

Most Significant Violations against Media Activists in June 2014

Most Significant Violations against Media Activists in June 2014

Documented by [SNHR](#)

In June: Seven media activists were killed, five kidnapped and arrested, in addition to nine injured.

344 have been killed since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution

First: Summary

Violations against media activists in June are divided as follows:

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

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

Extremist groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda: one media activist has been killed by ISIS

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

The Syrian regime didn't arrest any media activists in June according to our documentation team while five media activists were kidnapped by armed opposition factions; three by ISIS, one by Al-Nusra Front (Jabhat Al-Nusra), and one by an unidentified armed group.

3- Injuries: nine media activist were injured in June as follows:

Government forces injured seven media activists.

Armed groups: ISIS injured one media and the other one was injured by an unidentified armed group.

Introduction :

The media scene in Syria is suffering from an increasing void and difficulties in accessing information, publishing it, and monitoring incidents in a free and professional manner especially after many more areas were affected by the conflict and the emergence of many new armed faction in the Syrian armed conflict.

The Syrian regime worked since the beginning of the revolution to cultivate the culture of fear and horror among oppositionist media activists and has every possible way to punish them.

Then, another armed forces emerged as a partner in enhancing this culture such as ISIS.

Since about four years, the guided violence against working media activists on the ground has not stopped. Nevertheless, this violence is increasing and escalating with no one to punish and hold the perpetrators of these violations accountable.

Huda Al-Ali, researcher in SNHR, says:

“The numbers that document the violations against media activist doesn't necessarily reflect a complete picture of what's really happening on the ground. For example, the secrecy mentality manifests as many families and relatives prefer not to talk when a media activist is kidnapped or arrested, this is even the case for many foreign governments and agencies. The magnitude of accumulated violence makes it very difficult to establish a free and independent media work in light of the weapon's dominance over the word and the picture.”

Media activists in Syria are still facing huge risks and paying huge prices. Every day there are new media activists who get killed, arrested, kidnapped, disappeared, forcibly or voluntarily expelled, or hiding inside Syria or abroad trying to protect his own life or to support himself especially after the draught of living resources in Syria.

SNHR affirms the necessity of taking serious and immediate actions to save what could be saved of media work 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 the civilians in Syria.

Details :

A: Violations by government forces and militias affiliated to it:

Killing:

We start with the bloodiest incident, the killing of the journalist Mohammad Omar Hamed Al-Khateeb who died under torture in Saydnaya prison a month and a half ago after being imprisoned for two years as he was arrested on 8 January, 2012. Security forces had told Omar's family officially about his death and gave them all his official papers on 27 June before his relatives had told us and it has been confirmed.

Government forces have killed the following media activists:

Mohammad Fayez Al-Tarh by fire bullets while covering in Eastern Ghouta (4 June), Qutaiba Mahmood Daher Darweesh while covering in Al-Maleeha in Damascus countryside (13 June), Mohammad Shayah (member of the Syrian institute of justice) by barrel bomb shelling on Al-Sukari neighborhood (16 June), the Egyptian journalist Ahmad Hasan Al-Sayed (Xinhua News Agency reporter) who died of wounds sustained at the door of the Supreme Constitutional Court in Damascus after he was hit by a bullet during the celebration of Al-Assad winning the presidential elections. (5 June), and Mohammad Al-Ta'ani (Smart News Agency reporter) who died of wounds sustained during an aerial shelling on Al-Abassiya neighborhood in Daraa after being unconscious for eight days at a hospital in Jordan (27 June).

Arresting and Kidnapping :

The Syrian authorities have released:

The artist Hazem Waked (9/6) after being arrested from his residence in Damascus on 10 January, 2014, the journalist Omar Al-Sha'ar (the managing editor of the English section in D Press) (15 June) after being arrested for eight months when a security patrol raided his house in Jermana and seized his laptop and arrested him on 11 November, 2013, the author Ajowad Amer (16 June) after being arrested at Saleem checkpoint in Assweidah on 17 February, 2014, and Karam Jamal Al-Hamad (the head of the media office of the local council of Deir-Azzor) (25 June) after being he was arrested along with his brother from Al-Qusoor neighborhood in Deir-Azzor a year ago where they and took him to a detention center in Damascus and then to Adra prison in Damascus countryside.

Injuries :

The following media activists have been injured at the hands of government forces:

Abo Bakr Al-Homsi (Sham News Network correspondent in Homs) (2 June) while covering events in Om Sharshooh Town in Homs countryside resulting in losing his right leg and severe injury in his left leg, Ali Hafez (Orient Net reporter) by an exploding sniper bullet in his right thigh (29 May) while filming a fire in adhesives store and antiquarian places in Torab Al-Ghoraba'a Yard area near Al-Nahaseen Market in Old Aleppo, Mohammad Al-Abdulla (Sham News Network reporter in Al-Mleeha in Damascus countryside) by a mortar, AboHani Al-Halabi (Shaba Press reporter in Aleppo) while covering the event and trying to save the injured by a barrel bomb shelling on Al-Hulluk neighborhood (30 May), Abo Hothayfa (Jabal Az-Zawyeah Al-Yawm reporter) while covering events in Idlib countryside (30 May) resulting in losing his leg, Abo Yazan (Aleppo Media Center reporter) by fragments of a barrel bomb that fell next to the pedestrians bridge in Al-Sakhoor neighborhood in Aleppo (4 June), and the reporter of Halab News Network by aerial shelling on Masaken Hanano neighborhood in Aleppo (14 June).

B: Violations by armed opposition factions

Killing :

ISIS, affiliated to Al-Qaeda, has executed the media activist Moayad Sallom (Orient News channel reporter) after they kidnapped him along with his brother at Al-Kastello road check-point in Aleppo on 1 November, 2013. It should be noted that his brother has been released months ago while Moayad fate remained unknown until one of the defected personnel of ISIS has told his family that Moayad has been executed at the Eyes Hospital in Aleppo when ISIS took control of that area.

Kidnapping :

ISIS has kidnapped Ahmad Al-Matar (lens young raqqawi reporter) and Al-Mothanna Al-Moe'edy and Firas Al-Swayha (12 June). The latter two were released in few days. It should be noted that Firas Al-Swayha has been kidnapped and tortured by ISIS before on 27 May 2014 before he was kidnapped and released again. Molham Al-Kayed (the media office member in Nahta in Dera'a countryside) was kidnapped by Al-Nusra Front (Jabhat Al-Nusra) on 29 June and he was released in a few days.

The family of the artist Mohamad Tlayemat has announced his kidnapping, after they kept the news a secret for a year. He was kidnapped according to them by unidentified group while he was going from his home in Al-Mala'ab area in Homs to his gallery in Oras in eastern Homs. His kidnapers asked his family for 20 million Syrian pounds to release him, the price was downed to six millions after talks. His wife paid but they didn't release him. His office and farm has been looted and more than a hundred of his drawings has disappeared. He was dedicated to art and had no political activity.

ISIS released on 19 June the Danish photographer Daniel Rye Ottesen. His family didn't announce his kidnapping, which was on 17 April, 2013, as they were afraid for his life

Injuries :

Firas Al-Swayeha has been injured in his hand causing it to stop moving as a result of the torture he faced during the first kidnapping by ISIS (27 May). It should be noted that has been kidnapped again by the extremist group and has been released.

Also, Khader Al-Najem has been injured as a result after a failed attempt to kill him by an unidentified armed group in front of his house in Al-Qooryah city in Deir-Azzor country side (10 June).

Fourth: Appendixes and Attachments

Photos and video footages of the media activists mentioned in the report:

A: killed, injured, and kidnapped by the hands of government forces:

The journalist [Mohammad Omar](#) Hamed Al-Khateeb
[Mohammad Shayah](#)

The Egyptian journalist [Ahmad Hasan](#) Al-Sayed
Qutaiba [Mahmood Daher](#) Darweesh

[Mohammad Fayez Al-Tarh](#)

[Mohammad Al-Ta'ani](#)

The author [Ajowad Amer](#)

The artist [Hazem Waked](#)

The journalist [Omar Al-Sha'ar](#)

[Karam Jamal Al-Hamad](#)

[Abo Bakr Al-Homsi](#)

[Ali Hafez](#)

[Abo Hothayfa](#)

[Abo Yazan](#)

B: killed, injured, and kidnapped by the hands of armed opposition factions:

[Moayad Sallom](#)

The Danish photographer [Danyal Ray Aotosen](#)

Some of the artis [Mohamad Tlayemat drawings](#)

Acknowledgment :

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

