



## **Joint declaration by the International Publishers Association (IPA) and the Egyptian Publishers Association (EPA)**

*Adopted in Paris and Cairo on 10 February 2011.*

For many years the International Publishers Association (IPA) and its Egyptian member, the Egyptian Publishers Association (EPA), have been following the political situation in Egypt and the impact this has had on freedom of expression and freedom to publish. Egyptian publishers have suffered censorship, prosecution and intense government pressure for many years. IPA has sought to fight these attacks on freedom of expression by lobbying a number of international organisations and institutions and sharing with them information about the situation.

To a large extent, the developments of recent weeks give rise to some optimism. IPA and EPA hope, with the people and publishers of Egypt, that this is the beginning of a new era, in which freedom of expression and freedom to publish will prosper.

IPA and EPA trust that this will allow Egyptian publishers to contribute to social progress in society by supporting learning, democracy, cultural diversity and political debate.

In this context, IPA and EPA together reiterate the importance of the following principles:

- The respect for the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); In particular, the promotion of freedom of expression, including the freedom to publish books in conformity with international standards for freedom of expression (Articles 19 of the ICCPR and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights);
- The absolute independence from one's Government; the resolute fight against the latter when necessary, including the need to remind one's Government of

### **International Publishers**

its international commitments in various fields, including freedom to publish, and of the need to respect the rule of law and due process;

IPA and EPA further urge the Egyptian authorities from now on:

- To protect Egyptian and foreign journalists, photographers, writers and publishers and publishing houses in the exercise of their work. This includes also their property;
- To formally end any form of restrictions on book importation and circulation in Egypt;
- To launch an immediate and independent investigation of the attacks on journalists, photographers and publishing houses in January and February, in particular to identify and prosecute those responsible for the death of Publisher Ahmed Mohamed Mahmoud of Dar Al-Lataef for Publishing and Distribution;

IPA and EPA further reaffirm the importance of the independence and improvement of the Cairo Book Fair. In this context, time has come for the efforts that EPA has been exerting for a long time to come to fruition by creating a book fair with independent management free of any interference.

EPA takes this opportunity to announce the establishment of an independent freedom to publish committee within the association to deal with the questions above on a permanent and active basis.

### **More about IPA:**

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is an international industry federation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for economic, cultural and political development. Around the world IPA actively fights against censorship and promotes copyright, literacy and freedom to publish. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate.

### **More about EPA:**

The Egyptian Publishers Association is an independent Egyptian federation whose mandate includes the advancement of the publishing profession and the protection of intellectual rights in Egypt. It comprises of 423 members and was founded in 1965. It joined IPA in 2000.