Saudi Arabia and UAE Demands to shut down independent news outlets Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and The New Arab only embolden us

Tuesday 27 June, 2017

Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and The New Arab have on Monday 26 June 2017 again outright dismissed calls for its
shutdown as one of the demands made by several Gulf nations for an end to their efforts to isolate Qatar. AlAraby
Al-Jadeed, whose print and online editions are created from offices in London, Doha and Beirut, has grown to become one of the region's most read and most trusted sources of independent journalism – and senior figures have rejected demands from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt that it be shut down as a blatant infringement of press freedom.

"There are worse things than being banned by Saudi Arabia and the UAE," said James Brownsell, managing
editor of The New Arab's English-language edition. "Having them approve of us would be one." The UAE,
Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have demanded Qatar shut down independent media including Al-Jazeera.
They want Qatar to end its independent foreign policy, and to align itself with the hegemony imposed on the region by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. They want Qatar, a sovereign country, to limit its diplomatic links
with other nations in the region. These demands prove that the Gulf diplomatic crisis was never about "fighting terrorism", it continues to be about making Qatar subservient to its Gulf neighbours.

We don't speak for Qatar. We have covered Qatar critically on a number of occasions. We don't speak for Qatar. We speak for a small group of journalists working to change the narrative over the Middle
East beyond one of blood and sand to involve nuance, context and something more than state propaganda. And now this small group of journalists find its livelihood threatened by several of the world's largest and most powerful economies and autocrats in a move which threatens the existence of any
independent reporting or free press in the countries involved.

The New Arab refuses to be intimidated by this attempt to fundamentally suppress freedom
of opinion. Demanding our closure has not frightened us, nor will it prevent us from continuing to do what we believe in. If anything, it has emboldened us. It has empowered us.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt fund news outlets in their own countries, the Arab world and the
rest of the world. This isn't unusual. But they use their influence as an axis of disinformation to spread inflammatory conspiracy and snide insinuations. We have never called on these governments to stop exploiting the outlets they fund to spread their lies, incitement and defamation - because we do not concern
ourselves with their affairs. Characteristically, prominent state controlled news outlets in these countries have
supported calls for our closure. We hope that western media will do its utmost to shed light on this current crisis.

Our own journalistic integrity and ethical practices are our top priorities, and we thrive on them and nothing
more. Since our launch in 2014, we have grown based purely on the merit of our coverage – an idea to which
many of the region's gutter journalists are oblivious. The New Arab will never give up championing freedom and democracy for the Arab world, and will continue to recognise our role at this critical point in history.

##ENDS## (555 words inc headline)

Notes for editors:

Related Sectors:

Business & Finance :: Media & Marketing ::

Related Keywords:

Al-Araby :: Al-Jadeed ::

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Managing editor James Brownsell and company CEO Abdulrahman Elshayyal are available for comment on
the blockade, the calls for banning and the GCC crisis. Calls for the closure of Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and The New
Arab come amid a deepening diplomatic crisis which has seen SaudiArabia lead otherGulf nations in severing
contact with Qatar, closing land borders and airspace. This editorial by James Brownsell is available for republishing.

https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2017/6/23/our-saudi-uae-ban-is-a-badge-of-honour

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