



## The Killing of 3 Media Activists, the Injury of 2, the Abduction and Arrest of 8 others March 2016 Death Toll

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### I. Introduction:

Media's situation is deteriorating in Syria amid the absence of care and attention of a number of international media organizations regarding the Syrian crisis and the sharply decrease of media coverage in the last year compared to previous years. Activists risk their lives to report what is happening in Syria, however, they are met with oppression, killing, arrests and threats. Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011 and up to this moment, 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. All these violations did not change the international community's efforts towards the Syrian cause; therefore the Syrian Network for Human Rights is keen on revealing the important role of the media activists' in the uprising by issuing monthly reports which document the violations being committed against them by all conflict parties.





*Fadel Abdul Ghany, SNHR chairman, says:*

*“Since the presence of foreign media outlets is prevented by the Syrian government, local media activists and personnel play a key role in covering the news about the most important violations, arrests, killings and destruction. Thus, in our monthly reports, we record and document the most important violations committed by different conflict parties against media personnel.”*

Different Syrian governorates, especially regions under the control of armed opposition, witnessed a significant decline in the shelling and killing percentages since March 2011. However, it is worth noting that regions under the government control or Kurdish Self Management Forces are not subjected to government shelling which is considered responsible for killing more than 60% of the victims in addition to destroying houses and displacing its residents.

However, the Syrian regime continued to breach the ceasefire in several ways as it is one of the most affected parties regarding this agreement and unpublicized violations have been continuous like torturing detainees.

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.

## **II. Executive Summary:**

The most significant violations committed against media personnel in March 2016 are detailed as follows:

### **A. Extrajudicial Killing: SNHR documented the killing of 3 media activists, detailed as follows:**

- i. Government forces: killed 2 media activists, including a woman
- ii. Armed Opposition Groups: killed one media activist

### **B. Arrests: We recorded 6 arrest cases, amongst which 5 were released, detailed as follows:**

1. Armed opposition groups: we recorded one arrest case
2. Extremist Islamic Groups:





i. **Al Nusra Front:** we recorded 4 arrests then they were released.

1. **Kurdish Self Management Forces:** we recorded one arrest case and its release.

**A. Abductions:** we recorded two abductions and its release. The individuals were abducted by unidentified groups.

**B. Injuries:** we recorded two injuries, detailed as follows:

i. Kurdish Self Management Forces: injured a media activist

ii. Unidentified groups: injured a media activist

## II. Report 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.

## III. Report Details:

**A. Violations committed by government forces:**

1. Extrajudicial Killings:

- On 30 March 2016 media activist Manal Abdul Baki died due to government warplane shelling on Al Kanamat neighborhood in Deir Al Zour. Manal is an independent media activist and worked as a field correspondent in Deir Al Zour Channel. Also, she worked as a volunteer in the relief aid field. Manal, 21, was from Al Kanamat neighborhood in Deir Al Zour.





- On 31 March 2016, media activist N.M, (his name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons), died due to government forces' bullets while he was documenting their progress in Homs northern suburbs, even though the cessation of hostilities was taking place. N.M is also known as Abi Jamal Al Shayahi, from Al Joura neighborhood in Homs, born in 1993, a high school student, and he worked in the media office of Ahrar Al Sham (an armed opposition group) and The News Network of Homs Governorate.

SNHR interviewed media activist [Ghazwan Al Nakdali](#), the victim's relative:

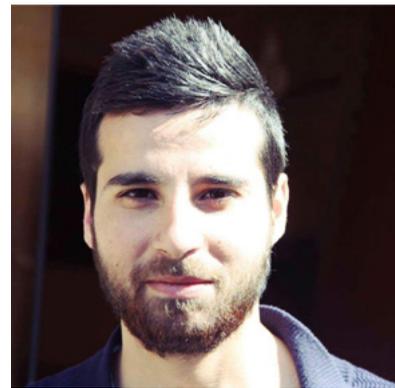
*“Abu Jamal cooperated with several media pages in Homs and lately he videotaped and documented the progress of the government forces. That day he was shot with government bullets. He was hit with two bullets in his chest and a third one in his leg. He died.”*

#### **A. Violations by Extremist Islamic Groups:**

##### **- Al Nusra Front:**

##### **- Arrests and Releases:**

On 7 March 2016 Al Nusra front arrested Housam Jamal Al Deen Hazbar in Idlib city that is under the control of armed opposition and Al Nusra front. He was accused of working with an organization that opposes Al Nusra front's policy. He was released on 31 March 2016. Housam is a media activist who works for documenting the crimes of the Syrian regime. He is from Ma'art Al No'man city in Idlib, 24, a student in the Commerce and e-Marketing College.



On 7 March 2016, Al Nusra front arrested media activist [Mohamad Ahmad Karakas](#) in Idlib city. He was arrested due to a misunderstanding with a member from Al Nusra front and was released on 8 March 2016. Mohamad is a media activist who works for Baladi Network and Al Ma'ara Media Center. He is from Ma'art Al No'man city in Idlib, 21 and married.





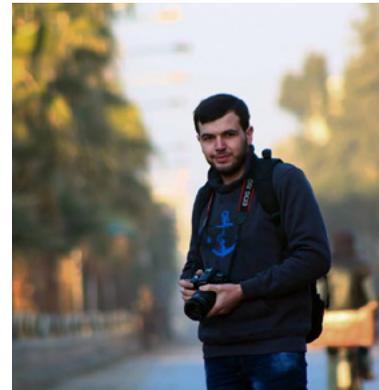
On 7 March 2016 Al Nusra front arrested media activist [Mouaz Al Shami](#) in Idlib city and released him the next day. It became clear that he was mistakenly arrested. Mouaz is an independent media activist from Erbeen city in Damascus suburbs, 23, a student in the faculty of economics and commerce.



*SNHR interviewed Mouaz:*

*“On 7 March 2016, I was surprised that I was arrested by Al Nusra front in Idlib city. During the interrogation, it turned out that they arrested me by mistake and one of my friends is the person they want. I was released after 40 hours and I was treated well.”*

On 7 March 2016, media activist [Yaseen Bassam Al Boushi](#) was arrested by government forces in Idlib city and he was released the next day. Yaseen is an independent media activist and photographer from Erbeen city in Damascus suburbs. Yaseen is 26 years old, and a student in the faculty of engineering.



*SNHR interviewed Yaseen:*

*“I was abducted under the threat of weapons in Idlib city by Al Nusra front. During the interrogation they told me that I was arrested by mistake and they released me the other day. The arrest was for 30 hours long.”*

## **B. Violations Committed by Armed Opposition Groups:**

### **Extrajudicial killing:**

On 9 March 2016 media activist [Mohamad](#) (his last name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons) died during clashes between two armed





opposition groups in Al Mayser neighborhood that is under the control of armed opposition in Aleppo. We could not identify the group that shot him as the victim was standing next to his house in the clash zone when he was shot.

Mohamad is also known as Abu Khaled Al Halabi, a media activist for an armed opposition group. The victim was from Aleppo, born on 1989 and married.

### **Arrests:**

On 22 March 2016, media activist Faez Moustafa Al Dougheim was arrested from the restaurant he worked in, in Jirjinaz town in Idlib suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. He was arrested by Ahrar Al Sham, an armed opposition group. He was accused of criticizing armed opposition groups and publishing news about ISIL on his facebook account.



[Faez](#) is a media activist and reporter for Al Masdar Newspaper in Idlib. He was born on 1996, a student in the faculty of education in Al Ba'ath University.

*SNHR interviewed Mohamad Hassan Al Sayed Al Dagheem, Faez's friend:*

*"While Faez was working in one of the restaurants in the peripheries of Jirjinaz town in Idlib suburbs, a patrol that belonged to Ahrar Al Sham arrested him and took him to an unknown place. Then he was taken to their center in Bab Al Hawa were he was interrogated about his post on facebook as he criticized armed opposition groups and published information about ISIL. He is still detained up to this moment."*

### **C. Violations Committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces:**

#### **Arrests and Releases:**

- On 16 March 2016, KSM forces arrested media activist [Masoud Hamdi](#) from Khizna town in Al Hassaka governorate. He was released on 23 March 2016.

Masoud, from Khizna town, is a reporter for Yekti Media website.





### - Injuries:

On 13 March 2016, media activist Mohamad Shbeeb was injured after he was shot with a sniper bullet in his right shoulder at the hands of KSM forces. He was injured while he was monitoring a KSM location in Sheikh Maksoud neighborhood in Aleppo city that is under the control of armed opposition. Mohamad, 22, is a media activist from Aleppo News network.

### A. Unidentified Groups:

#### - Injuries:

On 2 March 2016, media activist Mouaz Fahed Al Neymi was injured after a car was bombed next to a headquarter that belonged to an armed opposition group in Al Esha town that is under the control of armed opposition in Al Qunaitera governorate. He was injured in his leg and head. We were not able to identify the group that committed this crime up to the moment of making this report.



Mouaz is a reporter for Khouwa Network and the media office of Daraa Camp. He is 22 years old, married and a student in the faculty of law in Damascus University.

### Abductions and Releases:

On 2 March 2016, media activist Fareeh Hazae' Al Khaledi was abducted next to Al Mazreeb town that is under the control of armed opposition in Daraa suburbs while he was aiding injured people from the car bombing next to the armed opposition headquarters in Esha town. We were not able to identify the group who abducted him up to this moment.

[Fareeh](#) is a media activist for Syria's rebel, an armed opposition group, from Kharab Al Shahem town in Daraa suburbs.





SNHR interviewed Ousama Al Samhati, Fareeh's friend:

*“The car bomb happened next to a headquarter that belonged to an armed opposition group in Al Esha town in Al Qunaitera governorate which killed dozens of individuals and injured others. After Fareeh finished documenting the bombing, and while he was aiding two injured armed opposition members to be treated in Jordan, he was abducted with his escorts by unknown individuals and their fate is still unknown up to this moment.”*

On 27 March 2016 media activist [Ahmad Ibrahim Al Reslan](#) was abducted in Khan Shaykhoun city in Idlib and was released 12 hours later. However we were not able to identify the group who were responsible for this violation.

Ahmad is a reporter and presenter for Radio Fresh, from Khan Shaykhoun city in Idlib, born in 1987, and a holder of a BA in English Literature.

SNHR interviewed Ahmad Al Bayoush, the executive manager of Radio Fresh:

*“At 11 pm while Ahmad was in western Khan Shaykhoun returning to his house with his friends when suddenly a Range Rover pulled over and three masked men got out. They abducted Ahmad and covered his eyes. They took him to an unknown location. After his release, he told me that he might have been inside a cave probably. The abductors interrogated him and asked him several questions about his work in Radio Fresh and some other personal questions. They did not hit or assault him but according to him, the arrest was fearful. When he asked them about who they were, they did not answer him and told he that was there to answer their questions only. In the morning, the abductors released him and his eyes were still covered thus he could not recognize them.”*

## Acknowledgment

Our heartfelt thanks go to victims' families and friends and to the local activists who contributed majorly to this report. Also, our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families.

