



WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY IN SYRIA!

Violations In April

19 media activists
have been killed
while 14 media activists
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or kidnapped
and 15 have been injured.
Four media centers have been
raided and destroyed.

This report includes:

- The most significant press freedom violations during the past three years
- Press freedom violations in April

Monday 5 May 2014



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World Press Freedom Day in Syria!

This report includes:

The most significant press freedom violations during the past three years

Press freedom violations in April

1st: The most significant press freedom violations during the past three years

The most horrible violations and crimes against journalists and media activists are still being perpetrated by various armed sides, which emerged in the last year as a strong competitor to the Syrian regime which is still the strongest and most notable party who perpetrated these crimes. These crimes had a negative impact on the press freedom and its professionalism. Media activists in Syria are becoming victims of horrible acts including killing, torturing, arresting, kidnapping, threatening, pursuing, and freedom repression. This made the media work one of the most dangerous professions in Syria, especially with the rising and non-stopping violence of the armed conflict for more than three years. Besides the expansion and the complexity of the conflicting factions' territories.

To imagine how big the disaster of the media work in Syria is, the horrifying numbers and facts that came into existence during the past three years of revolution in Syria must be shown. Government forces have killed since the beginning of the revolution until the end of April 2014 no less than **328** media activists; among them were photographers, journalists, civil journalists, and media activists; including **12** foreign media workers. **16** media activist have been killed

in April alone; three of them were tortured to death.

Government forces have arrested no less than 848 media workers, they have been tortured brutally which killed 19 of them under torture inside the detention centers of the various sides; the last but not the least of them was “PalestineToday” channel’s journalist: Belal Ahmed Belal.

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), who is affiliated to Al-Qaeda, has killed no less than 13 media activist and arrested 42 others; 18 of them were released while 23 are still prisoned.

The armed opposition has killed no less than eight media activists; among them were two media workers affiliated to the Syrian government, while 37 others have been kidnapped and arrested.

These killings, torturing, and kidnapping acts made hundreds of media workers leave the country after they’ve realized it’s impossible to work inside Syria because of many reasons; the most important of which was the lack of safety, freedom, and the appropriate environment. We’re talking about a continuous bleeding and hundreds of media workers that the media field are losing. Killing and kidnapping of foreign journalists can’t be ignored anymore as it pushed the foreign media agencies to prohibit and warn its journalists from entering Syria. All of that puts us in front of a deteriorated reality that is considered a crisis in every way.

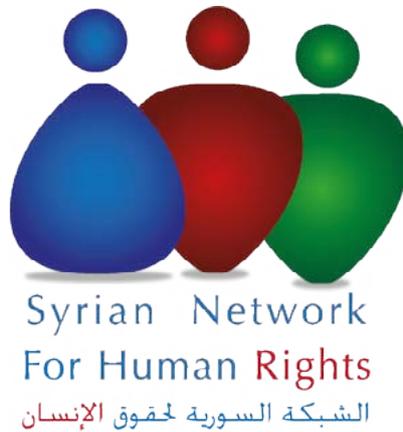
In other words, the media reality in some of the hot areas can be summarized into the following points:

- The Syrian media field suffers from a big increasing void, and the lack of an appropriate environment for the press to work in due to the increasing violence against media workers by all armed sides, mainly by the governmental forces and ISIS.
- The Syrian regime, by a big difference, takes the lead, in quality and quantity, of the crimes against media activists, as there are new incidents of torturing- to-death that involve the Syrian regime every month in addition to tens of media activists that are still in arbitrary detention. This systemized policy of targeting media activists through killing, harassing, and pursuing them hasn’t changed.
- The growing of war journalism on the account of free civil media journalism, especially in the official Syrian media, where the idea of the armed or fighting journalist has been spread widely, as some people tried to combine between the profession of journalism and fighting, which violates the basic media standards. This wasn’t hidden as some of the journalists published pictures of them holding weapons proudly or pictures of them being involved in military operations. This is true also for some of the opposing media activists who had to join armed troops seeking protection and safety.
- ISIS, who is affiliated to Al-Qaeda, was able to impose its rules by force in the areas that it controls, especially in Ar-Raqqa city and some of Aleppo countryside towns through methodological silencing voices and oppressing freedoms forcibly in a manner that is similar to the the Syrian regime; killing, torturing, kidnapping, pursuing and harrasing. This evoked some of the activists

to launch a campaign under the slogan “Ar-Raqqa is being slaughtered in silence” to highlight the violations and crimes in the city. On the other side, ISIS has threatened the supervisors of the campaign to kill them as it charged them with disbelieving and secularism, and launched huge arresting campaigns among the internet cafes.

- It's noticed lately the huge deterioration of press freedom on the Syrian lands under the control of the Kurdish party PYD as the party and its people are arresting, pursuing, beating, torturing, and threatening media activists without any hesitation. In some cases they exile some of the media activists to Iraqi Kurdistan under the charge of betrayal in order to silence other voices and scare those who works in the news section.

SNHR affirms the necessity of quick serious actions by the civil organizations and committees to press on the decision-makers around the world in order to stop the bleeding of the media field in Syria and to highlight the suffering of the Syrian media activists widely. SNHR also affirms its condemnation of all the violations against press freedom and truth transferring by any side whatever its type or size. Additionally we emphasize the necessity of respecting the media freedom and those who work in the media field, this field must have its due attention and consideration. Furthermore, All those who are involved in the violations against journalists and media activists must held accountable.



The most significant violations against media activist in April 2014

19 media activists have been killed while 14 media activists have been arrested or kidnapped and 15 have been injured. Four media centers have been raided and destroyed. Violations against media activists are divided as follows:

1st: killing: SNHR have documented the killing of 19 media activist, divided as follows:

Government forces: They've killed 16 (including three that were tortured to death, one among them was younger than 18 years old)

Armed groups: three media activists have been killed on the hands by armed groups.

2nd: arresting and kidnapping:

we've documented 14 cases of kidnapping and arresting, in addition to releasing 4 foreign journalists, divided as follows:

Arresting: there are no arresting incidents by government forces.

Kidnapping: four media activist have been kidnapped by PYD

Where five have been kidnapped by ISIS; three by Jabhat Al-Nusra, and two by unidentified armed groups (one of them has been beaten and tortured)

Four foreign journalists have been released, who were arrested by ISIS months ago.

3rd: injuries:

we've documented 15 injury cases among media activists, divided as follows:

Government forces: they've injured 10 media activists.

Armed groups: they've injured five media activists, among

them was one has been beaten by unidentified armed group.

4th: property violations:

an artist's gallery has been raided by security men while a media center in Aleppo has been shelled by governmental forces, in addition to the burning of a media center in Aleppo by unknown masked men, and a media activist house has been raided by YPG forces.

Details

Government forces violations:

Government forces have killed 16 media activist; among them were three than have been tortured to death in detention centers and a media activist, who was younger than 18 years old, has been killed by shelling, while PYD forces have kidnapped four media activists, exiled two of them outside the country and released the third after few days and prisoned the fourth for 15 days under the charge of terrorism. Government forces have shelled a media center while t security men have raided an artist gallery in Damascus. Additionally a media activist's house was raided by YPG forces. 10 media activists were injured by government forces while covering the clashes.

Incidents details:

We'll begin with the most significant and bloodiest cases. Government forces torturing 3 media activists to death:

[Belal Ahmed Belal](#), a director in (Palestine Today) Channel, has been killed under torture in Saydnaya prison four months ago, and it hasn't been announced until April 29. He has been arrested by the air-force intelligence forces in Damascus on 13/9/2012 before he was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the field military court in Aleppo.

The artist [Fadi Abdullah Murad](#) has been killed under torture in security centers about six months ago. It hasn't been announced until Apr 7, when the security forces has given his ID card to his parents. Fadi was arrested on 8/1/2013 on Al-Mazzeah highway while he was coming back from his work, his family didn't know anything about him.

[Kenan Rakwan Al-Atassi](#), a founder of (Al-Jazeera Al-Homsyia) network, has been tortured to death in 2 military intelligence's 248 security center in Damascus after being arrested at one of the air force's checkpoints in Homs on 14/11/2012, while his parents have known nothing about his death until 9/3/2014 when they called his parents and asked them to come to retrieve take his papers.

The killing of the media activists during the covering of the events has continued, and they are:

The well-known media activist [Mohammad Moadh Abd-ARahman](#) "Abo Mahdi" by his injury of a ground-ground rocket in [Kafar-Zeeta in Hama](#) countryside on Apr 25, it's mentioned that he's young-

er than 18 years old, [Mohammad Qasem Al-Shabeeb](#), a correspondent at (Jabal Al-Zawya Today) network on Apr 3 while covering the clashes in Jisr Al-Soghoor in Idlib countryside, [Saleem Okasha](#) “Abo Moaffaq” while he was covering field events in Al-Maleeha in Damascus countryside on Apr 5, [Owna Abd-Al-Samad](#), a founder of HOMS page, by a car bomb in besieged Homs which was prepared to break the siege and he was near it accidentally on Apr 6, Mohammad Al-Rowayse while he was covering the battles in Al-Qunaytera countryside on Apr 7, [Ahmad Mohammad Yahya](#) under shelling in Al-Rashedden neighborhood on Apr 10, [Mohammad Hosny](#) under shelling while he was covering the events in Al-Qunaytera countryside on Apr 11, [Yahya Noqrosh Noqrosh](#) “Abo Hamza Al-Dameery” by indiscriminate shelling on Apr 12 while he was covering events in Al-Qalamoon in Damascus countryside, he’s a member of the media and the political offices member and a moderator in “ElBaraka Belshabab” magazine, [Tawfeeq Ismaeel Al-Hussain](#) “Abo Ismaeel Al-Deery” on Apr 15, he was shot in the head while he was covering the clashes in Dier-AzZoor city, [Samer Dallof](#) “Abo Fawzi” in Job-AlJandali in Homs by shelling on Apr 19, [Ahmad Mohammad Hajjo](#) by shelling while he was covering the events near Al-Rashedden school in Aleppo on Apr 20, [Ahmad Abd-ALKareem](#) “Abo Al-Fath Al-Sakhoory” by shelling while he was covering the events in [Tareeq Al-Entharat](#) in Aleppo on Apr 21, and [Abd Al-Qader Abd Al-Azeez Moahhad](#) in Sarmeen in Idlib countryside by air shelling on the city on Apr 26.

While the following media activists were kidnapped:

[Mohammad Mahmmod Basahr](#), a correspondent in “Rodaw” channel in Al-Hasaka province by PYD forces on Apr 23, and he has been released on Apr 28.

An armed group called “YPG martyrs families’ foundation” has kidnapped “Rodaw” channel correspondent, [Beshowa Bahlowi](#), and “Orient News” “[Rooday Ibrahim](#)” on Apr 19, and exiled them to Iraqi Kurdistan and threatened to kill them if they came back to Syria. It’s mentioned that they have been arrested before by the Syrian regime by PYD forces.

On the other side, on Apr 24 YPG forces have threatened the journalist [Jomard Hamdoosh](#), “Rodaw” channel correspondent, to arrest and exile him if he continues covering the news and it has broken into his house and messed it, which made him hide as he knew that his house is under surveillance. In a recent incident on 29/1/2014, PYD forces have prohibited him from journalism work in Afreen Area. The air force intelligence has raided the gallery of the well-known artist Yusuf Abdalky and messed it on Apr 14. Abdalky is considered one of the most significant Syrian intellectuals whom has been arrested and harrassed many times.

The regime forces have shelled the office of “Sham News Network” which damaged it considerably. In addition, the People Court, affiliated to PYD, in Afreen-Aleppo countryside on Apr 29 has sentenced the media activist [Hameed Jamal Hammo](#) to 15 years in prison with the charge of terrorism after being arrested for longer than two months.

Furthermore, the following have been injured:

The media activist [Ward Al-Haj](#) “Ward Al-Foraty” while covering the clashes in Al-Moathafeen neighborhood in Dier-AzZoor on Apr 2, [Mohammad Al-Tayeb](#) and [Ali Al-Zajel](#), the correspondents of (Aleppo Media Center), they were shot with a machine gun while covering the clashes in Al-Ameryea neighborhood on Apr 9, [Haj Yosdr](#), (Halab News) network correspondent, he was shot while covering the events in [Al-Sheikh Najjar](#) on Apr 9, [Abd Al-Elah AlHalaby](#), (Halab News) network correspondent, by a mortar on Al-Ma’asaraniya neighborhood while covering the events there on Apr 9, [Khaled Al-Taklawy](#), Deir-AzZoor channel correspondent, while covering the clashes near Deir-AzZoor military airbase on Apr 9, Abo Zayd Al-Homsi, he was shot while covering the events in Rankoos in Al-Qalamoon on Apr 13, [Byarphilip Godren](#), BBC channel photographer, by mortar shelling on [Mohsen Tarkawy](#) housing center in Al-Dablan neighborhood in Homs, and it’s likely done by regime forces on Apr 16, [Abo Al-Feda](#) and [Ali Ahmad Yaseen](#) by a thermobaric rocket fragments while covering the events in Job Al-Jandaly neighborhood in Homs on Apr 21.

Other violations:

Recently, the concept of the armed or fighting journalist has been spread widely, where some tried to combine between journalism profession and fighting at the same time, which violates the basic media standards. Which violates the basic media standards. This wasn’t hidden as some of the journalists published pictures of them holding weapons proudly or pictures of them being involved in military operations.

For example, the official Syrian TV channel’s correspondent Aws Hassan appeared rising the victory sign next to a barrel bomb inside one of the regime warplanes on Apr 4. It’s likely that he was preparing to drop the barrel.

OTV channel appeared carrying a machine gun in Kasab in Latakia countryside, then he took a photo of himself in the same place with the camera, and in a video report done by him he appears on a very leading place in the front line with the Syrian army men.

Violations by armed groups

The armed opposition has killed three media activist, while ISIS has released four foreign journalists a few months ago. Moreover Five civil-journalists have been kidnapped; one of them has been released after a few days, while unidentified armed groups have kidnapped two media activists, and three were kidnapped by Jabhat Al-Nusra, while five media activists have been injured, and one media center have been burnt by unidentified masked men, and least but not last Reuters agency photographer were a subject to a failed assassination attempt.

Incidents details:

First with the most significant incident, the killing of three of Al-Manar team, namely Hamzah Al-Haj Hasan, the cameraman Mohammad Mentash, and the technical Haleem Alwa in Ma'aloola in Damascus countryside on Apr 14. Three of the armed opposition men were suspected to be the killers, the story was that they shot the cars of Al-Manar channel, after we verified the pictures and videos we received, it is safe to say that it is more likely that the team was with military personnel the Syrian army and the car they were in didn't have the channel logo or press word. Mohamad Qasas and Ja'afar Hasan were injured in the same incident. Some speculations suggest that some of Al-Manar team were armed then as there was a published photo of Al-Manar correspondent while he's carrying a rocket and wearing military clothes.

The four French correspondents, [Edouard Elias](#), [Didier Francois](#), [Nicolas Henin](#) and [Pierre Torres](#), were released after they've been kidnapped by ISIS since June 2013.

ISIS kidnapped:

AlJazeera channel correspondent, [Omar Al-Hazza](#)'a known as "Ammar Al-Haj" on Apr 10 on Teshreen dam checkpoint in Ar-Raqqa while going to Turkey.

The media activist [Ahmad Esam Al-Haj](#), a member of Ar-Raqqa coordination, and the media activist Eesa Al-Ghazi by ISIS in Ar-Raqqa, and they raided his house and took the computer and the mobile on Apr 17, and then they released the first one on Apr 29. This was a part of a raiding and arresting campaign against the activists in Ar-Raqqa after a demonstration in Al-Mansour Street that was a part of the campaign that the activists in Ar-Raqqa started under the name of "Ar-Raqqa is being slaughtered in silence."

Sham News Network's correspondent and a member of the media office at the local council of Ar-Raqqa city [Al-Motazbellah Al-Hassan](#) was kidnapped a month and a half ago by ISIS as he was coming back from Turkey at Al-Forousiya military checkpoint in Ar-Raqqa.

The media activist [Hasan Al-Hamdo](#) "Abo Ayham", the former member of the media office of Manbij city in Aleppo countryside, on Mar 24 by ISIS. They arrested him based on his former work in the media field and his current work in communications.

While unidentified groups have kidnapped:

AlJazeera correspondent in Idlib, [Alaa'a Al-Deen Yousef](#), by an unidentified armed group near Darkoosh Bridge on Apr 5 while he was on his way to Kasab to cover the events there, then he was released on 12/4/2014 after being threatened, beat, and tortured. The identity of the kidnappers has been censored to seek his safety.

The media activist [Hussain Al-Khattab](#), by an unidentified armed group on Apr 12 while he was going from Manbej to the eastern areas of Aleppo to cover the events there.

While each of the media activist [Mo'ath Talab](#), his fellow media activist [Faysal Dahmoosh](#), and the media activist [Omran Al-Talab](#) were kidnapped by Al-Sharea authority that represents Jabhat Al-

Nusra in Dier Az-Zoor on Apr 22 after raiding their media center and taking their internet device.

While the injured were as follows:

The Syrian News channel cameraman, [Akram Salman](#) by a mortar fragments while covering the battles in Kasab in Latakia countryside on Apr 5, he was wearing a military clothes then.

The media activist [Haydar Rezq](#), Sham FM radio's correspondent, by the armed opposition while covering the events in Job Al-Jandaly in Homs on Apr 20.

Reuters photographer, [Mohammad Abdullah](#), in Al-Marj in eastern Ghouta by unidentified armed men while coming back to his house from the relief office.

Unidentified masked men burnt Shaba Press news agency in Al-Sokkari neighborhood on Apr 2, when it was empty.

The general leadership of Al-Tawheed Battalion that is affiliated to the Islamic Front published a generalization to all the military and administrative leaders in all the sectors of Aleppo and its countryside that prohibits the media activists from entering the battalion sectors without an official authorization starting Apr 6.

Appendixes and attachments:

Photos and video footages of the media people whom were mentioned in the report:

Deaths and injuries by governmental forces:

The media activist Mohammad Hosni Al-Barm
The media activist Awfa Abd Al-Samad
The media activist Saleem Okasha
The media Activist Mohamad Qasem Al-Shabeeb
The media activist Mohammad Mahmood Bashar
Rodaw” channel correspondent, Beshowa Bahlowi, and “Orient” channel, Newz Ibrahim
The media activist Abo Zaid Al-Homsi
BBC news channel photographer, the British Byarphilip Godyon
Sham News Network office in Aleppo
The media activist Abo Al-Feda
The media activist Ali Ahmad Yaseen
The photo is to the media activist Ali Al-Zajel
The media activist Mohammad Al-Tayeb
Halab News network correspondent, Abd Al-Elah Al-Halapi
The well-known artist Yusuf Abdalki

Armed media workers:

OTV channel correspondent, Tony Oryan
A video footage of Tony in Yabrud battle
The official Syrian TV correspondent, Aws Hasan

Photos and video footages of killed and kidnapped media workers on the hands of armed groups:

The four French journalists: Edouard Elias, Didier Francois, Nicolas Henin and Pierre Torres
Al-Manar TV correspondent, Hamza Al-Haj Hasan
A photo of Al-Manar correspondent Hamza Al-Haj Hasan while transporting a rocket
A photo of Al-Manar channel team 20/4/2014
The video footages of Al-Manar channel team after being targeted in Ma’aloola
Al-Alam Channel has an exclusive views of targeting Al-Manar channel team
Al-Manar channel team
AlJazeera channel correspondent, Omar Al-Hazza’a known as “Ammar Al-Haj”
AlJazeera correspondent in Idlib, Alaa’a Al-Deen Yousef
The Syrian News channel cameraman, Akram Salman
The media activist Mo’ath Talab
The media activist Hussain Al-Khattab
The media activist Haydar Razzoq
The media activist Ahmad Esam Al-Haj
The media activist E’esa Al-Ghazi
Sham News Network correspondent Al-Mo’taz Be-Allah Al-Hasan
The media activist Hasan Al-Hamdo

Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank and appreciate all the victims parents and relatives and all the media activists by all sides, who without their efforts and contributions we wouldn't be able to finish this report on this level.

