



6 Media Activists Killed, 7 Arrested or Abducted, and 1 other injured In January 2016

Report Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Report Methodology
- IV. Report Details
- Acknowledgment

I. Introduction:

Media's situation is deteriorating in Syria amid the absence of care and attention of a number of international media organizations regarding the Syrian crisis and the sharply decrease of media coverage in the last year compared to previous years. Activists risk their lives to report what is happening in Syria, however, they are met with oppression, killing, arrests and threats. Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011 and up to this moment, the Syrian media arena has been losing its prominent media activists each month, who risk their lives to document crimes being committed against Syrian citizens. They were killed, arrested, kidnapped, harassed, seriously injured, suffered from permanent injuries, or forced to disappear amidst international silence that ignored their suffering, basic rights to be protected and safe and without holding the perpetrators accountable for their violations against them. All these violations did not change the international community's efforts towards the Syrian cause; therefore the Syrian Network for Human Rights is keen on revealing the important role of the media activists' in the uprising by issuing monthly reports which document the violations being committed against them by all conflict parties.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, SNHR chairman, says:

"Since the presence of foreign media outlets is prevented by the Syrian government, local media activists and personnel play a key role in covering the news about the most important violations, arrests, killings and destruction. Thus, in our monthly reports, we record and document the most important violations committed by different conflict parties against media personnel."





SNHR affirms the importance of protecting mass media in Syria, renews its condemnation of all violations committed against media activists, and assures the importance of respecting the freedom of working in media. The International community, characterized by the Security Council has to hold liability for not protecting journalists and media activists in Syria.

II. Executive Summary:

The most significant violations committed against media personnel in January 2016 are detailed as follows:

A. Extrajudicial Killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 6 media personnel, detailed as follows:

1. Russian Forces: killed 2 media activists
2. Extremist Islamic groups:
 - ISIL: killed 4 media activists, including a woman

B. Arrests, Abductions Releases:

SNHR recorded 10 cases of arrests, or abductions or releases, detailed as follows:

- Government Forces (security forces, army, local and foreign militias): We recorded two releases
- Extremist Islamic Groups:
 - Al Nusra Front: we recorded 4 arrests, 3 amongst which were released
 - Armed Opposition Groups: We recorded one case that was arrested then released, and another release of a different media activist.
 - Unidentified Groups: we recorded a case of abduction then its release.

C. Injuries: We recorded one injury of a media activist by ISIL

D. Violations against Properties: We recorded two cases of arrests, detailed as follows:

- Al Nusra Front: one case was recorded
- Unidentified Groups: one case was recorded





III. Report Methodology:

A citizen journalist is anyone who plays an important role in covering and publishing news even if he is not impartial as opposed to what a journalist should be. When a citizen journalist carries a weapon and gets involved directly in armed clashes, he is no longer a citizen journalist unless he completely retires from military action. This report is based mainly on SNHR's archives and investigations in addition to the testimonies of victims' families and relatives. Information we collected from local activists, and the verified pictures and videos we receive and add to our archives that we have been updating regularly since 2011.

It should be noted that these statistics and facts are the bare minimum of the violations and crimes that happened in light of the security and logistic difficulties and challenges we are facing in order to reach the locations where these violations occurred.

IV. Report Details:

A. Violations committed by government forces:

- Releases:

On 6 January 2016, government forces released media activist (D.A) after a month of his arrest. His name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons. He is a local media activist from Hama, was arrested by government forces after his house was raided on 6 December 2015.

On 29 January 2016, government forces released media activist (N.A) after a month and a half of his arrest. His name shall be kept secretive due security reasons, from Hama, a reporter for Radio Shabab channel, was arrested by government forces after a raid on his house on 12 December 2015.

B. Russian Forces:

Extrajudicial Killing:

On 12 January 2016, media activist [Louaa' Abdul Nas-er Al Mandeel](#) was [killed to a shrapnel from a rocket](#) that was shelled by alleged Russian warplanes while he was covering the shelling in Ma'art Al No'man city in Idlib suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. He was a photographer and a manager of a facebook page that covers the news about Al Ma'ara city, 28, [from Ma'art Al No'man city](#), married and a father of two children.





On 12 January 2016, media activist [Ahmad Samer Al Mandeel](#) died to an injury from a shrapnel while he was covering the news about the alleged Russian war-plane shelling on Ma'art Al No'man city in Idlib. Ahmad, 18, was a media activist for Al Sham Army, one of the armed opposition groups.



SNHR interviewed Fadi Al Mandeel, the victims' cousin:

“While Ahmad was videotaping the shelling on the city by the Russian war-planes, a rocket was shelled next to him. A fragment from the rocket injured his neck and chest, which killed him.”

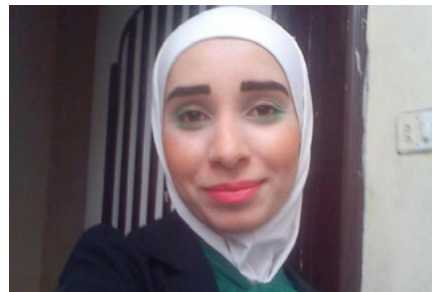
C. Extremist Islamic Groups:

- ISIL:

- Extrajudicial Killing:

On 2 January 2016, one of ISIL's commanders informed the family of [Roukaya Hassan Mohamad](#), a media activist, that they have executed her after she was charged with treason. It is worth noting that ISIL arrested Roukaya on 11 August 2015.

Roukaya is known as Nisan Ibrahim, an independent media activist from Ein Arab city in Aleppo suburbs, 31, and had a BA in Philosophy.



On 3 January 2016, ISIL media activist in Al Raqqa city broadcasted a [video](#) that depicted the killing of two media activists, Faysal Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaafar and Oubay Mohamad Abdul Ghani. They were shot to death as they were charged of videotaping ISIL's headquarters and members.

[Faysal](#) was from Al Raqqa city, 25, and managed an internet café

[Oubay Mohamad Abdul Ghani](#), 18, was a photographer from Al Raqqa





On 10 January 2016, media activist Mohamad Jamal Dahkoul died after he was shot while he was videotaping the clashes between ISIL and armed opposition on Ghazal front in northern Aleppo suburbs. Mohamad worked as a photographer for Faylak Al Sham, one of the armed opposition groups, from Termaneen town in Idlib suburbs, born in 1995 and married.



Injuries:

On 26 January 2016, media activist [Waheed Saed Yazbek](#), from Homs, Madina FM radio reporter, died while he was covering the news about ISIL's car bombing in Al Zahraa neighborhood which supports the ruling regime in Homs. As a result, [Waheed](#) sustained different injuries.



-Al Nusra Front:

- Arrests and Releases:

On 6 January 2016, Al Nusra Front arrested media activist [Ammar Aref Al Abdo](#) on one of Al Nusra's checkpoints in Jabal Al Zawiya region in Idlib suburbs. His fate is still unknown for SNHR. Ammar was an independent photographer

SNHR interviewed Nour Aref Al Abdo, Ammar's brother:

“My brother was arrested on Wednesday while he was passing by one of Al Nusra's checkpoints in Jabal Al Zawiya region. After some time I was able to communicate with one of the Nusra's former released detainees and he told me that my brother was arrested and beaten by a group that belongs to Al Nusra front, called Al Oukab. He told me that his health situation has deteriorated and his right eye was damaged. Mr. Nour said that there was no known reason for his arrest except that he used to criticize Al Nusra and that he participated in a carnival in Syrian about mobile movies where he videotaped a short documentary called “Walking towards Death””

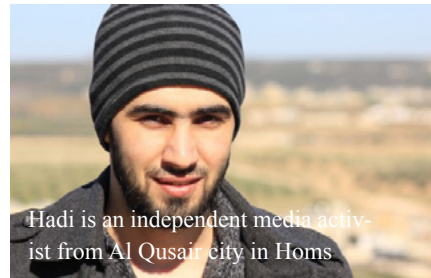




On 10 January 2016, Al Nusra Front arrested [Jameel Al Lbababidi](#) from Ma'art Al No'man city but he was released in the same day after his equipment was confiscated.

On 10 January 2016, Al Nusra front arrested the renowned activist Hadi Al Abdullah and Raed Fares after they stormed Radio Fresh in Kafr Nabel city that is under the control of armed opposition and Al Nusra. The activists were arrested after “wrongful” post on facebook. They were released on the same day after few hours when Hadi Al Abdulla signed a statement of acknowledgment of a wrongful act. Raed Fares also had to attend a court session according to acknowledgment statement.

Raed is a manager of the union officers of the revolution offices, from Kafr Nabel city in Idlib, 41, married and a father of three children



SNHR interviewed Ahmad Al Byoush, the executive manager of Radio Fresh:

“At 7:30 a.m. sharp, Al Nusra front members invaded the union’s offices and gathered several employees including media activist Hadi Al Abdulla and Raed Fares in one room. They confiscated the radio and broadcasting equipment, the laptops, cell phones, internet transmission equipment and private cameras. They also searched Hadi’s room and confiscated his private including his camera. They broke several doors in the offices under the pretext that the radio is broadcasting songs. They arrested Hadi and the radio’s manager, Raed for several hours. They released them at night after they released a statement and forced Hadi acknowledge the “wrongful” act.”

Violations against properties:

On 10 January 2016, Al Nusra front confiscated several equipments from [Radio Fresh](#) offices in Kafr Nabel in Idlib including the activists’ private properties and books. Al Nusra front declared that it had made a mistake regarding the raids and pledged to return all the confiscated equipment.





A. Armed Opposition Groups:

- Arrests and Releases:

On 16 January 2016, media activist Ezz Bashek Al Tadamon was released by Al Ababeel army, one of the armed opposition groups while he was passing by one of its checkpoints in Byasthmen town souther of Damascus on 27 November 2015.

Ezz did not tell us his real name due to security reasons, gave us his testimony after his release:

“While I was passing by one of the group’s headquarters in Sihim town, one of its members arrested me and took me to one of its prisons and interrogated me. They accused me of treason and affiliating to ISIL. I was tortured in the interrogation and after 53 days I was released due to a prisoners swap deal between ISIL and Al Ababeel Army.”

On 30 January 2016 members from an armed opposition group in eastern Ghouta arrested Abdul Mo’meen Amwar Homs from Douma city due to a law suit against the news agency he worked in since the agency conducted a survey entitled “Syria’s Future: Between Assad and Baghdadi”

Abdul Mo’meen, 20, is an independent media activist from Hamouriya city in Damascus suburbs.



A. Unidentified Groups:

Abductions:

On 4 January 2016, armed individuals abducted a media activist called [Jinkeen](#) Aliko from a region close to the local council in Al Derbasiya city in Hassaka city. They took him to a region close of Raes Al Ein and assaulted him until he became unconscious. However, they released him in the same day. We were not able to identify the group who perpetrated this crime.

[Jankeen](#) is a reporter Yekti Media that belongs to Yekti Kurdish party, from Al Derbaseya city in Hassaka suburbs.





On 11 January 2016, armed individuals abducted Mahmoud Hassan when he was next to his house in Al Sakhour neighborhood in Aleppo that is under the control of armed opposition. On 18 January 2016 Mahmoud was able to run away as we are unable to identify the perpetrators until this moment.



Mahmoud is a photographer, reporter and a member in Sunaa' Al Basma organization, which is concerned with humanitarian and relief aid, 29, from Aleppo and married

SNHR interviewed Houssien Al Hassan, Mahmoud's brother:

“While my brother was parking his car in front of his house in Al Sakhour neighborhood in Aleppo when I heard him scream. I went directly to the building's entrance and saw masked men abducting my brother. They put him in a car's trunk, a silver Mercedes car. I tried to stop them but one of the armed members pointed the gun at my face until the others left and he followed them.”

Violations against properties:

On 11 January 2016, armed individuals [raided Radio Alwan](#) office in Darat Ezza city in Aleppo western suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. They confiscated and vandalized the equipment and assaulted the guard which stopped the broadcasting. We were not able to identify the group who perpetrated this crime up to the moment of making this report.

Acknowledgment

Our heartfelt thanks go to victims' families and friends and to the local activists who contributed majorly to this report. Also, our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families.

