



## Special Report

Violations against Media Activists during March, 2014.

11 media  
activists killed  
6 abducted,  
7 injured  
and 3 media  
centers assaulted.



من اعداد فريق الشبكة السورية لحقوق الانسان

[info@sn4hr.org](mailto:info@sn4hr.org)

[www.sn4hr.org](http://www.sn4hr.org)

## Special report: Violations against Media Activists during March, 2014

11 media activists killed, six abducted, seven injured and three media centers assaulted.

This report is prepared by: The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR).

The scope of the report: Documenting the most prominent practices and violations against the media activists in the Syrian scene during March 2014.

Period covered by the report: March, 2014

### First: Executive Summary

Violations against journalists and media activists In March were divided as follows:

First: Killing: SNHR documented the killing of 11 media activists as follows:

The Government Forces:

Seven media activists were killed by the government forces (one of them was tortured to death).

The Armed groups:

Four media activists were killed by the armed groups (Two on the hands of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), one by the armed opposition, and one was killed by unidentified armed groups).

Second: Arrest and Abduction: SNHR documented six cases of abduction and arrest as follows:

Arrest: Five media activists were arrested by the government forces, one of them was released on the same day of the arrest, while the PYD arrested three media activists.

Abduction: One case of abduction was documented that was on the hands of unidentified armed groups. The abducted victim was released later.

Third: Injuries: seven media activists were injured during March as follows:

The government forces: five media activists were injured by the government forces.

The Armed groups: Two media activists were injured after they were physically assaulted by unidentified armed groups.

**Fourth: Property vandalizing: PYD raided two media centers, while an unidentified armed group raided a media center in Aleppo and confiscated its equipment.**

## **Second: Introduction**

With every day goes by, new violations are being documented against media activists regardless of the party that committed these violations. Media work has become one of the most dangerous professions in Syria, especially with the rapid escalation of the armed conflict over the past three years, and the increasing width of the conflict grounds.

Although the Syrian regime is still the most party, in quantity and kind, to commit violations against media activists, this does not change that fact that there are other armed groups that have committed similar acts (whether it supports the Syrian regime such as PYD, Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups such as ISIL, or other armed groups). These violations are spreading more with the time, and representing a notable and serious obstacle to the free independent media work.

We would like to mention that these crimes have become less over the past two months (February and March 2014), particularly after the ISIS's withdrawal from several regions and centralizing in Ar-Raqqa and few towns in Aleppo countryside, still this can be considered a positive indicator apparently for several reasons that we listed in previous reports, however we will list the most significant reasons as a remainder:

- Most of the media activists have left the regions controlled by the armed groups, especially ISIS-held regions.
- Quitting media work and choosing the silence option after the difficult price that was to be paid, which was in some cases death or abduction (there are still tens of abducted media activists, in addition to the many that have been killed such as Mohammad As-Saeed, Dyab Hajoula, and others).
- Some of the media activists had to join some armed factions and work for them in order to gain protection, this of course had its negative impact on the independent media work.

The researcher in media affairs at SNHR Huda Al-Ali says:

”it's critical for any form of free and independent media to grow and develop away from the leverage of weapon and violence, so it can play its role as one of the civil society organizations in addition to the important role that it supposed to play in the ongoing Syrian conflict of col-

lecting and sending information, and contributing in documenting the violations and crimes of all the conflict parties impartially, accurately, and honestly. This is the healthy environment that the Syrian media scene are lacking today”.

SNHR affirms that it condemns all the violation against any form of media work and truth-revealing by any part however the kind or magnitude was, also SNHR is seeking to ask all the parties to respect media work and work on insuring the safety of those who works in the media field, and to hold anyone involved in the violations against journalists and media activists accountable. Additionally SNHR emphasizes the necessity of serious actions on the civil society organizations' part to apply pressure on the Syrian government and armed groups and to stop it using proper means.

### **Third: Details**

Violation committed by the Syrian government forces

The Syrian regime forces have killed seven media activists; one of them died under torture, additionally the Syrian regime arrested two; one of them was released a few hours later. PYD forces arrested three media activists and released them later, it also raided one media center as it was trying to arrest tow media activists. Furthermore five media activists were injured by the Syrian regime while they were covering the clashes.

Starting with the most significant incident; torturing the media activist Marwan Ismail Arsan to death in Damascus after he has been prisoned for more than a year (11 March).

The media activists who were killed in March are:

Omar Farid Ash-Shahma was killed under artillery shelling in Bosra Ash-Sham – Daraa countryside (2 March), Mustafa Al-Hammadi “Amir Andalusi”, who is the admin of the page “Adasat Shab Rayeq” on Facebook, was killed while he was covering in Khan Shaikhoun (7 March), the Canadian journalist Ali Mustafa was killed under a barrel bombs shelling on Al-Haydariya neighborhood in Aleppo while he was covering (9 March), Mohammad Ghaleb Ash-Shuhari, a member of Qadsiya media team, was killed by the Syrian regime planes that was targeting Qadsiya in Damascus countryside (19 March), Udai Redq Zانبقا was killed while covering the clashes in Qunietra countryside (24 March), and Yousuf Ahmad Al-Khalaf who was killed by a sniper while he was covering in Mourak – Hama (27 March).

The Syrian government arrested also:

The Filmmaker Mohammad Malas at the Syrian – Lebanon borders as he was heading to Ge-

neva to attend a film festival, he was then transferred to the “State Security” branch in Damascus and was released a few hours later (4 March), also the Syrian security forces arrested the media activist Manna’ Ahmad head of Az-Zahira coordination in Damascus (9 March).

The Kurdish forces arrested the following media activists:

Mustafa Abdi manager of “Kouani Kurd” website in Ain Al-Arab as he was on his way back from Turkey (5 March), he was arrested by Al-Asayesh forces that are affiliated to PYD, he was released two days later. Also PYD arrested the media activist who works at “Talabat Ifreen” coordination Wahid Mustafa in Ifreen – Aleppo countryside (17 March), he was released the following day. Raman Hissou, who is a member of Amouda coordination, was also arrested by PYD (19 March) where he was physically assaulted and his equipment was confiscated before he was released the following day.

PYD forces raided the house of Mahmoud Kourish, who is a member of “Azadi Ifreen” coordination, and also the house of Salah Illou, who is a member of “Jyan Ifreen” coordination as the PYD was trying to arrest both of them (17 March).

The media activists who were injured in March are:

Baraa Al-Ma’qlani under shelling while he was covering in Daraa (17 March), Mohammad Yassin, who the office manager of “As-Souri Al-Hour” channel, was injured as he was covering the clashes at Ash-Shaikh Najjar front (13 March), Mohammad An-Nqawa, who is a member of the media office in An-N’iema town, was injured while he was covering the events at Gharz prison in Daraa (19 March), Aleppo News Network’s reporter “Ali Abu-Ja’far” was injured under the shelling that targeted B’idien neighborhood with barrel bombs (21 March), and Abu-Zaid Az-Zou’bi who was injured while he was covering in Ghriezef – Daraa (21 March).  
Violation committed by Al-Qaeda-affiliated armed groups or rebels

ISIS executed two media activists in Ar-Raqqa, while unidentified armed groups killed another and the armed opposition killed a fourth one. A media activist was abducted, physically assaulted, and tortured for five days by unidentified armed groups, while ISIS has released three foreign journalists after they have been prisoned for months. Moreover an unidentified group has raided a media activist’s house, hit him, and confiscated his equipment.

### **Details:**

The most notable events was executing the two media activists Abdulmuhammen Al-Jaber and

Saad Jajaan at the hand of ISIS (27 March) after it kidnapped them in Der Az-Zouqabel countryside for around 10 days, this was because ISIS declared them non-Muslims as they worked with Syrian Emergency Task Force organization.

The media activist Ahmad Mahmoud Al-Ali “Abu-Ja’far Al-Mansour”, who was the manager of At-Tadamoun coordination in Damascus, by an unidentified armed group in Al-Yarmouk camp (8 March), also Al-Mayadien Channel’s report Omar Abdulqader was killed by the rebels while he was covering the armed clashes at Der Ezzor military airbase (8 March).

The following media activists were abducted:

“Smart” Netowrk’s report was an armed group in front of his home and took him to unknown place where he was tortured, insulted, offended, assaulted for five consecutive days which left several bruises and wounds on several parts of his body and head, they made sure to torture him more because he was working in the media field, the report assured that he they threatened to kill him too. He was released on (5 March).

The ISIS freed the Spanish journalist Mark Markhendas (2 March) after he has been prisoned since 4/9/2013, Mark was arrested at an ISIS’s checkpoint in Hama countryside, also ISIS freed the Spanish Journalists Javier Esponisa and Ricardo Garcia after they were kidnapped six months ago on the hands of ISIS (30 March).

Hamoud Al-Eossa “Asir Al-Hurriya” (The Freedom Prisoner), who is the head of Der Ezzor rebels’ squad, was injured after a failed assassination attempt by an unidentified armed group in Al-Mayadien – Der Ezzor (12 March).

Furthermore the media activists Khaled Al-Majd’s house was raided in Aleppo by a masked armed group, the masked men assaulted him and stole his equipment including his computer, mobile, and camera (7 March).

#### **Fourth: Appendixes and Attachments**

Pictures and videos of the media activists that whose names were mentioned in this report

Victims, Wounded, and prisoners targeted by the Syrian regime

The media activist Omar Farid Ash-Shahma

The media activist Mustafa Al-Hammadi “Amir Andalusí”

The media activist Khaled Al-Hussani

The Canadian Journalist Ali Mustafa

The media activist Mohammad Ghaled  
Ash-Shuhari

The filmmaker Mohammad Malas

The media activist Udai Reda Zambqa

The media activist Raman Hassou

The media activist Yousuf Ahmad Al-  
Khalaf

The media activist Abu-Zaid Az-Zou'bi



The media activist Mohammad An-Naqawa

**[Pictures and videos of the victims and abducted targeted by the armed groups](#)**

[The media activist Saad Al-Jajan](#)

[The media activist Ahmad Mahmoud Al-Ali](#)

[Al-Mayadien channel reporter Omar Abdulgader](#)

[The media activist Khaled Abulmajd](#)

[“Smart” Network reporter](#)

The media activist Baraa Al-Maf’lani

[The Spanish reporter Mark Markhendas](#)

[The two Spanish reporters Javier Espinosa and Ricardo Garcia Vilanova](#)

The media activist Mustafa Abdi

## Acknowledgments

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