



Usa vs al-arian

In February 2003 Sami Al-Arian, a university professor and Palestinian activist, was arrested in Tampa for supporting Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a terrorist organization. He was imprisoned for two and a half years as he waited for his time in court.

The documentary follows Sami, his wife Nahla and their five children through the 6 month trial and the aftermath. It is a close portrait of a Muslim family who is fighting discrimination and stigmatism post-9/11. The documentary gives important insight into how the U.S. war on terror puts the rights of civilians aside.

The documentary will be screened at the GIJC, presented by the director Line Halvorsen. See program for details.

Top: Sami Al-Arian in Orient Road Jail.
Center: Nahla Al-Arian meeting the press.
Bottom: Director, Line Halvorsen.

against Palestinians. This made it almost impossible to expect a just verdict. This is like when the blacks didn't have the same rights as white," says Abdullah Al-Arian, who says it is a bitter paradox that his dad only can regain his freedom if he leaves the "the land of the free".

The reason the authorities are refusing to release Al-Arian from prison is that he denied testifying against former colleagues and activists in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. By not doing this, the U.S. authorities say Al-Arian broke the agreement between the two parties. Instead he was found guilty in contempt of court, which prolonged his time in prison.

Al-Arian says he will not testify against his friends out of principle. In addition, he fears for the safety of his family if he does testify. Al-Arian has protested by having several long-lasting hunger strikes in prison.

Both Halvorsen and Andersen are pleased with the reception the documentary received in New York.

"In most of the places we have shown the movie people contact us to tell us about similar cases in the U.S. It just shows how strong the fear of terrorism is in the U.S.," says Andersen. She has already started on a new documentary project about Bosnia.

REPUBLICAN CONVENTION ARREST

Amy Goodman, host of Pacifica Radio's "Democracy Now!", was arrested while covering protests at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota early in September, The Washington Post reports. Goodman was arrested along with two producers, and held for three hours before being released.

"I was seriously manhandled and handcuffed. My top ID that allows me to get on the floor was ripped off of me by the Secret Service. I was clearly a reporter", Goodman says.

TOLD TO IMPOSE SELF-CENSORSHIP

Russian Communications and Information Technology Minister Igor Shchyogolev told Russian journalism students during a seminar early in September that Internet censorship is technically impossible, and therefore it is necessary to promote self-regulation, Russian news agency Interfac reports. The speech was held on the Faculty of Journalism at Lomonosov Moscow State University.

AMERICAN TO TEACH IN QATAR

Former DePauw professor Richard Roth is has left the U.S. to teach journalism in Qatar. "He is the ideal choice to teach free-press, American-style journalism in, of all places, the Middle East", writes Mark Bennett in the Terre Haute Tribune-Star. Roth has been teaching journalism for 19 years, first at DePauw University and then at Northwestern, since he left his position at the Tribune Star. Roth is now serving as the journalism dean at Northwestern University's first international campus in Doha, Qatar. "The press here isn't really free like it is in the United States. You can't say things here about the emir that people would say about George W. Bush in the U.S.", Roth says.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM GOES EGYPTIAN

The Amman-based Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) has been chosen by the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) to provide specialised training in investigative reporting to Egyptian journalists and editors by January 2009.

The network will provide training to 10 Egyptian coaches and 30 Egyptian journalists under a six-month media support programme. The participants will be guided in the production and dissemination of their reports, and will be linked to ARIJ's network of trainees and mentors.