



**Special
Report**

Most Significant Violations against Media Activists in May 2014

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This Report includes five main paragraphs

Summary

Violations against media activists in May are divided as follows:

1- Killing: SNHR documented the killing of nine media activists as follows:

Government forces killed seven media activists including one media activist who died under torture

Armed groups killed two media activists; one of whom was executed at the hands of ISIS while we couldn't verify the identity of the armed group that killed the other media activist.

2- Kidnapping and Arresting: we recorded six kidnapping and arresting cases as follows:

Arresting: The Syrian regime didn't arrest any media activists in May according to our documentation team

Kidnapping: two media activists were kidnapped by PYD forces.

Armed Groups: Five kidnappings were recorded; three media activists were kidnapped by rebel groups including two foreign journalists, one media activists by An-Nusra front, and one by ISIS.

On the other side, two media activist were released after they have been kidnapped by ISIS for five months.

3- Injuries: 13 media activist were injured in May as follows:

Government forces injured nine media activists including a journalist who has PhD in media studies where he was sniped, and a reporter who suffocated after he inhaled poisonous chlorine gas in Kafriya - Hama.

Armed groups injured four media activists including two foreign journalists who were beaten and shot at by members of armed groups while the third one was beaten and threaten by rebel groups and the fourth jumped off a building after he was surprised by the presence of some rebels in the building.

4- Violating private properties

There were four cases of violating private properties; a media center was shelled in Nawa by the Syrian regime, a house and office were burned, and another house was bombed by PYD armed forces

Introduction

As the Syrian crisis continuously escalating, the void of the media scene in Syria are getting bigger where the media field is losing daily substantial components and activists which is reflecting negatively on the freedom of journalism and truth. The vital and functional role of media activists (whether they were journalists or civilians) is undeniably important to collect, deliver, and publish information and help Human Rights groups in documenting violations regardless of its type or perpetrator.

The media activists are still facing considerable risks and paying huge prices to fulfill their duties. On the other side, violations against them are being perpetrated without the slightest form of accountability as they are being, almost daily, killed, arrested, kidnapped, lost, or forcibly disappeared with the only thing they can do is to disappear or escape from this dreadful reality to protect their own life or seeking a better life especially with the tough living conditions in Syria in light of the ongoing armed conflict and crude war.

All of this was more than enough to terrorize the media activists and the people around them. Being a media activist in Syria is considered one of the most difficult and dangerous jobs. In most cases, the punishment affects also their families and beloved ones which is why the media activists' families abstain from telling if he was arrested or died under torture inside the detention center, and especially if the Syrian regime was involved. Our team noticed the high level of secrecy in many cases where media activists are victims of arresting, torturing, or killing in the Syrian regime's areas and especially in the major cities (such as Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, Tartus...) out

of fear of the prisoner being killed or to avoid any retaliatory actions against their beloved ones. This also the case in the ISIS-held areas in Ar-Raqqa and some areas of Der Ezzor and Aleppo countrysides.

Also, the media state in the Kurdish areas is not any better; the mentality of oppression and freedom suppression is becoming obvious as there are many cases of kidnapping, threatening, burning the homes of media activists, expelling them, and prohibiting some of them from practicing their work under the pretext of lacking the permit to do so.

Today, the weapon of media (written, audio, or video) has become one of the most dangerous weapons that every armed faction, including the Syrian regime, its allies, and ISIS is fighting.

SNHR affirms the necessity of taking serious and immediate actions and condemns all the violations against media 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 the civilians in Syria.

Details

• Government forces and its militias

Killing

We start with the most notable incident in which the media activist Ayman Zahar was tortured to death inside one of the Syrian regime's detention center on 25 January, 2014 after he was arrested on 5 January, 2014 at a military checkpoint in Al-Qtiefa. He spent three days in the local branch before he was transferred to the military security branch 227, his corpse was in Tishreen military hospital 20 days later. His fate wasn't revealed until 4 May.

The following media activists were killed at the hands of the Syrian regime

Jamal Yousuf Makkah (head of Joubar neighborhood coordination) was killed by mortar shells while he was covering the events in Joubar neighborhood in Damascus (7 May), Nader Anbatawi (member of Al-Mlieha town media office) was killed by a sniper (7 May), Qais Ahmad Ghaziyya was killed while covering the events in Southern Inkhil city (7 May), Samer Abdou Umran was killed while covering the events in Joubar neighborhood in Damascus (20 May), Jamal As-Salti was killed while covering the events in Daraa city (24 May), and Jamal Matshar Al-Ali who was

killed by the shelling of barrel bombs against Masaken neighborhood in Aleppo (25 May).

Kidnapping

Daldar Hamou (reporter of ARK channel) was kidnapped at the hands of Al-Asayesh forces (the military wing of PYD) in Al-Qahtaniya in Al-Hassaka countryside (11/5) after they raided his home and confiscated his laptop and camera and he was released five days later, Daldar was arrested by the same faction in last February under the pretext of lacking a permit to practice journalism. The media activist Salah Alout was kidnapped (member of Azadi Ifreen coordination) in Ifreen – Aleppo countryside (17 May) by the military wing of PYD.

Injuring

Abu-Uqba Al-Halabi (reporter of Aleppo News Network) after he was hit by fragments while covering the first moments of the shelling of a thermobaric missile on Al-Halk neighborhood in Aleppo (1 May), Ibrahim Arbou's back was hit by fragments after an airstrike that targeted the civil defense center in Al-Atareb (29 April), Hassan Hammash (reporter of Hama media center) was injured while he was covering the news in Jidreen village – Hama countryside (3 May), Abu-Mohammad Al-Kurdi (The Syrian Kurdish Revolutionary Council spokesman) was injured by fragments of a missile that targeted his car while he was on Darat Izza road in Aleppo countryside (23 May), Mustafa Jomaa (reporter of Akhbar Al-A'an) had a suffocation after a Syrian regime's shelling of barrel bombs that contained poisonous gases on residential neighborhoods in Kafrzyta – Hama countryside (22 May), Mahmoud Hassanou was injured by fragments of a mortar shell in Al-Mayriya neighborhood – Aleppo (25 May), Ma'moud Mohammad Helal (Abu-Haydra Al-Andani) while he was covering the clashes at the surroundings of Aleppo Central Prison (23 May), Abdullah Ghannam was injured (reporter of Shahba Press agency) in Andan - Aleppo countryside by a surface-to-surface missile (16 May), and the journalist Ali Hafez who was shot by a sniper stationed at Aleppo castle while he was taking pictures of the castle (25 May), Ali Hafez has a PhD in media studies and works as a writer and political analyst.

Violating Private Properties

- The house of Omar Haj Nouri (member of Amouda coordination) was burned in Amouda – Al-Hassaka countryside (14 May), there is some speculations that YPG, the military wing of PYD, is involved in this incident.
- The media center of Nawa city was shelled by the Syrian regime which caused material damages (16 May).
- Military personnel, likely affiliated to PYD, burned the house of Mahmoud Mohammad (mem-

ber of Kurdish Youth Union) in Al-Antariya neighborhood – Al-Qameshli (19 May). A few hours before the incident, Mahmoud talked on Rodaou channel to cover the demonstrations of some of the refugees in the camps of Iraqi Kurdistan as a respond to PYD’s practices against Kurdish political leaders and activists from Al-Jazira area in Syria.

- The house of Lound Hussein was bombed and destroyed in mysterious circumstances in Turba Sbi town – Al-Qameshli (9 May). Members of PYD are suspected to be the ones behind this operation as one of them died while planting an explosive device and the other was injured, PYD members have later confiscated some of Lound Hussein’s books and belongings. Lound Hussein (member of YRKS) is living in Germany.
- Armed Groups

ISIS executed one media activist while other unidentified armed groups executed another media activist.

Five media activists were kidnapped by rebel groups including two foreign journalists and a third one who was kidnapped by rebel groups. The fourth media activist was kidnapped by An-Nussra front while the fifth was kidnapped by ISIS.

On the other side, two media activists, who have been kidnapped by ISIS for five months, were released.

Four media activists were injured including two foreign journalists who were beaten and shot at by unidentified armed groups while the third was beaten by rebel groups as well. The fourth one jumped off a building after he was surprised by the presence of some rebels in it.

Details

Killing

Al-Mu’tazbellah Ibrahim (reporter of Sham News Network in Ar-Raqqa) was executed (4 May) at the hands of ISIS in Tal Abyad – Ar-Raqqa countryside along with his cousin Marwan Ismail, his family received the corpse on 7 May, 2014. Before he was executed, he had been prisoned by ISIS for about two months.

Badr Al-Lafi (Abu-Shahm) was killed in Der Ezzor countryside (26 May) by unidentified armed groups.

Kidnapping

- Times reporter Anthony Loyd and cameraman Jack Hill, along with their fixer Mahmoud Al-Basha, were kidnapped, beaten, and blackmailed by “Hakim Anza’s” battalion that is affiliated to The Islamic Front, this happened when the journalists were crossing Tal Ref’t city in Aleppo countryside on their way to Turkey, Anthoni was shot in the leg (15/5) as he was trying to es-

cape, other factions affiliated to The Islamic Front intervened and released them a few hours later.

- Hassan Abuzzain Al-Hemsi was kidnapped (18 May) by rebel battalions whose “identity wasn’t mentioned by the source” in Al-Waar neighborhood – Homs where they raided his home, took him to an unknown location, and beat him after releasing him the next day.
- Rayyan Rayyan was kidnapped by An-Nusra front (1 May) in Bostan Al-Qasr neighborhood – Aleppo and was released the next day.
- ISIS pursued and looked for the media activist Abu-Bakr (reporter of Sabil Network and Al-Jazeera.net) in his neighborhood in At-Tabaqa – Ar-Raqqa which forced him to stay outside and abstain from returning. Apparently, ISIS intended to apprehend him right after it executed his associate Al-Mu’tazbellah as they thought that he is still working for Sham Network according to what Abu-Bakr told us.
- On the other side, the media activist Ahmad Ash-Shebli managed to escape on the same day he was kidnapped by ISIS from their hideout in At-Tabaqa – Ar-Raqqa countryside (10 May).
- The media activists Karam Karam and Loai Abuljoud were released by ISIS (2 May) after it arrested them while they were going to cover the shelling on Qadi Askar neighborhood in Aleppo on 28 November, 2013.
- Injuring
- Abdulghani Al-Jarough (reporter of Sama channel that supports the Syrian regime) was injured (25 May) while he was covering the clashes at Jabal Al-Arba’ien in Idlib countryside; Abdulghani climbed a building to take pictures of government forces before he jumped as he was surprised by the presence of some rebels in the building.



Appendixes and Attachments

Pictures and video footages of the media activists that were mentioned in this report

Victims, wounded, and prisoners by the Syrian regime

Ayman Zahar Tabash

Nader Anbtawi

Qais Ahmad Mufleh Ghazia

Dar Hammou (reporter of ARK
channel)

Salah Allout (member of Azadi
Ifreen coordination)

Samer Abou Umran

[Omar Haj Touri \(member of Amouda coordination\)](#)

[Office of the human rights activists Omar Haj Nouri \(member of Amouda coordination\)](#)

[Abu-Uqba Al-Halabi](#)

[Ibrahim Arbou](#)

[Abu-Mohammad Al-Kurdi](#)

[Mustafa Jomaa](#)

[Mahmoud Hassanou](#)

[Ma'moun Mohammad Helal](#)

[Abdullah Ghannam \(reporter o Shahba Press agency\)](#)

[Dr. Ali Hafez](#)

[The shelling on Nawa city media office](#)

[Lound Hussein](#)

[House of Lound Hussein](#)

- Pictures and vide footages of victims and kidnapped by armed groups

[Al-Mu'tazbellah Ibrahim \(reporter of Sham News Network in Ar-Raqqa\)](#)

[Anthony Loyd \(Times reporter\) and Jack Hill \(camerman\)](#)

[Abu-Bakr \(reporter of Sabil Network and Al-Jazeera.net\)](#)

[Abu-Bakr \(on the right\) with his friend Al-Mu'tazbellah who was executed by ISIS.](#)

[Badr Al-Lafi](#)

[Hassan Abu-Zain Al-Homsi](#)

[Rayyan Rayyan](#)

[Loai Abuljoud](#)

[Karam Karam](#)

[Abdulghani Al-Jarough \(reporter of Sama channel\)](#)

Acknowledgment

Our thanks and appreciation go for the victims' families and relatives and for all the media activist. We wouldn't have been able to finish this report on this level without their help