

## Jordan: Two Media Executives Arrested Following Broadcasting of Virus Complaints

15 April 2020

<https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/jordan-two-media-executives-arrested-following-broadcasting-of-virus-complaints.html>

Jordanian authorities arrested the general director and the owner of Roya TV, the country's main private television station, following the airing of a video showing workers complaining about access to money to buy food during the COVID-19 pandemic. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) condemns the use of emergency laws to stifle the media and urges the Jordanian authorities to release the two journalists.



Roya TV news director Mohamad al-khaldi, left, and owner Fares Sayegh, right. Credits: Roya TV

Roya TV general director, Mohamad al-khaldi, and owner Fares Sayegh were arrested after broadcasting a program interviewing workers complaining about the lack of money to buy food during the pandemic. In the video, which has been removed from the station's website, workers said that if they don't receive help or are not allowed to work *"they will have no option but to steal or become drug dealers."*

As in many other countries in the world, Jordan is under lockdown to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and the authorities passed emergency laws to tackle it. The two journalists were arrested under those emergency laws.

*"We have been and will continue to support the efforts of the Jordanian state during the crisis, committed to high standards of professionalism and national responsibility and the respect to the role of law"*, Roya Media said in a statement.

IFJ General Secretary, Anthony Bellanger, said: *"Emergency laws to fight against the pandemic can never be used as tools to stifle the media and restrain fundamental rights. Journalists must be able to work in freedom and report on the real situation in the country. Jordanian authorities must release the two journalists immediately and stop silencing media"*.