

Beat: News

Video of anchor interrogating arrested minors sparks criticism regarding rights

Media ethics

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USPA NEWS - A video featuring a number of arrested children on charges of accusations of smuggling goods in Port Said governate has sparked a wave of criticism, as it goes against the Egyptian constitution, Child Acts, media standards and ethics, as well as violating their human rights.

The video was published on a Facebook Page dubbed "the official page of Port Said," featuring the minors sharply interrogated by a female anchor named Salwa Hussien, regarding the reasons behind what she described as their illegal acts.

"Why do you not choose decent work?" Hussien asked one of the arrested children. "Do you consider smuggling as a profession? Are you happy now with being in such a situation?"

Most of the arrested children were hiding their faces from the camera, crying and trying hard to arrange their words to answer the anchor's questions. One answered to her "I could not find other work. I swear there were no other choices."

However, the anchor angrily snapped at the minors by saying, "if you looked for a job you will find, but you did not. There are plenty of jobs in Port Said's cleaning companies and other firms, which offer chances for expats of other governates as you."

However, one of the children, apparently 16 years-old, challenged her and said "OK, we will not do that again," adding "you want me to work for EGP 50 on a daily basis? the EGP 50 cannot be sufficient enough to feed three sisters and a mother. I am not talking about myself now. I am talking about them," noting that he takes some of EGP 150 daily from his current smuggling work.

He told her that she underestimates the people suffering to live and meet their daily basic needs. "Life is difficult. We are not satisfied with our state," he said.

The video raised a wave of anger among social media users, who denounced the anchor's behaviour, attitude and questions, as well as broadcasting a video of the arrested children, instead of supporting them, and protecting their rights.

In response to the rage, Port Said governor Adel al-Ghadhban offered his apology to the children, saying that the governorate "does not have the media personnel who are able to present the case properly." His remarks came along with removing the video after social media users accused the governorate officials of "defamation the children."

Additionally, the National Council For Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) strongly criticized the video, calling on the prosecutor general to take legal proceedings regarding the arresting of the children on charges of smuggling, as well as broadcasting a video featuring them, which violates Egypt's Child Law No 12 of 1996.

"Children may not be detained, placed in custody, or imprisoned with adults in one place," read article number 112, adding, "in detention, it should be observed that children are to be classified according to their age, sex, and nature of their crime."

It added "children shall be sentenced to jail for a period not less than three months, and not exceeding two years, and a fine not less than EGP 1,000, and not more than EGP 5,000, or by one of the two penalties, any public official or in charge of a public service who detains, places in custody, or imprisons a child with one or more adults in one place."

Last Thursday, the prosecutor general ordered the release of four children charged in the case of smuggling with a fine.

Moreover, the Egyptian billionaire businessperson Naguib Sawiris has pledged to hire the six minors interviewed in the controversial video, adding that he sent a lawyer to settle their situation.

Such video interviews were regularly broadcasted on Egyptian media, featuring suspects of different ages and charges, most of the

time, if not all, without their permission, as well as releasing their full names and identities even before court rulings.

According to Article 54 of Egypt’s constitution 2014, “all those who are apprehended, detained or have their freedom restricted, shall be treated in a way that preserves their dignity. They may not be tortured, terrorized, or coerced. They may not be physically or mentally harmed or arrested and confined in designated locations that are appropriate to humanitarian and health standards.”^[2]

It added, “any violation of the above is a crime and the perpetrator shall be punished under the law.”^[2]

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-13916/video-of-anchor-interrogating-arrested-minors-sparks-criticism-regarding-rights.html>

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