanad, who began a hunger strike on 23 August, is now refusing to drink and already has heart problems. Detained since March, his physical condition is very alarming and needs urgent intervention.

"While Sanad's hunger strike is a personal decision, the authorities are responsible for the cause, an unjust and anti-democratic political imprisonment," Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard said. "If he does not resume drinking, he could very soon die in detention and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces would have to take full responsibility. Held for exercising his right to freedom of expression, Sanad must not become the symbol of a repressive and unjust post-Mubarak Egypt."

Aged 25, Sanad was arrested by military police on the night of 28 March and was tried by a military court, which sentenced him to three years in prison on 10 April on charges of insulting the armed forces, publishing false reports and disturbing public order.

Neither his family nor his lawyer has been able to see him of late. He used to be allowed one visit a week that this has been reduced to two visits a month.

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## Hunger striking blogger's health and prison conditions much worse

PUBLISHED ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

**Maikel Nabil Sanad**, an imprisoned blogger who began a hunger strike on 23 August, has now stopped drinking water and his physical condition is extremely worrying.

The conditions in which he is being held have also deteriorated. His family used to be able to see him once a week but the prison authorities have reduced the frequency of visits to two a month. His family was not allowed to see him at the start of this week. Prison officials claimed that Sanad had said he did not want to see anyone.

Reporters Without Borders calls for his immediate release on humanitarian grounds.

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## **Jailed blogger on hunger strike, health failing**

PUBLISHED ON 27 AUGUST 2011

The blogger **Maikel Nabil Sanad** began a hunger strike in Cairo's Al-Marg prison on 23 August in protest against the three-year jail sentence a military court gave him on 10 April. Sanad has heart problems and his detention since 28 March has undermined his health. He nonetheless says he is determined to continue his protest regardless of the consequences.

"I will no longer accept injustice," Egypt's first prisoner of conscience since the revolution recently said. "If my death is the price that must be paid to end this unjust situation, they I will pay it and I will die."

Sanad reportedly drafted a statement about his decision to go on hunger strike which the prison has refused to release. The prison authorities are also opposing his transfer to the prison infirmary. Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities to free Sanad at once or, failing that, to provide him with all the medical care he needs.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces recently [abandoned](#) plans to try another blogger, **Asmaa Mahfouz**, on the same charges as Sanad. Reporters Without Borders urges the council to go further and to end all prosecutions of civilians before military courts.

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## **Court martial sentences blogger to three years in prison for criticizing military**

PUBLISHED ON 11 APRIL 2011

Reporters Without Borders is deeply shocked by the three-year jail sentence that a military court has passed on the blogger and conscientious objector **Maikel Nabil Sanad** for posting a report on his blog criticizing the role played by Egypt's armed forces in the country's revolution earlier this year. He is the new government's first prisoner of conscience.

The sentence was issued discreetly yesterday in the absence of Sanad's defence and his supporters, who had previously demonstrated outside the court. No appeal is possible. Detained since 28 March, he was tried on 7 April, after several postponements, on charges of insulting the military, publishing false information and disturbing public security.

Challenging the view that the armed forces maintained a relatively neutral stance during the protests in January and February, the report [accused](#) them of taking part in the arrests and the torture of demonstrators.

"The methods used by the Egyptian military do not seem to have evolved since Hosni Mubarak's fall," Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard said. "They show the degree to which the military still cannot be criticized and are still a taboo subject. A civilian should not be tried by a military court. This is not the way things are done in the democratic society to which Egyptians aspire."

Julliard added: "The circumstances of this blogger's arrest and the conduct of his trial demonstrate a complete lack of consideration by the military for the most basic principles of international law. Egypt has begun a process of democratization and it should now be possible to criticize the armed forces like any other component of the state."

Reporters Without Borders urges the Egyptian authorities to review Sanad's trial and free him without delay. This would demonstrate the desire to build a democratic society on the basis of social justice that Prime Minister Essam Sharaf professed on 30 March.

All Sanad did was draw attention to shortcomings within the armed forces, in the country's general interest. This does not make him a troublemaker.

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## **Military police arrest blogger for criticizing armed forces**

PUBLISHED ON 31 MARCH 2011

Reporters Without Borders is shocked to learn that **Maikel Nabil Sanad**, a blogger and conscientious objector, had been arrested by the military police for allegedly defaming the armed forces in his blog.

"How can one trust an institution that promises a democratic transition with civil society's participation and then jails a pacifist blogger and conscientious objector at the first sign of any criticism?" Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard asked. "This arrest raises questions about the reality of free speech in Egypt and whether the armed forces are ready to respect it."

Sanad, 25, was arrested by military police on the night of 28 March. The next day a military court ordered him held for 15 days for investigation. He is facing a possible three-year jail sentence on charges of "insulting the military institution and publishing false news about it" and "disturbing public security."

According to the blogosphere, he was arrested because of a blog [entry](#) in which he criticized the lack of transparency in the armed forces since President Hosni Mubarak's departure.

Sanad has already had two spells in prison, during which he said he was tortured. Concerned about the treatment he could be receiving right now, Reporters Without Borders urges the military authorities to free him at once and to make a greater effort to respect fundamental freedoms.

Egypt went from being an "Enemy of the Internet" to a "country under surveillance" in the annual Internet [report](#) that Reporters Without Borders released on 12 March.