



12 Media Activists Killed, 4 arrested or kidnapped and 10 others injured In October 2015

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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.”

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 October 2015 are detailed as follows:

A. Extrajudicial Killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 12 media personnel, detailed as follows:

1. Government forces (army, security forces, local militias and foreign Shiite militias) killed 5 media personnel.
2. Russian Forces killed one media activist.
3. Extremist Islamic Groups:
 - i. ISIL: killed one media personnel
4. Armed Opposition Groups: killed one media activist
5. Unidentified Groups: killed four media personnel

B. Arrests or Kidnappings:

We recorded 5 cases between kidnaps or releases and arrests :

1. Government Forces arrested one media activist
2. Extremist Islamic Groups:
 - i. ISIL: arrested one media activist and released another
3. Armed Opposition Groups: arrested then released one media activist
4. Unidentified Groups: kidnapped one media activist.

C. Injuries:

1. Government forces injured 10 media activists





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.

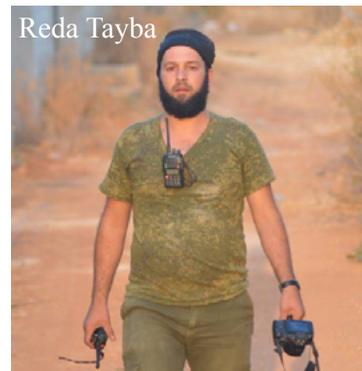
IV. Report Details:

A. Violations committed by government forces:

i. Extrajudicial Killings:

On 9 October 2015, media activist Reda Tayba died due to his injuries when he was sniped by government forces when he was covering the battle news on Karm Al Tarran warfront in Aleppo between armed opposition and government forces.

Reda, 29, was a media activist who worked in one of the armed opposition groups from Al Haydareya neighborhood in Aleppo.



On 20 October 2015, the family of media activist S.D (his name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons) informed us that they verified his death under torture in one of the government detention centers. He was arrested on 6 October 2015 on one of the government checkpoints. He was from Hama city, 25, and an independent media activist.





On 21 October 2015, media activist [Taher Houssien Flitan](#) died of wounds he sustained from 2 October 2015 when he was injured with rocket fragment in the head due to government military aviation shelling on Al Masaken neighborhood in Douma city in Damascus suburbs. [Taher](#) was 21 years old, single and a freshman in the Faculty of Agricultural Engineering. [He](#) is a photographer and media activist who worked for Baladi website. Ever since his injury, he remained unconscious until he was deceased on 21 October.



On 25 October 2015, media activist [Mahmoud Abdul Fatah Al Lawz](#), from Teir Ma'alee town in Homs, 23, a student in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, single, died of injuries he sustained a day before [he](#) was killed with a bullet fired from government forces while he was covering the news about the battles between armed opposition and government forces on Al Mazaree' war-front in Tier Ma'alee town in Homs suburbs.



On 27 October 2015, media activist [Jomaa Al Ahmad](#), from Hayyan city in Aleppo, 34, married and a father of four children, died to injuries he sustained due to government warplane shelling on Hayyan town in Aleppo suburbs while he was covering the news about the town's shelling.

Jomaa was nicknamed as Abu Nour Al Halabi and he was head of Shahbaa News Agency in Hayyan city since 2013.





ii. Arrests:

On 2 October 2015, media activist L. S. (his name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons) was arrested from his house by the general administration of the Military Intelligence Branch in Damascus and then taken to Branch 215. L.S is Syrian- Palestinian and a press photographer from Al Yarmouk Camp in Damascus.

iii. Injuries:

On 5 October 2015, media activists [Moustafa Mohamad Al Alaywi](#) and [Ali Al Ali](#) were injured due to the government shelling on Kafr Zeita city in Hama suburbs. A rocket was shelled next to them while they were on their motorcycle. Moustafa is nicknamed as Abu Arab, 24, married and father of one child, from Shahnaz town in Hama suburbs, is the spokesperson for Hama Media Centre and has a BA in Physical Education. Ali is nicknamed as Abu Al Farouk, 21, single, from Al Awneya town in Hama suburbs, and worked for Hama Media Center.

On 11 October 2015, media activist [Waseem Al Adel](#) was injured while he was covering the battle news of liberating Kafr Nabouda town in Hama suburbs between government forces and armed opposition. [Waseem](#) is a media activist from Al Ma'ara Media Center and works for a number of media outlets, from Ma'art Al Noaman city in Idlib, 28 and a student in the Faculty of French Literature.

SNHR interviewed [Waseem](#):

“While I was covering the news about the battle I was injured with two rocket fragments from government rocket launchers. The first rocket fragment injured my face and the second hit my right foot. The only thing I was holding was my camera to videotape and document the battle.”

On 19 October 2015, media activist [Akeel Abdul Azeez](#) was injured to artillery missile fragment shelled by government forces on armed opposition locations. He was injured since he was covering the news about the battles between armed opposition and government forces in the warfronts of southern Aleppo suburbs.

Akeel, 19, from western Aleppo suburbs, is a member the media office of an armed opposition group, Nour Al Deen Zanki, in Aleppo.

On 20 October 2015, media activist [Moutee' Jalal](#), from Sermeen city in Idlib, 29, a fourth year student in the Faculty of Arts in the Department of Archeology, was injured due a rocket fragment when Sermeen city in Idlib was being bombarded by government warplanes. He was injured in his chin; chest and he sustained burns





in his body. Moutee' was injured while he was accompanying the Civil Defense team who were aiding injured people from earlier shelling. Government warplanes launched a second strike which led to the injuries of a number of the civil defense team. Moutee' is a media activist in the civil defense team in Idlib and a member in Sermeen media office.

On 22 October 2015, media activist [Diyaa Mohamad Hadeed](#), from Talbesa city in Homs, 26, a student in the faculty of History, works as a reporter for Homs Media Center, was injured with a barrel bomb fragment that was dropped by government aviation while he was covering the news about the battle between armed opposition and government forces in Tier Ma'ala city in Homs suburbs.

On 24 October 2015, media activist Abdul Hadi Mansour was injured due to mortar missile fragment that was shelled by government forces on armed opposition locations in the vicinity of Al Wadehi town in southern Aleppo suburbs while he was covering the battle news there.

[Abdul Hadi](#) is nicknamed as "Fadi Mansour", a [media activist](#) in an armed opposition group, from Al Ebzmo town in western Aleppo suburbs, 21, and a student in the Faculty of Arts of French Literature.

On 24 October 2015, [media activist Ahmad Al Omar](#), 19, from Aleppo, was injured while he was covering the news about the battle between armed opposition and government forces in Sheikh Saeed warfront in Aleppo. Ahmad is nicknamed as Abu Al Baraa Al Halabi and works as a reporter for Al Bourak Media Group.

On 25 October 2015, media [activist Mahmoud Reslan](#), 21, married, was injured while he was covering the news about the battles between armed opposition and government forces in Sheikh Saeed warfront in Aleppo. Mahmoud Reslan, also known as Mahmoud Abu Al Sheikh, works for Al Jazeera Live TV channel, from Al Sha'ar neighborhood in Aleppo.

On 28 October 2015, [media activist Ammar Saab](#), from Douma city, 21, was injured due to a Gvozdika missile that was fired from government artillery next to his house in Douma city in Damascus suburbs. [Ammar](#) was nicknamed as [Ammar](#) Al Doumani, a photographer and a media activist in the Syrian Media Commission.





B. Russian Forces:

i. Extrajudicial Killing:

On 23 October 2015, media activist Waseem Al Adel who was injured earlier this month, died due to the alleged Russian shelling on Byaneen town in Jabal Al Zawiya in Idlib with several rockets while he was documenting the shelling on the town.

Waseem was a media activist from Al Ma'ara Media Center and works for a number of media outlets, from Ma'art Al Noaman city in Idlib, 28 and a student in the Faculty of French Literature.

Mohamad Al Faysal, a local media activist and Waseem's friend gave SNHR his testimony:

“Waseem was in a visit to one of his relatives in Jabal Al Zawiya in Idlib suburbs when Russian warplanes launched an air strike on the town so Waseem went directly to document the shelling. During that time, the Russian warplanes launched another strike on the same location and Waseem was injured with several rocket fragments in his back and left arm. Due to that, he was taken to Al Ma'ara National Hospital then when his health state deteriorated he was taken to a Turkish hospital where he died.

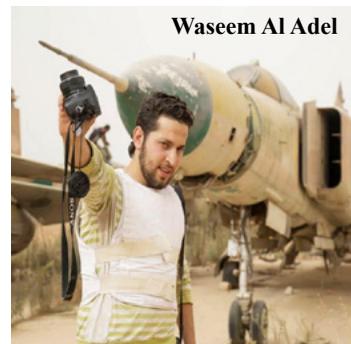
The [location](#) where media [activist Waseem Al Adel](#) died:

B. ISIL:

i. Extrajudicial Killing:

On 14 October 2015, media activist [Ayman Mohamad Shawbak](#) died due to ISIL's bullets when he was covering the news about the clashes in Ihres town in northern Aleppo suburbs between ISIL and armed opposition groups.

Ayman, 32, married and father of a child, was a media activist for one of the armed opposition groups in Aleppo.





ii. Arrests and Releases:

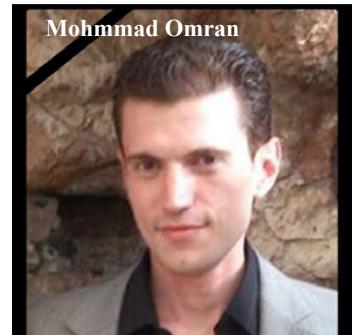
On 13 October 2015, ISIL released media activist [Farhad from Al Hassaka](#) governorate in a prisoners swap deal between ISIL and Kurdish Self Management Forces in the vicinity of Al Ya'arabeya border town with Iraq in Al Hassaka governorate. It is worth noting that Ferhad was arrested with his photographer friend Masoud Akeel who was released earlier in 21 September 2015 in the same deal. It is worth noting that [Ferhad](#) is a reporter of Roudaw News Channel.

On 15 October 2015, media activist Othman Al Sultan was arrested from his residence in Al Kouriya city in Deir Al Zour suburbs by ISIL and he was taken to an unknown location in Deir Al Zour governorate.

A. Armed Opposition Groups:

i. Extrajudicial Killing:

On 19 October 2015, [Mohamad Omran Ahmad Fadel Zaberi](#), media activist from Aleppo, 34, a master's student in the Faculty of Economics in Aleppo University died due to a missile fragment that was shelled on one of Aleppo neighborhoods that is under the control of government forces. The missile came from a region under the control of armed opposition. It is worth nothing that Mohamad Omran was the marketing and public relations manager in Al Khabar TV channel.



ii. Arrests and Releases:

On 4 October 2015, media activist Abo Omar Al Sahafi was arrested by one of the armed opposition groups when he was passing by an inspection point in Hamoriya region in Damascus suburbs. He was released on 6 October 2015.

[Abo Omar](#) who is from Damascus is also nicknamed as Ayef Al Tanka (he did not mention his real name due to security reasons and fears). He is the head of Damascus Media Office.

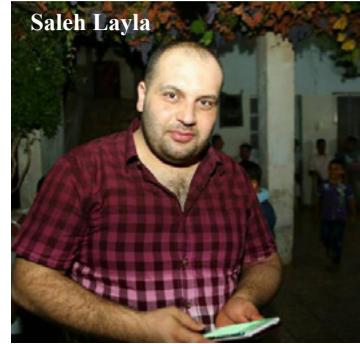




B. Unidentified Groups:

i. Extrajudicial Killing:

On 8 October 2015, media activist [Saleh Layla](#) died in a car was bombed in the Square of Hraytan city in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition groups. [Saleh](#), 27, from Adnan city in Aleppo suburbs, was a reporter for Anadulo Agency and a member of the media office in Al Jabha Al Shameya. We were not able to identify the perpetrators who committed his crime up to the moment of making this report.



On 25 October 2015, media activist Marwan Al Hamad died after unidentified armed men shot him in Rouwayhina town in the suburbs of Al Qunaitra. Marwan, who was nicknamed by Abu Yaseen, from Jabatha Al Khashab town in Al Qunaitera, was a media activist who worked with several media outlets. We were not able to identify the perpetrators who committed his crime up to the moment of making this report.

On 30 October 2015, media activist Ibrahim Abdul Kader and Fares Hamadi were found slaughtered and stabbed in their house in Orfa, a city in Turkey. We were not able to identify the perpetrators who committed his crime up to the moment of making this report. A lot of indicators point to ISIL but the incident is still under investigation since it happened in Turkey not Syria. Ibrahim, 20, from Al Raqqa, was a media activist and a member in Raqqa Being Slaughtered Silently campaign and the executive manager of Ein Ala Watan Media Agency.



iv. Kidnapping:

On 26 October 2015, media activist Tamer Aker was kidnapped by unknown individuals in Jabal Al Zawiya region in Idlib suburbs while he was going to Lattakia suburbs. His fate is still unknown up to the moment of making this report.

Tamer, 23, from Lattakia, a media activist and worked for a number of news agencies and TV channels:



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.



