



## The Killing of 9 Media Activists and the Injury of 5 others February's 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."*





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 February 2016 are detailed as follows:

### 1. Extrajudicial Killing: SNHR documented the killing of 9 media activists detailed as follows:

- Government forces: killed 6 media activists including 2 who died under torture
- Russian forces: killed one media activist
- Armed Opposition Groups: killed one media activist.
- Kurdish Self Management Forces: killed one media activist.

### 2. Releases:

We documented one release by armed opposition groups.

### 3. Injuries: We recorded 5 injuries detailes as follows:

- Government forces: 4 injuries
- Russian forces: 1 injury

## III. 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.





## IV. Report Details:

### A. Violations committed by government forces:

#### 1. Extrajudicial Killings:

On 2 Feb 2016 media activist [Yaser Fouad Al Masouti](#) was shot and killed by government forces while he was covering the news about the clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups on Damascus- Homs international road. Yaser, nicknames as Abu Fouad, was a media activist for Al Islam Army, an armed opposition group, from Douma city in Damascus suburbs.



On 7 Feb 2016 media activist's family H.M, (his name shall be kept confidential due to security reasons), informed us that they confirmed his death under torture in one of the government detention centers. The victim, 23, from Damascus suburbs, was arrested from his residence on 1 August 2014.

On 11 Feb 2016, media activist's family T.E (his name shall be kept confidential due to security reasons), informed us that they confirmed his death under torture in one of the government detention centers. The victim, 25, from Hama governorate, was arrested in 2013.

On 19 Feb 2016, media activist [Majed Shafeek](#) Mo'adamani, died after he was injured due to tank missile fragment while he was covering the news about the clashes between armed opposition and government forces in Daraya city that is under the control of armed opposition. [Majed](#), who is also known as Majed Dirani, was a photographer and reporter for Anadoulu Agency, one of the managers of Daraya Media Center, born on 1995, was from Daraya city.



On 24 Feb 2016 media activist [Sief Al Deen Shahade](#) died due to the government shelling on his house in Saida town in Daraa that is under the control of armed opposition which killed him and two of his friends. [Sief Al Deen](#) was a photographer and an independent media activist, born in 1971, from Khirbit Ghazala town in Daraa.





On 25 Feb 2016 media activist Housam (his family name shall be kept confidential due to security reasons) died while he was covering the clashes between armed opposition and government forces in the Kurds Mountain in Lattakia suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition.

- Injuries:

On 3 Feb 2016 media activist [Yehya Rejo](#) was injured in his left hand with a fragment from a missile that was shelled by government forces on the front of M'arasta Al Khan town in northern Aleppo suburbs. The victim was from Maree' city in Aleppo. He was born in 1992 and worked as a [photographer](#) and a reporter for Aleppo News Network.



On 10 Feb 2016, media activist [Haytham Al Bakkar](#) was injured due to a shrapnel from a missile while he was covering the news about the government shelling on Douma city in Damascus suburbs. [He](#) is a reporter for Einab Baladi and a media activist in Douma coordination. He is 37 years old, from Douma and married. SNHR interviewed Haytham Bakkar:



*“While I was covering the news about the government shelling on Douma, a missile fell next to me. The region was full of displaced civilians from nearby towns. I was injured in my thigh and shoulder. Government forces were stationed in the mountain that overlooks the city”*

- On 19 Feb 2016 media activist [Mohamad Ghourab](#) was injured with an explosive missile that was fired by government forces in Nabel town in Aleppo. He was injured in his abdomen and back while he was covering the news about the clashes between armed opposition and government forces in Al Matmoura front in northern Aleppo suburbs.

Mohamad is also known as Abu Wissan, was an independent media activist. He worked for SKY NEWS Arabia, from Adnan city in Aleppo, born in 1986 and married.





On 19 Feb 2016 media activist Khaled Abu Ishaq (his real name shall be kept secretive for security reasons) was injured due to government sniper bullets while he was covering the news about the clashes between armed opposition and government forces in Hor Bnafso town in Hama suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition.



[Khaled](#) is a reporter for Hama Media Center, from Hama, born in 1990 and married. SNHR interviewed one of his friends, media activists Hakam Abu Rayyan:

*“Violent clashes took place between armed opposition and government forces in the periphery of the town. Government forces were trying to invade the town. Its artillery forces, warplanes and snipers were centered on the town’s periphery which injured Khaled with 2 sniper bullets.”*

## **B. Russian forces:**

### **- Extrajudicial killings:**

On 8 Feb 2016 media activist [Zakareya Orfally](#) died after he was injured with shrapnel from the shelling while he was covering the news about the alleged Russian shelling on Hraytan city in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. Zakreya was also known as the Syrian Eagle or Free Mazen. He worked previously as a media activist for Aleppo News Agency and before his death he worked as a media activist for an armed opposition group. He was from Aleppo city, born in 1991, and a sophomore student in the Institute of Political Sciences in Damascus.



### **- Injuries:**

On 7 Feb 2016 media activist [Ibrahim Naseef](#) was injured due to rocket shrapnel in his leg and neck while he was covering the news about the alleged Russian warplane shelling on Adnan city. [He](#) was 23 years old, an activist in the medical field.





### C. Armed Opposition Groups:

#### - Extrajudicial Killing:

On 6 Feb 2016 media activist [Ali Youssef Dasho](#) died due to injuries he sustained when he was covering the clashes between armed opposition and government forces in Raytan town in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. He was a media activist and a photographer for Hezbollah party. [He](#) was from Nubbul city in Aleppo suburbs, born in 1993 and a university student.



#### - Releases:

On 1 February 2016 the unified judiciary in eastern Ghouta released media activist [Abdul Moe'en Anwar Homs](#) who was arrested on 30 January 2016 after a lawsuit against him for conducting a survey. [He](#) is an independent media activist from Hamouriya city in Damascus suburbs, 20 years old.



SNHR communicated with [Abdul Moe'en](#) and he gave us his testimony:

*"I conducted a survey in eastern Ghouta for Khoutwa News Agency that worked for. The survey was about the choice that the Syrian people are going to take between the Syrian regime and ISIL. After the report was released, the Media Activists Committee in the region sued me under the pretext of offending the revolution. Then I was arrested on 30 January 2016 for three days. Then my colleagues helped in changing the committee's opinion to suing the agency not me. I signed a pledge before the unified judiciary and I was released on 1 Feb 2016."*

### E. Kurdish Self Management Forces:

#### Extrajudicial Killing:

On 14 Feb 2016 media activist [Anas Ahmad Al Khateeb](#) was killed due to shrapnel from a missile that fell next to him while he was covering the news about the clashes between armed opposition and KSM forces in Tal Ref'at city in northern Aleppo suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. [Anas](#) is a media activist and photographer for one of the armed opposition groups, 22 and married.





## 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.

