

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST FOUND INNOCENT BY JURY

On the night of 31 May 2020, police in the city of Des Moines, Iowa, pepper sprayed, arrested, and detained journalist Andrea Sahouri while she was reporting on a Black Lives Matter protest even after she yelled “I’m press, I’m press.” Her trial finished on 10 March 2021 with a jury decision acquitting Andrea Sahouri on both charges.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Andrea told Amnesty that while she was covering the Black Lives Matter protest for her work as a journalist, police in riot gear showed up and ordered protesters to disperse, and people began running in multiple directions. As the police fired tear gas, Andrea ran with protesters into a busy commercial intersection and police charged at them. Even as she kept yelling, “I’m press, I’m press,” she was pepper sprayed on her arms and face twice at close range. She told Amnesty, “My entire face and eyes were burning, and I was crying out in pain.” The police arrested her and cuffed her in zip ties behind her back, and placed her in a police van. She was cited for failure to disperse and interference with official acts.

Despite global pressure to drop the charges, the prosecutor insisted on moving ahead with a trial for the two simple misdemeanors, which could have resulted in a fine, 30-day jail sentence, or both.

Her trial took three days and generated international media attention. On 10 March 2021, Andrea was declared innocent. She is very grateful for the worldwide support she received.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Andrea Sahouri (she/her)

THIS IS THE SECOND AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 014/21

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/3633/2021/en/>