



94 Media Activists killed, 33 arrested and kidnapped and 91 Injured During 2015 Amongst Which 7 Media Activists Killed, 3 Arrested, and 5 injured In December 2015

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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. 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 amidst 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; therefore the Syrian Network for Human Rights is keen on revealing the important role of the media activists' in the uprising by issuing monthly reports which document the violations being committed against them by all conflict parties.

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:

A. The Most Significant Violations Committed Against Media Personnel In 2015 Are Detailed As Follows:

1. Extrajudicial Killing:

SNHR documented the killing of 94 media activists in 2015, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces (army, security forces, local militias and foreign Shiite militias): killed 57 media activists including 9 under torture.

B. Russian Forces: killed 2 media activists

C. Extremist Islamic Groups:

i. ISIL: killed 16 media activists, including 2 under torture

ii. Al Nusra Front: killed 1 media activist under torture

D. Armed Opposition Groups: killed 8 media activists

E. Unidentified Groups: killed 10 media activists





2. Arrests, Releases and Abductions: we recorded the total of 48 cases of abductions, kidnaps, or releases, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces: we recorded 6 arrests, 5 media activists who were arrested then released, 3 arrests, and one kidnap case.

B. Extremist Islamic Groups:

i. ISIL: We recorded 2 arrests, 2 releases and 4 abductions

ii. Al Nusra Front: We recorded 2 arrests, one of which was released, 3 kidnaps and 3 releases.

C. Armed Opposition Groups: We recorded two arrests, 6 media activists who were arrested then released, 2 releases, and 3 kidnaps.

D. Kurdish Self Management Forces: We recorded 5 arrests, 6 arrested media activists who were arrested then released, and one release case.

E. Unidentified Groups: We recorded two arrest cases, one release and 6 abduction cases.

3. Injuries: We recorded 91 injuries, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces injured 62 media activists

B. Russian forces injured 3 media activists

C. Extremist Islamic Groups:

i. ISIL: injured 1 media activist

ii. Al Nusra Front injured 2 media activists

D. Armed Opposition Groups injured 18 media activists

E. Kurdish Self Management Forces injured one media activist

F. Unidentified Groups injured 4 media activists

4. Violations Against Properties: We recorded 33 cases, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces: we recorded 11 cases of violations against properties

B. Extremist Islamic Groups:

i. Al Nusra Front: we recorded 6 cases of violations against properties

D. Armed Opposition Groups: we recorded 10 cases

E. Unidentified Groups: we recorded 2 cases

B. The Most Significant Violations Committed Against Media Personnel In December 2015 Are Detailed As Follows:

1. Extrajudicial Killing:

SNHR documented the killing of 7 media activists in December, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces (army, security forces, local militias and foreign Shiite militias): killed 4 media activists.





B. Extremist Islamic Groups:

i. ISIL: killed 1 media activist.

C. Unidentified Groups: killed 2 media activists

2. Arrests and Releases: We recorded 8 cases of arrests and/or releases, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces: We recorded 3 arrests, one of which was released

B. Armed Opposition Groups: we recorded 2 arrest cases, one of which was released

C. Kurdish Self Management Forces: we recorded 3 arrest cases that were released later on

D. Unidentified Groups: we recorded two arrest cases that were released later on, 6 abductions and one release.

3. Injuries: We recorded 5 injuries, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces injured 3 media activists

B. Russian Forces injured 2 media activists

4. Violations against properties: We recorded one case that was committed by unidentified groups.

III. Report 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:

A. Violations Committed by Government Forces Against Media Activists in December 2015:

• Extrajudicial Killing:

On 7 December 2015, media activist [Zakareia Yehya Ibrahim](#) was killed due to a gun shot by a [government force's sniper](#) on 2 December 2015 while he was covering the clashes in Taldo city between armed opposition and government forces. [Zakareia](#) is a photographer for Al Jazeera News Channel, from Taldo city in Homs, 19, and single.

On 13 December 2015, media activist [Radwan Mohamad Al Sinn](#) due to government shelling with rockets on Siqba city in Damascus suburbs that is under the control of armed opposition. He was injured with two shrapnel in his head and body. [He](#) was an independent media activist from Siqba city, a photographer, 24 and single.

On 16 December 2015, media activist [Mohamad Ilyas Mahmoud Al Taweel](#) died due to government shelling with several mortar missiles on Douma city while he was covering the clashes and helping the civil defense members in evacuating injured people. [He](#) was a media activist in the civil defense office in Damascus suburbs, from Douma, 22, and single.

On 16 December 2015, media activist [Malek Riyad Ghamoum](#) died due to government shelling on Marj Al Sultan front in Damascus suburbs. Shrapnel from the shelling amputated his leg and caused a lethal injury in his face. [Malek](#) was a member in the media office in Mesraba and a photographer for Al Islam Army, one of the armed opposition groups. He was from Mesraba, 19, and single.

• Injuries:

On 20 December 2015, media activist Mohamad Nour, a pseudonym since his real name shall be kept secretive, was injured in his leg from shrapnel due to a barrel bomb that was dropped by government helicopters on one of Mo'admayat Al Sham fronts in Damascus suburbs while he was covering the clashes there. Mohamad Nour was from Mo'dameyat Al Sham and a member in its media office, 21, and was single.

On 29 December 2015, media activist Firas Ousama Al Kahhal was injured due to government artillery shelling on Douma city while he was covering the news about the clashes





there. [He](#) was injured all over his body due to the shrapnel from the shelling which led to a kidney biopsy.

[Firas](#), was known as [Firas Al Doumi](#), a member in the media office of the civil defense in Douma city, 19.

SNHR spoke to Mohamad Adam, one of Firas's friends who gave SNHR his testimony:

"Douma city was under government artillery shelling which injured several individuals. Firas escorted the civil defense members to aid the injured people and evacuate them when government artillery re-shelled the region and that is when Firas was injured. His injuries were in his liver, neck and pancreas. He underwent several surgeries and he had one of his kidneys removed. He's health state is stable right now."

On 30 December 2015, media activist [Abdul Rahman Moustafa Tafour](#) was injured due to government shelling on his house in Douma and he sustained several injuries in his body and face.

Abdul Rahman is the head of Damascus Suburbs Media Network, from Douma, born in 1987, married and has a BA in Economics.

SNHR spoke to local media activist [Mansour Abu Al Kheir](#), and he gave SNHR his testimony:

"Government warplanes shelled Douma with several vacuum missiles; one of them fell next to Abdul Rahman's house which destroyed his house completely, killed his daughter and injured him, his wife and his son."

Arrests and Releases:

On 6 December 2015, government forces arrested media activist D. A after they raided his house. He is a local media activist from Hama and his name shall be kept secretive due to security reasons.

On 9 December 2015, media activist [Omar Abdulla](#) was arrested by government forces in Mesyaf city that is under government control in Hama suburbs. He was arrested because he criticized one of the members in the parliament. He was released on 10 December 2015. [Omar](#) was known as Omar Deir Mama, head of Mesyaf News on facebook, from Deir Mama town in Hama suburbs.

On 12 December 2015, government forces arrested media activist N.M. from his house. He is a reporter for Radio Shabab radio station from Hama governorate.





Insulting Victims' Bodies:

State TV channel reporter, [Kinana Alloush](#), appeared reporting the news between the victims' bodies where she referred to them as terrorist opposition fighters.



A. Violations Committed by Russian Forces:

Injuries:

On 12 December 2015, media activist [Ahmad Hassan Oubeyd](#) was injured due to a rocket shrapnel in his legs and eye while he was covering the shelling from the alleged Russian warplanes on Al Atareb city that is under the control of armed opposition.

Ahmad, who is known as Adam Atareb, is a media activist for one of the armed opposition groups. He worked for Shahba Press, a local news agency. He is from Al Atareb city in Aleppo, 25, and married.

On 20 December 2015, media activist [Souhaib Moustafa Al Khalaf](#) was injured due to a rocket shrapnel that broke his left foot while he was documenting the alleged Russian shelling on Idlib that is under the control of armed opposition.

[Souhaib](#) is a reporter for Al Jazeera news agency from Kumyanous town in Idlib, 29, married and a father of a child.

SNHR spoke to journalist Sief Al Hamawi who gave SNHR his testimony:

"While [Souhaib](#) was documenting the shelling that was next to Al Carlton Hotel in Idlib, Russian warplanes launched a rocket next to him which injured him in his left foot and abdomen."

D. Violations committed by ISIL:

Extrajudicial Killing:

On 4 December 2015, ISIL killed media activist [Moustafa Hassa](#) after they put him in a cage and bombed it with an explosive device in Al Houwiada neighborhood in Deir Al Zour. Moustafa was accused of spying and communicating with third parties. He was nicknamed as Steve, a photographer and a member in Deir Al Zour Centre, and several other local media outlets. He was from Deir Al Zour, 29.

A. Violations Committed by Armed Opposition:

Arrests and Releases:

On 1 December 2015, media activist Ezz Bashek Al Tadamoun was arrested next to his residence in Damascus at the hands of an armed opposition group. He did not tell us his





real name due to security reasons. He is a media activist and a member from Damascus Media Team, and from Al Tadamon neighborhood in Damascus.

On 6 December 2015, media activist Mouaz Al Kharboutli was arrested from his house by Ma'ghweer Al Islam Brigade, an armed opposition group. He is from Kafar Batna, 19 and was a media activist in several local groups.

E. Violations Committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces:

- Arrests and Releases:

On 8 December 2015, media activist [Jihan Misto](#) was arrested by KSM forces in Efreeen city in Aleppo. She was accused of communicating with parties against KSM forces and other allegations. She was released on 10 December 2015. Jihan, 22, is a reporter and photographer for Ara news from Efreeen city in Aleppo.

On 22 December 2015, media activist [Amer Mourad](#) was arrested by KSM forces from his residence in Al Kameshli city in Hassaka suburbs. They took him to a military detention centre that belonged to KSM forces then released him on 28 December 2015. He is a journalist and head of Hifi radio station, from Al Qameshlo, 41.

On 26 December 2015, media activist [Fareedon Kajo](#) was arrested by KSM forces from his workplace in Amouda market and was released later on 28 December 2015. He worked for Wiktimedia website, from Amouda in Hassaka suburbs.

F. Violations Committed by Unidentified Groups:

- Extrajudicial killing:

On 16 December 2015, media activist [Ahmad Mohamad Moussa](#) was killed after two unknown individuals on motor cycles shot him with two bullets in his head next to Abu Al Thouhour town in Idlib suburbs where he lives. He is a media activist and a member in Raqqa being slaughtered in Silence, from Al Raqqa city, 23 and defected from government forces in 2012.

On 27 December 2015, media activist [Naji Jaref](#), a journalist, editor of Hentah newspaper and the head of the Syrian Basmah Foundation was assassinated in the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep. The persons who committed this [crime](#) remain unknown up to the moment of making this report. He is from Al Selmeya city in Hama suburbs, had a BA in Philosophy, born in 1977, married and a father of two children. He produced several documentaries about his city before he left it. Recently he directed a movie "ISIL in Aleppo" and it depicted ISIL's violations in Aleppo. [He](#) also conducted several workshops in collaboration with SMART agency under the title "A Citizen Journalist".





Naji Jaref

Injuries:

On 10 December 2015, media activist [Majed Ahmad Rasheed](#) Baksour was injured in his arm and leg due to a car bomb in Jarez town in western of Kefra town that is under the control of armed opposition in Aleppo suburbs. The party responsible for this crime remains unknown up to the moment of making this report. He was known as [Majed Al Halabi](#), a media activist in an armed opposition group, 20 years old.

Violations Against Properties:

On 28 December 2015, media activist [Ibrahim Al Manjar](#) survived an assassination attempt after an explosive device was planted in his car in Daraa. [He](#) was not injured because he was not in his car back then but we could not identify the party that was responsible for this crime. [Ibrahim](#) work in the editing department in SMART news agency, from Tal Shehab town in Daraa, 23, married and he was not able to finish his university degree to the current situations.

SNHR spoke to Ibrahim and he gave SNHR his testimony:

“On 28 December I survived an assassination attempt. My car was bombed after 30 minutes of when I reached my house. I am an independent media activist. The next day, masked men sent another threatening letter with my niece (a student in the town’s school). They threatened to kill me. Until now I cannot accuse anybody but our region is known for conflict between Al Nusra front and another group who supports ISIL.”

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.

