

IFLA/FAIFE

IFLA protests crack down of intellectual freedom in Tunisia

Press release

18 November 2005

There can be no freedom of access to information without freedom of expression.

Participating in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunisia, IFLA most strongly protests the abuses on intellectual freedom in the country. With deep concern we have witnessed the attempts by Tunisian authorities to silence journalists and human rights activists in the run up and during the summit. Human rights activists have been imprisoned and some are on hunger strike. Journalists have been attacked, civil society meetings cancelled as a protest to the state of affairs. Information has been censored, newspapers banned and Web sites blocked.

IFLA supports the Tunisian Monitoring Group's (TMG) appeal to UN Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan "to call on the Tunisian authorities to end attacks on civil society and freedom of expression not only during this Summit, but beyond and to initiate an Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights special investigation into the occurrences around the WSIS."

By its actions the host country has most regrettably demonstrated that it does not share the common vision of an Information Society for All adopted by the WSIS in Geneva in November 2003 and which is strongly supported by IFLA. That vision promotes an inclusive society in which everyone will be able to create, access, use and share information and knowledge. This means providing the opportunity for people to seek, receive and impart information and ideas without restriction, in accordance with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To achieve this goal, IFLA stresses the importance of removing any barriers to open access to information for all. Consequently,

IFLA once again urges the Tunisian government to remove barriers to open access to information for all its citizens.

IFLA restates its strong commitment to the fundamental human rights to know, learn and communicate without restriction.

IFLA urges the Government of Tunisia to respect human rights and remove the impediments to freedom of access to information, freedom of expression and freedom of association following the World Summit on the Information Society.

Contacts:

Paul Sturges

Chair of IFLA/FAIFE,
Department of Information Science
Loughborough University
Leicestershire, UK, LE 11 3TU
Tel.: +44 (0) 1509 22 8069
Fax: +44 (0) 1509 22 3053
Email: R.P.Sturges@lboro.ac.uk

Susanne Seidelin

Director, IFLA FAIFE Office,
Copenhagen, Denmark
Tel: +45 32 34 15 32
Fax: +45 32 84 02 01
Email: susanne.seidelin@ifla.org or sus@db.dk

Sources:

- Tunisian Monitoring Group (TMG) -- <http://campaigns.ifex.org/tmg/>
- World Association of Newspapers (WAN) -- <http://www.wan-press.org/recherche.php3?recherche=WSIS>
- Amnesty International -- <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE300192005>
- IFEX -- <http://www.ifex.org>

Latest Revision: 18 November 2005

Copyright © International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

www.ifla.org