



CLD and IFJ launch Handbook on International Standards and Media Law in the Arab World

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The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) today launched the *Handbook on International Standards and Media Law in the Arab World*.

The Handbook sets out international standards regarding media freedom and assesses the extent to which the legal regimes governing the media in Arab countries conform to those standards. It is designed to support journalists and others in the Arab world in their struggle for press freedom and media law reform in the region.

The Handbook offers a unique overview of the laws and regulations governing the media in countries in the Arab world and spells out potential solutions to the challenges facing Arab journalists based on international standards. As the first detailed assessment of media laws across the region, the Handbook should prove to be a vital tool for journalists and others in their fight to bring about key media law reforms in the region, and thereby to confront threats from poverty, corruption and political interference.

“Arab journalists and their unions are confronting huge challenges arising from warring political factions, social conflicts and pressure for change,” said IFJ President Jim Boumelha. “Equipping them with a blue print for root-and-branch reforms of media laws and regulations is crucial in helping them build a new culture of journalism which would bring to an end offensive laws that continue to control information.”

The Handbook covers key media law issues, including media diversity, the need for bodies which regulate the media to be independent of political and commercial interference, regulatory standards in different media sectors – including journalists, the print and broadcast media and public broadcasting – the right to information, and criminal and civil restrictions on what may be published or broadcast.

“An assessment like this of the media law regimes across the Arab world is long overdue,” said Toby Mendel, Executive Director, Centre for Law and Democracy. “The Arab Spring has opened up new possibilities for democratic change, and we hope the Handbook will assist those advocating for reform in the region.”

The *Handbook on International Standards and Media Law in the Arab World* is available in English and in Arabic at <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/cld-and-ifj-launch-handbook-on-international-standards-and-media-law-in-the-arab-world/>.

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