

**7th International Conference on Information Law (ICIL) 2016
South Africa**

Evolution of Media Law and Policy in Egypt Within the Fast-Changing Media Landscape

By Mervat Abou Oaf
Dept. of Journalism & Mass Communication
GAPP School
The American University in Cairo

An essential question for Egypt post-Arab Spring concerns the changes needed to ensure that the Egyptian Media and Journalists Syndicate can operate responsibly and professionally yet free of government control. To grant a satisfactory outcome to this question, the sovereignty of law is needed to secure citizen freedoms and preserve national rights and responsibilities.

In Egypt, human rights organizations have long been calling for media law reform. The Jan. 25, 2011 Revolution has created an unprecedented opportunity to secure much-needed reforms; however, many impediments hinder such attempts and necessitate establishing specific strategies to realize such reforms. Through democratic transitions, it is hoped desired change will be facilitated.

Nevertheless, reformers in Egypt face major challenges, like determining key areas to prioritize. Accordingly, significant efforts attempt to implement the Global Campaign for Free Expression: The "Article19 Justice Initiative," signed in Egypt in 2010, and concerns the following: the use of criminal law to restrict freedom of expression; the absence of protection for right to information; the highly restrictive system of media regulation; restrictions on freedom of association (NGOs); and restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly.

Media law and policy is currently more blurred than ever, not only in Egypt but in the region at large. This study aims at outlining key media law and policy areas in Egypt where reform is needed to bring the media system into line with international standards, and to underscore the difficult process of realizing said reform.