

Three Media Workers Killed, One Injured, and One Arrested in Syria, Toll of July 2018

12 Media Workers Have been
Killed by Syrian Regime Forces
in 2018

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Saturday, August 4, 2018

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



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I. Introduction and Methodology

Parties to the conflict have oppressed journalists and citizen journalists to varying extents, committing crimes qualifying as war crimes against them. The Syrian regime, however, is the party who has perpetrated most of these crimes since March 2011, where the Syrian regime has been responsible for up to 83% as it waged a systematic war on media workers, committing hundreds of violations against journalists and citizen journalists, including killing, arrest, and torture in an attempt to conceal the human rights violations that the Syrian people are being subjected to and hide the crimes against Syrian citizens.

On the other hand, ISIS, factions from the armed opposition and Self-Management forces resorted to suppressing views as a policy in their areas of control as seen by the wide arrests they made.

In light of all of that, Syria has fallen to the 177th place (out of 180 countries) according to the Reporters Without Borders' [Press Freedom Index for 2018](#)

A journalist is a civilian individual according to the international humanitarian law regardless of their nationality. Any attack deliberately directed against a journalist is considered a war crime. However, when a media worker gets close to action-heavy zones, they are responsible for their own actions where targeting them in such case would be seen as collateral damage. Also, they would lose the right to protection if they were involved in hostilities.



The international humanitarian law states that journalists should be protected, as Article 79 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 says that civilian journalists who are engaged in missions in areas of armed conflict should be respected, considered as civilians, and protected from all forms of deliberate attacks, provided that they take to action adversely affecting their status as civilians. Additionally, Rule 34 of the international humanitarian law's customary rules states that:” **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.**”

In addition, Security Council adopted [Resolution 2222](#) on May 27, 2015, which condemns all violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict,

Methodology

This report monitors the most notable violations against media workers (journalists and citizen journalists) by the parties to the conflict in July.

SNHR defines a citizen journalist as anyone who plays a significant role in reporting and publishing news. He is not necessarily impartial as a journalist should be. In case a citizen journalist bore arms and was directly engaged in hostilities, he would be no longer deemed a citizen journalist whereas it is possible that he would be referred to as a citizen journalist again, provided he retires completely from military action.

This report draws upon, firstly, the daily, ongoing documentation and monitoring efforts by SNHR team, and, secondly, on accounts from survivors, eyewitnesses, and local media workers that we've talked to via phone or social media. We have also analyzed a large number of the videos and pictures that were posted online or we received from local activists via e-mail, Skype, and social media. We have copies of all the videos and pictures included in this report in a secret online database, as well as backup copies on hard drives. We always make sure to store this data with its respective source. Nonetheless, we can't claim that we have documented all cases, in light of the ban and pursuit by Syrian regime forces and some of the other armed groups.

Please see the methodology adopted by SNHR for [documenting victims](#).



This report contains one account that we've collected through speaking directly to eyewitnesses, and are not cited from any open sources. We have explained the purpose of these interviews for the eyewitnesses who gave us permission to use the information they provided without offering or giving them any incentives. Also, SNHR tried to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violation as much as possible, and gave insurances to conceal the identity of any witness who preferred to use an alias.

The report might include incidents that we believe do not constitute violations of the international humanitarian law. We include it, however, to preserve the truth historically and store it as a national record, but we don't describe it as having qualified as crimes.

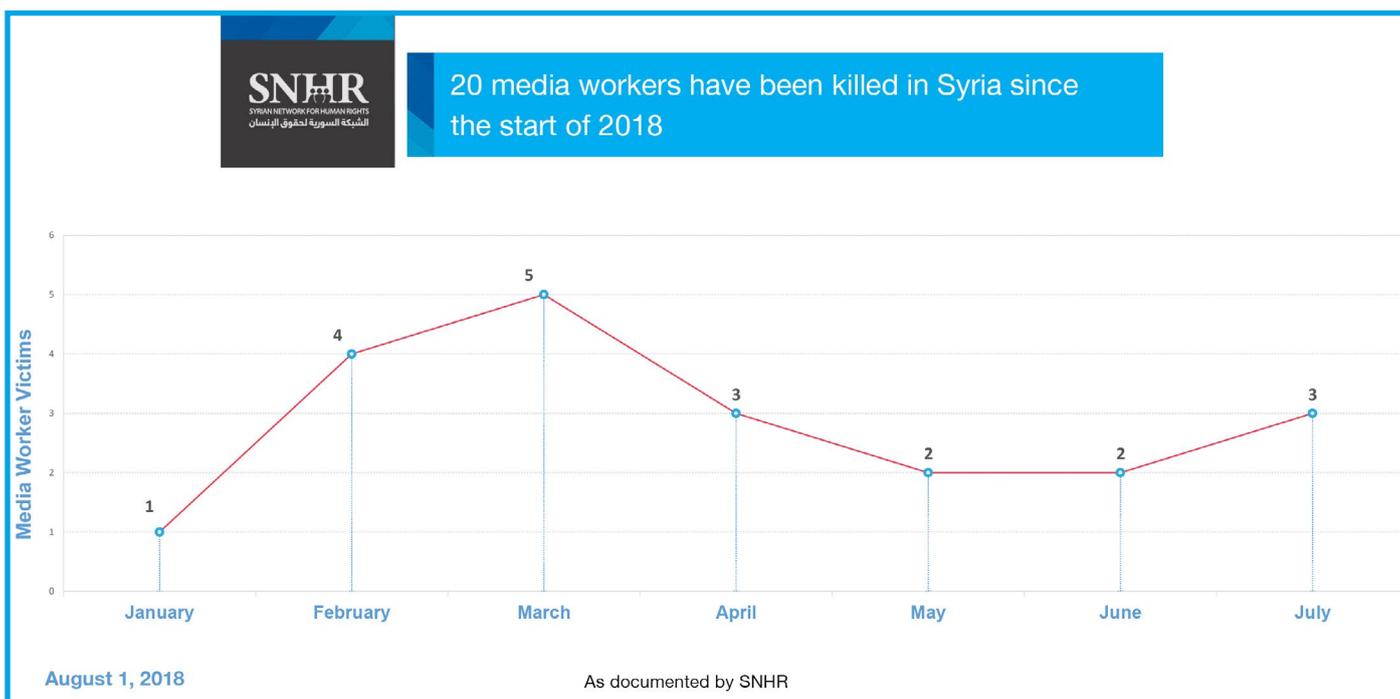
II. July Outline

Forcibly disappeared persons' families are still finding out about their beloved ones' death through civil registry offices who recorded them as dead. Media workers were no exception as we recorded two incidents in July.

III. Executive Summary

A. Death toll among media workers since the start of 2018

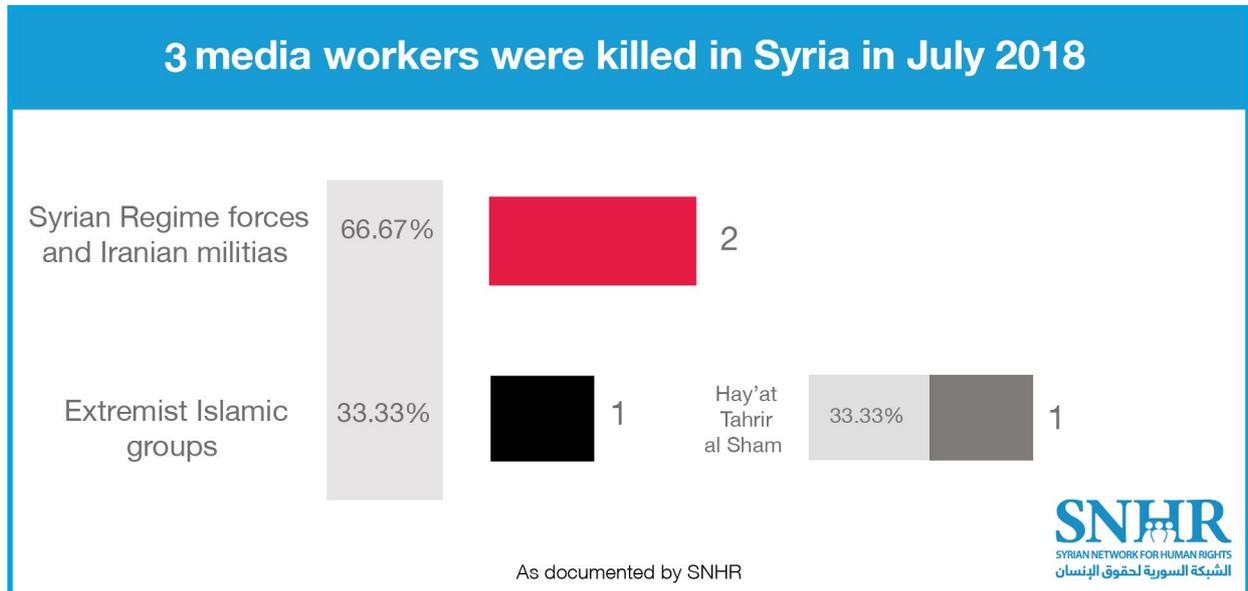
SNHR has documented that 20 media workers were killed between the start of 2018 and August of the same year at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria. Death toll is distributed by month as follows:



B. Violations against media workers in July 2018

Violations against media workers in July 2018 were distributed as follows:

- **Acts of killing:** SNHR has documented the killing of three media workers, as follows:



- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias): 2, due to torture

- Extremist Islamic groups

- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of armed opposition factions): 1

- **Injuries:** we have recorded that 1 media worker was injured at the hands of a party that we couldn't identify

- **Arrest:** We have recorded one case of arrest at the hands of factions from the armed opposition.



IV. Details

A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias)

- Acts of killing

Niraz Saied Manad

Monday, July 16, 2018, we received information that Niraz had died due to torture inside a detention center for Syrian regime forces. It should be noted that Syrian regime forces arrested him on Friday, October 2, 2015 from Damascus city. [Niraz](#), [photographer](#), from Awlam village, Palestine, a resident of al Yarmouk Camp, southern Damascus city, born in 1991, has a high school diploma, married. Niraz won numerous awards, most notably the UNRWA Photography Competition for 2014 for his photograph, "The Three Kings". He also worked on the movie, "Letters from Yarmouk" which won several international awards.



Nizar Manad

Mohammad al Dimashqi (real name was concealed for security concerns)

Monday, July 30, 2018, we received information that he died due to torture inside a detention center for Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, March 4, 2015. Mohammad was arrested by the same forces in Damascus city on Sunday, February 3, 2013.

Mohammad, media worker, from al Hama village, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1987. He was the administrator of the Facebook page "Syrian Revolution Coordination in al Hama Area". He also worked with "Pulse of the Capital Damascus Facebook page".

B. Extremist Islamic groups

- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham

- Acts of killing

Mustafa Salama

Monday, July 16, 2018, SAMA TV Channel [mourned](#) Mustafa Salama on its official website. [Mustafa](#) was [killed](#) as he was [covering clashes](#) between Syrian regime forces and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on the battlefield of Mashara town, eastern suburbs of Quneitra governorate. He was killed by a shell fired by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham who fired a number of mortar shells that landed on the site of the channel's team.



Mustafa Salama



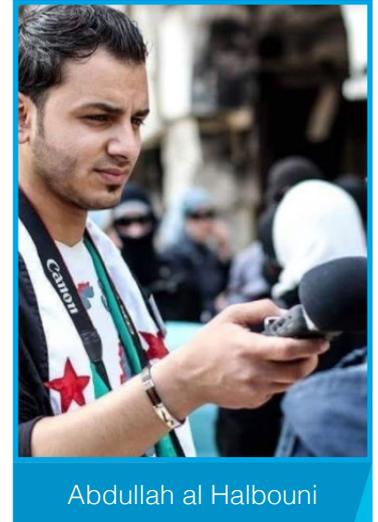
C. Factions from the armed opposition

- Arrest

Abdullah al Halbouni

Saturday, July 13, 2018, gunmen from Ferqat al Hamza, an armed opposition faction, arrested him in Afrin city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Abdullah, known as Laith al Abdullah, reporter for al Kul Radio, from Douma city, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, 25-year-old, unmarried.



D. Other parties

- Injuries

Hamza Mohammad al Faraj

Monday, July 2, 2018, Hamza [sustained wounds and fractures in both legs](#) as a result of a landmine explosion on the outskirts of al Mta'iyā village, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, as he was covering the displacement of civilians in light of Syrian regime forces' vicious offensive in the area. As of this writing, we have yet to identify the party that planted the landmine. The village is under the control of Syrian regime forces at the time of this writing, while it was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time of the incident.

Hamza, a reporter and photographer for Yaqin Media Institution, from al Laja area, eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1986, has a high school diploma, married.

SNHR contacted Hamza¹ who told us that civilians fled in large numbers in light of the heavy bombing, using all kinds of weapons, on Daraa governorate, **“As I was covering the displacement on the outskirts of al Mta'iyā village, a landmine exploded near me. Both my feet were injured. I was immediately rushed to Jordan.”** Hamza believes that **Syrian regime forces planted the landmine.**



¹ Via Facebook on July 22, 2018



V. Recommendations

Security Council

Work on fighting the policy of impunity by referring the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

OHCHR

Condemn the targeting of media workers in Syria and shed light on their sacrifice and suffering.

Commission of Inquiry (COI)

Launch investigations on the targeting of media workers specifically, given their integral role in recording incidents in Syria.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

Address the cases mentioned in this report and past reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide more evidences and data.

International and Arabic media institutions

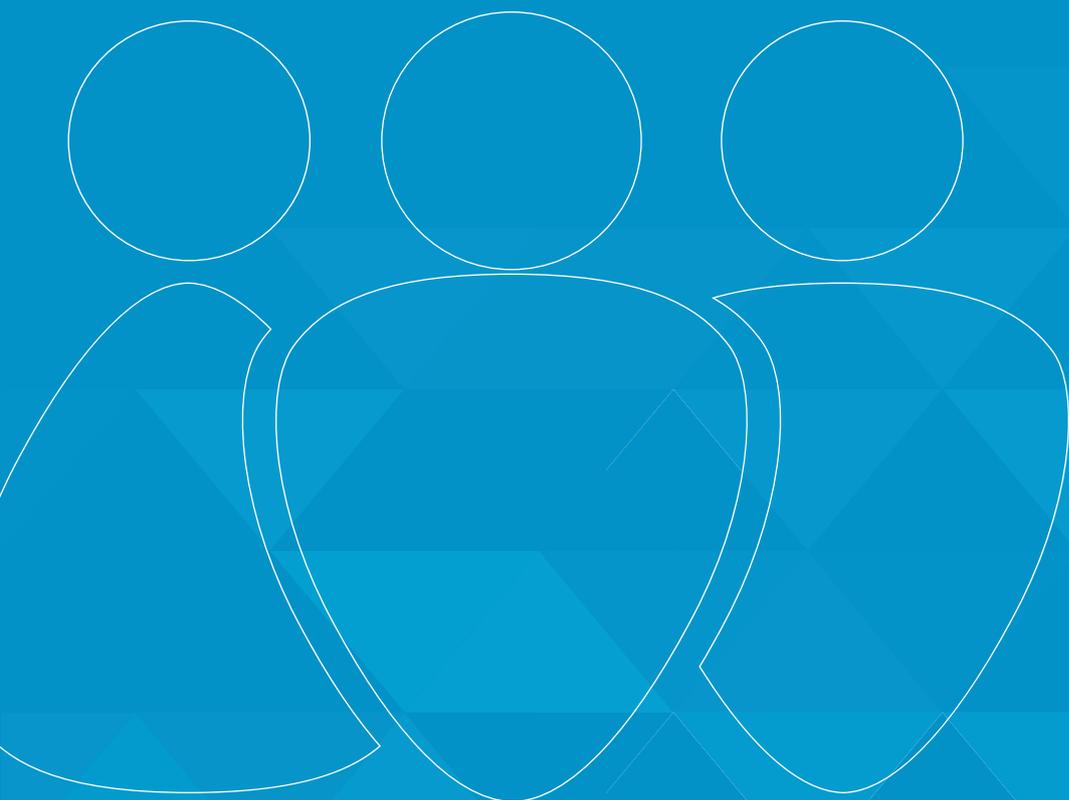
Support their colleagues in the field of media by publishing periodic reports that shed light on their daily suffering and memorialize their sacrifice. Also, they should contact their families to console them.

Finally, all parties have to respect the international humanitarian law in their areas of control in relation to the protection of civilians and especially media workers and their equipment.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

Our most heartfelt condolences go to the victims' families. We also would like to thank the friends and families of media workers who contributed effectively to this report.





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