



9 Media Activists Killed, 5 kidnapped, and 13 Injured in June 2015

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Acknowledgments

I: Executive Summary:

Violations against media activists in the month of June 2015 are documented as follows:

Killing: SNHR documented the death of 9 media activists, detailed as follows:

i. Government Forces (army, security forces, local militias, foreign Shitte militias) killed 5 media activists, amongst one media activist died under torture.

Ii-Extremist Groups:

-Daesh (known as ISIS) killed 4 media activists

Arresting and Kidnapping We recorded 5 kidnapping cases, detailed as follows:

Government Forces: kidnapped one media activist

Armed Opposition Groups: kidnapped 3 media activists

Unidentified Groups: Kidnapped one media activist

Injuries: We recorded 13 injuries, detailed as follows:

Government Forces: injured 11 media activists

Armed Opposition Groups: injured 2 media activists

Violations against Properties: We recorded 3 cases, detailed as follows:

Government Forces: one case was recorded

PYD: one case was recorded

Armed Opposition Groups: one case was recorded





II- Introduction:

Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011, 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.

SNHR recorded a notable rise in the number of activists killed during May and June 2015, most of them were killed while documenting government shelling or in different war zones between armed groups. Government forces are ranked first when it came to committing these crimes, followed by Daesh (known as ISIS). On the other hand, An-Nusra front and other armed opposition groups' crimes were limited to kidnapping or beating media activists. PYD forces were categorized as the least amongst all groups to harm journalists.

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.

III- 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- Repot Details:

Government Forces' Violations (army, security forces, local militias, foreign Shitte militias)

Extrajudicial killing:

On 9 June 2015, media activist Abdullah Al Kassem (nick-named as Abu Baker), from Al Sanamen City in Daraa suburbs was killed due to fragment of a missile fired from government military aviation on Al Harak City in Daraa suburbs while he was covering the news in the area.



Abdullah Al Kassem

On 25 June 2015, media activist Omar Jihad Al Masalima was killed after he was shot by government forces sniper in Daraa Neighborhood in Daraa City while covering the news in the “South Storm Battle” in the city.

Omar was 23 years old from Daraa. He was a member in Nabaa Media Foundation and a reporter for Yakeen Media Foundation as well.

On 26 June 2015, Al Jazeera cameraman Mohamad Ahmad Al Asfar was killed in Daraa by government forces sniper in Al Minshiyi Neighborhood in Daraa City while covering the news there.



Mohamad Ahmad Al Asfar

Mohamad Al Asfar, born in 1996, was from Daraa governorate and worked with Al Jazeera office since it was established in Daraa.

On 27 June 2015, SNHR documented the death of a political and media activist (A.N) – his name was kept confidential- since he died under torture in the 215 branch in Damascus. His family told us that they were officially informed of their son’s death by government security forces. (A.N) was 46 years old who was arrested by government forces on 24 March 2012 from his residence in Hama City. Back then, he was in good health and worked in media. He did a number of interviews with Arab media.

On 28 June 2015, media activist, [Mohamad Nour Al Hariri](#) died after being injured with a government artillery missile that was shelled next to him in Busr Al Harir in Daraa Suburbs.

Injuries:

On 3 June 2015, media activist [Mohamad Kasyoun](#), director of Talbisa Live Network, was injured due to a barrel bomb fragment shelled by the government military aviation on Talbisa City in Homs suburbs while documenting the shelling on his city.





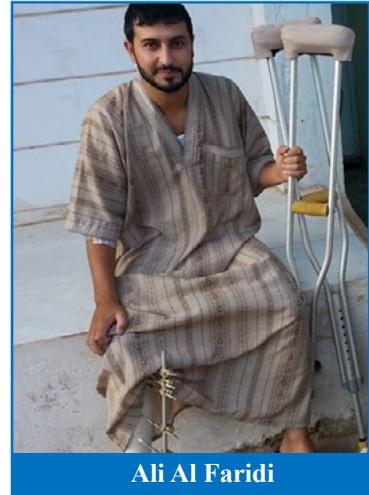
SNHR spoke to Mohamad Kaysoun:

“While I was videotaping and documenting the shelling after a barrel bomb dropped by the government military aviation on civilian houses in my city, Talbisa, another barrel bomb was dropped 4 meters away from me. As a result, I was bruised, injured and suffered from a seizure as a result of the psychological dread of what happened.”

On 7 June 2015, Al Yakeen Media Foundation reporter, Ali Al Faridi and [Aboud Al Hourani](#) were injured due to a missile shelled by government aviation next to them in Al Harak City in Daraa suburbs, while covering the news in the region.

Aboud Al Hourani

On 9 June 2015, Ahmad Al Salamat “Al Qaysar Media Foundation” reporter was injured with a fragment from a missile shelled by government aviation in Al Harak City in Daraa suburbs, while covering the news in the region.



Ali Al Faridi

On 9 June 2015, [Khaled Al Sari](#) (nicknamed as Abu Omar), “Al Yakeen Media Foundation” reporter was injured by a government forces sniper, while covering the news about the battles of the 52 Brigade in Al Harak City in Daraa suburbs. Due to that, he underwent a surgery to extract the bullet from his spine, next to his neck

On 12 June 2015, [Mohamad Al Hourani](#), “Al Aan” reporter, was injured by shrapnel from a missile shelled by the government aviation next to Al Thuala Airport in Al Swayda City, while covering the battles and news in the region.

On 17 June 2015, Media activist [Basel Al Riffaee](#), “Al Yakeen Media Foundation”, was injured by a fragment of a missile shelled by the government aviation on Oum Walad town in Daraa suburbs, while covering the news in the region.

On 26 June 2015, “Al Ghazaleh Media Center” reporter, [Husam Taha](#) was injured due to the government artillery shelling while he was covering the “South Storm Battle” in Daraa.

On 26 June 2015, “Syrian Media Commission” and “Al Jisr Satellite TV” reporter, [Ammar Al Zayed](#) was injured by a fragment of an artillery missile shelled by the government forces in Daraa City, while covering the news there.

SNHR spoke to Ammar and he told us that he was injured in the camp in Daraa, on the air force frontier while he was covering the news there. Since government forces targeted the area with the 57 cannon and the 23 cannon, usually used in aviation, but government forces





use it to shell civilian houses in Daraa.

On 27 June 2015, reporter “[Abu Abdo](#)” was injured while he was documenting the government aviation shelling on his town, Al Dar Al Kabira in northern Homs suburbs.

SNHR spoke to Abu Abdo, and he recounted what had happened:

“Al Dar Al Kabira town was shelled with government aviation. We were in the middle of documenting the government violations, after we were shelled the first time. The residents started to aid the injured people and after three minutes exactly, the same place was shelled with another missile. I was videotaping the shelling casualties when the second missile was shelled two meters away from me. Due to the strong pressure from the blast, my foot was broken and I fell 20 meters away from the explosion site. Later, I was taken to the makeshift hospital in the town, where my leg was severely injured and doctors couldn’t cast it, since it was wounded with a missile fragment.”

Arrests:

On 17 June 2015, “Al Alam” news reporter, Rabie Keleh Wendi, was beaten and held captive for hours by members of the internal security force while he was covering the news in Al Khalidiyi neighborhood in Aleppo that is controlled by government security forces; even though Rabie had an official permission to videotape what was going on. Rabie’s statement: “Even if you a reporter who is doing your job in Aleppo, security forces will arrest you just because you carry a camera to report the truth, take you to prison and then assault you... This is what happened with me today.”

[The reporter’s statement on his personal facebook page](#)



Rabie Keleh Wendi

Violations against properties:



منزل محمد الحوراني

On 8 June 2015, a media activist house, Mohamad Al Hourani, was shelled by a government aviation missile in Saida town, in Daraa suburbs, which led to massive destruction in the house but the damages were limited to material ones.





PYD Violations

Violations against properties:

On 8 June 2015, the cultural and media commission, affiliated to PYD forces prevented the distribution of 3 newspapers published by the Printed Syrian Media Network in Efreeen City in Aleppo due to written articles that attack the PYD, according to the commission.

In what follows article titles of the newspapers mentioned above:

PYD Official Denies Displacing Arabs (Tadmon Newspaper – Issue number 78)

Violations against Hasaka Arabs and the State attacks with Explosives (Enab Baladi Newspaper – Issue number 171)

PYD Attacks Arabs (Kuluna Suriyoun Newspaper – Issue number 32)

SNHR spoke to Mr. Hassan Mutlik, an editor in Enab Baladi newspaper, and he disclosed to us what had happened:

“On the eighth of June 2015, PYD forces prevented the distribution of Enab Baladi newspaper in Efreeen City due to an article written in issue no. 171 that sheds light in the Kurds violations against Arabs in Al Hasaka City. The article was titled “Violations against Hasaka Arabs and the State attacks with Explosives”. The commission sent a notice to the distributor that prevents him from distributing the newspapers. Also, Tdmon newspaper - Issue 78 and issue 32 of Kuluna Suriyun newspapers were prevented from being distributed due to written articles

that attack the PDY forces, according to the commission. Right now, our newspaper is being distributed in Efreeen after the PYD commission issued a decision which is not to prevent the distribution of any newspaper disregard of its contents. Our newspaper is only distributed in Efreeen.”



Extremist Groups' Violations:

Extrajudicial Killing:

Daesh (known as ISIS):

On 3 June 2015, media activist Mohamd Nour Al Halabi was killed by an artillery missile launched by ISIS on Al Sheikh Reeh town in northern Aleppo suburbs while covering the news between opposition groups and between ISIS as well.

Mohamad Nour was nicknamed as Abu Musa'ab Al Babi. He was born in Al Bab City in Aleppo suburbs in 1994. He worked for the media office of Ahrar Al Sham Movement, one of the armed opposition groups.





(Ahrar Al Sham Movement kept some information about Mohamad confidential since his parents still live in the Al Bab City that is under ISIS control and to protect them from any danger ISIS members can impose)

On 12 June 2015, media activist [Abdullah Al Husami](#) was killed with random bullets from ISIS in northern Aleppo suburbs. Abdulla Al Husmai, 21 years old, was born in Lattakia, and was the director of Islam Army media office in Aleppo.



On 19 June 2015, media activist [Mohamad Al Sheikh](#), (nicknamed as Abu Fadel) was killed after being injured with an artillery missile shelled by ISIS on Un Al Kura region in northern Aleppo suburbs, while covering the battles between Al Safwa Islamic Brigade, an armed opposition group, and ISIS.

Mohamad Al Sheikh was from Tal karah town in Aleppo suburbs, born in 1988, and worked as a reporter for Al Safwa Islamic Brigade.

On 20 June 2015, reporter [Abdulghani Abdulkafi Al Hajji](#), 18 years old, was killed in Mare' city in northern Aleppo Suburbs from his wounds in one of the Turkish hospitals, after being injured with a fragment of a tank missile shelled from ISIS on his house in Mare' city on 13 June 2015.

Other Violations:

On 21 June 2015, ISIS killed [Mohamad Al Moussa](#) (nicknamed as Abu Ahmad) in the prison of Al Raqqa City. He was the father of the founder of “Raqqa being Slaughtered in Silence Campaign” Hamoud Al Moussa (nicknamed as Salsabeel Al Ward). Mohamad was arrested by ISIS 77 days prior to his death. ISIS members informed the victim's family with his death and ordered them to leave their house. As a result, the family had to leave and go to Idlib before ISIS allowed them to return to their home.

Armed Opposition Groups:

Injuries:

On 11 June 2015, the Syrian state-TV reporter Anas Al Silman and cameraman Dergham Al Dabisi were injured due to a mortar missile that was shelled next to them in Al Thea'la Airport in Al Sawayda suburbs, while they were covering the battles that were happening in the airport. The shelling source was one of the armed opposition groups. The media team driver was killed in this incident as well.





Arrests and Kidnapping:

On 28 June 2015, reporter Sief (nicknamed as Abu Yazan) who worked for Talbisa media office was arrested by one of the armed opposition groups in Talbias in Homs suburbs. The armed opposition group was called Al Rahman Brigade. He was released the next day due to the pressure exerted on other armed opposition groups who were present in the city to set him free.



Sief Abo Yazan

On 30 June 2015, media activist [Anas Al Khawli](#) was arrested with his father by armed members affiliated to Al Islam Army, after raiding their house in Misraba city in Damascus suburbs.

It is noteworthy that Anas was a member in Misraba Coordination Committee who was covering the protests news that objected the harsh living circumstances in Eastern Ghouta, called for the release of the prisoners who are held captive at the Islam Army, break the siege and ignite the frontiers.

On 30 June 2015, head of Syria Press News Agency, Sief Hamdan, issued a statement on his personal page stating that their reporter in eastern Ghouta, Aram Al Doumani, was arrested for two days and all their office equipment, in Saqba in Damascus suburbs, were confiscated by Islam Army members on 2 February 2015. He justified the delay in the statement due to the fear of the life and safety of their reporter and now since Aram Al Doumani has left the Ghouta, they can announce the news.



Saleh Saleh

SNHR spoke to the head of Syria Press News Agency, Mr. Sief Hamdan, about the incident:

“Aram criticized repeatedly the unified command in eastern Ghouta, demanded access to Ghouta, and lowering the prices of goods midst the siege. On 2 February 2015, Aram was arrested and our equipment was confiscated. He was released two days later but he was interrogated during his arrest and forced to sign three papers amongst one empty paper. He also signed a pledge prohibiting him from criticizing the unified command, especially the commander of Al Islam Army, Zahran Alloush.

Now after Aram has left Ghouta, and after assured his safety, we demanded Al Islam Army to release our equipment and they are stalling up till now.”

The [issued](#) statement by Syria Press News Agency on 30 June 2015:



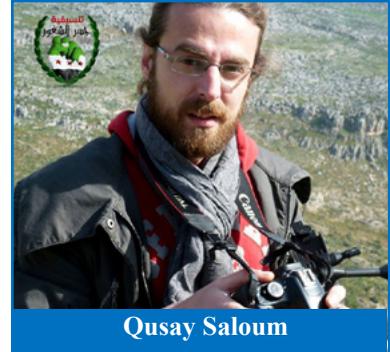


Unidentified Armed Groups:

Abduction:

On 25 June 2015, media activist Qusay Saloum (member of Jisr Al Shugour Coordination) in Al Jadeeda town in Jisr Al Shugour, Idlib, went missing. His relatives believe that he was kidnapped by one of the armed groups whom we were not able to identify.

It is worth mentioning that Qusay was assigned as to be the vice president of the local council of Jisr Al Shughour. He went missing when he went to receive seals and required office papers from the former council.



Al Jadida town and Jisr Al Shugur are administratively and judicially subservient for Drouksh and it is military subservient for An-Nusra Front. One of the region's activists, who is close to Qusay, told us that he asked these authorities about him but they denied their involvement in his disappearance.

Acknowledgments

We would like to sincerely thank the victims' families and relatives and all the media activists who contributed majorly to this report and our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families.

