

24 Media Workers Documented Killed, 28 Injured, and 31 Arrested or Kidnapped in Syria in 2018

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, January 4, 2019

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 persecuted journalists and citizen journalists to varying degrees, committing crimes qualifying as war crimes against them. The Syrian regime, however, is the party which has perpetrated most of these crimes since March 2011, with the Syrian regime bearing responsibility for up to 83 percent of these criminal acts through waging 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 to which it is subjecting the Syrian people and to hide its crimes against Syrian citizens.

Other entities such as ISIS, as well as factions from the armed opposition and Self-Management forces, have also resorted to suppression of dissenting views as standard policy in areas under their control, as seen by the widespread arrests they have made.

In light of all of these facts, Syria has fallen to 177th place (out of 180 countries) in the global rankings for press freedom, according to the Reporters Without Borders' [Press Freedom Index for 2018](#)

Syria also ranked second among the deadliest countries in the world for journalists in the [annual report](#) issued by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), by killing 11 journalists in 2018. The report also states that there are at least 60 journalists worldwide currently being held hostage, 59 of whom are held in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.



A journalist is defined as a civilian individual, according to international humanitarian law, regardless of their nationality. Any attack deliberately directed against a journalist is considered a war crime. However, when media workers get close to conflict zones, they are deemed responsible for their own actions; in such cases, when they are targeted, they are viewed as collateral damage. Also, they lose their right to protection if they become directly involved in hostilities.

International humanitarian law states that journalists should be protected, with Article 79 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 stating that civilian journalists who are engaged in missions in areas of armed conflict should be respected, classified as civilians, and protected from all forms of deliberate attacks, provided that they take no action which might adversely affect 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, the UN 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 documents the most notable violations against media workers (journalists and citizen journalists) in December by the parties to the conflict.

SNHR defines a citizen journalist as anyone who plays a significant role in reporting and publishing news. He or she is not necessarily impartial as a journalist should be. In cases in which a citizen journalist has taken up arms and engaged directly in hostilities, he or she would be no longer classified as a citizen journalist, although it is possible that he or she would be referred to as a citizen journalist again, provided he or she refrains completely thereafter from any further direct involvement in military action.

This report draws, firstly, upon the daily, ongoing documentation and monitoring efforts by SNHR's team, and, secondly, on accounts from survivors, eyewitnesses, and local media workers who 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 which 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 cached in a secret online database, as well as backup copies on hard drives. We always ensure that this data is stored with its respective source. Nonetheless, we can't claim that we have documented all cases, in light of the proscriptions put in place by the regime and other parties and the pursuit and persecution of media workers by Syrian regime forces and some of the other armed groups.

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

This report contains nine accounts that we've collected through speaking directly with eyewitnesses, none of which are 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 us offering or giving them any incentives. Also, SNHR tried to spare the eyewitnesses the agony of remembering the violations as much as possible, and gave assurances that we would 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 international humanitarian law. Whilst we include these to preserve the truth historically and store them as part of a national record, we don't necessarily describe these as having qualified as crimes.

II. December Outline

December saw arrests of media worker by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, Syrian Regime forces and Kurdish self-Management forces, most of whom were subsequently released.

The first third of 2018 witnessed an increase in the toll of media workers, compared with the next two-thirds of the year, following the military escalation by Syrian-Russian forces on the three de-escalation zones (certain areas of northern Homs governorate, parts of Daraa and Quneitra governorates, and the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs governorate) until these forces seized control over those areas and forcibly displaced their residents. The Syrian Regime forces were responsible for the majority of killings of media workers documented during this period, killing 55 percent of the total number of victims recorded, with 39 percent of this total died as a result of torture in the regime's detention centers.

In the second half of the year, we noticed an unprecedented rise in the number of arrests of media workers, mostly in the north of Syria, by both factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, with these arrests signaling a continuation of efforts to silence the community, a strategy which has now apparently become standard policy.

The factions of the Armed Opposition led the rest of the parties in terms of the arrests of media workers, arresting 21 percent of the total recorded, followed by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham with 19 percent.



III. Executive Summary

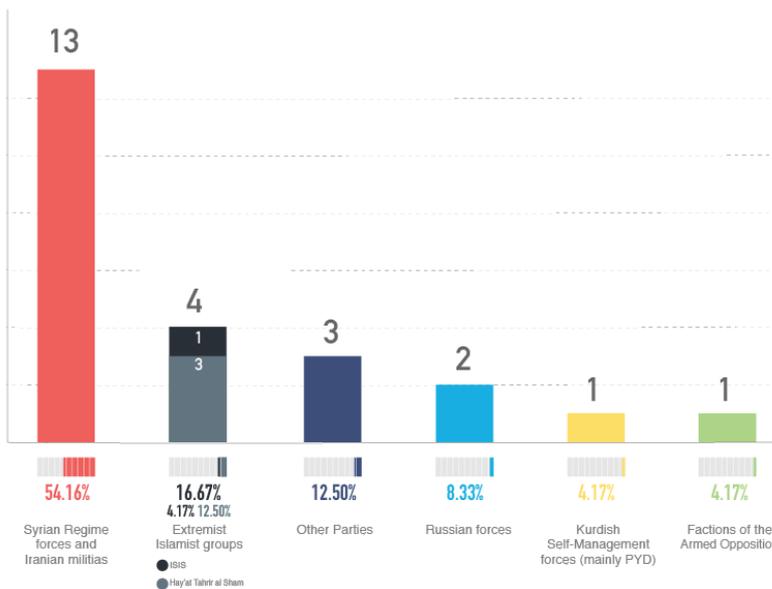
A. Death toll of media workers killed in 2018

The SNHR documented the following violations against media workers in 2018:

- **Acts of Killing:** the SNHR documented the death of 24 media workers, distributed as follows:



Distributed as follows:



24
media workers
were killed
at the hands of
the main parties to
the conflict in Syria in
2018

As documented by SNHR

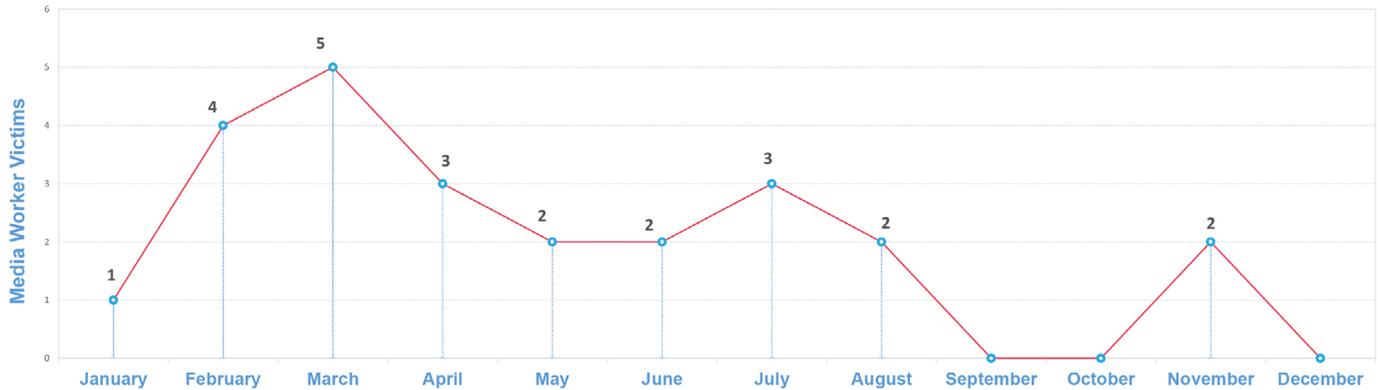
- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias): 13, including five died due to torture.
- Russian forces: two
- Extremist Islamist groups:
ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'): one.
Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition): three
- Factions of the Armed Opposition: one
- Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party): one.
- Other parties: three



The death toll of media workers killed in 2018 was distributed by month as follows:



24 media workers were killed in Syria in 2018



As documented by SNHR

- **Injuries:** we recorded the injury of 28 media workers, distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias): 12

- Russian forces: eight.

- Extremist Islamist groups:

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition): one.

- Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party): one.

- Other parties: six.

- **Arrest and release:** we recorded 48 cases of arrest, kidnap and release, including one woman (adult female). These cases were distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):

We recorded three cases of arrest, one of whom was released.

- Extremist Islamist groups:

Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition): we recorded nine cases of arrest, five of whom were released, and one case of release



- Factions of the Armed Opposition: we recorded 10 cases of arrest, including one woman, four of whom were released.
 - Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party): we recorded four cases of arrest, three of whom were released.
 - Other parties: we recorded five cases of kidnap, three of whom were set free.
- Other violations against media workers:** we recorded four violations, distributed as follows:
- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias): three.
 - Other parties: one.

B. Record of Violations against media workers in December 2018:

Types of violations against media workers in December 2018 were distributed as follows:

- Arrest and release: We recorded 11 cases of arrest and release, distributed as follows:

- Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):

We recorded two cases of arrest, one of whom was released.

- Extremist Islamist groups:

Hay’at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition): we recorded three cases of arrest, all of whom were released.

- Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party): We recorded one case of arrest, who was released.

- Other violations against media workers: we recorded one attack at the hands of Syrian Regime forces.

IV. Most Notable Violations in December:

A. Syrian Regime forces:

- Acts of arrest and release:

Wissam al Tair “We were unable to identify his real name”

On Saturday, December, 2018, Wissam was arrested by Syrian Regime forces in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR.

Wissam, a media activist and administrator of the ‘Dimashq al Aan’ Network, is from Qudsayya city in the northwest of Damascus Suburbs governorate.



Wissam al Tair



Sonel Ali

On Saturday, December 15, 2018, Sonel was arrested by Syrian Regime forces in Damascus city, being released 12 days later on Thursday, December 27, 2018.

Sonel, from Latakia city, works as a reporter for al Madina FM Radio station.

- Other violations against media workers:

On Thursday, December 20, 2018, Syrian Regime forces raided the office of 'Dimashq al Aan', in al Sha'lan neighborhood in the center of Damascus city, and confiscated the media outlet's computers, five days after arresting the administrator of the network, known as Wissam al Tair.

B. Extremist Islamist Groups:

- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:

- Acts of arrest and release:

Abdullah Khaled al Hasan

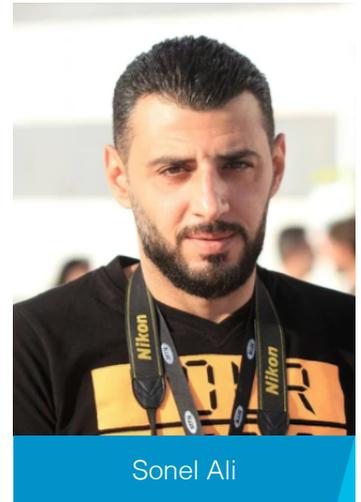
On Wednesday, December 19, 2018, Abdullah was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in Kelli town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was taken to a prison belonging to the group in Harim city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, and was released 12 days later on Monday, December 31, 2018.

Abdullah, known as Noor al Rifa'i, from Qunaitera city, is a media activist who works as a reporter for al Jisr TV channel.

Amjad Bakir

On Thursday, December 13, 2018, gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham raided Amjad's house in Saraqeb city in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate aiming to arrest him. A city dignitary intervened on his behalf, however, and prevented his detention. Amjad was later summoned to a court run by the group, before being released after a few hours.

Amjad Bakir, from Saraqeb city, is a media activist with the Jabhet Thwwar Saraqeb brigade's media office; the brigade is a faction of the Armed Opposition.



Amjad Katlani

On Sunday, December 16, 2018, Amjad was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in al Souq area in the center of Idlib city. He was released the next day, Monday, December 17, 2018.

Amjad, from Idlib city, works for the 'Child Protection Network'.



Amjad Katlani

C. Self-Management forces:

- Acts of arrest and release:

Sabri Fakhri

On Friday, December 21, 2018, Sabri was arrested by the Self-Management forces following a raid on his home in al Seyahi street in Qameshli city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. He was released after a few hours. Sabri, a reporter for ARK TV and a member of the Kurdish Democratic Party, is from Qameshli city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate.



Sabri Fakhri

V. Most Notable Violations in 2018:

A. Syrian Regime forces:

- Acts of killing:

Abdul Rahman Ismail al Yasin

On Tuesday, February 20, 2018, Abdul Rahman [died](#) as a result of fatal shrapnel wounds to his right thigh and lungs following an air raid by fixed-wing Syrian Regime warplanes that fired a missile which exploded near him whilst he was reporting on earlier regime air strikes on Hamouriya town in the Eastern Ghouta in the east of Damascus Suburbs governorate. The town was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident.

[Abdul Rahman](#), a photographer with the Hamouriya City Media Office, was born in 1988 and held a middle school diploma. He was married and had two children.



We contacted Abdul Salam Hamza¹, who told us that his colleague Abdul Rahman was in the vicinity of Dar al Shifa' Hospital documenting the bombardment there when the military aircraft returned to bomb the area again: “ **Abdul Rahman was wounded with shrapnel throughout his body. One of the shrapnel fragments hit his femoral artery, while another one lodged in the lungs. He was hospitalized immediately in the hospital of Dar al Shifa' where he died.** “

Ahmad Bashir Hamdan

On Wednesday, March 14, 2018, Ahmad was [killed](#) by several shrapnel fragments that pierced most of his body following an air raid by fixed-wing warplanes belonging to the Syrian or Russian air force (SNHR is still working to confirm which of the two parties was responsible) that fired a missile at his house in the town of Hamouriya in the Eastern Ghouta in the east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident. The area is under the control of the Syrian Regime forces at the time of the preparation of the report.

[Ahmad](#), a member of Hamouriya Media Office, a member of the al Ghouta Media Center, and a participant in representative video clips from the town of Hamouriya, was born on December 5, 1992. He was a student at the Institute of Media and Journalism at Masar Academy in the Eastern Ghouta, was married and had a female child.



Saeed Khaled al Abrash

On Sunday, June 3, 2018, Saeed' parents ascertained that Saeed had died due to torture in a detention center when they went to the Civil Registry Department in Hama, where they informed of his death without the officials there explaining the cause, place, date of death or even providing them with a death certificate. We note that on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, Saeed was arrested by personnel from the Syrian Regime forces' Military Security branch when he was taken to hospital for medical treatment after being shot in the foot whilst reporting on those forces breaking into Bab al Qebli neighborhood, west of Hama city.

[Saeed](#), a media activist who worked as a reporter for the Ugarit News Network, as well as a photographer in the Coordination of Bab al Qebli neighborhood group was born in 1987. He came from Bab al Qebli neighborhood, held a secondary certificate - literary branch – and was single.

¹ We contacted him on his personal FB account on February 22, 2018



The SNHR met with Abdul Rahim al Abrash², Saeed's brother, who told us that his sister revisited the Civil Registry Department in Hama on June 3 after hearing that some of the disappeared had been recorded as dead in the population records: **“The employee informed my sister that Saeed was dead without any further details. We do not know when he died, but we used to receive news about him until 2017. Saeed was transferred between several detention centers. He was in the Military Security branch in Hama, and then moved to Branch ‘215’, then to Sednaya in Damascus Suburbs, after which we had no more news about him.**” All the information that the family members received indicated that Saeed’s health had steadily deteriorated following his detention, Abdul Rahman added.

- Injuries:

Abdul Qader Taleb al Mansour

On Saturday, March 10, 2018, Abdul Qader was wounded by shrapnel [in the face](#) following a bombing by Syrian Regime forces stationed at al Masasna village checkpoint in the north-western suburbs of Hama governorate, who used a missile launcher to fire a missile at agricultural land east of the town of Latamena in the northwestern suburbs of Hama governorate, which is under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition.

[Abdul Qadir](#), known as Obada al Hamawi, is a journalist at al Latamena Surgical Hospital, and a student in the Physics Department at the Faculty of Science at Tishreen University. He is 29 years old and single.

Abdul Qader³ told us that some farmers were hit by an artillery shell fired by Syrian Regime forces using a missile launcher at a farm near Latamena town at approximately 08:00:

“I went there to cover the incident and rescue the wounded, but a second shell fell near me, which caused me many wounds all over my body, including light wounds to the right eye, in addition to the injury of my upper jaw and losing some teeth. I am still being treated.”

Anas Abdul Majeed al Diab

On Friday, September 7, 2018, Anas was [injured](#) by [shrapnel in the lower](#) limbs from an artillery shell fired by Syrian Regime artillery forces which hit an area nearby him, while he was helping the Civil Defense team to put out a fire caused by a previous missile attack by fixed-wing warplanes which we believe were Russian. This air raid had targeted an industrial facility on the outskirts of Khan Sheikhoun city in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which is under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition and Hay’at Tahrir al Sham.

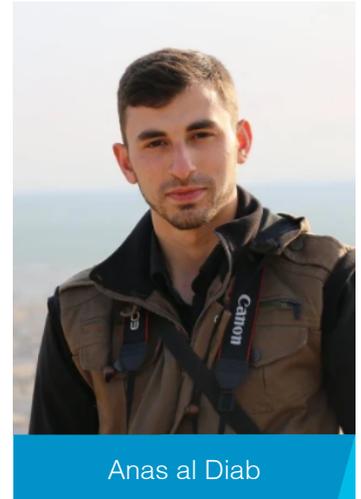
² In his place of residence in Idlib city on June 5, 2018

³ We contacted him via WhatsApp



[Anas](#), a photographer for the Civil Defense Media Office, from Khan Sheikhoun city, was born in 1996 and has a secondary school diploma. He is single.

The SNHR contacted Anas⁴, who told us that he had gone with the Civil Defense team to put out a fire in a factory caused by Russian air strikes: **“While I was working with the team, the area came under artillery fire from positions of the Syrian regime with four shells. The first shell injured me alongside a friend of mine and a civilian who was at the site. I was evacuated to a hospital in Ma’aret An-Nu’man where they told me that one of the veins in my leg had been cut, some tendons had been damaged, I underwent surgery in the same hospital, and I stayed for three days until I was taken to a hospital in the Turkish city of Gaziantep to complete the treatment. “**



- Arrest and release:

Omar Kalo

On Saturday, August 25, 2018, Omar was arrested by Syrian Regime forces at a checkpoint on the road linking between Aleppo and Manbej city in the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR, as well as to his family.

[Omar](#), who holds a degree in media from the University of Damascus, is a newscaster on the Rudaw satellite channel. He was born in 1977 in the village of Arslan Tash, east of the city of Ein al Arab, in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

B. Russian forces:

Acts of killing:

Ahmad Mahmoud Aziza

On Friday, August 10, 2018, Ahmad was [killed](#) by [shrapnel wounds](#) to most parts of his body as a result of air raids by fixed-wing warplanes which we believe were Russian that hit the area near him while he was rescuing the victims of a previous air strike by the same warplanes on Urm al Kubra village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which is under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition.

[Ahmad](#), a reporter and a photographer with the ‘Aleppo News’ network and ‘Syrian Eyes’ network, was born in 1998 and held a middle school diploma.



⁴ We contacted him on his personal FB account on September 26, 2018



The SNHR contacted the media worker Mahmoud Aziza⁵, known as Abu al Izz al Halabi, Ahmad's father, who told us that fixed-wing warplanes belonging to the Russian Air Force had launched a raid on Urm al Kubra village using missiles. Ahmad went to the site to provide coverage of the bombardment. **“Ahmad arrived at the site before the rescue teams, and decided to contribute in saving victims instead of covering the incident. While he was helping a child, warplanes bombed the same site; causing severe injuries to most of his body, which led to his death immediately at about 7:00 pm “** Mahmoud added that he learned that his son Ahmad was missing: **“ I went to search for him in all medical centers where I couldn't find him. So, I went to where they gathered the bodies of the victims of the massacre, and I found him there. Praise be to God on his tenderness. “**

- Injuries:

Shaher Yahya Summaq

On Monday, January 29, 2018, Shaher sustained [a head wound](#) by [shrapnel](#) in an [air raid](#) by [fixed-wing](#) warplanes we believe were Russian that fired small missiles at Uday Hospital. He was working on providing media coverage about those wounded in a previous air strike on the potato market in Saraqeb town in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, which was under the joint control of factions of the Armed Opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident.

[Shaher](#), a married reporter for the Orient Channel, was born in 1990. He is from Binnesh city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, and was a second-year student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, English Department.

Shaher⁶ told us that the Russian warplanes launched a raid at the hospital in Saraqeb city while he was reporting on injured people who had arrived at the hospital for treatment due to being injured in a previous bombing by the same warplanes on the potato market in the city: **“ I was hit by shrapnel in my head and I was taken to a medical center in the city of Binnesh, and then to another center in the city of Idlib and then I was taken back to Binnesh. “**

⁵ We contacted him on his personal FB account on August 25, 2018

⁶ We contacted him on his personal FB account on January 31, 2018



C. Extremist Islamist groups:

- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:

- Acts of killing:

Raed Mahmoud Fares and Hamoud Jneed

On Friday, November 23, 2018, at around 12:00 Damascus time/10:00 GMT, as people were performing the Friday Prayer, Raed Fares was in his car with his fellow media activists Hamoud Jneed and Ali al Dandoush, driving from the URB towards Kafranbel's main market, on their way to the home of a relative of Raed. They were pursued by gunmen in another vehicle; when Raed stopped his car in front of his relative's house, the gunmen assassinated him and his colleague Hamoud. We believe that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham was most likely behind this assassination, and have issued an [extensive report](#) on this incident.

Raed, the director of 'Radio Fresh', was a prominent activist in the popular uprising for democracy. He was born in Kafranbel city in southern Idlib governorate in 1972. Raed was married and a father of three children.

Hamoud was a media activist from Kafranbel city, who was a crew member with Radio Fresh. Born in 1980, he was a married father of four children, including a daughter with special needs. He had been actively involved in filming the demonstrations with Raed, as well as documenting the Syrian regime's bombardment of the city with many photos and videos. He also produced a number of reports for Radio Fresh.

- Arrest and release:

Mohammad Fadel Janoudi

On Monday, June 24, 2018, Mohammad was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, for not having permission to photograph in the areas under their control, from his local area near Ein al Bayda camp, near the town of Bdama, in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was taken to a detention center in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR, as well as to his family.



Raed Fares



Hamoud Jneed



Mohammad Janoudi



Mohamed, known as Mohammad al Shami, was born in 1995. A married father of two children, he is a reporter for the Qasioun Agency in the suburbs of Latakia governorate, from al Najeyya village in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate.

Jumpei Yasuda

On Tuesday, October 23, 2018, Jumpei was Released by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham for ransom money. We note that Jumpei was arrested by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in Salhab village in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate in July 2015, and appeared in [a video](#) released to mark his birthday on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, in which he sent a message to his family and friends calling on them to work for his release.

Jumpei, a Japanese journalist, was born in 1974.



Jumpei Yasuda

Jum'a al Omari

On Monday, October 29, 2018, Jum'a was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham in Termanein village in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. His fate remains unknown to the SNHR, as well as to his family.

Jum'a is an independent media activist from Kafr Hamra town in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

The SNHR contacted Mr. Hasan al Mahmoud⁷, a resident of the town of Darat Ezza in the western suburbs of Aleppo Governorate, who witnessed the arrest: **“On Monday evening, when the media worker Jum'a was in his house on the outskirts of Teramanein town, masked gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arrived and surrounded the house where Jum'a lives with his family, and then fired several shots into the air to intimidate the people. Jum'a and his father came out of the house. The masked men immediately arrested them and took them to a place we do not know. So far no one knows his fate or the location where he and his father are. “**



Jum'a al Omari

⁷ We contacted him via WhatsApp



D. Factions of the Armed Opposition:

- Arrest and release:

Delshan Qarajuol

On Friday, March 30, 2018, Delshan was arrested by gunmen affiliated with the Sultan Murad Brigade belonging to factions of the Armed Opposition, in Afrin city, in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. She was taken to a detention center in the Izaz city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, before she was released on Friday, April 27, 2018.

Delshan Qarajuol, a photographer and relief activist, from Afrin city, was born in 1975.

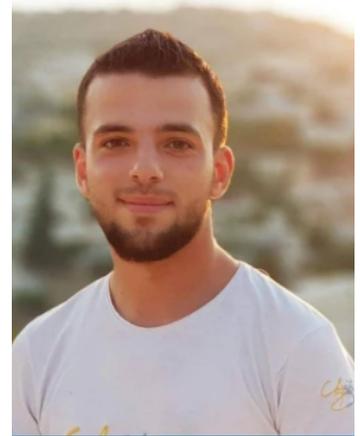


Delshan Qarajuol

Bilal Sraiwel

On Thursday, November 8, 2018, at around 20:00, gunmen affiliated to al Sultan Murad brigade, one of the factions of the armed opposition, arrested Bilal in Vilas street in the center of Afrin city on charges of filming without obtaining prior authorization. He was taken to an undisclosed location, before he was released on Sunday, November 11, 2018, after being subjected to [severe torture](#).

Bilal, from Douma city in the Eastern Ghouta in eastern Damascus Suburbs governorate, was born in 1993. He is a media worker for Swa'adna Alsouria Organization, a member of the Media Workers Association of East Ghouta, and a designer for the Syrian Independent Kurd League.



Bilal Sraiwel

SNHR contacted Bilal⁸, who told us, **“As I was photographing in a street in the city of Afrin, someone approached me and asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was taking some humanitarian pictures. He confiscated my equipment and contacted a patrol of the security office who tied my hands and blindfolded me and took me to some place half an hour away from Afrin, where they beat me and tortured me without asking any questions.**

⁸ We contacted him via WhatsApp on November 21, 2018



After half an hour of torture, they asked me whom I work for, but they did not believe me and continued beating me brutally all over my body, and they hung me up from the ceiling and ground out cigarette butts on my body to force me to confess that I was working for a certain party. Then they put me in solitary for four days tied with handcuffs and blindfolds never knowing where I was or what was happening around me.” Bilal added, “ **On Sunday, November 11, they asked me to put on my clothes and took me to a nearby area of Afrin, and they took me to an office where there was someone sitting. I was told that that man was Abu Ahmad, the commander of the Sultan Murad Brigade, then I was released.**” Bilal confirmed that the individuals who arrested and tortured him were affiliated to someone known as Abu al Laith who is affiliated with the Sultan Murad Brigade.

E. Other parties:

- Acts of killing:

Ibrahim Abdul Razzaq al Mnajjer

On Thursday, May 17, 2018, Ibrahim was [shot dead](#) with [gunshots](#) to the [neck](#) and chest by gunmen in front of his house in Sayda city in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate. We were unable to determine who was responsible for the shooting as of the time of the preparation of the report. The city was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the writing.

[Ibrahim](#), a reporter for the Sham News Network and ‘Sy24’ website, from Tal Shehab town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, was born in 1992. He was a third-year student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Damascus – English Department, married with a female child.



- Injuries:

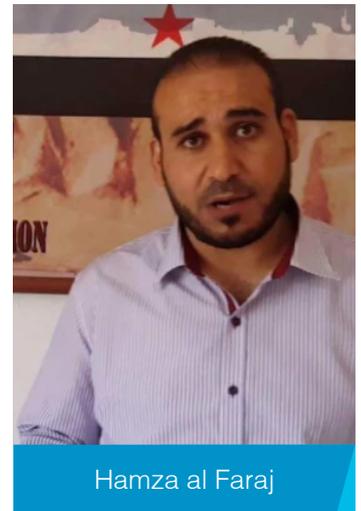
Hamza Mohammad al Faraj

On Monday, July 2, 2018, Hamza suffered fractures to both legs in a landmine explosion on the outskirts of al Mata’iya village in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate while he was providing media coverage of the displacement of civilians as a result of the fierce military campaign by Syrian Regime forces on the area. As of the reporting date, we were unable to determine the party responsible for placing the mine. The village, which was under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition at the time of the incident, is under the control of the Syrian Regime forces at the time of the preparation of the report.



[Hamza](#), a reporter and photographer for Yaqeen Media Foundation, from al Laja area in the eastern suburbs of Daraa governorate, was born in 1986 and holds a secondary school diploma.

The SNHR contacted Hamza⁹, who told us that a large number of people had been displaced as a result of the intensive shelling of Daraa governorate: **“During my media coverage of the movement of displaced persons on the outskirts of the village of Mata’iya, in rural Daraa, a landmine exploded near me; resulting in injuries to both my legs. I was immediately hospitalized to Jordan.**” Hamza believes that the Syrian Regime forces planted the mine.



- Arrest and release:

Farid Dalli Omar

On Thursday, November 15, 2018, on the basis of the earlier arrest of a fellow media activist, Bilal Sraiwel, by the Sultan Murad Brigade, Farid was kidnapped by unknown gunmen on the road linking Izaz city with Afrin in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, an area under the control of factions of the armed opposition. However, he was released in the early hours of Saturday, November 17, 2018.

[Farid](#), a media activist, known as Farid Abu Yamen, was born in 1994. He has a secondary school certificate, and works for the Sultan Murad Brigade, which is affiliated with factions of the armed opposition.



VI. Recommendations

Security Council

Work on combating the current policy of impunity by referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

⁹ We contacted him on his personal FB account on July 22, 2018



OHCHR

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

Commission of Inquiry (COI)

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

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

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

International and Arabic media institutions

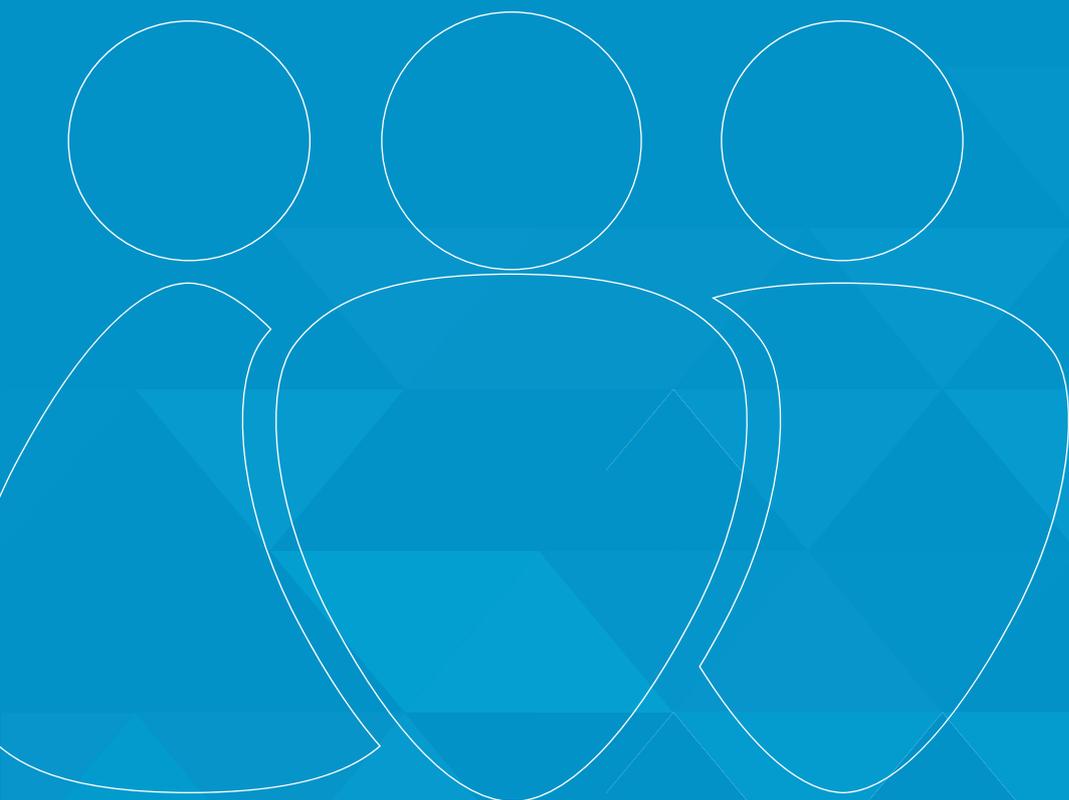
Support their colleagues in the field of media by publishing periodic reports that shed light on their daily suffering and commemorate their sacrifice. Also, these institutions should contact the bereaved families of murdered media workers to offer consolation and any assistance which they can provide.

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

Acknowledgment and Condolences

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





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