

Egypt issues arrest warrant for satirist

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The state prosecutor of Egypt has issued an arrest warrant for a popular television presenter accusing him of insulting Islam and the country's president.

Saturday's warrant for Bassem Youssef, known for his satirical take on news, is the latest legal action to take aim at a critic of Mohamed Morsi.

On his official Twitter [account](#), Youssef said he would hand himself over on Sunday, "unless they kindly send a police van today and save me the transportation hassle".

The warrant marks the latest in a series of legal actions against the comedian, who has come to be known as Egypt's Jon Stewart.

Youssef's widely watched weekly show, ElBernameg, or The Programme, has become a platform for lampooning the government, opposition, media and religious leaders.

The fast-paced show has attracted a wide viewership.

Youssef has been a frequent target of legal petitions, most of them brought by lawyers who have accused him of "corrupting morals" or violating "religious principles".

The comedian has faced several court cases in the past, also accusing him of insulting Morsi.

Gamal Eid, a lawyer for Youssef, said this is the first time an arrest warrant has been issued for the comedian.

Widening campaign

Eid said the warrant fits into a widening campaign against government critics, media personalities and activists.

"The prosecution has become a tool to go after the regime's opposition and intimidate it," Eid said.

A call to a top aide to the country's chief prosecutor, Hassan Yassin, for comment went unanswered.

Opposition figures have expressed concerns about freedom of expression and assembly for what they call a crackdown on dissent at a time of deep polarisation in Egypt's politics.

The opposition charges that Morsi and the Brotherhood have failed to tackle any of the nation's most pressing problems, are trying to monopolise power and breaking promises of inclusiveness.

Morsi blames the country's woes on nearly three decades of corruption under Hosni Mubarak, his predecessor.

He accuses the opposition of stoking unrest for political gain.

On Monday, Egypt's top state prosecutor, Talaat Abdullah, issued arrest warrants for five of Egypt's most prominent democracy advocates and activists over allegations that they instigated violence last week near the Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters in Cairo.