



## **Publishing Groups Call on France to Pressure Tunisia on Press Freedom**

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The International Publishers Association (IPA) and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) have called on the French Foreign Affairs Minister, Bernard Kouchner, to monitor press freedom violations in Tunisia and urge authorities in the North African country to respect their international commitment to freedom of expression.

IPA, the global organisation of book and journal publishers, and WAN-IFRA, which represents the world's newspapers and news publishers, met last week with Fabrice Mauries, the Advisor for North Africa and the Middle East to Mr. Kouchner, to discuss France's policy regarding violations to the right to freedom of expression in Tunisia. The delegation addressed the systematic repression of free speech in the country and the violence used against journalists and human rights advocates.

The delegation, joined by François Gèze, CEO of Editions La Découverte, asked the Ministry to ensure that a representative from the French Embassy to Tunisia would observe the court hearings of independent journalists Taoufik Ben Brik on 30 January, and Zouhayr Makhoul on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, both sentenced to prison in late 2009. They raised other cases, including those of Fahem Boukadous, Naziha Rejiba, Sihem Bensedrine, Slim Boukhdhir and Slim Bagga.

The delegation also asked that France and the European Union publicly urge the Tunisian authorities to respect their human rights obligations under the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement (article 2), which include freedom of expression.

WAN-IFRA and IPA, members of the Tunisian Monitoring Group (<http://campaigns.ifex.org/tmg/index.html>) of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), are calling on France and the EU to adopt a firmer stand in favour of freedom of expression in Tunisia.

## International Publishers Association

### **More about IPA and WAN-IFRA:**

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the global non-governmental organisation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing worldwide. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for cultural and political advancement worldwide. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate. Around the world IPA actively fights against censorship and promotes copyright, literacy and freedom to publish. IPA currently has 65 member associations in 53 countries.

WAN-IFRA, based in Paris, France, and Darmstadt, Germany, with subsidiaries in Singapore, India, Spain, France and Sweden, is the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers. It represents more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries. The organisation was created by the merger of the World Association of Newspapers and IFRA, the research and service organisation for the news publishing industry.

The web site of the IFEX Tunisia Monitoring Group can be found at :  
<http://campaigns.ifex.org/tmg/index.html>

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