



## The Most Notable violations Against Media Activists in March 2015 media activists killed, 4 arrested or abducted, and 1 injured 9

### Report components:

- I- Executive summary
- II-Introduction
- III-Report Details
- Acknowledgment

### I- Executive Summary:

Violations against media activist for this month have varied as follows:

#### A-Killings:

SNHR documented the death of 9 media activists, detailed as follows:

- **Government Forces** (Army, Security, Foreign and Local Militias): Killed 7 media activist, including 2 who died under torture in government detention center.
- **Armed Opposition Groups:** Killed 1 media activist
- **ISIL:** Killed 1 media activist

#### B- Abduction and Detention:

SNHR documented 4 cases of abductions or detentions, as follows:

- Government Forces:** detained 1 media activist
- **PYD** (Kurdish Democratic Union Party) Forces: Arrested 2 media activist then released them later. They have also released a media activist who was arrested for a few months.
- **Armed Opposition Groups:** A media activist was detained and released later

#### C- Injuries:

SNHR documented a single injury by government forces.

#### D- Assault Against Property:

- **Government Forces:** SNHR recorded a single assault.
- **Unknown Groups:** SNHR recorded a single assault.





## II- Introduction:

Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011, 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.

SNHR recorded a notable rise in the number of activists killed, most of them were killed while documenting government shelling or in different war zones between armed groups. Government forces are ranked first when it came to committing these crimes, followed by ISIL. On the other hand, Al-Nusra front and other armed opposition groups' crimes were limited to kidnapping or beating media activists. PYD forces were categorized as the least amongst all groups to harm journalists.

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.

All these violations did not change the international community's efforts towards the Syrian cause as Syria was amongst the 10 worst countries for journalists, press freedom, and censorship over media.

On the other hand, SNHR commends the efforts of some of the organization concerning the protection of free journalism work that shed light on the crimes committed against journalists. We specially thank Reporters without Borders who demanded the Security Council on 16 April 2015 to refer the Syrian and Iraqi situation to the International Criminal Law due to war crimes against journalists in both countries. SNHR monitored and very intensively the crimes and violations since the protests begun in March 2011, and issued several monthly reports and studies that includes the toll and details of these crimes and violations and the effect of this situation on the Syrian media.

The media activists in Syria today are challenging the repression machine and grave risks without any protection or serious efforts to curb such crimes and violations against them, as they face these challenges on their own and daily pay a high price in exchange for their courage and their determination to transfer the word and image".





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### III- Report Details:

#### A- Violations Committed by Government Forces:

##### - Extrajudicial Killing:

1- On 28 February 2015, media activist Omar Yassine Al-Atrat, “Manager of Affaq Media Institution” died due to government shelling on Kafr Shams town in Daraa, as he was covering the news about the clashes in the region.



2- On 8 March 2015, Nour Al-Dein Ahmad Hashem known as “Nour Al-Dein Al-Khatib”, died due to injuries he sustained from a missile fragment that was shelled government warplanes on Erbeen, in Damascus suburbs as he was covering the news about the clashes in the region.



Nour Al-Dein was born in Erbeen, on 1994, and he used to live there and work as a media activist in Damascus suburbs since the beginning of the uprising. He studied some courses about media and documenting the violations. He was one of the first reporters of “Al Etihad Press” News Network.

3- On March 17, 2015 media activist Abd Al-Kadr Zakria Al-Buqaei died due to wounds he sustained after government forces launched an explosive missile on Deir Al-Asafeer town in eastern Ghouta. Al-Buqaei was a member in the town’s media office





4-On March 21, 2015, SNHR recorded the death of media activist Yaman Arshidat Abazeed”, Sham News Network reporter in Daraa city. He died under torture in a government detention center. His family identified his identity through the leaked Cesar images. Yaman was arrested on a government checkpoint in Daraa on October 10, 2012 after he returned from a media tour to cover some of the news in the eastern region of Daraa suburbs with fellow journalists. His fate remained unknown until his identity was identified through the [leaked pictures](#).



5- On March 24, 2015, media activist Milad [Mohammed Fayez Shbat](#), known as Abu Al-Hakm Al-Hourani died due to government missile shelling on Busra Al-Sham city in Daraa while he was covering the news about the clashes in the city. Milad was from Al Sheikh Miskeen city and a member of Shahed Media Institution.



6- On March 28, 2015, SNHR documented the killing of a media activist (his name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons). His family informed us with the news of his death under torture in Palestine Security Branch in Damascus. The victim was born in Hama, was 21 years old, and had been arrested by government forces on November 6, 2014.

7- On March 30, 2015 Media activist Alaa Mohammed Huwaidi , also known as “Abu Zeid Al-Souri” died due to sniper bullets from government forces in Salah Al-Din neighborhood in Aleppo while he was conducting a report on the religious institutions in the city.



Alaa was born in the city of Aleppo in Al Safiera city. He was the director of the media office of Ahrar Al Sham brigade in Aleppo, Syria.





### **- Injuries:**

On March 26, 2015 media activist Mohammad Naif Abazeed, reporter of Al Naba Media Institution, was injured in government heavy and random mortar shelling on Daraa Al-Bald city in Daraa while he was documenting the government shelling.



### **B- Abductions and Arrests:**

On January 11, 2015 media activist Mohammad Ameen Ramdan also known as “Abu Al-Bashir” was arrested by government forces in Hama after he was charged with broadcasting demonstrations on Al-Jazeera Channel. Lately, we were informed that he had been transferred to Palestine Security Branch in Damascus.

Abu Al-Bashir is from Tareek Masyef town in Hama, 29, a relief aid activist and a member of the media office of Hama Rebels’ Union. His brother Ayman was arrested from his house in Hama on March 12, 2015, as he was charged with helping Mohammad with his media activities.

### **C-Violations against Properties:**

On March 1, 2015 Al-Jazeera Reporter Suhaib Al-Khalf’s vehicle was shelled with a barrel bomb in Al Latamena town which burned it.

[Image](#) of the reporter Suhaib Al-Khalf vehicle after it was burned

### **B- PYD violations:**

#### **a- Arrests:**

On March 5, 2015 Media activist Hajjar Al-Sayed, a reporter in Qasioun News Agency reporter was arrested in Amouda city in Al Hasakah governorate by PYD Kurdish forces while he was video-recording the fire that was ignited in Khuder Al-Khayat’s house. He was released half hour later after signing a pledge.





On March 12, 2015, Ishti Teshi, a reporter in Rûdaw channel in Al Qameshli city was arrested by PYD Kurdish forces while he was covering the news about the memorial about the stadium incident in March 2004. He was later released after about 2 hours and his camera was confiscated



#### **- Releases:**

1- On March 26, 2015 media activist Mahmoud Kourish, a member in Azadi Efreeen coordination was released by the PYD after he was abducted on December 3, 2014 by a force called “Task Force of Raiding Terrorist”. It is a new security force that belongs to the PYD which works secretly and through masked individuals.



#### **C- Violations Committed by Armed Opposition:**

##### **A- Extrajudicial Killing:**

On March 21, 2015, media activist Mohamed Nur Nahlawi, known as “Abu Al-Yusser Al-Shami” died of wounds he sustained on Friday in the city of Erbeen, Damascus suburbs. He was hit by a car that belonged to Rahman brigade, one of the armed opposition groups, in Al Ghouta region. Muhammad was on his motorcycle with a friend. In the morning of that day they went to film a documentary in the region and it coincided with the presence of some armed conflicts between the Rahman brigade and the Islam Army at the time.



Mohammed Noor is from Qaimariya neighborhood in Damascus. He was born in the city of Erbeen in 1994 and the founded the united media office in his city. He was also a member in the Association of Journalists in Eastern Ghouta.





### **B- Abductions and Arrests:**

On March 12, 2015, media activist Yossef Essa, the director of the Information Office of Bab Al-Salama, was arrested after a raid on his office by armed members of Al Shameiya Front, an armed opposition group. He was released on the same day without knowing the reasons for his arrest.



### **D- Violations committed by Extremist Islamic Groups** **i- ISIL:**

#### **Extrajudicial Killing:**

On March 2, 2015, ISIL published a video that depicted the execution of a media activist, Ahmed Mohammed. The victim was shot in the head after he was charged of cooperating with the media, communicating with foreign parties, and providing them with information about ISIL.



Mohammed was born in Jarablus, Aleppo, and was 31 years old. He worked in the media office with the Arab Spring Brigade, an armed opposition group in Al-Halak and Tareek Al-Bab neighborhoods in Aleppo. ISIL detained him since December 15, 2014.

### **E- Violations committed by Unidentified Groups:**

#### **Violations against Properties:**

On March 4, 2015, Kafr Nabel's media office in Idlib was shot by unidentified groups. The bullets damaged the office but no casualties were reported.

SNHR interviewed media activist Hamoud Al-Junaid and he gave us his testimony: "When we were at the media office at 7a.m. we heard gun firing sounds and after about 10 seconds, another shots were fired at us. It was 10 explosive bullets. We went outside in order to find out who was shooting at us but we did not find anyone. One of the neighbors told us that he saw a person running away after shooting at the





media office. The neighbor could not identify his identity or where he went.”

### **Acknowledgment:**

SNHR would like to thank everyone who helped to deliver data to SNHR and specifically the activists who cooperated with us. Furthermore, our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims’ families and relatives who agreed to cooperate with us despite their grave losses.

