



## The Death of 10 Media Activists, the Abduction and Arrest of 7, and the Injury of 8 others May 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. Out of the prominent media attention to the role in the popular movement in the armed struggle, SNHR, monthly, issues a report that monitors violations against them.

But we must recall something important, which is that the press is people, civilians, according to international humanitarian law, regardless of nationality, and any attack targeting them is intentionally considered as a war crime, but the activist who is close to military targets, he is doing so based on his own responsibility, because the target in this case, may be considered among the side effects, and also he loses his protection if he participated directly in combat operations. We also see that the media activists must be respected, whether they have identity cards, or those who don't have due to the many difficulties to own one.

### Fadel Abdul Ghany, SNHR director, says:

“The presence of media outlets in Syria is very important as it, most of the times, shows a thin layer of the various crimes that happen every day. Thus, in our monthly reports, we record and document the most important violations committed by different conflict parties against media personnel.”





Different Syrian governorates, especially regions under the control of armed opposition, witnessed a significant decline in the shelling and killing percentages since March 2011. However, it is worth noting that regions under the government control or Kurdish Self Management Forces are not subjected to government shelling which is considered responsible for killing more than 60% of the victims in addition to destroying houses and displacing its residents. However, the Syrian regime continued to breach the ceasefire in several ways as it is one of the most affected parties regarding this agreement and unpublicized violations have been continuous like torturing detainees.

One day after the declaration of the Supreme Commission for negotiations to postpone its participation in the Geneva negotiations on 19 April, government forces and Russian forces resumed bombardment of areas beyond the control of the Syrian regime to return the pace of killings to what it was before the cessation of hostilities agreement.

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- Report Methodology**

According to SNHR 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.





### III- Executive Summary:

The most significant violations committed against media personnel in May 2016 are detailed as follows:

#### **A- Extrajudicial Killing: SNHR documented the killing of 10 media activists, detailed as follows:**

- i- Government forces: killed 2 media activists
- ii- Extremist Islamic Groups:
  - ISIS: killed 4 media activists
- iii- Armed Opposition Groups: killed 3 media activist
- iv- Unidentified Groups: 1 media activist

#### **B- Arrests: We recorded 6 arrest cases, amongst which 5 were released, detailed as follows:**

- 1- Government Forces we recorded one arrest case that has been released
- 2- Armed opposition groups: we recorded 4 arrest cases that has been released
- 3- Kurdish Self Management Forces: we recorded one arrest case

#### **C- Abductions: we recorded one abduction and its release. The individual was abducted by unidentified groups.**

D- Injuries: we recorded 8 injuries, detailed as follows:

- i- Government forces: 5 injuries
- ii- Extremist Islamic Groups:
  - ISIS: one injury
- iii- Armed Opposition Factions: 2 injuries

**E- Other violations against Media Activists:** we have recorded two bombardment incidents at two media centers

### IV- Report Details:

#### **A- Violations committed by government forces (Army, security, local militias, foreign Shiite militias)**

##### **1- Extrajudicial Killings:**

Wednesday, 4 May 2016 the Media activist Abdo Omar Amin died due to his injuries by the splinters of a missile (Phil type) fired by government forces while he was covering clashes between armed opposition factions and government forces in the family house area in the governorate of Aleppo, under the control of the armed opposition factions.





Abdo is known as [Khattab Abi Omar](#), a photographer at Nour Al Dine Al Zinki Movement one of the armed opposition factions, from Qoubtan Al Jabal Town, governorate of Aleppo, born in 1994, earned Secondary School Certificate of legitimacy, unmarried.

Thursday 5 May 2016 The media activist Muhannad Zreik died after being injured by the splinters of government warplanes shelling several explosive barrels on Om Caramil Village in the suburb of Aleppo governorate, under the control of the armed opposition factions, where he was on his way to Khan Tuman village in the suburb of Aleppo governorate to cover the clashes between armed opposition factions and the government forces.

[Muhannad](#), photographer at [Ahrar Al Sham](#) Movement one of the armed opposition factions, from Sarja village in Idlib Governorate, born in 1987, fourth year student in the Faculty of Engineering of informatics at the University of Aleppo, married.

#### **Arrest And Release:**

Sunday 14 February 2016 government forces released the media activist Aḡmir Al Hamawi (who did not reveal his name for security reasons)

Aḡmir, a correspondent of the Syrian Network of consolidated media and a member of the Federation of Hama media activists, from Al Safsafiya town in the countryside of Hama province, a 24-year-old.

Monday, 30 May 2016, SNHR contacted with the Aḡmir, who said the following: «the military security forces raided my home on Thursday 26 November 2015 and took me to the security detachment belonging to them, due to my practice in the media activity, I moved between several detention centers in each of Hama, Homs and Damascus during which I was exposed to torture, at the end, I was exposed to the anti-terrorism court where a sentence was issued to release me due to the lack of evidence to prove my condemnation».

#### **Injuries:**

Monday, 2 May, 2016 media activist Ayman Qabawa was injured in his shoulder and his leg due to a shelled missile by the government warplane near the place he was in during the coverage of government bombardment at Al Hulluk Neighborhood in Aleppo city under control of armed opposition factions.

Ayman, known as [Abi Taym Al Halabi](#), a photographer of Aleppo Media Center from the city of Aleppo, born in 1993, earned the Secondary School Certificate, married.





SNHR contacted Ayman and he said, «During my coverage of the government war-plane bombardment at Al Hulluk Neighborhood in the city of Aleppo, we were informed that the place is going to be exposed to another bombardment so I escaped inside one of the buildings and I hid underneath the stairs. The raid caused huge damages in the building and the falling of its bricks harmed my shoulder, my feet injured also due to the falling of the door of the building on them, in addition to breaking the lens of my camera that I use to film. I was transferred to the hospital due to suffocation as I was breathing dust.»

Sunday, 22 May 2016 Media activist Jalal Abdel Basset Ali Suleiman has been injured in his hand and foot after being hit by the splinters of explosive barrels by government warplanes at Taldaw town in Homs governorate, under the control of the armed opposition factions

Jalal, Aljazeera channel correspondent, from the governorate of Homs, 25-year-old, holds a BA in the faculty of commerce and economics of the University of Aleppo, married.

SNHR contacted with [Jalal Abdel Basset](#) Ali Suleiman, who narrated his story: «While I was working on the media coverage of dropping the barrel bombs on the town of Taldaw in Sahel Al Houla city in the suburb of Homs governorate, a barrel bomb fell near me; what led to injury in my hand and foot».

Monday 24 May, 2016 Media activist [Mohammad Abdul Majid](#) Al Rifaae has been [injured in his leg](#) by a sniper shot by the government forces, while he was covering clashes between the government forces and the armed opposition factions on front of Khan Al Sheih Camp in Damascus suburbs governorate.

[Mohammed](#), director of the Media Office of Alweyat Al Forqan in Western Al Ghouta, from Taiba town in the governorate of Damascus suburbs, born in 1986, a university student in the Faculty of Legitimacy, married and a father of a child.



Sunday, 29 May, 2016 Media activist Hasan Sherif al-Omari has been injured by splinters of an government artillery shell; he was injured in his left foot, his back, and his face during the media coverage of the clashes between armed opposition factions and the government forces on the reservoir front in the village of kherbet Al Jamee in the southern countryside of Hama governorate.





**Hasan**, a photographer at Hama Media Center from Akrab Town in the southern suburb of Hama governorate, 26-year-old, earned a BA from the geometric institute and a student in the faculty of commerce and economy, married.

Sunday, 29 May, 2016 Media activist **Hakam Abu Rayan** has been injured by splinters of an artillery shell of government forces, he was injured in his left foot, back, and his face during the media coverage of the clashes between armed opposition factions and the government forces on the front of the reservoir in the village of Kherbet Al Jamee, in the southern suburb of Hama governorate.

Hakam, the correspondent in Hama Media Center, from Akrab Town in countryside of Hama governorate, 30 years old, married.

### **Other violations against Media Activists**

Tuesday, 3 May 2016 government forces artillery shelled a mortar shell on the **Media Office** for «Smart» agency in Al Mashhad Neighborhood in the governorate of Aleppo, under the control of the armed opposition factions, which led to the medium damage in the construction of the office, electricity switches, and fuel tanks.

Sunday, 22 May 2016 government forces artillery shells bombed the Media Office of «Smart» agency in Al Yamadiya in Jabal Al Turkman in the countryside of Lattakia governorate, controlled by the armed opposition factions, which led to medium damages.

### **B: violations by Extremist Islamic Groups:**

ISIS (called the Islamic state):

#### **Extrajudicial Killing:**

Wednesday, 18 May 2016 Media activist **Ayman Walid Al Okde** died after being **injured in the head** by a sniper's bullet by ISIS while covering clashes between the ISIS and armed opposition factions on the front of **Kafra town** related to Aleppo governorate, which is under the control of the armed opposition factions.

**Ayman**, military correspondent on **the Shamiyah Front**, one of the armed opposition factions, from Herbel town in the countryside of Aleppo, born in 1981, holds a certificate of primary education, married and has 4 children.





Friday 27 May 2016 Media activist [Mohammad Deeb Bakkar](#) died after being injured by the bullets of ISIS during his attempt to save some of the civilians trapped in the village of Nadda, countryside of Aleppo governorate where he was there to cover the clashes between ISIS and the armed opposition factions

Mohammad, a photographer on the Shamiyah front, one of the armed opposition factions, from Manbej in the countryside of Aleppo governorate, born in 1974, has a BA of accounting, married and has 6 children.

On Saturday, 28 May, 2016 Media activist Mohammad Al Khatib was shot by a sniper's bullet of ISIS in the head and died; while covering clashes between armed opposition factions and ISIS on the front of Maree' city in the northern suburb of Aleppo. Mohammad, known as Abi Mayyar Al Halabi , independent photographer, from the city of Aleppo, born in 1986, student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Aleppo, unmarried.

Sunday 29 May 2016 Media activist [Mahmoud Othman Al Wahesh](#) was shot by a sniper's bullet of ISIS in the head and died, while covering clashes between armed opposition factions and

ISIS on the front of Braighida in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

Mahmoud is known Fajer Al Abzamo, a photographer to Nour Al Dine Al Zinki Movement one of the armed opposition factions, from Al Abzamo town in the western countryside of Aleppo, born in 1993, has a Secondary School Certificate of legitimacy, unmarried.

### **Injuries:**

Wednesday, 4 May 2016 Media activist [Mohammad Abdul Rahim Zamel](#) has been [injured in his shoulder](#) and chest after being hit by explosive shot 23 mm from ISIS , while covering clashes in the battle of Nahrawan Horan between ISIS and the armed opposition factions in the governorate of Daraa

Mohammad, Activist in Alweyat Al Forqan, from Kanaker town in the governorate of Damascus suburbs, under the control of the armed opposition factions, born in 1993, Single.

### **V: violations of armed opposition factions :**

Extrajudicial killing:

Tuesday, 3 May 2016 media Activist [Akram Rajab](#) died by the Fostat Army sniper's bullet in Al Ashaa'ry area in the governorate of Damascus countryside, under the control of the armed opposition factions , while covering clashes between Al Islam Army and both of Faylaq Al Rahman Army as well as Al Fostat Army. And all of them are armed opposition factions .





Akram, director of the media department of Al Islam Army, from Douma city in the governorate of Damascus suburbs, born in 1989, has Secondary School Certificate, married.

Saturday 7 May 2016 Media activist [Farouq Abdul Razzaq](#) Marjana died after being injured by the bullets of both the army of Foŕtat and Faylak Al Rahman during breaking into one of the headquarters of Al Islam Army near the town of Mesraba in the governorate of Damascus countryside, it is worth mentioning that the three parties are from the armed opposition factions .

Farouq, a photographer of Al Islam Army, from Douma city in the governorate of Damascus suburbs, born in 1995, has preparatory certificate, unmarried.

Wednesday, 11 May 2016 Media activist [Hmaidī Khaled Al Jaiouŕh](#) died as a result of being shot from [Al Muthanna](#) movement and Liwaaŕ Chuhadaaŕ Al Yarmouk allegiance to ISIS , while covering clashes between them and the armed opposition factions on the front of Sahŕam Al Joulan in the countryside of Daraa governorate. Hmaidī, a photographer at Shabab Al Sunna Team, one of the armed opposition factions, from the town of Maaŕraba in the countryside of Daraa governorate, 17-year-old, obtained a certificate of primary education, unmarried.

### **Arrest And Release:**

Thursday, 28 April 2016 One of the armed opposition factions arrested two media activists in the city of Douma in Damascus suburbs governorate, under the control of the armed opposition factions, and released them on Sunday, 1 May 2016, SNHR reserved their data and the circumstances of their arrest for security reasons.

Thursday, 28 April 2016 One of the armed opposition factions arrested a media activists in the city of Douma in Damascus suburbs governorate, under the control of the armed opposition factions, and released them on Wednesday, 4 May 2016, SNHR reserved his data and the circumstances of his arrest for security reasons.

Friday, 29 April 2016 One of the armed opposition factions arrested the media activists in the city of Douma in the countryside of Damascus governorate, under the control of the armed opposition factions, and released them on Sunday, 1 May 2016, SNHR reserved his data and the circumstances of his arrest for security reasons.





### **Injuries:**

Saturday, 14 May 2016, the media activist [Shadi Hilwa](#) was [injured due to splinters](#) in several places of his body as a result of [the explosion](#) of an explosive device near his car near the center of broadcasting in Aleppo City, it is worth mentioning that Abu Amara for special assignments is one of the armed opposition factions, had claimed responsibility for planting the bomb.



Saturday, 14 May 2016, the cameraman [Sharif Abes](#) [slightly](#) injured as a result of [the explosion](#) of an explosive device near a car he was riding with the media activist Shadi Hilwa, near the center of broadcasting in Aleppo City, it is worth mentioning that Abu Amara for special assignments is one of the armed opposition factions, had claimed responsibility for planting the bomb.

### **W: violations by the Kurdish Self Management Forces:**

#### **Arrest:**

On Saturday, 28 May 2016 Kurdish Self Management forces arrested [Anwar Nassau](#) in the city of Amouda in countryside of Al Hasakah governorate.

Anwar, director of Radio Amouda and leading in the Kurdish Yakiti party, 50-year-old.

### **C: violations by unidentified groups**

#### **Extrajudicial Killings**

Monday 16 May 2016 Media activist [Moayyed Omar Al Jarak](#) died of his wounds due to [the explosion](#) of an explosive device in Al-hama town in the governorate of Damascus suburbs, under the control of the armed opposition factions, while passing the through it on Saturday, 14 May 2016, we have not been able to verify the group who planted the device until the moment of the preparation of the report.

Moayyed, a photographer of the Media Office of Al-hama Town, and he is from this town, born in 1995, has the preparatory certificate, unmarried.

#### **Abduction**

Sunday, 22 May 2016 Media activist [Hussein Mahmoud Al Seeno](#) was abducted in Al Dirbaseya, in the countryside of governorate of Al Hasakah, under the control of the Kurdish Self Management forces, was released on the same day, we have not been able to determine who kidnapped him until the moment of the preparation of the report.

Hussein, Media activist at Walat Media Institution, from Al Dirbaseya, countryside of governorate of Al Hasakah, born in 1994, a university student in the Faculty of Economy.





## V- Recommendations:

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

Condemn the targeting of journalists in Syria, and to highlight the sacrifices and suffering.

International Commission of Inquiry:

Conduct investigations to target the media activists, in particular, is vital for their role in the events in Syria recording.

Security Council:

Contribute to the fight against impunity policy through the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

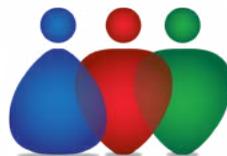
Media Arab and international institutions:

Advocate media colleagues by publishing periodic reports shed light on the daily suffering and perpetuate their sacrifices, and must communicate with their loved ones and to mitigate and comfort them.

Finally, to all sides in the areas under their control; to adhere to the requirement of International Humanitarian Law regarding the protection of civilians, particularly journalists and their equipment.

## 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.



Syrian Network For Human Rights  
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان



