

Major violations of media freedom in Syria, December 2013

Documented by [SNHR](#)

documenting the most prominent violations against media activists in Syria as murder, torture to death, arrest, and abduction Killing 22 media victims including 2 tortured to death by security forces

First: Summary

Violations committed against media activists for this month distributed as follows:

- 1- Kill: 14 victims of media activists and journalists, Syrian regime killed 13 of them including one under torture, armed group killed an Iraqi journalist.
- 2- Detention and Abduction: Syrian Network for Human Rights documented 26 cases distributed as follows.
 - Abduction: 19 media activist have been abducted this month by the Islamic state of Iraq and Levant , and 7 by unidentified armed groups.
 - Should be mentioned that 12 of them were released after of day of abduction (9 by the Islamic state of Iraq and Levant , and 3 by unidentified group) While there are other 14 journalists, photographer and media activists still abduct (11 by the Islamic state of Iraq and Levant , and 4 by unidentified group
One of the media activist was released after been abducted last month.
- 3- Injured: 4 media activist were injured: 3 by government forces and 1 by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant.
- 4- Shelling and destruction: 8 media centers have been stormed, and burn almost 1000 copies of We rush out for freedom newspaper.

Second: Introduction:

It looks that Islamic state of Iraq and Levant are insisting to leave his own fingerprint (the same that distinguish Syrian regime for many years) and to impose his one-way vision and laws by arms, especially in areas totally or partially controlled by them as Aleppo and Raqqa, repeated violations against freedom of media are no longer accidental or individual acts, but they seem to have become an approach and clear vision among its leaders, and trying to forcibly applied on the reality of new-born media.

Although Syrian regime is systematically and continuously undisputed topping the killing scene in the Syrian media field, but Islamic Iraq and Levant state is undisputed topping the abduction, terror, threaten media scene, and now media freedom are besieged by those two sides:

- 1- the Syrian government.
- 2- Armed groups; their negative rule appeared lately and clearly on the media scene, particularly The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant organization .

While there are still some media activists struggling for third path will be ruled by freedom of professional media work, and upgrade this work from just being a mean or platform to publish news that deployed certain and political goals and agendas, unfortunately this attitude could not hold out too much against the streams of escalating violence, particularly in areas outside the regime's control, where armed groups headed by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant are escalating violations day after day , and more importantly the lack of truly international support aim to establish civil society institutions instead of the regime's one, and bridge the gaps that fill by armed groups right now.

As a result: Syrian media activist conditions are as follows:

- 1- Fleeing out of the country and work from abroad
- 2- Join some armed factions, work with them for protection and care.
- 3- Silence and retired of media work, after lot of them have paid dearly, even their lives (we still have dozens of abducted like Mohamad Al-Saed, Diab Hajoulah, and others), as many number of foreign journalists declined entering areas out of regime's control.

SNHR reaffirmed its condemnation of the continuous violations against media freedom and convey the truth of any party and whatever type or size disparity.

As the network seeks actively from all parties, to respect media freedom and to ensure the safety of media activists, with accounting involved in violations against journalists and media activists.

SNHR also emphasis the need to move hard and fast by security council to issue resolutions oblige all the parties to allow free media coverage.

Third: Report Details

A- Major violation against media freedom committed by government forces in Syria during December 2013:

Killed Victims:

SNHR monitored during December 2013, raise of media activists' victims number in Syria, where 13 media activists were killed , one of them tortured to death in detention, child photographer (under the age of 18) was killed too, and at least 3 were injured, and one journalist was arrested for few days.

Details:

- 1- Syrian security forces killed Syrian- Palestinian Artist and Media activist Hasan Al-Hasan, he was tortured to death in Military Security Branch (235) known as Palestine branch, after 3 months of detention , 15/12/2013.
- 2-Media activist Sharif Tabaji, manager of Syrian media centre in Nabk city, he was helping in evacuate wounds in Nabk, of Damascus countryside, 2/12/2013
- 3-Media activist Mohamad Birnawi, shelling on Doma , 3/12 /2013.
- 4- Media activist Ahmad Nafari, correspondent of Media centre in Nabk city, cause of shelling during covering clashes in Alsad road of Daraa, 18/12 /2013.

- 5- Media activist and photographer Mazen Jarkas, killed in shelling on Naqarin front of Aleppo while he was prepare field report, 18/12 /2013.
- 6- Photographer of Reuters Mlhim Barakat (under the age of 18) , during covering events in clashes around Alkindi hospital in Aleppo, 20/12 / 2013
- 7- Media activist Mohamad Abdulhai , during covering clashes in Aleppo countryside, 23/12/2013.
- 8- Media activist Mohamad Ashor , by sniper bullet in Bibila of Damascus countryside, 26/12/2013.
- 9- Media activist Eng Ahmad Al-Haji, a founder of Alkifah charity society , killed cause of shelling by barrel bombs on Tareq Albab of Aleppo , 28 /12 /2013.
- 12- Media activist Ahmad Toama by warplane shelling of Doma of Damascus countryside 28/12 /2013.
- 13- Media activist Mohamad Ashmar spokesman of Capital Beat heart, killed during covering clashes in Adra of Damascus countryside, 29/12 /2013.
- 14- Media activist Khalil Mahmoud , during covering clashes in Dier ez Zoor , 31/12 /2013.

Injuries :

SNHR also documented at least 3 injuries, in during covering events in the battle fields, and they are:
Media activist :Mahmoud Habou member of Aleppo media centre, while covering shelling by barrel bombs on different neighborhood in Aleppo, 15/12 /2013.

Media activist and member of Media bureau of Al-Bab city :Mazen Alkshikh, while covering clashes near Kindi hospital in Aleppo, 21/12 /2013.

Media activist Mohamad Khulif member of media bureau of Free Dair ez-Zoor radio station network, fragments in his leg while covering clashes 22/12 /2013

Detention and Abduction:

Arrest by Syrian governorate:

Syrian Security forces arrested in 1/12/2013, Nael Al-Harir musician, writer and member of Policies bureau in building Syrian state movement, then released after 5 days.

B- Major violation against media freedom committed by armed opposition in Syria during December 2013:

SNHR recorder unprecedented raise in kidnapping workers in the media field by armed groups, (led by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant organization especially in the area under their control), 26 media activist including two journalists from Spain, and one from Turkey were kidnapped, in addition to the kill Iraqi journalist in Idlib countryside by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant organization , and they injury another media activist, 8 media centers were stormed , burn almost 1000 copies of We rush out for freedom newspaper after encounter distribution team. 10 media activists were kidnapped by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant, and 4 by others armed groups

Other 12 media activists were kidnapped for one days and released in the next day (9 by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant, and 3 by others armed groups)

As another media activist was released.

Details:

Killed Victims:

Yaser Jmili: Iraqi independent photographer was killed after been kidnapped in Idlib countryside north of Syria, after spending almost 10 days in preparing report for Spanish newspaper 4/12/2013. While other violations and crimes diversities among kidnapping, detention, threaten, attack and seizure media centers, including

Abduction :

- Kidnapping two Spanish journalists Espinosa and Ricardo Garcia Vilanova in Tal- Abiad in Raqqa governorate by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant in 16/9/2013, as El Mundo newspaper and their families announced in press conference that was held on 10/12/2013 news after nearly three months of their disappearance.

- Media activist Hamed Orabi with one of his friend were kidnapped by unidentified armed group in North of Tartous 11/12/2013

- Milliyet: the Turkish newspaper said that Bunyamin Aygun was disappear in Syria during journalist duty two weeks ago and they lost connection with him, Jihadest armed group suspected of involvement of his kidnapped, 17/12 /2013.

- Kidnapped of writer and opposed political activist Khalaf Al-Jarbouaa (ex-detainee in regime's prisons for 5 years)by masked armed groups from Nakhil cafeteria in Raqqa , 17/12 /2013, member of Islamic State of Iraq and Levant are suspected of involvement of his kidnapped.

- Masked men are suspected to belong to Islamic State of Iraq and Levant to be of involvement of his kidnapped raided Shada Alhurria TV office in Kalasa neighborhood of Aleppo 26/12/2013, shot media activist Abdullah Mohamad in his head and abdomen, prevent the people there from saving him and now he is in critical condition, kidnapped other six media activists in the office and they are: Maher Hasromi, Amin Abo Mohamad, Saif Allah Alhur, Tim Alshami, Sultan Alshami, and Abu Younes.

- Those crimes was repeated this month, 27/12/2013: Milad Shihabi correspondent and photographer of Shahba Press abducted by masked men after attacking Hanano Media Network office, stole all the contents of the office as cameras, computers, Satellite internet, electric generator, and all precious things, they stayed for more than half an hour, where they beat, curses, yelled in very loud voice to terrify the members and neighbors.

- Masked men raided media bureau of Syria live network in Turkman mountain of Lattakia countryside, stole the equipments, kidnapped media activist Tarek Sheikho 30/12/2013, Islamic state of Iraq and Levant raid the headquarter of Ghorbal magazine in Kafar Nobl of Idlib countryside, seized all equipments, kidnapped editor-in-chief media activist Mohamad Sallom

in 30/12/2013, kidnapping campaign against media activist in Kafar Nobl continued: Yousef Al-Ahmad member in Mantara magazine kidnapped for one day 31/12/2013.

- Kafar Nobal :Islamic state of Iraq and Levant raid the headquarter of Radio Fresh, and media centre in the city, kidnapped seven media activist for few hours (Salah Jaar, Ahmad Baiosh, Hamoud Jnid, Ahmad Janak, Abdullah Hamadi, Saad Aabi) and sized all equipments of the activists.

- In the same context : Nusra Front seized headquarter of reporters without borders in Raqqa 8/12/2013, Islamic state of Iraq and Levant burned almost 1000 copies of “ We rush out for freedom” newspaper and other revolutionary newspaper, after encounter distribution team at barrier in Raqqa entrance and accused them of disbelieve.

- Arrested media activist eng. Ahmad AL-Ali by unknown armed group in Raqqa and released after one day 3/12/2013, correspondent of Sham News Network Moad'az Bi Allah arrested by Islamic movement of Levant Freeman and released in 8/12/2013, media activist Mohamad Siti in Saraqeb arrested by Islamic state of Iraq and Levant's members and released in the same day.

- Media Activist Mohimn Alhalabi was kidnapped in Easter countryside of Aleppo by masked armed group 26/11/2013 and found tied in a house in a village near to Khanaser of Southern Idlib countryside 12/4/2013.

Fourth: Conclusions and Recommendations :

Legal Conclusions:

Rule 34 of Customary IHL the applicable law in the armed conflicts

Rule 34. Civilian journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected as long as they are not taking a direct part in hostilities.

- Widespread unlawful killing operations committed by government forces, not only don't respect media nature, but also deliberately target media activists and workers since the beginning of Syrian revolution to this date, the ongoing fact that we lose as a monthly average nearly 20 victims between media activists and reporters.

It proves that the violations committed by government forces are systematic state policy, it evidenced by the large number of media victims in all of the Syrian governorates, so it is crime against humanity according to the article 7 of Rome Statute.

- Syrian Government's Forces deliberately committed those crimes under non-international armed conflicts which is considered as a war crime according to Article 8 of the Rome Statute. Armed groups in Syria, especially Islamic state of Iraq and Levant committed multiple violations against Syrian medias, which amount to war crimes

Syrian National Coalition Of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces should follow-up and account those responsible of such violations and should ensure that no one of them escape punishment. SNHR reaffirmed its condemnation of the continuous violations against media freedom and convey the truth of any party and whatever type or size disparity.

As the network seeks actively from all parties, to respect media freedom and to ensure the safety of media activists, with accounting involved in violations against journalists and media activists. SNHR also emphasis the need to move hard and fast by security council to issue resolutions oblige all the parties to allow free media coverage.

Recommendations :

- Intensification of press and media coverage about the tragedies and violations committed against the Syrian people
- Supporting the struggle of the Syrian people and their revolution to get freedom and democracy.
- Train Syrian media activists in order to upgrade their media and press level

Fifth: Attachments:

A- Victims and wounded by Government's forces :

[Arrest Nael Hariri](#)

[Sharif Tabaji](#)

[Ahmad Nafari](#)

[Mohamad Birnawi](#)

[Palestinian artist Hasan Hasan
activist Odai Mohamad Bardan](#)

[Abdulnaser Alshanbour](#)

[Mohamad Sharifa](#)

[Maher Hamzah](#)

[Abdulhadi Katish tortured to death](#)

[Child Ahmad Saleh](#)

[Osama Swidani](#)

[Amine Kojo](#)

[Moumen Dalati](#)

[Yousef Alsaer](#)

[Abdullah Abu Mohamad](#)

[Mohamad Khalaf Alazzo](#)

[Abdullah Barghout](#)

[Mohanad Obaid](#)

[Hasan Othman](#)

[Jean-Pierre Duthion](#)

[Blogger Tal Almalohi](#)

B- Victims and Abduction by Armed groups :

Destruction in Hanano Media Network office and Shahba media [27/12/2013](#)

Spanish [journalists Espinosa and Ricardo Garcia Vilanova](#)

Iraqi Photographer [Yaser Jmili](#)

Photographer [Bunyamin Aygun](#)

Media bureau in [Kafar Nobl](#)

[Mohimin Husain](#)

[Ahmad Al-ALi](#)

[Mohamad Sitti](#)

[Hamed Orabi](#)

[Milad Shihabi](#)

[Khalaf Jarbouaa](#)

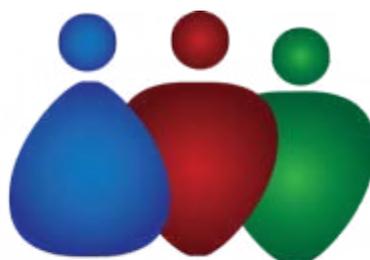
[Hamoud Jnid](#)

[Abdullah Saloum](#)

[Tarek Sheikho](#)

[Mohamad Salom](#)

[Yousef Ahmad](#)



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