



Six Media Activists Killed, 12 Arrested and Kidnapped, and Two Injured in January 2015

390 media activists have been killed from the beginning of the Syrian revolution until the end of January 2015

This report includes:

First: Executive Summary

Second: Introduction

Third: Details

Fourth: Acknowledgment

First: Executive Summary

Violations perpetrated against media activists during January 2015 are divided as follows:

- **First: killing:** SNHR documented the killing of six media activists as follows:

Government forces: killed two media activists

Extremist groups:

Daesh: killed a Japanese journalist

An-Nusra Front killed one media activist

Unidentified armed groups: killed two media activists

- **Second: Arrests and kidnappings:** we recorded 12 kidnapping and arrest cases as follows:

Government forces: three arrests by government forces were documented

Kurdish forces: kidnapped one media activist and was released later

Extremist groups:

Daesh: kidnapped a journalist

An-Nusra Front: kidnapped two media activists and released them later in addition to releasing two media activists who were arrested last month.

Armed opposition: Kidnapped three media activists and released one of them later

Unidentified groups: kidnapped two media activists

- **Third: Injuries:** Two media activists were injured by government forces

- **Fourth: Violations against properties**

Government forces: responsible for two cases

Armed opposition: responsible for two cases

An-Nusra Front: responsible for one case





Second: Introduction

Media reality in Syria has become a dangerous unsuitable working environment for professional independent journalism. As more and more crimes and violations are being perpetrated against media activists and journalists, in addition to the growing void in the media scene and the weapon's dominance over the power of word, the commitment to the principles and ethics of journalism have been considerably undermined, credibility, accuracy, and objectivity in covering the news have all been hugely disregarded, facts and truth are obscured, the difficulty to monitor the news is increasing, and politicized media is growing stronger at the expense of the independent journalism.

Obstacles and difficulties facing human rights and media activism are increasing, in synchronization with lack of reliability which reached a critical and dangerous level. This situation manifests itself significantly through a media chaos, contradictory and misleading information. Politicization and militarization of media and the continuous bleeding of most of the media experts on the grounds – hundreds of media activists were lost, whether they were killed, arrested, kidnapped, fled out of fear or seeking livelihood were among the main reasons behind this huge deterioration of media reality.

The absence of protection and serious efforts to protect the freedom of media, the unsafe environment amid the critical security conditions and ongoing violations and crimes against media activists, and the lack of professional independently-financed media institutions that can offer professional training and employment chances for media activists are the most notable challenges and obstacles in the field of media today in Syria. These obstacles prevent media from being able to keep up with the rapid and complicated development on many levels which results in it being incapable of playing its integral and vital role of monitoring and reporting news.

As we face this harsh reality that lacks the foundations of the free professional media and the results of hiding the truth, silencing mouths, and obscuring facts, SNHR affirms the necessity of taking serious and immediate actions to save what could be saved in Syria and renews its condemnation of all the violations against media's freedom and truth-covering regardless of the involved parties and its kind or magnitude. SNHR also stresses the importance of respecting media work, insuring the safety of those who are working in that vital field, and paying them special consideration. The perpetrators of violations against journalists, activists, and media activists must be brought to justice and the International Community, represented by the Security Council, should shoulder its responsibilities to protect media activists in Syria.

Third: Details

A. Violations by government forces

Extrajudicial killing

1- On Monday 5 January, 2015, the media activist Mohammad Najjar “Qais Al-Halabi” died of wounds caused by a government forces sniper that shot him in the head in Al-Mlah area, seven kilometers to the north of Aleppo city, on 15 December, 2014 while he was reporting the events there.

It is worth noting that Mohammad underwent five surgeries and remained unconscious until he died.



Mohammad is from Aleppo suburbs – Marea' town and was residing in Aleppo city – Salah Ad-Din neighborhood.





2- On Wednesday 28 January, 2015, media activist [Saeed Al-Barnawi](#) “head of the media division at the unified relief office – Douma district” of wounds sustained during the government forces warplanes’ shelling against the city on the previous day.

Injuries:

On Thursday 1 January, 2015, Mustafa Sultan, cameraman for Anadolu Agency was injured in his hand and waist by shrapnel during the government forces’ shelling on Aleppo – Al-Briej area as he was covering the ongoing clashes between government forces and the Islamic Front.



Arrests and kidnappings

1- On Friday 9 January, 2015, media activist “Abu-Dujana Al-Hamwi” was arrested by security forces from his residence in Hama city – As-Sabouniya neighborhood.

2- On Tuesday 13 January, 2015, media activist “A.B” (his name is not mentioned) by government forces from his residence in Hama city.

3- On Sunday 18 January, 2015, [the writer Ibrahim Farhan Al-Khalil](#) was arrested by militias affiliated to government forces (The masked men) in Al-Hassaka city. It should be noted that Al-Khalil was head of the Kurdish Writers Union – Al-Hassaka branch. He studied literature and wrote several books that were translated into Kurdish.

Violations against properties

On Monday 29 December, 2014, at dawn, Syria Press news agency office was targeted with a missile by government forces warplanes in Damascus suburbs – Douma city. The missile caused damages and the office lost contact with its head [Saleh Saleh, known as “Aram Ad-Doumani”](#) for three days, it was found out later that Saleh was at a field-hospital after he was mildly injured.

SNHR team talked to Saleh and he told us that, in addition to what happened on 29 December, his car was targeted by a sniper who fired ten bullets at the car while he was shooting in Eastern Ghouta to make a documentary film on Eastern Ghouta.

Saleh also told us that he has been constantly receiving threats by unknowns for eight months to stop his media work in Ghouta.

B. Violations by Kurdish forces

Kidnapping

On Saturday 17 January, 2015, Azad Jamkari, reporter for Rudaw TV channel, by PYD’s Asayish forces in Al-Hassaka – Al-Malikiya city. He was released on the same day after he was interrogated.





C. Violations by extremist groups

Daesh

Extrajudicial killing

On Saturday 31 January, 2015, Daesh published a video footage that shows the Japanese journalist Kenji Goto being slaughtered. The extremist faction published a message prior to the slaughter where he said that this is because Japan “foolishly” joined the alliance against Daesh and Japan didn’t realize that Daesh has the power, strength, and a complete army. Also, the faction held the Japanese Prime Minister Abe responsible because he was the one who decided to join the war on the faction and assured that they will continue slaughtering Japanese wherever they are found as the Japanese nightmare is only beginning. On 27 January, 2015 Daesh published a video that shows the Japanese journalist Kenji Goto holding a picture of the Jordanian pilot Muath Al-Ksasba which was arrested by Daesh. The Japanese journalist said that Daesh is offering to release him in exchange for the release of a female prisoner named Sajeda Ar-Rishawi in Jordan. This was before Daesh demanded 200 million dollars as a ransom to release Kenji Goto and the other Japanese Haruna Yukawa where they threatened to slaughter the two in after 72 hours. However, Daesh published later a [video](#) that shows [Goto holding a picture](#) of his colleague after he was beheaded.

Goto was permitted by Daesh to enter Syria through Aleppo city. His last tweet on his twitter account was from Ain Al-Arab city “Koubani” before he was kidnapped while he was heading to Ar-Raqqa city from Aleppo in October 2014 by Daesh.

Goto founded a company that produces documentary movies in 1996 specializing in the Middle East and other areas for Japanese TV channels. The company was named Independent Press. The other hostage entered Syria in July 2014 and he was allegedly working for a Japanese security company.



, Azad Jamkari, reporter for Rudaw TV channel

An-Nusra Front

Extrajudicial killing

On Monday 26 January, 2015, [Walid Al-Qasim](#), reporter for Aleppo News network, in one of An-Nusra prisons in Hrietan. An official message was sent to Al-Qasem’s family said that he was killed in prison by an active fighting group without mentioning any further details.

Al-Qasem was arrested on 12 October, 2014 by An-Nusra Front when he was with Fajr Al-Hurriya battalions going back to Aleppo city from the northern suburbs.

Picture of Walid Al-Qasim

A [statement](#) issued by the judicial office in Hrietan on Walid Al-Qasim’s murder in prison



media activist Ma'd Bariesh

Kidnapping:

1- On Wednesday 7 January, 2015, media activist Ma’d Bariesh, member of Saraqeb Al-Yaum media office, along with his colleague Wethab Al-Izzou by an unidentified group while they were heading to Saraqeb, their hometown in Idlib suburbs, from Bab Al-Hawa.





2- On Wednesday 7 January, 2015, media activist [Wethab Al-Izzou](#) was kidnapped along with his colleague the media activist Wethab Al-Izzou by an unidentified group while they were heading to Saraqeb, their hometown in Idlib suburbs, from Bab Al-Hawa.

Releases

1- On Sunday 4 January, 2015, An-Nusra Front released [Ahmad Al-Jad'an](#) “Basmat Syria news network reporter” and his brother the photographer Hamoud Al-Jad'an after they were arrested on 28 December, 2014, during a raid and arresting campaign that An-Nusra carried out in Idlib suburbs – Jouzaph village. The two brothers are from Idlib suburbs – Kafnbul city.

2- On Sunday 4 January, 2015, An-Nusra Front released the photographer [Hamoud Al-Jad'an](#) and his brother Ahmad Al-Jad'an “Basmat Syria news network reporter” after they were arrested on 28 December, 2014, during a raid and arresting campaign that An-Nusra carried out in Idlib suburbs – Jouzaph village. The two brothers are from Idlib suburbs – Kafnbul city.

Other violations

On Saturday 17 January, 2015, An-Nusra Front fighters raided the center of revolutionary offices and Friesh Radio center and insulted many media activists at the center. Also, they assaulted the activist [Hadi Al-Abdullah](#) and accused him of working for foreign parties. Afterwards, An-Nusra fighters withdrawn without arresting anyone or confiscating any equipment

The pretext on which the raid was based is that An-Nusra received information that the center was used to print Sourietna Journal which is printed outside Syria and distributed in Syria.

D. Violations by armed opposition groups

Kidnapping:

1- On Sunday 4 January, 2015, Amir Ash-Shami, media activist and the spokesperson for Jaish Al-Umma brigade, by Al-Islam Army in Damascus suburbs – Douma city.

2- On Sunday 4 January, 2015, Taher Flietani, media activist who works for Jaish Al-Umma brigade, was arrested by Al-Islam army in Damascus suburbs – Douma city.

3- On Monday 19 January, 2015, the media activist and painter [Jomaa Mousa](#), known as “Al-I'lami Al-Mareh” (The funny media activist), was arrested by Al-Jabha Ash-Shamiya's intelligence division over accusation of distributing Sourietna Journal which was banned by the intelligence division for expressing its solidarity with Charlie Hebdo, he was released on the next day after he was interrogated.

Other violations

On Sunday 18 January, 2015, the intelligence division, affiliated to the Islamic battalion in Aleppo and Ahrar Ash-Sham movement, the recent issues of Sourietna, Enab Baladi Sada Ash-Sham, and Tamadoun journals and announced that is has banned the distribution of those journals after they expressed their solidarity with Charlie Hebdo which insulted the Prophet Mohammad.

[The intelligence division](#) is an intelligence branch for the revolutionary groups. Its mission is to monitor, arrest, interrogate, and prosecute anyone who is suspected to be working for the regime or any other “foreign” parties. The founding of this division was approved by many military lead-





ers in Aleppo including the leader of Al-Jabha Ash-Shamiya Abdulaziz Salama at the beginning of this year

E. Violations by unidentified groups

Extrajudicial killing

1- On Thursday 1 January, 2015, the media activist [Derar Mousa Al-Jahed](#), doctor and member of the local coordination and media offices, was assassinated by an unidentified group at night in Daraa – Ibta' city where armed men raided his home and shot him four times and also shot three others who were at his home.

2- On Thursday 1 January, 2015, the media activist [Fayez Ibrahim Abu-Halawa](#) was assassinated along with the media activist Derar Al-Jahed in addition to two others by unidentified group in Daraa – Ibta' city. The armed men killed Derar and Fayez in addition to two others who were at his home.

Abu-Halawa was born in Ibta' in 1971 and studied mathematics.

3- On Saturday 17 January, 2015, unidentified armed men arrested two reporters for Hawa Smart Radio (the names of the reporters weren't mentioned) in Idlib suburbs – Rasha village. The two reporters are from Hama – Al-Madyaq village.

Fourth: Acknowledgment

Our thanks and appreciation go to the victims' families and relatives whose valuable contribution helped us substantially to finish this report on this level, and our most sincere condolences to the victims' families.

