



## Violations against Media Activists in April 2015 Six Media Activists Killed, One Abducted, and Five injured during the Month of April 2015

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### 1. Executive Summary:

Violations against media activist for this month are as follow:

1-**Killing**: SNHR documented the death of six media activist who were killed by:

- **Government forces**: killed four media activist, three of whom died under torture in detention centers

- **Extremists groups**:

- **ISIS**: killed two media activists

2- **Abduction and Arrest**: SNHR recorded one case of abduction.

- **Government forces**: released a media activist

- **Extremists groups**:

- **An-Nusra Front**: SNHR recorded one abduction case

- **YPG**: released a media activist

3- **Injuries**: SNHR recorded five injuries, inflicted-by as follow:

- **Government forces**: three injuries recorded

- **Extremists groups**:

- **ISIS**: one injury recorded

- **An-Nusra Front**: one case of assault and torture recorded

4- **Assaulting properties**:

- Government forces: two assault incidents recorded

- **Extremists groups**:

- **An-Nusra Front**: three assault incidents recorded

- **Armed opposition factions**: two assault incidents recorded





## 2.Introduction:

It doesn't seem that the death of 469 media activists and the arrest and abduction of 1028 others during the ongoing armed conflict in Syria and the continuity of systematic crimes and violations against the free media work were enough to peak interest the civil community organizations that look after protecting journalists and freedom of journalism, we are sorry to see them overlooking the risks and challenges surrounding the media activists in Syria, we have notified repeatedly that the media profession has changed into a very dangerous and challenging profession, due to the type and amount of systematic violations against Syrian, Arab, and foreigners alike. We have been by ignoring the horrific actions against media activists in Syria in the Committee to Protect Journalists annual report issued late last month, and talked about the 10 worst countries for journalists, press freedom, and censorship over media, and the report was titled "Here are the 10 worst countries for journalists in 2015". It was notable and surprising to not see Syria among the top 10 countries, and with a quick look at the violations registered by the committee, an observer can easily see that the Syrian authorities have committed more violations than many countries mentioned by far, from the absence of tens of journalists to the ongoing torture, to blocking hundreds of websites (including SNHR website), and banning all the media and picking only what suits the State policy, and monopolize the media activity by the Syrian authorities and its newspapers alone, and many other that there is no space to mention that have become famous for the simplest objective journalist in the world.

On the other hand SNHR commends the efforts of some of the organizations concerning the protection of free journalism work and shed light on the crimes committed against journalists, and we specially thank Reporters without Borders that demanded from the Security Council on April 16, 2015 to refer the Syrian and Iraqi situation to the International Criminal Law due to war crimes against journalists in both countries.

**SNHR** monitored and very intensively the crimes and violations since the protests begun on March 2011, and issued many monthly reports and studies that includes the toll and details of these crimes and violations and the reflection of this on the reality of the Syrian media, and the most notable problem or difficulties or blocks that the media suffer from, we repeatedly notified that the crimes committed against media activists are in continued rise by all the armed parties participating in the war,





and all of that happens in the shadow of no punishment or without holding the people who committed the violations accountable

Huda Al Ali a researcher in **SNHR** said:

“The media activists in Syria today are challenging the repression machine and grave risks without any protection or serious efforts to curb such crimes and violations against them, as they face these challenges on their own and daily pay a high price in exchange for their courage and their determination to transfer the word and image”.

Ahead of this worrying facts that would undermine the right foundations that are supposed to be a strong base for the start of the professional free media work, the risk resulting from the blur of truth and the course of events, and gagged, and block out the image and the word, SNHR emphasis the necessity to move hard and fast to save what can be saved from media work in Syria, and renew its condemnation of all violations of the right to freedom of media work and convey the truth of any party, and emphasizes the need to respect the freedom of media work, and work to ensure the safety of its workers, and give them special care, with those involved in the violations against journalists and activists in the media held accountable, and the international community represented by the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in protecting journalists in Syria.

### **3. Report Methodology:**

According to SNHR methodology the citizen reporter played a vital role in reporting and publishing the news, and he isn't necessarily a neutral individual, as a reporter should be.

When a citizen reporter holds a weapon and participates directly in the offensive attacks, he is no longer a citizen reporter, and if he retired completely from military work he is once again a citizen reporter.

This report depends mainly on the archives and investigations of SNHR. Our methodology in documenting victims can be reviewed extensively, in addition to victims' families and relatives' testimonies, the information from local activists, and analyzing the images and videos that are sent to us and we keep in our archive in our records since 2011.

It always should be noted that these statistics are the minimum amount of crimes and violations that occurred in the midst of logistics and security challenges and difficulties





## Details:

### a. Government forces violations:

#### -Extrajudicial killing:

1- Friday, April 3, 2015 SNHR recorded the death of Qutaiba Bakou Shikhani, “Head of the Media Office of Ansar Party”, under torture in a detention center in Damascus, after his family identified his photo through the lately published photos. Qutaiba nickname was “Abu Sheirko” and is from Qaboun in Damascus, and a member of the leadership council of the Ansar Party, and a member in the political and media committee in the party, he was arrested from his office in Al Shalaan in Damascus on December 31, 2012.



2- Tuesday, April 7, 2015, SNHR documented the death of media activist [Ahmad Ibrahim Naqrash](#) under torture in Sednayah Prison in Damascus suburbs, as his family informed us that they went to the Military Justice to visit him and they were told to visit Tshreen Military Hospital in Damascus where they were informed that he has been dead and buried for 4 months on January 9, 2015, and his relatives confirmed to SNHR that his mother had visited him 7 months ago in Sednayah Prison and he was at the time in good health as he was also in good health when arrested. Naqrash worked as a media activist in Ad Dumayr coordination in Damascus suburbs, and he was one of the first peaceful activists who participated in the beginning of the protests in March 2011, he was arrested by government forces in an armed trap as he was inviting Ad Dumayr residents for the public lockout on December 23, 2011, over three years ago.

As he was a field member of the coordination

3- Thursday, April 16, 2015, SNHR documented the death of a media activist (We have reservations on publishing the name) under torture in a security branch in Damascus, after the security forces informed his parents of his death, they told us that he was arrested by government forces from his house in Hama about three and a half years ago, and he was in good health at the time.

4-Saturday, April 18, 2015, SNHR documented the death of a media activist (We have reservations on publishing the name) in Sednayah Prison in Damascus suburbs, by an order from the field court in Damascus, although he has been arrested by government forces since June 3, 2012.





### - Injuries:

1- Wednesday, April 24, 2015, Orient News Channel reporter Ammar Dandash was injured in Jisr Al Shoughour in Idlib, as the channel broadcast car was targeted with a government warplanes missile, during the coverage of the conflicts between the armed opposition factions 'Al Fateh Army' and government forces in Jisr Al Shoughour surroundings, Ammar Dandash was taken to a close-by makeshift hospital.



This was [Ammar](#)'s second injury, as he was injured in July 2013 during his coverage of the battle of 'Jisr Al Shoughour the Crossing Way' in Idlib suburbs, after a government warplane targeted the channel car as well.

2-Monday, April 27, 2015, the media activist [Mahmoud Aloush](#) 'Abu Al Bara Al Baliuni' Free Syrian reporter due to a land mine explosion that was planted by government forces in the surroundings of Qarmeed Military base in Idlib suburbs, during covering the events in the area



### - Releases:

Monday, April 26, journalist Shayar Khalil was released after the fourth judge in the terrorism court signed on releasing him for a 10 thousands Syrian Lira bail, and released him on the same day from Adra Central Prison in Damascus, after he spent a year in government forces prisons in Damascus.



Shayar was born in 1985 in Afrin in Aleppo he was a third year student in the Faculty of Media and Communication in Damascus University, and was collaborating with many news websites. in 2011 he started working as a journalist for Sky News Arabia Network and participated with some of his colleagues in establishing Syrian-Kurd Journalists Union.

Shayar was arbitrary arrested with some of his friends on April 23, 2013 by the Air force Intelligence members in Sarouja Café in Damascus, then he was taken for interrogation in Palestine Branch, then he was transported to Adra Prison, Shayar went on trial on July 16, 2013 in front of terrorism court in Damascus.





The official media forced Shayar and his colleagues to go on the TV program ‘Al Ein Al Sahera’ to make statements about practicing intellectual terrorism, incitement, and disinformation. What was in the beginning in early March 2014.

Video of the [interview](#):

#### **-Assaulting Properties:**

1-Sunday, April 5, 2015, in the middle of the day government forces targeted Qasioun News gency in Tadamun neighborhood in Damascus with a missile fired by the government forces artillery that destroyed the whole office and injured one of the agency employee with moderate wounds according to SNHR team

Image of one of [Qasioun Agency reporters wounded](#)

Images of the [destruction of Qasioun Agency office](#)

Video of the [destruction of Qasioun Agency office](#)

2- Monday, April 27, 2015, media center in Darayya in Damascus suburbs was targeted by a government warplanes barrel bomb, causing [material damages](#)

#### **b. People’s Protection Units violations:**

##### **- Releases:**

Monday, March 30, 2015 People’s Protection Units forces released Afrin News Network member [Lazkin Barakat](#), after he has been missing since December 4, 2014 when he was abducted by by a force called “Terrorist Swat Team”, a newly-established security force of the People’s Protection Units.

#### **c. Extremists groups violations:**

##### **1- ISIS:**

##### **Extrajudicial Killing:**

1. Wednesday, April 1, 2015, reporter [Jamal Khalifa](#) was died from an injury caused by ISIS mortar shelling on Yarmouk Camp in Damascus, during covering the battles in the Camp.



2.Thursday, April 16, 2015, reporter [Humam Najar](#) “Abu Yazan Al-Halabi” Sham News Network reporter, died from an [injury sustained](#) on April 7, 2015 in an ISIS car bomb inside an armed opposition faction military base in Marea in Aleppo suburbs where he was transported then to a Turkish hospital where he later died.







### Injuries:

Tuesday, April 7, 2015 [Abu Albara Al Halabi](#) Syria News Agency reporter, was injured in an ISIS car bomb explosion in an armed opposition military base in Mar-  
ea in Aleppo countryside, where he was transported to a Turkish hospital wher he  
completed his treatment.

### **2- An-Nussra Front:**

#### - Abduction:

Tuesday, April 7, 2015, media activist Mohammad Own 'Ryan Ryan', was abducted  
from near the Industrial Area Circle in Kalaseh neighborhood in Aleppo by members  
of An-Nussra Front and he was beaten severely during his abduction he was released  
in the next day.

SNHR talked with Ryan and he told us he received many threats before his abduction  
from the Information Security and the Security Office of An-Nussra Front, after  
he started the campaign "Lift your revolution flag" on March 13, 2015, in Aleppo  
neighborhoods that are out of government forces control.

On Tuesday, while Ryan was coming back from the Shariah Judiciary to Bustan Al  
Qasr neighborhood his car was blocked by a jeep driven by a masked man and with  
him was 2 other masked men and arrested him, the three kidnappers hit him severe-  
ly on his head and all around his body locals gathered around but the kidnappers  
said he "Insulted the Divine Self" so the people backed down then the kidnappers  
sprayed a burning material on his eye so he can't see and he surrendered to them.

Ryan said:

"After putting me in the car I heard from the wireless communication device in  
their car, that the opposition factions armed military police are searching for the  
kidnappers; therefore stayed about half an hour wandering in the neighborhoods  
of the city of Aleppo, trying to hide, then got the car into a military checkpoint of  
An-Nussra Front and they were allowed to cross out of the city, and after about  
15 minutes, the car arrived at an unknown location, and then they took me down  
and put me in another car of the type "Van", and after half an hour we arrived  
at the military headquarters of An-Nussra Front is used as a detention center - did  
not know its place in the countryside of Aleppo where I was held in the ground  
floor within the headquarters. In the meantime, they confiscated my mobile phone  
and Laptop, and they have opened all my personal accounts on Facebook, Skype,  
WhatsApp, and Viber, accessed its content, and when at the evening I was called for  
investigation and they covered my eyes and took me to a second room. "





“Interrogated me by an unknown man I could not see him, and during the investigation he asked me about the reason for my refusal to fly the flag of Al Qaeda and the reason for being against it, during the investigation he threatened me of torture and enforced disappearance”.

On the next day, April 8, 2015 An-Nusra Front released Ryan after the intervention of the brigade “Faistaqem Kma Omert” of the Shamiyeh Front one of the armed opposition factions. And this is the second time he was abducted and tortured by An-Nusra Front, we recorded his abduction earlier in the middle of 2014.



Mohammad Own “Ryan”, age 38, a founding member of “Ana Suri; I’m Syrian” and one of the first peaceful activist, and he also was arrested by government forces and charged with participating in demonstration in the early days of the popular protests, and he was injured by government warplanes shelling earlier on Bustan Al Qasr neighborhood

Image shows the [battering and torture in Ryan body](#):

Video of [Ryan after his release](#) and the minute of arriving at the hospital in Aleppo  
[Assaulting Properties](#):

1- Saturday, April 4, 2015, An-Nusra Front members confiscated the broadcasting equipment from Alwan Radio station office in Saraqib in Idlib, according to a statement from the radio stations on their Facebook page the statement stated:

“Apologizes from Alwan radio team to listeners for broadcasting on FM waves in Idlib countryside and stopped, because of the elements of An-Nusra Front confiscation of broadcasting equipment and the contents of the office in Saraqib and transported to an unknown destination, without any permission from the court, and without giving reasons. Radio Alwan team confirms that it will stay with you through its website, and through broadcast on FM waves in other parts of Syria, and promise to work on resuming broadcasting on FM waves in Idlib and its countryside at the earliest opportunity”.

Link to the statement of [Alwan Radio](#)

2-Thursday, April 3, 2015, several armed opposition controlling Bab Al Hawa border crossing point with Turkey banned the distribution of issue 73 from Tamadun newspaper and burned the copies, later we found out the reason was an investigation published in page 7 of the newspaper talks about displacing Christians in Deir Ez-Zor, and warned them of completely stopping the newspaper distribution if these sort of investigation repeated, as the crossing point management considered the investigation







“Distort the image of Islam and contradict with Islam Sharia”.

Also the crossing point management about a week before this incident banned the distribution of Inab Baldi newspaper on the back of an article the writer criticized the Sharia personnel in An-Nusra Front Al-Saudi (Abdullah Al-Muhaisini)

The Syrian part of the crossing point is under the control of a Sharia court formed from An-Nusra Front and Al Sham Freeman Movement and other armed factions in Idlib countryside.

#### **d.Armed opposition factions:**

##### **Assaulting properties:**

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### **Appreciation and Gratitude:**

Our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the victims’ families and relatives and all the media activists in all fields, whom without their collaboration with us we wouldn’t be able to deliver this report on this standards, and our sincere condolence to the families of the victims

