

PRESS RELEASE
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Arab Americans join with Middle Eastern Arabs to launch new international journalism association

Members of the National Arab American Journalist Association, the largest American coalition of professional journalists from the Middle East, announced this week that they were partnering with journalists in the Middle East to form a new international organization.

The new group is called iNAAJA and has been renamed the “International Arab Journalists Association,” said Atef A. Hassan, the national board president. The group’s new website is www.iNaaja.org.

“Journalists have great challenges in bringing truth and facts to the public but it is even more of a challenge for people from the Middle East and the Arab and Muslim communities in America where oppression, conflict and discrimination combine to marginalize their voices,” Hassan a journalist, trainer and media consultant based in Cairo, Egypt.

Hassan is a Middle East Correspondent for Mergermarket, a London-based news wire, working there for 11 years covering almost all major business events in Egypt as well as some in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Ethiopia, India and the UK.

“We Arabs and Muslims from the Middle East need to come together not only to defend our profession but to also help encourage younger Arabs and Muslims to pursue journalism as a career choice. The challenges we face are many, but together, we can make a difference. We hope to do that together through the International Arab Journalists Association.”

Currently, iNAAJA has chapters and member representatives in Detroit and Chicago in the United States, and in Egypt, occupied Palestine, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

“Membership is open to any Arab and Muslim journalist who has a professional background in journalism, and to the youth who are interested in pursuing journalism and communications as careers,” explained iNAAJA Vice President Laila Alhusini, the host of America’s only daily morning Arab American radio program, US Arab Radio based in Detroit on WNZK AM 690.

“The only way to strengthen our voices and to make ourselves heard and the stories of our people heard is to stand together as professionals, work together, and support each other.”

Alhusini said that iNAAJA hopes to organize journalism conferences to continue those hosted by the former group NAAJA. NAAJA hosted more than 8 conferences during its 15 years in existence.

Alhusini identified the structure of the iNAAJA board as follows:

National Board members include: Atef A. Hassan, President; Laila Alhusini, Vice President; Ray Hanania, National Consultant.

The Detroit Leadership includes: Atef A. Hassan, Mohamed Abdulzaher, Hossam Abdelkader, Adel A. Mozip, Khalil E. Hachem, Atef Gawad, Marwa Macboul (Egypt), Alaa Qaisieh, Laila Alhusini, Sahar Khamis

The Chicago leadership includes: Mansour Tadros, Chicago Director; Ray Hanania, board member and former founder of NAAJA.

“Arabs and Muslims in America face great discrimination. We are ostracized by the mainstream American news media which claims to be objective. We are marginalized by American newspapers, American radio stations and American TV stations, and we are targeted by discriminatory practices by many of the online news sites and institutions. The only way we will be able to successful

confront this journalism bias is to stand together,” said Hanania, who worked as the Chicago City Hall reporter from 1976 until 1992 for two Chicago daily newspapers.

Currently, Hanania is a syndicated columnist with the Arab News in Saudi Arabia and political columnist with the American newspaper chain, the Southwest News newspaper group of seven newspapers.

Information on all of the members and links to their contact information is posted online on the new iNAAJA.org website.

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