

Statement

SNHR Condemns Missile Strike by Hezbollah on Five Media Workers Covering Developments on the Syrian-Lebanese Borders on March 17, 2025

Thursday 20 March 2025



The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyzes in Syria.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has documented a targeted attack on five media activists and reporters on the morning of Monday, March 17, 2025, using an anti-tank guided missile, believed to be a Kornet, while they were on the Syrian-Lebanese border in Homs governorate, opposite the Lebanese village of Al-Qasr. The missile attack, which was launched from positions controlled by Hezbollah militants inside Lebanese territory, resulted in minor injuries of varying degrees among the journalists. They were subsequently transferred to a medical facility in Homs governorate for treatment. The journalists affected were identified as:

- **Mohammed al-Ashqar**, born in 1992, a correspondent for Al Arabiya, originally from Latakia city.
- Rustum Salah, an Al Arabiya cameraman, from Latakia city.
- **Ayham al-Bayyoush**, a correspondent for the SY24 platform, from Kafranbel in southern rural Idlib governorate.
- **Karam al-Sibai**, a correspondent for the Syrian Ministry of Defense, from Homs city's Bab Siba' neighborhood.
- **Mohammed Jamal**, a correspondent for the Syrian Ministry of Defense, from Tel Hadia in southern rural Aleppo.

The attack occurred while the journalists were covering armed clashes between Syrian government forces affiliated with the Ministry of Defense and Hezbollah elements, which followed the abduction and killing of three Syrian army personnel near the Zita Dam area along the Syrian-Lebanese border. According to local sources, the kidnapped soldiers were taken into Lebanese territory, where they were reportedly executed in a barbaric manner by stoning. Subsequently, a team from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in coordination with the Lebanese army, transferred their bodies to the Hermel Governmental Hospital in the Lebanese town of Hermel before handing them over to Syrian transitional government officials at the Jousieh border crossing in Al-Qusayr, Homs governorate. These events triggered violent confrontations between the two sides, leading to the deaths of at least ten Syrian army personnel over March 16 and 17, according to SNHR's documentation.


On March 18, the Syrian and Lebanese Ministries of Defense announced that they had reached an agreement to cease hostilities along the border and to enhance coordination and cooperation between the two sides.

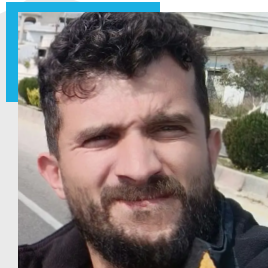
SNHR strongly condemns the targeting of journalists, a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and a serious threat to the safety of journalists and press freedom in conflict zones. International humanitarian law explicitly mandates the protection of journalists and media professionals during armed conflicts, recognizing media personnel as civilians who must not be targeted. SNHR must also stress that Hezbollah's actions undermine Syrian sovereignty and obstruct the transitional government's efforts to establish peace and stability.


SNHR calls for an independent and transparent investigation into the incident, ensuring that all responsible parties, from decision-makers to direct perpetrators, are held accountable. It also urges Syrian authorities to publicly disclose the findings of the investigation.

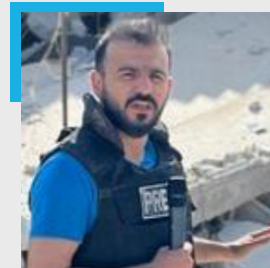
Furthermore, SNHR emphasizes the need to create a safe environment for media work that upholds freedom of expression and strengthens the role of journalism in exposing the truth and documenting human rights violations.



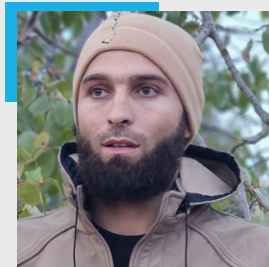
↑  Ayham al-Bayyoush



↑  Rustum Salah



↑  Mohammad al-Ashqar



↑  Mohammad Jamal



↑  Karam al-Sibai



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No justice without accountability

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