

**REPORTERS
WITHOUT BORDERS**
FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION



Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj
Head of the Libyan Government of National Accord
Tripoli

Paris, 9th august 2018

Dear Prime Minister,

In a communiqué dated 3 August 2018, the Libyan foreign ministry's Foreign Media Department (FMD) unveiled an unprecedented series of new measures that create further obstacles to the work of international journalists and the Libyan correspondents of foreign media outlets.

The existing interminable delays in obtaining and renewing visas, countless other forms of red tape and various kinds of harassment have now been compounded by 13 new measures to which international journalists and the Libyan correspondents of foreign media outlets must submit when applying to the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation for accreditation to work in Libya.

Each of these 13 measures details of an additional bureaucratic step that must be undertaken with an administrative entity, and constitutes another real barrier to journalistic freedom.

On the pretext of offering them better security guarantees, the FMD is tightening its grip on the foreign media at a time when, in the run-up to the general elections scheduled for 10 December, the freedom to inform is proving more essential than ever for a democratic and pluralistic debate in Libya.

All existing accreditations have been cancelled since the end of 2017 on the grounds that new procedures are being put in place. Since then, the FMD has replaced the old procedures by mechanisms designed to prevent journalists from working freely and independently. It now issues only temporary permits and in a sporadic manner. Many journalists have been left without accreditation, which exposes them to them to the risk of being expelled or being attacked.

RSF and LCFP would also like to express their utmost concern about the constantly escalating restrictions that are making journalistic work almost impossible. The FMD limits journalists

to covering events in which it is a participant and obstructs the work of those who do not comply with its demands, using accreditation as blackmail to force international news agencies to stop employing some of their correspondents. All journalists agree that working in Tripoli now constitutes an almost insurmountable challenge that threatens both their physical and their judicial security.

We also think it is crucial to point out that the obligation for journalists to wear a vest with the word "Press" and the FMD logo constitutes a violation of media independence and endangers their lives in a country in which all media personnel are potential targets.

All of these unwarranted obligations restrict the freedom to inform and help to delay realization of the democratic aspirations that the Libyan people expressed in 2011.

RSF and LCFP therefore call on the Libyan government to:

1. Stop obstructing the work of international journalists and the Libyan correspondents of foreign media outlets.
2. Respect the freedom of international journalists and the Libyan correspondents of foreign media outlets to practice journalism by establishing a simple and clear procedure for obtaining accreditation.
3. Allow international journalists and the Libyan correspondents of foreign media outlets to do their work with complete freedom.

We thank you in advance for the attention you give to this letter and we are at your disposal should you wish to discuss the subject further.

Sincerely,

Christophe Deloire
Secretary-General
Reporters Without Borders

Mohamed Ennajem
Executive Director
Libyan Centre for Freedom of Press