

# Abdelrahman Ayyash

Journalist and researcher · Edinburgh

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Arabic (native) · English (professional)

Egyptian journalist and researcher with twelve years of work on Islamist movements, the Arab state and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa. Leads Al Jazeera Digital's Investigations and Features Unit. Co-author of *Broken Bonds*, a study of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. Documented abuses for Human Rights Watch and managed more than 80 political-detainee cases at The Freedom Initiative.

## EXPERIENCE

**Al Jazeera Media Network** (aljazeera.net), Doha; remote from Edinburgh

Nov 2019 – present

Investigations & Features Unit Lead, Al Jazeera Digital, Feb 2026 – present. Senior Writer and Contributing Editor, Nov 2019 – Mar 2026.

- Lead Al Jazeera Net's long-form investigations and profiles; co-direct the editorial strategy of Midan, and commission and edit writers across the region.
- Lead open-source investigations using satellite imagery, geolocation and platform data, including the verification of 75 strikes on Iran's internal-security sites and reporting on Strait of Hormuz shipping, Israeli operations in southern Lebanon, Gaza reconstruction and the collapse of Sudan's farmland.
- Building Al Jazeera Net's data journalism unit.
- Wrote and edited more than 150 Arabic analyses and explainers since 2019.

**Egyptian Human Rights Forum** remote

May 2025 – Feb 2026

Lead Researcher and Author, Transnational Repression project (consultancy under agreement with MEDC)

- Led the research for the Forum's second annual report, *Wherever They Go*, launched at the European Press Club in Brussels in February 2026.
- Surveyed 34 Egyptians in exile and built a database of 84 cases across 17 countries, coded by method: consular denial, loss of citizenship, abuse of Interpol, digital surveillance, online defamation and the targeting of families.
- Briefed Members of the European Parliament and the European External Action Service in Brussels with EuroMed Rights, June 2025.

**Middle East Democracy Center** Washington DC; remote

Jan 2024 – Jul 2025

Senior Policy Consultant, Democracy Matters Initiative

- Led researchers and editors producing Arabic and English briefs on governance and rights across MENA; chaired panels linking civil-society researchers with policymakers in Washington and Brussels; wrote the organisation's Arabic editorial guidelines.

**The Freedom Initiative** Washington DC; remote

Sep 2021 – Apr 2024

Case Manager

- Managed more than 80 political-detainee cases in Egypt; pursued them through UN special procedures, legal counsel, congressional offices and the press. Contributed to campaigns that led to seven releases.

**The Century Foundation** remote

Jun 2021 – Jan 2024

Research Fellow

- Led a working group on political Islam and civil-military relations in Egypt; co-authored *Broken Bonds* (2023) and presented its findings at think-tank and academic events.

**Human Rights Watch** Istanbul and Washington DC

Aug 2018 – Oct 2021

Assistant Researcher, Middle East and North Africa Division

- Conducted more than 200 interviews with victims and witnesses; co-authored two reports on Egypt, on extrajudicial killings (2021, drawing on a 350-case geodatabase) and on the abuse of children in detention (2020).
- Provided Arabic-language digital monitoring to the Yemen and Israel/Palestine teams.

**HuffPost Arabi** Istanbul

Nov 2016 – Nov 2018

Senior Journalist and Investigative Editor

- Led the investigations unit. Reporting from a search-and-rescue ship in the Mediterranean won first prize at the 2017 Migration Media Award and was shortlisted for the Samir Kassir Award.

Non-Resident Fellow

- Built a media-monitoring dataset on propaganda and disinformation in Egyptian outlets.

**Noon Post** Istanbul

Oct 2014 – Nov 2016

Co-Founder and Chief Editor of a pan-Arab news site for young writers.

#### PEER-REVIEWED

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“Escaping the Iron Cage of the Present: Chronopolitics as Liberation Praxis in Islamic Movements.” In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Muslim Liberation Theologies*, edited by Emin Poljarevic and Ivan Ejub Kostic, 132–145. Wiley, 2026.

#### BOOKS

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CO-AUTHOR *Broken Bonds: The Existential Crisis of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood, 2013–22*. With Amr ElAfifi and Noha Ezzat. The Century Foundation, 2023.

#### REPORTS AND POLICY PAPERS

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LEAD AUTHOR *Wherever They Go: Transnational Repression and the Targeting of Egyptians Abroad*. Egyptian Human Rights Forum, 2026.

CO-AUTHOR “Security Forces Dealt with Them”: Suspicious Killings and Extrajudicial Executions by Egyptian Security Forces. Human Rights Watch, 2021.

CO-AUTHOR “No One Cared He Was a Child”: Egyptian Security Forces’ Abuse of Children in Detention. Human Rights Watch, 2020.

“The Turkish Future of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood.” The Century Foundation, 2020.

“Strong Organization, Weak Ideology: Muslim Brotherhood Trajectories in Egyptian Prisons since 2013.” Arab Reform Initiative, 2019.

“The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 2016: Scenarios and Recommendations.” With Victor J. Willi. *DGAPkompakt* 9, German Council on Foreign Relations, 2016.

“The Brotherhood’s Post-Pacifist Approach.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015.

#### TRANSLATIONS INTO ARABIC

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Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright and Erica Frantz, *How Dictatorships Work*. Arab Network for Research and Publishing, 2021.

Khalil al-Anani, *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity, and Politics*. Arab Network for Research and Publishing, 2018.

Zoltan Barany, *How Armies Respond to Revolutions and Why*. Arab Network for Research and Publishing, 2016.

#### TALKS

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“Escaping Presentism: Hamas, Memory and the Politics of Endurance in Gaza.” BRAIS annual conference, Cambridge, July 2025.

“Broken Bonds: The Existential Crisis of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood.” LSE Middle East Centre, London, 24 October 2023. With Amr ElAfifi; chaired by Jeroen Gunning.

“The Collapse and Inevitable Return of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood.” Launch of *Broken Bonds*, The Century Foundation, online, 1 March 2023.

#### EDUCATION

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MA Global Affairs, Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul, 2018.

BA Computer Engineering, Mansoura, 2011.

#### AWARDS

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Migration Media Award, first prize, Arabic online reporting, 2017.

Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press, investigative journalism, shortlisted, 2017.

The Drum Online Media Awards, breaking news story of the year, shortlisted, 2020.