



Five media activists killed, 13 kidnapped and arrested, and five injured in December

384 media activists have been killed from the beginning of the Syrian revolution until the end of December 2014

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First: Executive Summary

Violations against media activists in December are distributed as follows:

Killing: SNHR documented the killing of five media activists; all of whom were killed by government forces.

Arrest and kidnapping: we recorded 13 arrest and kidnapping cases as follows:

Government forces: arrested one media activists and released him later.

Kurdish forces: kidnapped three media activists and released one of whom later.

Extremist groups:

- **Daesh:** kidnapped two journalists.

- **An-Nussra Front:** we recorded six kidnapping carried out by An-Nussra Front while one media activist was released.

- **Jund Al-Aqsa:** one media activist was kidnapped and released later.

Injuries: we recorded five injuries:

- Government forces: injured four media activists

- An-Nussra Front: injured one media activist

- Violations against properties: one by An-Nussra Front

Second: Introduction

With the end of 2014, nearly four years have passed since the beginning of the Syrian revolution and media reality in Syria has become a dangerous unsuitable 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.

Media activist who are still in Syria are unable to challenge and confront the oppression and risks they are facing in their work without protection or some serious efforts to put an end to the crimes and violations against them. Every day, they are paying the dearest prices for their bravery and commitment to report the news.

Despite the fact that the number of crimes against media activists have relatively decreased over the past few months especially by Daesh and other armed forces, these crimes are still a clear indication that the policy of violence has managed to undermine the media work. Additionally, this indicates also that violence and terrorization caused an increasing void in the media scene as there is a great lack of independent and free media institutions. SNHR anticipated this outcome and we already noted that in many previous reports.

A large portion of media activists who decided to stay in their areas joined armed groups. With the domination of weapon and power, the chance of getting accurate information is diminishing as media is now a method of warfare in Syria.

Obstacles and difficulties facing human rights and media activism increase, 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.

Huda Al-Ali, media researcher at SNHR, says: “The lack 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. Government forces

Extrajudicial killing

1- On Monday 8 December, 2014, government forces targeted with a missile a car for Orient News TV channel. In that attack, which took place at the borders of Daraa – Ash-Shaikh Miskean city, the reporters Adel Al-Assimi, Yousuf Mahmoud Ad-Dous, and the cameraman Salem Abdurrahman Al-Khlail were all killed. Although, the car didn't have a journalism logo on it, it carried a receiver on it which can be clearly seen. Also, it was considered as a civil target.

- Yoususf Mohammad Ad-Dous, from Daraa countryside – Bosra Ash-Sham, 29-year-old, majored in English literature and graduated in 2011, member of the Syrian Journalists Association, and one of the founders of the media office in Daraa, he was a prominent media activist, with the beginning of the Syrian revolution, he became a media activists to report and monitor the events in Daraa, he was hired by Orient News as a reporter and did many field and humanitarian reports in Daraa countryside and Qunietra countryside.



Yoususf Mohammad Ad-Dous

- Rami Adel Al-Assimi, from Daraa countryside – Dael city, 26-year-old, majored in IT engineering at Damascus University, he was one of the first to stream live events via his cell phone, founder of the media office in Dael city, and worked as a reporter for Orient News, he also wrote for several newspapers that were founded during the revolution.



Rami Adel Al-Assimi

- Cameraman Salem Al-Khalil, from Daraa countryside – Bosra Ash-Sham, 27-year-old, graduated from the institution for computer engineering in 2009, he recorded many battles and events in Daraa, he worked for Orient News as a cameraman along with his colleague Youusf Ad-Dous, Salem was formerly a rebel after he defected from the government army but he retired from military work and became a cameraman later.



Cameraman Salem Al-Khalil





2- On Wednesday 10 December, 2014, Al-Jazzera Net reporter Mahran Bashir Ad-Diri was killed while he was heading to cover the clashes between the rebels and the regime forces in Daraa countryside – Ash-Shaikh Miskean. Mahran in car accident in which he hit a car that was for rebels after he turned off his cars lights to avoid getting caught by government forces. The car accident took place almost at the same location where government forces killed the three media activist who worked for Orient network a few days before.

Mahran Ad-Diri, 31-year-old, from Ash-Shaikh Miskean, majored in media at Damascus University and graduated in 2008, and worked for SANA before he defected from the agency early in the revolution, Mahran wrote for many local and international newspapers.



Mahran Bashir Ad-Diri

3- On Sunday 21 December, 2014, the media activist [Mahmoud Asem Al-Ms alma](#), from Daraa – Bosra Ash-Sham, was killed by government forces warplanes in Daraa countryside – Ash-Shaikh Miskean when he was covering the events there.

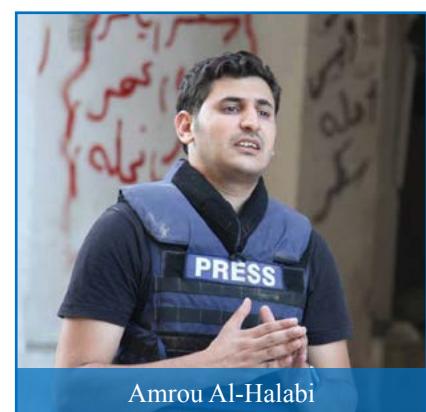
Injuries

1- On Sunday 30 November, 2014, the media activist [Yassin Abu-Raed](#), manager of the media office in Andan city, was moderately injured by a government forces warplanes that targeted Aleppo countryside – Andan city with a thermobaric missile.

2- On Thursday 11 December, 2014, the media activist [Moaed As-Sorour](#), Yaqin Institution reporter, was injured by government forces in Daraa countryside – Ash-Shaikh Miskean city where he was covering events.

3- On Monday, 15 December, 2014, media activist [Qais Al-Halbi](#) was shot by a government forces sniper in Al-Mlah area, which is seven Km to the north of Aleppo city, while he was covering the events there. Due to his severe injuries, he underwent five different surgeries.

4- On Friday 27 December, 2014, Amrou Al-Halabi, Al-Jazeera News TV channel reporter in Aleppo, was injured after government forces targeted his home in Aleppo with a missile. Amrou was wounded by a shrapnel in his hand and his house, which s reside by him and his team, was partly destroyed.



Amrou Al-Halabi





Arrest and kidnapping

1- On Tuesday 16 December, 2014, the female painter [Atab Al-Hamoud](#) was arrested by the Syrian security forces at the Syrian-Lebanese borders while she was heading to Lebanon, she was transferred to the State Security branch in Damascus She was released on Monday 29 December, 2014.

Atab, from As-Suwyida – Al-Qarya town, was a member of the UN-supervised psychological support team where she participated in many painting workshops in Al-Talaea' camp in As-Suwyida which became later a camp for IDPs.

2- On Thursday 18 December, 2014, the journalist [Omar Ash-Sha'ar](#) and the writer Jadea' Noufal were released pursuant to a judge's ruling in Damascus.

Omar was arrested along with two other journalists, Jadea' Noufal and the doctor Maria Sha'bou, on Friday 31 November, 2014 at the Syrian border crossing in Jadedat Yabous when they were heading to Damascus after attending a human rights workshop in Beirut, they were transferred to the Political Security branch in Damascus countryside.

3- On Sunday 28 December, 2014, the painter [Hazem Waked](#) was released from Adra Prison in Damascus countryside. He was arrested by security forces from his home in Damascus on 10 December, 2014.

B. Kurdish Forces

Kidnapping

1- On Wednesday 3 December, 2014, Ali Abdurrahman, member of Welatî network editorial team and the network reporter in Ifreen city, from his home along with his colleague Mahmoud Kouriesh by the self-proclaimed “Terrorists Raiding Squad” which is a newly-formed security forces that includes masked men. According to credible sources, it is affiliated to PYD.

[Ali Abdurrahman](#) was released three days later on Saturday 6 December, 2014, he revealed some of the kidnapping details on Welatî website where he said that he was taken by an unknown group after they handcuffed him and covered his eyes. They interrogated him about a report he published on Peshmerga Forces while he was in Ifreen to visit his family. Abdurrahman assured that he wasn't any physically or verbally offended. His eyes were covered during the interrogation and he didn't see the interrogator. He also mentioned that he stayed in a solitary cell.

2- On Wednesday 3 December, 2014, [Mahmoud Kouriesh](#), member of Azadi Ifreen coordinate, was kidnapped along with Ali Abdurrahman from Ali's house by the self-proclaimed “Terrorists Raiding Squad” which is a newly-formed security forces that includes masked men. According to credible sources, it is affiliated to PYD. Mahmoud's fate is still unknown especially after PYD's YPG denied that they have the two activists.





3- On Wednesday 3 December, 2014, [Lazkien Barakat](#), member of Azadi Ifreen coordinate, was kidnapped by the self-proclaimed “Terrorists Raiding Squad” which is a newly-formed security forces that includes masked men. According to credible sources, it is affiliated to PYD. Lazkien’s fate is still unknown especially after PYD’s YPG denied that they have the two activists.

C. Extremist Groups

Daesh

[Kidnapping](#)

On Monday 15 December, 2014, the team of the Kurdish channel Rûdaw: Farhad Hamou and the cameraman Mas’oud Al-Aqiel disappeared in Al-Qamishli countryside as they were coming back from Tal Koujar.

We learned later that they were kidnapped by a temporary checkpoint for Daesh on Al-Ya’roubiya road. Credible sources told their family that they were transferred to Tal Hamies in Daesh-held Al-Qameshly countryside and then to Al-Hassaka countryside – Ash-Shdadi city to continue their interrogation.



Farhad Hamou and Mas’oud Al-Aqiel

An-Nussra Front

[Kidnapping](#)

1- On 29 November, 2014, An-Nussra Front released the media activist Jawdat Malas he had been imprisoned for one month. Jawdat was kidnapped in Idlib countryside – Ma’rat An-Nu’mān on Thursday 28 November, 2014, he told SNHR that he was physically and psychologically tortured by An-Nussra Front forces because of his work with a group that opposes An-Nussra Front in Ma’rat An-Nu’mān and for his opposing views.

2- On Saturday 27 December, 2014 An-Nussra Front arrested three members of Rouzna Radio team; one media activist and two technicians, their names were kept a secret as per their family’s request. The three were trying to install a broadcaster on top of An-Nabi Ayoud summit which is the highest point in the area, located in Idlib countryside – Jouzaf village. Additionally, An-Nussra destroyed the equipment and the broadcasters.

3- On Sunday 28 December, 2014, An-Nussra Front arrested the media activist Ahmad Al-





Jad'an, reporter for Basmat Souria network, and his brother the photographer Hamoud Al-Jad'an during a raid and arresting campaign that was carried out by An-Nussra forces in Idlib countryside – Jouzaf village. The two brothers are from Idlib countryside – Kafrnbul village.

4- On Sunday 28 December, 2014, An-Nussra Front arrested the independent photographer Hamoud Al-Jad'an during a raid and arresting campaign that was carried out by An-Nussra forces in Idlib countryside – Jouzaf village. The two brothers are from Idlib countryside – Kafrnbul village.

5- On Monday 29 December, 2014, the media activist Raed Al-Fares, head of the media office in Kafnrbul and head of the organization of active revolutionary offices collation in Idlib, was kidnapped along with his colleague the cameraman Hamoud Al-Junaid by An-Nussra forces while they were heading back from Saraqeb to Kafrnbul. According to credible sources, they were transferred on the next day to Harem prison in Idlib countryside and accused of working against An-Nussra Front, they were released on Wednesday 31 December, 2014.

6- On Monday 29 December, 2014, cameraman Hamoud Al-Junaid was kidnapped along with Raed Al-Fares by An-Nussra forces while they were heading back from Saraqeb to Kafrnbul. According to credible sources, they were transferred on the next day to Harem prison in Idlib countryside and accused of working against An-Nussra Front, they were released on Wednesday 31 December, 2014.

Al-Junaid was arrested formerly by Daesh media office in Kafrbul city in December 2013 and he was liberated by rebels about two weeks later.

Other Violations

On Saturday 19 December, 2014, An-Nussra Front's Courthouse (Dar Al-Qadaa) in Idlib officially requested the media activists who criticized An-Nussra Front during its recent battle in Idlib countryside against Syria Revolutionary Front and Hazm Movement to appear before the court. 21 media and civil activists from southern Idlib countryside – Jabal Az-Zawiya were directly notified to appear before the court in their homes as they were threatened to be arrested if they didn't show up in the court. On the next day, the activists who were notified went to An-Nussra Front courthouse in Al-Bara and Der Sniel villages. They were detained for 22 days before they were released.

This is [the judicial memorandum](#) that was issued by Der Sunbul court in Idlib countryside which was used to request the appearance of one of the activists: [Mohammad Adib Al-Hamoud](#).





Jund Al-Aqsa

Kidnapping

On Thursday 4 December, 2014, the media activist [Laith Al-Abdullah](#) was kidnapped by Jund Al-Aqsa from his house in Idlib countryside – Saraqeb, he was released later on Monday 22 December, 2014.

Laithr was arrested and tortured formerly by an unidentified masked group in Saraqeb city on 20 August, 2014 and was released on the same day after they stole his devices and Identifications.

Fourth: Acknowledgment

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

