



## Eight media personnel killed, 1 arrested, 2 released and 5 Injured in September 2015

### Report Contents:

Introduction

Executive Summary

Report Methodology

Details

Acknowledgment

### 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. Activists risk their lives to report what is happening in Syria, however, they are met with oppression, killing, arrests and threats. Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011 and up to this moment, 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 midst international silence that ignored their suffering, basic rights to be protected and safe and without holding the perpetrators accountable for their violations against them.

All these violations did not change the international community's efforts towards the Syrian cause.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, SNHR chairman, says:

*"Since the presence of foreign media outlets is prevented by the Syrian government, local media activists and personnel play a key role in covering the news about the most important violations, arrests, killings and destruction. Thus, in our monthly reports, we record and document the most important violations committed by different conflict parties against media personnel."*

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. Executive Summary:

The most significant violations committed against media personnel in September 2015 are detailed as follows:

### A. Extrajudicial Killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 8 media personnel, detailed as follows:

1. Government forces (army, security forces, local militias and foreign Shiite militias) killed 6 media personnel.
2. Extremist Islamic Groups:
3. ISIL: killed one media personnel
4. Unidentified Groups: killed one media personnel

### B. Arrests or Kidnappings:

We recorded two releases and one arrest cases:

Extremist Islamic Groups:

1. ISIL: released one media personnel
2. An-Nusra Front: arrested two media personnel, amongst which one was released later on.

### C. Injuries:

We recorded 6 injuries, detailed as follows:

1. Government forces injured 4 media personnel
2. Armed Opposition Groups injured one media personnel
3. Unidentified Groups injured one media personnel

### D. Violations against Properties:

SNHR documented one violation against media personnel's properties, perpetrated by government forces.

## III. 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.





#### IV. Report Details:

##### Violations committed by government forces:

###### A. Extrajudicial Killings:

On 9 September 2015, media activist Anas Ghounaimi died due to wounds he sustained after he was injured by a government artillery missile. He was covering the clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups on Tal Kurdi front.

Anas is from Al Shoufounayi town in Damascus suburbs and worked as a reporter for Al Islam Army, an armed opposition group.



On 11 September 2015,, media activist [Abdul Karim Gaghestani](#) died due to wounds he sustained after he was injured by a government artillery missile. He was covering the clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups on Tal Kurdi front.



On 13 September 2015, media activist [Zouhair Hassan Al Salahi](#), from Douma, died of his wounds after he was hit with a missile shrapnel launched by government aviation while he was covering news about a battle in Damascus suburbs between armed opposition groups and government forces.



On 15 September 2015, media activist Othman Darwish died after a government artillery missile was fired next to him while he was covering news about clashes on Al Rashdeen front in Aleppo suburbs between government forces and armed opposition groups. Othman is from Sahel Al Ghad region in Hama governorate, born on 1988, and worked as a reporter for Al Islam Army, an armed opposition group.



On 26 September 2015, media activist [Obada Al Ghazal](#) died of his wounds after he was injured with a shrapnel from a barrel bomb dropped by government aviation on Tiftinaz town in Idlib suburbs. Obada, from Tiftinaz, worked a reporter for SMART News agency in Idlib.





On 27 September 2015, media activist [Rami Al Saleh](#) was shot by government forces while he was covering news of clashes between opposition groups and government forces in Al Qunaitera.

[Rami](#) is from Mamtna town in Al Qunaitera, 23, and worked as a cameraman in Al Joulan Media Foundation.



### **Injuries:**

On 13 September 2015, media activist [Amer Al Mehyani](#) was injured while he was covering news about a battle between government forces and armed opposition groups on mountains that overlook eastern Ghouta. He was injured by a Gvozdika missile launched by government forces. [Amer](#), also known as “Amer Al Shami”, an electronics engineer, 28, married, and worked as media personnel for the Syrian Media Committee, SMART news agency, and Reuters.

On 15 September 2015, media activist [Zakareia Abdul Kafi](#), was injured in his eye with a shrapnel due to government forces’ shelling with mortar missiles. He was injured while he was covering clashes’ news between armed opposition groups and government forces in Salah Al Deen neighborhood in Aleppo.

[Zakareria](#), from Aleppo, worked as a photographer for AFP.

On 20 September 2015, media activist [Jomaa Al Ahmad](#) was injured after government aviation launched a rocket on Karm Al Tarab neighborhood that is under the control of armed opposition groups, in Aleppo.

Jomaa, who was injured in his hands, is from Hayyan town in Aleppo, born in 1981, and worked as a reporter for Shahba Press.

On 29 September 2015, media activist [Yaman Al Sayed](#), worked as a reporter for Orient News Channel, was injured with a shrapnel in his head, foot and shoulder. He also suffered from bruises on his hands due to government warplane shelling with two rockets on the channel’s office in Zamalka in Damascus suburbs.

### **Violations against properties:**

On 29 September 2015, [Orient News Channel](#) was shelled by government warplanes with two rockets. As a result, the channel’s reporter, Yaman Al Sayyed, was injured; [the channel’s office](#) and his [equipment](#) were greatly damaged.



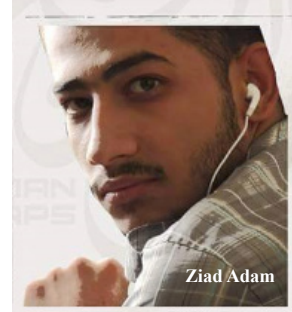


## 2. Violations Committed by Extremist Islamic Groups:

### i. ISIL:

#### A. Extrajudicial killings:

On 16 September 2015, media activist Ziad Adam was killed in one of ISIL's detention centers. Ziad, a member in Faylaq Al Rahman media office, was from Douma city in Damascus suburbs, and was kidnapped in Al Nashabeya region in eastern Damascus on 7 July 2015. A member from Faylaq Al Rahman, an armed opposition group, interrogated an ISIL member whom was arrested by them and he confirmed Ziad's death. However, we were not able to verify this incident or how Ziad was killed up to the moment of making this report.



#### B. Releases:

On 21 September 2015, ISIL released media activist [Masoud Akeel](#), who works for Rouwado Kurdish channel. [Masoud](#) was released among a prisoners' swap between PYD Kurdish forces and ISIL in the suburbs of Tal Barrak town in Al Hassaka governorate. It is worth noting that Masoud was a cameraman for the abovementioned channel and was arrested with his colleague, media activist Farhad Hammou, on an ISIL temporary check-point on Al Yourbeya international highway on 15 December 2014.

### ii. An-Nusra front:

#### A. Arrests:

On 1 September 2015, An-Nusra front arrested media activist Mohamad Mou'ayad Al Qunaity, from Khan Shaykoun in Idlib then released him the following day, Mohamad is from Khan Shaykhoun city in Idlib governorate, 27, and worked as a media activist using the pseudonym "Othman Al Khani". He was the director of the media office in Khan Shaykoun.

SNHR interviewed Mohamad:

*"Verbal altercations happened between the residents and An-Nusra members since the aforementioned group intervened in Al Rawda Mosque affairs when it appointed new members and opened a religious office downtown. The residents feared that the office would be a reason why the town might be shelled. As a result, Dar Al Hisba agency in Khan Shaykoun issued memoir for every person who objected the office opening. The Executive Power agency raided the city's downtown with weapons and machine guns. I tried to intervene to cool things down but the head of the Hisba agency, a Tunisian, ordered my arrest. They handcuffed and beat me. The city's elders intervened and the Nusra group released me the next day."*





On 14 September 2015, media activist [Abdul Karim Al Saleh](#) was arrested by An-Nusra front in Ma'arat Mahrema in Idlib suburbs and he was taken to an unknown destination. Abdul Karim is from Ma'art Mahrema town in Idlib suburbs and he is 33 years old.

### 3. Violations committed by armed opposition groups:

#### A. Injuries:

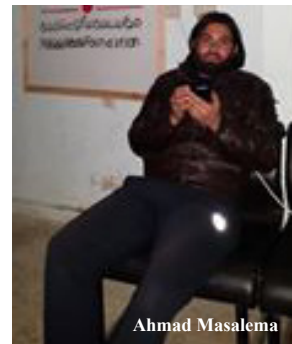
On 17 September 2015, female media activist [Dalal Saleh](#) was injured due to a mortar missile shrapnel in Bab Sharqi town in Damascus. The missile came from artillery stationed in a region under the control of Al Islam Army, an armed opposition group.

[Dalal](#), born on 1991, is Iraqi, of a Syrian origin, and worked as an anchorwoman for Nour Al Sham Channel.

### 4. Violations committed by unidentified groups:

#### A. Extrajudicial Killings:

On 19 September 2015, [Ahmad Masalema](#), media activist was killed by unidentified groups who shot him while he was going back to his residence. [Ahmad](#) was from Daraa and worked as an editor and photographer for Al Nabaa news agency. We were not able to identify the perpetrators up to the moment of making this report.



Ahmad Masalema

#### B. Injuries:

On 15 September 2015, media activist [Mohamad Abdul Salam Al Khalaf](#), 25 years old, from Qomyanas town in Idlib, was [injured and his leg was amputated](#) due to a land mine that exploded in the surrounding of Al Karmeed dactory in Idlib suburbs. We were not able to identify the responsible party regarding this incident up to the moment of making this report.

SNHR interviewed Mohamad:

*"I wrongfully stepped on a landmine. My leg was amputated and I sustained burning injuries in my entire body. I went to that area because I was interested in "land mines" as a subject for a report about it for a local media outlet."*

### Acknowledgment

Our 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.

