



# Six Media Activists Killed and Nine others Injured, Toll of October 2016 Including Four Media Activists Killed by the Syrian Regime

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## I. Introduction

Media activism in Syria is continuously deteriorating in light of the lack of attention by many international organizations to what is happening in Syria and the notable decline in media coverage over the last year compared with previous years.

SNHR publishes a monthly report documenting the violations against media activists who play a prominent role in the civil movement and the armed conflict.

It should be noted that a journalist is a civilian according to the international humanitarian law regardless of his nationality. Any attack directed against a journalist is considered a war crime. However, when a media activist gets close to action-heavy zones, he is responsible for his own actions where targeting him in such case would be seen as collateral damage. Also, he would lose the right to protection if he was involved in military operations. We believe that media activists must be respected whether they have identification papers as media workers or don't considering the many difficulties they encounter to acquire these papers.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR, says:

*“Media activism is especially important because it often sheds light on a string of various crimes that are taking place on a daily basis. Therefore, we record the violations perpetrated by conflicting parties in our monthly reports on violations against media activists.”*





SNHR emphasizes that serious and quick steps must be taken to save media activism in Syria and renews its condemnation of all violations against the freedom of media activism regardless of the perpetrators. The freedom of media must be respected and the workers in the media field must be protected and particularly considered. All individuals involved in violations against journalists and media activists must be held accountable. The international community, represented by the Security Council, must act upon its responsibilities in order to protect civilians and media activists in Syria.

## **II. Methodology**

According to SNHR's methodology, a civilian journalist is anyone who plays a notable role in reporting and publishing news. He is not necessarily impartial as a journalist should be.

In case a civilian journalist carried a weapon and was directly engaged in offensive military operations, he is no longer deemed a citizen journalist whereas it is possible that he would be referred to as a civilian journalist again provided he retires completely from military action.

This report draws upon SNHR archive and the investigations conducted by the Network in addition to accounts by victims' families, information from local activists, and analyzing the pictures and video footages that we have been receiving and archiving in our records since 2011.

to read more about SNHR methodology in documenting victims: [http://sn4hr.org/public\\_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR\\_Methodology\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf)

In light of the security and logistic difficulties to access all the areas where violations take place, it is worth noting that these statistics and incidents are only the bare minimum of the actual magnitude of crimes and violations that happened.





### III. Executive Summary

Violations against media activist in October 2016 are divided as follows:

A. Extrajudicial killing: SNHR documented the killing of six media activists who are distributed as follows:

- Government forces: Killed four media activists.
- Extremist Islamic groups

ISIS: Killed two media activists.

B. Injuries: We recorded nine injures distributed as follows:

- Government forces: Three injures.
- Russian forces: Two injuries.
- Extremist Islamic groups

#### **ISIS: Two injuries.**

- Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): One injury.
- Unidentified groups: One injury.

C. Arrest and release: We recorded two arrest cases where the detainees were released later by Fateh Al Sham Front.

D. Other violations against media activists: We recorded one incident of attack on the office of Tel'na Ala Al Hurrieya journal (We Went out for Freedom) by government forces.

### III. Details

#### **A. Government forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias) Extrajudicial killing**

Tuesday 4 October 2016, media activist AbdulQader AbdulRazzaq Jneid died of burns in most of his body sustained after fixed-wing government forces warplanes fired a missile near him as he was covering clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Tal Raya in the northern suburbs of

#### **Hama governorate.**

[AbdulQader](#), a photographer for Jaish Al Nasser, an armed opposition faction, from Hama governorate, born in 1993, has a certificate from the Faculty of science – Department of chemistry, single.





Monday 17 October 2016, media activist [Nawras Mahmoud Qetaz](#) died of an injury in his head caused by a bullet fired by a government forces Shelka as he was covering clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Mo'ta in the southern suburbs of Aleppo governorate.



[Nawras](#), a [photographer](#) for Division 13 in Idlib Free Army, an armed opposition faction, from Ma'aret Al No'man city in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1997, has a secondary education certificate, single.

Sunday 30 October 2016, media activist Mohammad Mustafa Nasri was killed in an ambush set by government forces for an armed opposition faction who was raiding a site on the battlefield of Al Katiba Al Mahjoura on the outskirts of Dael city in the suburbs of Daraa governorate. It is worth nothing that his corpse remains with government forces.

[Mohammad](#), known as [Abu Shaghour](#), a photographer for Fajr Al Islam brigade, an armed opposition faction, and Yasmin Baladi Institution, from Damascus city, born in 1990, has a secondary education certificate, married.

Monday 31 October 2016, media activist AbdulSalam Nayef Kan'an was killed by shrapnel after fixed-wing government forces warplanes fired a missile at Al Za'frana town, located in the suburbs of Homs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions.

[AbdulSalam](#), a photographer for [Al Jesr TV channel](#), from [Der Ba'lba neighborhood](#) in Homs governorate, born in 1982, has a secondary education certificate, married.

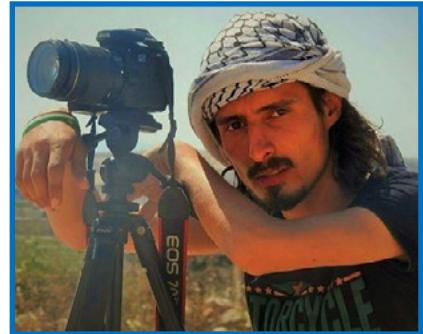
SNHR spoke to the media activist Anas Al Ahmad, a friend of AbdulSalam's, via Facebook:





*“Around 11:30 AM on Monday 31 October, the regime warplanes carried out a number of airstrikes on Al Za’frana town in the suburbs of Homs governorate. One of the airstrike hit AbdulSalam who was documenting the bombardment on the town. AbulSalam was hit by shrapnel in the back of his head and died on the spot.”*

Monday 3 October 2016, media activist [Sharif Mohammad Damlakhi](#) was injured by shrapnel in his back, right waist, and hands after a mortar shell fired by government forces artillery fell near him as he was covering government forces’ bombardment on Al Zebdiyeh neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions.



[Sharif](#), known as [Sharif Al Halabi](#), media activist for “Fastqem Kama Umret” Coalition, an armed opposition faction, from Aleppo city, born in 1994, has a secondary education certificate, single.

SNHR spoke to the media activist Sharif via Facebook:

*“I was documenting government forces’ mortar shelling on Al Zebdiyeh neighborhood in my city Aleppo, and a shell fell near me on Al Zebdiyeh hill. The shrapnel wounded me in my back, right waist, and both of my hands. I was taken to a makeshift hospital.”*

Sunday 9 October 2016, media activist Mahmoud Al Nsierat was injured by a shrapnel in his back after government forces helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near him as he was covering the bombardment of government forces warplanes on Ibta’ town, located in the suburbs of Daraa governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions.

Mahmoud, known as Abu Hamza Ibta’, a reporter for Shahed Media Institution, from Ibta’ town in the suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1986, a university student at the faculty of media, married.





SNHR contacted the media activist Mahmoud Al Nsierat via WhatsApp:

*“While I was covering the bombardment on the town by the regime warplanes and helicopters, a barrel bomb fell near me and the shrapnel hit me in my back. Thank God the wound was superficial.”*

Sunday 30 October 2016, media activist [Mohammad Hasan Al Hussein](#) was injured in his left hand and left foot after fixed-wing government forces warplanes fired a missile near him as he was covering the clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Al Rashidean neighborhood in Aleppo city.



[Mohammad](#), a photographer for the Syrian Popular Movement, from Dalama village in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1994, has an elementary education, married and has two kids.

SNHR spoke to the media activist [Mohammad](#) via Facebook:

*“I was covering the clashes between government forces and armed opposition faction on the battlefield of Al Rashidean neighborhood in Aleppo city, and the warplanes carried out a number of missile airstrikes. One of the missiles fell near me and shrapnel injured me in my left foot and left hand in addition to wounds in most of my body. I was taken to the nearest medical point where I received treatment.”*

### **Other violations against media activists**

Thursday 13 October 2016, fixed-wing government forces warplanes fired a missile on a complex that contains the office of [Tel’na Ala Al Hurrieya](#) journal (We Went out for Freedom) in Douma city in Damascus suburbs governorate. [The bombardment](#) heavily destroyed the equipment and the cladding materials of the office. It is worth noting that [the office](#) was bombed previously on 22 July 2016.





## **B. Russian forces**

### **Injuries**

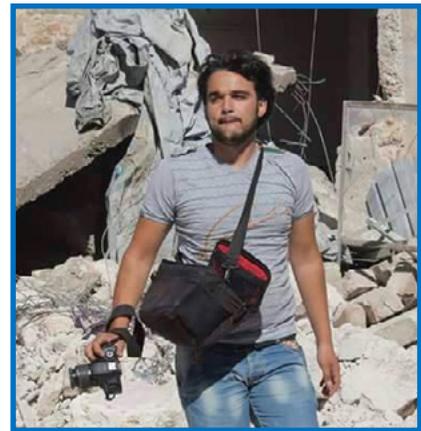
Wednesday 12 October 2016, media activist Bakr Al Qasem was injured by shrapnel in his neck after fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a missile near him as he was covering clashes between the regime forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of 1070 Shaqqa in Al Hamdaniya neighborhood in

### **Aleppo city.**

Bakr, reporter for the office of the Syrian Revolution Forces and Rozana Radio, from [Ma'aret Al No'man city](#) in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1995, a student at the veterinary medicine in Hama city, single.

Monday 17 October 2016, media activist [Abdullah Melhem](#) was injured by shrapnel in his right hand which was, consequently, amputated after fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a missile at Iwejel village, located in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions.

[Abdullah](#), a [reporter](#) for Aleppo Media Center and Al Atareb Media Center, from Al Atareb city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1995, has a high school diploma, married.



## **C. Extremist Islamic Groups**

### **ISIS**

#### **Extrajudicial killing**

Wednesday 5 October 2016, media activist [Subhi Mohammad](#) No'man died of wounds in his head, abdomen, and hands sustained in a suicidal bombing by an ISIS element in Al Qalamoun Al Sharqi area in Damascus suburbs governorate as he was covering clashes between ISIS and armed opposition factions in the area.

[Subhi](#), known as [Abu Mohammad Saleh](#), director of the media office of Jaish Al Islam, an armed opposition faction, from Douma city in Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1993, student at an intermediate Business institute, single.





Saturday 15 October 2016, media activist [Eissa Mohammad Nouri Al Hamdou](#) was killed by a landmine planted by ISIS in Arshaf town as he was covering clashes between armed opposition factions and ISIS on the battlefield of Arshaf town in the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

[Eissa](#), known as Abu Al Nour, a [photographer](#) for Al Sultan brigade, an armed opposition faction, from Al Hamidiya village in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1982, has an elementary education certificate, married and has kids.

## Injuries

Thursday 6 October 2016, media activist [Ayman Swied](#) was injured in his face and right foot by shrapnel after a locally-made rocket shell fired by ISIS artillery fell near him as he was covering clashes between ISIS and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Akhtarein in the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo.

[Ayman](#), known as Abu Hani Al Halabi, a [reporter](#) for Halab Al Yaum TV channel, from Mennegh town in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1986, a fourth-year university student at the faculty of law, married.

SNHR spoke to Ayman Swied via Facebook:

*“As I was covering clashes between ISIS and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Akhtarein in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, a rocket shell fired by ISIS fell near me. The shrapnel injured me in my face and right foot and I was taken immediately to Kelles hospital in Turkey where I stayed there for two hours before I was transferred to a private hospital in Gaziantep city in Turkey.”*

Saturday 15 October 2016, media activist Mohammad Sharafou Hamada was injured by shrapnel in his right hand after a mortar shell fired by ISIS artillery fell near him as he was covering clashes between armed opposition factions and ISIS on the battlefield of Ihtemlat in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

[Mohammad](#), a photographer for the Syrian Popular Movement, from Al Atareb city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1996, has an elementary education certificate, single.





## **Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nusra Front)**

### **Arrest and release**

Saturday 8 October 2016, Jund Al Aqsa arrested the media activist Mohammad Al Ashaqr as he was passing an inspection point for the group on Ihsem-Al Bara road in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was released on the next day [Mohammad](#), a reporter for Orient TV channel, from Latakia SNHR spoke to the media activist Mohammad via Facebook:

*“On Saturday 8 October I was surprised when I was on the road connecting between Ihsem and Al Bara towns in the southern suburbs of Idlib by an inspection point for Jund Al Aqsa that was newly established. The elements stopped me and had me get off from my car and then they confiscated the car with all my personal media equipment in there. They took me to a place I didn't recognize and treated me poorly without hitting me. They released me on the next day. At a later date, one of the factions affiliated for Ahrar Al Sham movement gave me back the equipment that was confiscated from me after Ahrar Al Sham found it in a site for Jund Al Aqsa they raided in Al Bara town.”*

Wednesday 26 October 2016, Fateh Al Sham front arrested the media activist Mohammad Al Hajji and confiscated his media equipment while he was covering a charity event for children in Al Draya camp in the suburbs of Latakia governorate. He was referred to Salqein court which released him after paying a fine on Friday 28 October 2016.

[Mohammad](#), a media activist for Mulham Volunteering Team, from Latakia governorate.





## **D. Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)**

### **Injuries**

Saturday 22 October 2016, media activist [Haitham Hammou Al Alou](#) was injured by a shrapnel in his head after a locally-made rocket shell fired by the Kurdish Self-management forces fell near him as he was covering clashes between Self-management forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Al Samouqa in the northern suburbs of Aleppo.



[Haitham](#), director of the media office of Al Jabha Al Shamiya, an armed opposition faction, from Sosnbat village that is affiliated to Al Bab city in the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo, born in 1987, has a certificate from the faculty of economy – the department of computer and information systems, married and has three kids.

SNHR spoke to the media activist [Haitham](#) via Facebook:

*“As I was working on covering the clashes between Self-management forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Al Samouqa in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, a rocket-shell fired by the Kurdish Self-management forces from their areas of control fell near me. I was injured by shrapnel in my head and I was immediately taken to Marea hospital in Marea city where they stitched my head.*”





## E. Unidentified groups

### Injuries

Sunday 23 October 2016, the media activist Wasim Al Khatib was injured in his left shoulder after he was stabbed with a blade “knife” by unknowns near his house in Irbeen city, located in Damascus suburbs governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions. As of this writing, we haven’t been able to identify the assaulters.

[Wasim](#), [director](#) of the office of the Syrian Institution for Documentation and Publishing in Damascus and its suburbs, from Irbeen city in the Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1990, a university student at the faculty of trade and economy, single.



SNHR spoke to [Wasim Al Khatib](#) via Facebook:

*“On Sunday 23 October evening, an attempt was made on my life as I was going back home in Irbeen city by two individuals on a motorbike who were covering their faces. One of the two called me by my name and when I turned around I was hit with a stick on my head and then I was stabbed in my left shoulder two times with a blade “knife” and then they escaped. I was able to reach the nearest point to my home before I lost my consciousness where I was taken to Irbeen surgical hospital and received the necessary treatment.”*

## III. Recommendations

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Condemn the targeting of media activists in Syria and sheds light on their sacrifice and suffering.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

Conduct investigations that focuses on the targeting of media activists given their vital role in recording incidents in Syria.





### **The Security Council**

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

### **International and Arabic media institutions**

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

Finally, all parties have to respect the international humanitarian law with respect to the protection of civilians and especially media activists and their equipment.

### **Acknowledgment**

Our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families and our thank for the families and friends of media activists who contributed effectively to this report.

