



Eight Media Activists Killed, Four Arrested, and Eight Injured, Toll of September 2016 Including Five Media Activists Killed at the Hands of the Syrian and Russian Regimes

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I. Introduction

Media activism in Syria is continuously deteriorating in light of the lack of attention by many international organizations to what is happening in Syria and the notable decline in media coverage over the last year compared with previous years.

SNHR publishes a monthly report documenting the violations against media activists who play a prominent role in the civil movement and the armed conflict. It should be noted that a journalist is a civilian according to the international humanitarian law regardless of his nationality. Any attack directed against a journalist is considered a war crime. However, when a media activist gets close to action-heavy zones, he is responsible for his own actions where targeting him in such case would be seen as collateral damage. Also, he would lose the right to protection if he was involved in military operations. We believe that media activists must be respected whether they have identification papers as media workers or don't considering the many difficulties they encounter to acquire these papers.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR, says:

“Media activism is especially important because it often sheds light on string of various crimes that are taking place on a daily basis. Therefore, we record the violations perpetrated by conflicting parties in our





monthly reports on violations against media activists.”

SNHR emphasizes that serious and quick steps must be taken to save media activism in Syria and renews its condemnation of all violations against the freedom of media activism regardless of the perpetrators. The freedom of media must be respected and the workers in the media field must be protected and particularly considered. All individuals involved in violations against journalists and media activists must be held accountable. The international community, represented by the Security Council, must act upon its responsibilities in order to protect civilians and media activists in Syria.

II. Methodology

According to SNHR’s methodology, a civilian journalist is anyone who plays a notable role in reporting and publishing news. He is not necessarily impartial as a journalist should be.

In case a civilian journalist carried a weapon and was directly engaged in offensive military operations, he is no longer deemed a citizen journalist whereas it is possible that he would be referred to as a civilian journalist again provided he retires completely from military action.

This report draws upon SNHR archive and the investigations conducted by the Network in addition to accounts by victims’ families, information from local activists, and analyzing the pictures and video footages that we have been receiving and archiving in our records since 2011.

to read more about SNHR methodology in documenting victims: http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf

In light of the security and logistic difficulties to access all the areas where violations take place, it is worth noting that these statistics and incidents are only the bare minimum of the actual magnitude of crimes and violations that happened.

III. Executive summary

A. Extrajudicial killing: SNHR documented the killing of eight media activists in September who are distributed as follows:

- Government forces: killed four media activists
- Russian forces: killed one media activist
- Extremist Islamic groups:
ISIS: killed two media activists
- Unidentified groups: killed one media activists





B. Injuries: We recorded eight injuries as follows:

- Government forces: four injuries
- Russian forces: four injuries

C. Arrests and releases: we documented four arrest cases who were released later and two release cases as follows:

- Government forces: we recorded one release case
- Self-management forces: Four arrests where the four detained individuals were released later
- Unidentified groups: One release case

D. Other violations against media activists: We recorded one incident of assault against a media office by Russian forces and one incident of beating against a female media activist by Self-management forces

IV. Details

Violations by Government forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

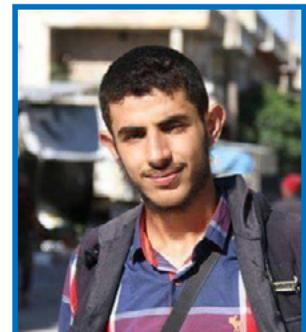
- Extrajudicial killing

Friday 2 September 2016, media activist [Ahmad Mohammad Al Hmoud](#) was died of injuries in his hand and chest sustained by shrapnel from a barrel bomb dropped by government forces helicopters near his car that he was riding along with his wife in Saif Al Dawla neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions, on Tuesday 16 August 2016.



Ahmad known as Shamel Al Ahmad, a photographer for Aleppo media center, from Aleppo city, born in 1980, a student at the industrial institute, married and a father of three.

Friday 2 September 2016, media activist [Ali Abulzain](#) (His name was concealed for security reasons at the request of his family) was killed by shrapnel that hit his head from a naval mine dropped by government forces helicopters near him as he was covering clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of M'an village in the eastern suburbs





of Hama governorate.

[Ali](#), a reporter for Assi Press media agency, from Bab Qebli neighborhood in Hama-city, born in 1999, has an elementary education certificate, single.

SNHR contacted Dr. Mohammad Al Sakaf, a relative of Ali Abulzain's, via Facebook:

“As Ali was documenting the clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of M’an village in the suburbs of Hama governorate, government forces helicopters dropped a naval mine near him which resulted in his immediate death due to critical injuries in the head.”

Monday 12 September 2016, media activist AbdulBaset AbdulKarim died of various injuries in his body which were caused by shrapnel after government forces war-planes fired a missile near him as he was covering the bombing on Al Salhein neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions, on Sunday 11 September 2016.



[AbdulBaset](#), known as Abo Al Majd Al Sakhouri, a reporter for Theqa agency and Jaish Al Mujahedein, an armed opposition faction, from Akhtarein town in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1995, has a secondary education certificate, married and a father of two.

SNHR contacted the media activist [Ahmad Rami Al Sayed](#), a friend of AbdulBaset's, via Facebook:

“On Sunday 11 September, while AbdulBaset covering the bombing on Al Salhein neighborhood, a missile fell near him and shrapnel hit him all over his body. Mohammad died on the next day despite the medics’ diligent attempts to save his life.”





Monday 12 September 2016, media activist [Mohammad Ali](#) Al Hariri died of different injuries in his body, the most critical of which in his back, sustained by shrapnel after government forces artillery fired a shell that fell near him as he was covering an armed opposition factions' attack on Teranja squad in the suburbs of Qunietra governorate as part of Qadiseyat Al Janoub battle.



[Mohammad](#), a media activist who works for Jund Al Malahem, an armed opposition faction, from Dael city in the suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1987, has a certificate from the faculty of literature – Arabic Language department, married and has a boy.

SNHR contacted the media activist [Beshr Knakri](#), a friend of Mohammad's, via Facebook:

“While Mohammad was covering the development in Qadiseyat Al Janoub battle which was launched by armed opposition faction to take over Teranja squad in the northern suburbs of Qunietra governorate which is under the control of armed opposition factions, an artillery shell fell near him and shrapnel hit him all over his body the most critical of which was in his back which forced him to undergo a surgery. Nonetheless, he died.”

- Injuries

Monday 5 September 2016, media activist [Ammar Al Jaber](#) was injured in his head and left hand by shrapnel after a government forces artillery fired a shell that fell near him as he was covering clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Al Amiriya in Aleppo city along with his colleague the photographer Ahmad Haj Omar.



[Ammar](#), known as [Ammar Al Halabi](#), works as a reporter for Orient News TV channel and was previously working with Shada Al Hurrayya TV Channel, from Al Kamari village in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1985, has a high school diploma, married and a father of a boy.





Monday 5 September 2016, media activist [Ahmad Haj Omar](#) was injured in his head and abdomen by shrapnel after a government forces artillery fired a shell that fell near him as he was covering clashes between government forces and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Al Amiriya in Aleppo city along with his colleague the reporter Ammar Jaber.

[Ahmad](#), a photographer for Orient News TV channel, from Al Atareb city, born in 1999, has a secondary education certificate, single.

Friday 16 September 2016, media activist [Ehab Suliman Al Mhemeid](#), was injured in different parts of his body by shrapnel after government forces artillery fired a number of shells on Jabata Al Khashab town as armed opposition factions were trying to block government forces' attempts to raid the town during Qadisyeat Al Janoub battle.



[Ehab](#), an independent media activist, from Daraa Al Balad in Daraa city, born in 1992, has a high school diploma, single.

SNHR contacted with the media activist Moath Fahd Al N'iemi, a friend of Ehab's, via Facebook:

“On Friday 16 September 2016, government forces tried to raid Qadisyeat Al Khashab town in the northern suburbs of Qunietra governorate which is under the control of armed opposition factions. While Ehab was covering the clashes between the two sides on the outskirts of the town, the area was targeted by a government forces' shelling which led to a number of injuries in most of Ehab's body the most notable of which was in both of his hands, abdomen, and legs in addition to a number of broken teeth. The injuries were caused by shrapnel.”

Wednesday 21 September 2016, media activist Mustafa Mohammad Al Hussein sustained injuries in his hands and bruises in most of his body because of shrapnel from a missile fired by fixed-wing government forces near him as he was covering the bombing on Al Qaterji neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions.





Mustafa, known as [Mustafa Al Sarout](#), a reporter for Aleppo media office, born in Aleppo city in 1993, has a secondary education certificate, single.

SNHR contacted the media activist Mustafa Mohammad Al Sarout via Facebook: “As I was documenting the regime warplanes’ missile bombing on Al Qaterji neighborhood, a missile fell near me which caused injuries in both of my hands and bruises in my body because of shrapnel. I was taken to a makeshift hospital.”

- Release

Monday 19 September 2016, government forces released the media activist [Mokhles Al Ahmad](#) who was arrested on 28 August 2012 over charges of working with media parties. Mokhles was transferred among a number of security branches. In early 2015 he was referred to the terrorism court and then transferred to Hama central prison.

Mokhles, a member of the Syrian Journalistic Center, from Al Touba village in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, graduated from the physical education faculty, born in 1989.

SNHR contacted Mokhles via WhatsApp:

“I was arrested by government forces in August 2012 as I was passing a government checkpoint in Al Hamamyat village in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate. Over the course of 24 hours, I was transferred among different inspection points in the northern suburbs of Hama. I was severely beaten using sticks and the lower parts of the shotguns. They to torture me using the Ghost torturing method and put out cigarette on my body. They transferred to a detention center affiliated to Shabiha in Der Shmiel in the western suburbs of Hama where I stayed for 11 days during which I was subjected to various forms of torture including ghosting, whipping, and beating using metal tools. I then was transferred to the Air Force Intelligence branch in Hama military airbase where I experienced 45 days of severe torture which forced me to confess to whatever charges they filed against me. I then was transferred to Hama central prison and my case was referred to the terrorism court in Damascus. I was put on trial multiple times and was released on 19 September 2016 as part of the negotiation following the riots in Hama central prison.”





B. Russian forces

- Extrajudicial killing

Friday 30 September 2016, media activist [Foad Abullail](#) (As of this writing, we haven't been able to verify his surname) was killed after a missile fired by fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fell near him in Al Hollok neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions, as he was covering the bombing on the neighborhood.

Foad, known as Laith Al Halabi, a media activist for Al Muntaser Bellah battalion, an armed opposition faction, and cooperates with Halab Al Yaom TV channel, from Aleppo city, born in 1991, has a high school diploma, single.

- Injuries

Saturday 3 September 2016, media activist [So'oud AbdulJawad Sayyah](#) sustained injuries from shrapnel after fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian dropped a missile loaded with cluster submunition near his place of work in Khan Al Sobol town, located in the suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions.



[So'oud](#), an independent photographer and field-activist, from Khan Al Sobol town in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1978, has a certificate from the applied and abstract arts institute, married and a father of three.

SNHR contacted the media activist [So'oud AbdulJawad](#) Sayyah via Facebook:

“Russian warplanes carried out a number of airstrikes on Khan Al Sobol town in the suburbs of Idlib governorate on Saturday. One of the airstrikes was with cluster bombs as one cluster bomb fell near my place of work at a complex that sells food supplies. I sustained various injuries in my neck, left elbow, thigh, and ankle. I was taken to the hospital immediately where they put a splint on my left hand. Six civilians were killed and about 20 others were wounded in that bombing.”





Thursday 8 September 2016, media activist Mohammad Adel Khdeir sustained bruises in his left knee after a fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a missile near him as he was covering the bombing on Jesr Al Shoghour city, located in the suburbs of Idlib governorate and is under the control of armed opposition factions.

[Mohammad](#), a media activist for the civil defense and reporter for Baladi Media Network, from Jesr Al Shoghour city in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1993, a second-year student at the industrial institute in Tishreen university, single.

SNHR contacted the media activist [Mohammad Adel Khdeir](#) via Facebook:



“On Thursday 8 September, Jesr Al Shoghour city in the suburbs of Idlib governorate was targeted with missiles by Russian warplanes. I went to the Hal market immediately to cover the bombing where a missile fell tens of meters away from where I was. I fell on the ground from the immense pressure of the bombing and, consequently, I sustained bruises in my knee.”

Thursday 22 September 2016, media activist [Mohannad Majd Al Din Makhzoum](#) was hit by shrapnel in his leg mainly after fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired a missile near him as he was at his home in Al Kallasa neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions.

[Mohannad](#), known as Abo Al Majd, a reporter for Baladi Media Network and director of the media office of Al Jabha Al Shamiya, an armed opposition faction, from Aleppo city, born in 1987, has a high school diploma, married and a father of three.



SNHR contacted the media activist Mohannad via Facebook:

“I got back home in Al Kallasa neighborhood in Aleppo city after I documented a barrel bomb dropping near it. Afterwards, Russian warplanes fired a missile near my home which resulted in the destruction of the building and the killing of seven of my family while I sustained scars and wounds all over my body. Also, my wife and three kids were wounded.”





Sunday 25 September 2016, media activist [AbdulMun'em](#) Jneid sustained injuries in his legs and head from shrapnel after fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missile near him as he was filming a news report on Al Al Ansari Al Sharqi neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions.



[AbdulMun'em](#), known as Ghaith Yaqout Al Murjan, a reporter for Al Boraq media institution, from Aleppo city, born in 1984, has a certificate from Al Sham high institute for journalism and media, married and a father of a boy. SNHR contacted the media activist [AbdulMun'em](#) via Facebook:

“As I was in Souq Al Sendyana street in Al Ansari Al Sharqi neighborhood working on a news report on the life in Aleppo city in light of the ruthless bombing, Russian airstrikes carried out a missile airstrike on the neighborhood. As one of the missiles fell near me, shrapnel injured my leg and my head was wounded.”

- Other violations against media activists

Friday 23 September 2016, fixed-wing warplanes we believe are Russian fired missiles that targeted a media office “We are refraining from revealing to which party the office is affiliated for security reasons” in Al Qaterji neighborhood, located in Aleppo city and is under the control of armed opposition factions, which destroyed it partially and damaged it moderately.

C. ISIS

- Extrajudicial killing

Monday 5 September 2016, engineer [Ahmad Kenan Mohammad Zaki Sondouq](#) was killed in three consecutive bombings under Arizona bridge at the entrance of Tartus city. ISIS issued a statement in which it claimed responsibility for the bombing where the first one was bomb car while the latter two were two ISIS suicidal bombers who blew themselves using explosive vests.

Ahmad, head of the employment department at Sama and Al Dunya TV channels, from Damascus city, born in 1984, has a certificate in electrical and mechanical engineering from the computer and automation faculty at Damascus University.





Tuesday 6 September 2016, media activist [Taj Al Din Jamal Souma](#) was killed by a landmine planted by ISIS as he was covering clashes between ISIS and armed opposition factions on the battlefield of Al Waqf village in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. It should be noted that ISIS planted the landmines at a previous date. [Taj Al Din](#), a photographer for the First Division of Failaq



Al Sham, an armed opposition faction, from Manbej city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1984, has a certificate from the high institute for hand crafts, married and a father of a boy.

SNHR contacted Abulmugheira Al Manbijji, a friend of the media activist Taj Al Din's, via Facebook:

“On Tuesday 6 September, as Taj Al Din Jamal Souma was covering clashes between armed opposition factions and ISIS on the battlefield of Al Waqf village in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, a landmine blew near him which was planted by ISIS. Taj Al Din was hit by shrapnel in his head and waist which led to his death.”

D. Self-management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

- Arrest and release

Sunday 11 September 2016, armed elements affiliated to Self-management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) the media activist Rodi Jouli as he was recording a video of the life of Eid in Amouda city and was released on the same day.



[Rodi](#), a photographer for Kulluna Mutataoe'oun volunteer team in Al Hasakah governorate, from Amouda city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate, 28-year-old.

Sunday 11 September, armed elements affiliated to Self-management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) the media activist [Nayef Bashir](#) as he was recording a video of the life of Eid in Amouda city and was released on the same day.





Nayef, a photographer for Kulluna Mutataoe'oun volunteer team in Al Hasakah governorate, from Amouda city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate.

Sunday 11 September 2016, armed elements affiliated to Self-management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) the media activist Akid Jouli as he was recording a video of the life of Eid in Amouda city and was released on the same day.

Akid, a photographer for Kulluna Mutataoe'oun volunteer team in Al Hasakah governorate, from Amouda city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate.

Saturday 17 September 2016, armed elements affiliated to Self-management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) the activist Ismail Ali in Al Malikiya city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate. He was released on Tuesday 20 September 2016.

Ismail, a reporter for the Kurdish TV channel Zagros, from Al Malikiya city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate.

- Other violations against media activists

Thursday 22 September 2016, Self-management forces that are overseeing the Syrian side of the border Symalka – Beish Khabour that connects Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan beat the female media activist [Rankein](#) Shrou and prevented her from entering the Syrian lands to visit her family in Dokarka village in the suburbs of Karki Laki city which is affiliated to Al Hasakah governorate over charges of treason.



[Rankein](#), a reporter for Rudaw News channel in Iraqi Kurdistan, from Al Malikiya city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah, has a certificate in social sciences, married.





E. Unidentified groups

- Extrajudicial killing

Wednesday 7 September 2016, media activist [Ayman Raja Bajbouj](#) died of wounds after he was shot three times in the abdomen and chest by unknowns in Al Abbasaiya neighborhood, located in Daraa city and is under the control of armed opposition factions, on Sunday 4 September 2016. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the perpetrators.



[Ayman](#), a photographer for Nabd Souriya TV channel, [he](#) worked previously with Al Jazeera Mubasher TV channel and Naba' Institution, from Daraa Al Balad area in Daraa city, 38-year-old, married and a father of three.

- Release

Wednesday 28 September 2016, Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nusra Front) has announced in an official statement that it has managed to release the female German journalist [Janina Findeisen](#) with his baby who was born while she was in captivity after the Front was able to pinpoint the location where Janina was being detained and the abducting party. Janina was abducted and forcibly-disappeared on 11 November 2015 in northern Syria within area under the control of armed opposition factions. As of this writing, we haven't been able to identify the abducting party.

[The statement of Fateh Al Sham \(Arabic\):](#)

V. Recommendations

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:

To condemn the targeting of media activists in Syria and sheds light on their sacrifice and suffering.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic:

To conduct investigations that focuses on the targeting of media activists given their vital role in recording incidents in Syria.

The Security Council:

To work on fighting the policy of impunity by referring the cases in Syria to the International Criminal Court.





International and Arabic media institutions:

To advocate their colleagues in the field of media by publishing periodic reports that shed light on their daily suffering and memorialize their sacrifice. Also, they must contact their families to console them.

Finally, all parties have to respect the international humanitarian law with respect to the protection of civilians and especially media activists and their equipment.

Acknowledgment

Our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families and our thank for the families and friends of media activists who contributed effectively to this report.

