

Report

Foreign Media Correspondents

Yemen



list of the most prominent foreign/ Yemeni journalists who were working for foreign outlets and left the country following the control of the Houthis-Saleh Alliance of the Yemeni capital

Hakeem Al-Masmari CNN	Said Bataty Gulf News, Al Jazeera English, New York Times, the Guardian and Foreign Policy	Almigidad Mojalli VOA , the IRIN agency	Casey Coombs The American Prospect and Time magazine	Alex Potter
Mohammed al-Qulaisi France 24 English channel, Fox News in new York, CBC and CBS radio. .				
Charlene Rodrigues Thomson Reuters, RAI TV, ITN, World Service and BBC 5live.	Iona Craig Al Jazeera- Freelance, Irish Times, The National, The Times, USA Today, The Guardian, The		Raymond Lidal NRK and Bergens Tidende	

■ American ■ British ■ Malian ■ Norwegian ■ Yemeni

Foreign Media Outlets with Licensed Correspondents in Yemen

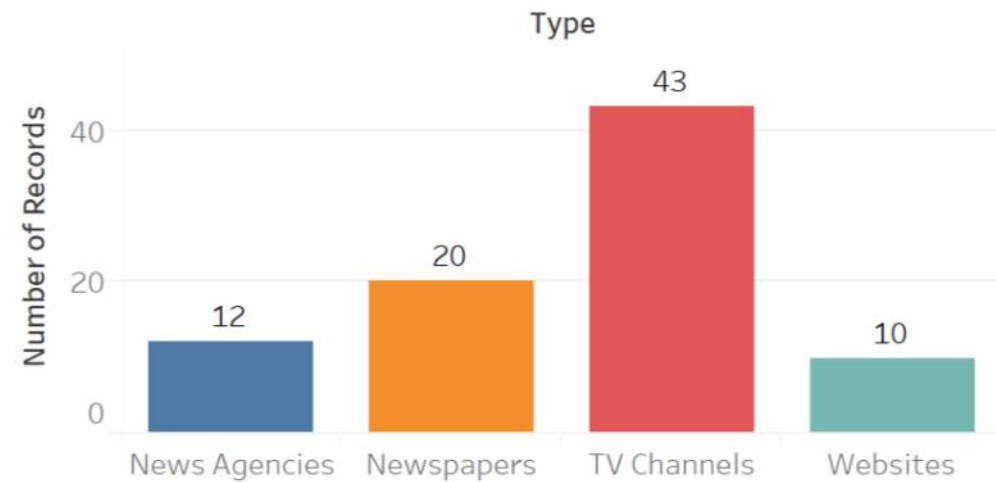


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Nationality



- American
- Malian
- Yemeni
- British
- Norwegian

list of the most prominent foreign journalists who left the country following the control of the Houthis-Saleh Alliance of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, as well as Yemeni journalists who are reporting to Western media

Name	F3	
Almigidad ..	VOA , the IRIN agency	
Alex Potter	Null	
Casey Coom..	The American Prospect a..	
Charlene Ro..	Thomson Reuters, RAI TV..	
Hakeem Al-..	CNN	
Iona Craig	Al Jazeera- Freelance, Iris..	
Mohammed..	France 24 English channel..	
Raymond Li..	NRK and Bergens Tidende	
Said Bataty	Gulf News, Al Jazeera Eng..	

list of foreign journalists who were able to enter Yemen to cover the war for short periods

Name	F2
Clarissa W..	CNN
BEN HUBBA..	New York Times.
Casey Coom..	Freelancer
Charlene Ro..	Freelancer
Ghaith Abd..	The Guardian
Iona Craig	BBC
Manon Mar..	Paris Match magazine
Martin Smi..	Freelancer
Michelle Mi..	Freelancer
Neil Connery	ITV
Nico Hameon	BBC
Orla Guerin	BBC
Sara Obeidat	Freelancer
Scott Anger	Freelancer
TYLER HICKS	New York Times
Vigo (Frenc..	Paris Match magazine

Introduction:

If freedom of expression is the spirit of democracy, the freedom of correspondents is at the core of the effective exercise of freedom of the press. Foreign media correspondents in Yemen have been an important component of influential media in the country.

Although foreign media correspondents in Yemen are relatively few, their influence is the most prominent because they represent Arab and international media outlets possessing huge capabilities. Equally significant is the attention paid to this category of journalists by the authorities and the attempts to win them over. When correspondents cross the green lines and anger the ruling authorities by covering issues viewed by the latter as sensitive, they are subjected to various forms of intimidation, suppression and penal procedures.

With the outbreak of the war in Yemen, starting with the storming of the Yemeni capital Sana'a by the Houthis on 21 September 2014 and the subsequent military intervention by the Saudi-led Arab coalition on March 26, 2015, foreign media correspondents faced serious challenges. Distribution of correspondents on the map of events and their freedom of coverage were changed, and their movement was restricted. A most prominent phenomenon in decades was repositioning as many of those correspondents either left the capital Sana'a to subsidiary cities or left the country altogether.

Foreign media correspondents have often been suspected of being

agents of foreign parties. Such a role was assumed and held by the regime of former President Saleh prior to the 2011 popular revolution. Consequently, correspondents were subjected to various forms of intimidation and violation such as trials and arrests, not to mention the attempts to attract and contain correspondents in the ranks of conformists to the regime's agenda. The Houthis adopt a similar attitude, as evidenced by the statements of the group's leaders. Indeed, the Houthis, who control Sana'a, are hostile to correspondents and journalists generally. The legitimate government has also been involved in numerous violations of correspondent freedoms in areas under its control.

In this report, we try to understand the working environment of foreign media correspondents and the ways this important media form was affected, the extent of the violations correspondents were subjected to, and the absence or exclusion of women from this field. The report also provides a set of recommendations for overcoming the most important challenges faced by foreign media correspondents in Yemen.

Mostafa Nasr

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Why The Study

Humanitarian crises in Yemen increases day by day on account of the war that has been raging for the past three years. This war has affected all aspects of life. The intensity of famine, and the spread of diseases are on the rise. Health and educational institutions have witnessed sharp decline, while other services are almost non-existent, including electricity and water; airports and seaports are closed. Foodstuff and fuel prices have more than doubled, making basic provisions inaccessible for more and more Yemenis everyday. Main exports such as gas and oil derivatives, have stopped. Public sector employees have not been paid for more than a year; and this unprecedented crisis is made even worse by lack of lack of work opportunities, especially as many plants and other commercial enterprises have shut down, thus depriving large numbers of private sector employees of their income. Moreover, dozens of women and children are killed and injured everyday in airstrikes and mine explosions.

In spite of this tragic situation, Yemen is almost totally absent on international screens and other media outlets. If covered at all, coverage is often very short, and does not reflect the catastrophic conditions experienced by Yemenis, due to the suppression of the freedom of the press by the so-called Arab Coalition

and the Houthi militia alike. Both conflicting parties impose severe restrictions on international media correspondents, including difficulties of entry into the country, difficulties in obtaining entry visas from the authorities: Houthis and the Aden-based government alike, and the unaffordable airfares.

This study aims to shed light on the situation of international media correspondents in Yemen and the difficulties they face in telling the world the full story of the suffering of Yemenis. Unless restrictions on international media correspondents are uplifted, the tragic situation in Yemen will continue unabated, and will even deteriorate further.

Importance of Foreign Media Correspondents:

This report examines the working conditions of foreign media correspondents in Yemen. Foreign media correspondents refers to Yemeni journalists who work as licensed correspondents of international agencies, newspapers and satellite channels, as well as foreign journalists working as international media correspondents.

The significance of foreign media correspondents lies particularly in the role they can play in covering the situation in Yemen, including the suffering of the Yemeni people as a result of the war that has been waged since March 2015. The war has claimed thousands of lives, and resulted in the displacement of millions of people, in addition to disease outbreaks, and deprivation of millions of Yemenis of the most basic needs, notably food and medicine. It lies within the scope of foreign media correspondents to transmit this tragic situation to the international community, and to draw attention to the disastrous conditions of the Yemeni people.

Therefore, a margin of freedom is crucial for those correspondents if they are to carry out this task. The positive outcomes of this prerequisite are clearly reflected in spreading the tragic picture and paving the way for international relief. Adopting an adverse attitude towards foreign media correspondents results in prolonging the suffering of the Yemeni people and amalgamates the disastrous conditions in the war-ravaged country.

Map of Correspondent Presence in Yemen:

The Yemeni capital Sana'a was the principal place where foreign media correspondents in Yemen were to be found. The centralized nature of the government of the government which made Sana'a the hub of political and economic activity. A few correspondents were based in Aden prior to the war, in addition to the democracy margin that emerged in the country following the Yemeni unification and introducing a multi-party system in 1990. However, the outbreak of the war changed the map of the presence of foreign media correspondents. Many journalists left Sana'a to other provinces, particularly Aden, Taiz and Marib for the following reasons:

- Assault and arrest campaigns launched By the Houthi Group against foreign media correspondents, including Al-jazeera and Al-Arabiyya correspondents due to their positions towards the swarming of Sanaa by the Houthis and their support of "Saudi-led Arab coalition in the ongoing Firmness Storm" under the pretext of restoring legitimacy in Yemen."
- Some foreign media correspondents who part ways with the Houthis have been subjected to arrests, beatings, confiscation of cameras, and other violations.
- The Houthis' uncompromising attitude to allow coverage by foreign media correspondents only in the manner it deems appropriate.
- The Houthi-orchestrated defamation campaigns targeting media

correspondents and charging them with treachery, puppetry, and spreading false accounts of the situation in Yemen.

- The spread of the armed conflict to other areas outside the Yemeni capital, Sanaa; as a result, many media outlets were convinced to contract correspondents to cover events from those areas.
- Some cities and towns experienced relative stability, inducing correspondents to move to those new locales and resume their jobs.

Based on these variables, the distribution of foreign media correspondents has witnessed a major transformation especially in the five main governorates (Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Marib and Hadramout as shown in the following tables:

Foreign Media Outlets with Licensed Correspondents in Yemen

Name	Type	
Abu Dhabi Channel	TV Channels	■
Al Kawthar	TV Channels	■
Al Manar	TV Channels	■
Al-Ahd	TV Channels	■
Al-Alam	TV Channels	■
Al-Arabiyya	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Al-Ghad Al-Arabi	TV Channels	■
Al-Ghad Al-Mushriq	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Al-Hadath	TV Channels	■ ■
Al-Horra	TV Channels	■
Al-Hurriah Live	TV Channels	■
Al-Jazeera	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Biladi	TV Channels	■
Dubai Channel	TV Channels	■
France 24	TV Channels	■ ■
Iran TV	TV Channels	■
Monte Carlo Radio	TV Channels	■
Nile News	TV Channels	■
Press TV	TV Channels	■
Reuters TV	TV Channels	■
RODAO	TV Channels	■
Russia Today	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Saudi Al-Ikhbariya	TV Channels	■ ■ ■ ■
Sharjah	TV Channels	■ ■
Sharjah Channel	TV Channels	■
Sky News	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
The Syrian News Channel	TV Channels	■

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Abu Dhabi Channel	TV Channels	■
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Al-Arabiyya	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Al-Ghad Al-Arabi	TV Channels	■
Al-Ghad Al-Mushriq	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Al-Hadath	TV Channels	■ ■
Al-Horra	TV Channels	■
Al-Hurriah Live	TV Channels	■
Al-Jazeera	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Biladi	TV Channels	■
Dubai Channel	TV Channels	■
France 24	TV Channels	■ ■
Iran TV	TV Channels	■
Monte Carlo Radio	TV Channels	■
Nile News	TV Channels	■
Press TV	TV Channels	■
Reuters TV	TV Channels	■
RODAO	TV Channels	■
Russia Today	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
Saudi Al-Ikhbariya	TV Channels	■ ■ ■ ■
Sharjah	TV Channels	■ ■
Sharjah Channel	TV Channels	■
Sky News	TV Channels	■ ■ ■
The Syrian News Channel	TV Channels	■

■ Aden ■ Hadramout ■ Marib ■ Sana'a ■ Taiz

■ Aden ■ Hadramout ■ Marib ■ Sana'a ■ Taiz

Foreign Media Outlets with Licensed Correspondents in Yemen

Name	Type	
Saudi Al-Madina Newspa..	Newspapers	■
Al-Sharq Al-Awsat	Newspapers	■
Kuwaiti Al-Ra'i	Newspapers	■
London-based Al-Arab	Newspapers	■
London-based Al-Arabi Al-..	Newspapers	■
London-based Al-Hayah	Newspapers	■ ■
Los Angeles Times	Newspapers	■
Oman Newspaper	Newspapers	■
Saudi Al-Watan	Newspapers	■
The New York Times	Newspapers	■
The UAE Al-Bayan	Newspapers	■ ■ ■
The UAE Al-Khaleej	Newspapers	■
UAE Al-Ittihad	Newspapers	■ ■
Washington Post	Newspapers	■

■ Aden ■ Hadramout ■ Marib ■ Sana'a

Media outlet	Type	
Al Jazeera Net	Websites	■
Al-Shurfa website	Websites	■
Arabi 21	Websites	■
Huffington Post	Websites	■
Iram News	Websites	■
Mada Misr	Websites	■
Orient News	Websites	■
Raseef 22	Websites	■
the US Department of State websit..	Websites	■
UAE Al Ain Website	Websites	■

■ Aden ■ Sana'a ■ Taiz

There are several freelance journalists. Freelancing has become a widely spread phenomenon among Yemeni journalists due to the increasing demand by foreign media outlets, particularly Gulf-based newspapers.

In addition, there are a number of media offices that provide media services to foreign TV channels, most notably Yemen Digital Media founded in 2005. It specializes in television production and works as an agent of a number of Arab and foreign television channels. There is also Al-Bunyan Bureau for Media Services, which produces media materials and reports for several TV channels. The Arab Media Agency, directed by Marwan Al-Khaled is an agent of more than a dozen Arab and international channels and agencies.

Noticeably, the current war redraws the map of the distribution of correspondents. Yet, this type of journalism did not witness unemployment, as is the case of Yemeni journalists specializing in newspaper journalism, broadcast media and websites. On the contrary, the war created a rising demand for new correspondents in the various regions of Yemen.

Gulf media outlets have employed correspondents in Taiz, Aden and Marib provinces. Other foreign media outlets appointed correspondents in these provinces as well as correspondents in Sana'a.

European and American Media Correspondents

Despite the limited presence of European media correspondents in Yemen prior to the outbreak of the war in 2015, some media outlets had correspondents in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, or relied on freelance correspondents.

As the war broke out in March 2015, the remaining of those correspondents left the country, except for two journalists, the American Casey Combs, who worked as a correspondent for the *Time* magazine and *American Prospect*, and the Norwegian Raymond Lidal, an NRK and Bergens Tidende correspondent. Both journalists were arrested and held for more than two weeks in Houthi prisons before being released. The American journalist came out of detention on a stretcher and was transported to the United States.

With the departure of foreign journalists from Yemen, Western media outlets worked with freelance Yemeni journalists, including Mohammed Al-Qulaissi, Saeed Al-Batati, Hakim Al-Mesmari, Mekdad Majali and others

Many foreign journalists wishing to cover the events in Yemen face difficulties entering Yemen due to several factors, including security concerns, difficulties in obtaining entry visas, and multi-sites of power, let alone the challenges pertaining to limitations

Nationality



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Said Bataty	Gulf News, Al Jazeera Eng..	

of Flights and lack of essential logistic services for correspondents, es-

pecially in remote provinces undergoing armed conflict.

In spite of these challenges, a number of journalists working for European and American media have been able to enter Yemen either on UN flights or through coordination with one or the other of the conflicting parties in Yemen.

Instances of Field Challenges to Correspondents

Foreign journalists have encountered considerable difficulties in covering events in Yemen. Obstacles are created equally by the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis controlling several northern Yemeni governorates, including the capital Sana'a. Some examples of the difficulties faced by foreign journalists who

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Martin Smi..	Freelancer
Michelle Mi..	Freelancer
Neil Connery	ITV
Nico Hameon	BBC
Orla Guerin	BBC
Sara Obeidat	Freelancer
Scott Anger	Freelancer
TYLER HICKS	New York Times
Vigo (Frenc..	Paris Match magazine

1- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/26/yemen-war-journalists-silenced-conflict-reporters-activists-abduction-torture>

visited the country to cover the war are in order.

Charlene Rodrigues, a freelancer, reports, "One Friday in Old Sana'a, while filming the aftermath of the Saudi-led coalition bombings, I found myself surrounded by a group of militia who were trying to take hold of my camera. I was detained for a few hours in the ruins, confused and unnerved."

She described the interrogation as "relentless. But the problems didn't stop here. For a week, I was harassed with regular phone calls and visits from National Security officials at my hotel. All this despite having a press visa issued in London.

" Incidents such as these are increasingly common since the rebel Houthi militia took over Sana'a in late September (2014). Local journalists have either fled to their villages or left the country. Some have been threatened and assaulted, while others' homes have been ransacked, their families living in constant fear. There are only a handful of foreign journalists in the country and they keep a low profile." (Charlene Rodrigues is a freelance journalist) (1).

Senior BBC correspondents were prevented from traveling to Yemen as the Saudi-led coalition refused to allow them to board a UN plane. The journalists were supposed to board a United Nations plane from Djibouti to Sanaa. They worked hard to secure entry visas to Yemen from both sides of the government and the Huthi rebel authorities in Sana'a. The flight line was shared with the Saudi-led coalition.

Senior international BBC correspondent, Orla Jorin, visited Yemen and

recorded her remarks in a videotape. "Journalists face tremendous hurdles to get in. We were prevented from flying to Yemen, The only way during that stage was by sea. We travelled to Aden and it took 23 hours. We and other organization faced tremendous difficulty to enter this country and report what was happening there. The Saudi-led coalition limits travels to the country. They obstruct efforts to tell the real story through blockade and prevent journalists from freely travelling to Yemen. We were prevented from flying to Yemen, and had to travel by boat, getting into the country via the port of Aden. Journalists who want to travel to Yemen are subject to strict surveillance. This is one of the reasons why the worst humanitarian crisis in the world has taken up less space in the world press."(2)

The two French journalists working for the *Paris Match* magazine, Hanon Maria and Figo, obtained press visas to visit the capital, Sana'a and cover the war in Yemen. Although the Houthis granted them entry visas, they were subjected to several instances of harassment. They were detained at a hotel in Hajjah and denied access to the town. They were later released. They have recently been transported by the Saudi-led Coalition.

Although the Houthis announced at the beginning of this year that foreign journalists would be allowed to visit areas under their control, journalists visiting those areas are closely monitored and all their actions are suspected. All their movements are attended by Houthi gunmen and are prevented from visiting certain places, where the pres-

2- <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/irish-studies/blog/2017/orla-guerin/>

ence of journalists is deemed undesirable.

Low Presence of Female Correspondents

Foreign media correspondents are predominantly male. Female correspondents are scarce and can be counted on the fingers of one hand, in spite of the fact that some of them competed successfully, one of them has even won an international award.

Foreign media outlets prefer employing male correspondents for several reasons, including the conviction that this profession is dangerous. A correspondent has to visit areas of conflict to cover events.

However, the presence of some female correspondents and their professional distinction

refutes this justification. One Journalist believes that bias towards women is a factor that explains scarcity of female correspondents. In addition, women are less inclined to build person-

List of some Yemen women correspondents

Name	
Arwa Tarboush	■
Hadeel Al Yamani	■
Iftikar Al-Qadhi	■
Laila Al Fahidi	■
Nabiha Al - Haidari	■
Nusseibeh	■
Rwayda al-Saqqaf	■
Shaima Saleh Bassid	■

- persistent
- Stopped working
- Stopped working as a journalist

al relationships compared to men, a disadvantage in a sector in which correspondence jobs are seldom advertised, and hiring is determined by personal relationships instead.

Some female correspondent who were interviewed attribute the lack of female correspondents in large part to female journalists' lack of confidence in their capabilities. They think they are not equipped to carry out such a big task as a foreign media correspondent. Moreover, reporting can be a risky job that requires flexibility to move anywhere at any time, a hurdle some female journalists find difficult to surpass.

The war also contributed to the aggravation of this problem. Already few in number, some female correspondents gave up their jobs due to concerns over their lives while others were subject to various kinds of intimidation. A female Yemeni correspondent recounts her story as she received death threats from an unidentified person. Fearing for her life, her family induced her to give up her job as a correspondent.

"I have worked as *Al-Raya* newspaper correspondent for nine years. I had to report on various issues, besides political pieces and analyses. One of my last activities, I interviewed a political figure. It was a two-page interview and appeared in two parts. Then the crisis in Yemen intensified. Incidents of kidnapping and torturing journalists also increased. I received a text message saying that I was a puppet of Qatar and a supporter of aggression.

The text message concludes, "This is another warning or you will disappear behind the sun." I was very upset. I reported the issue to the newspaper and the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate, and stopped reporting to the newspaper.

"I took the threat seriously and ceased practicing my profession altogether," says the former correspondent of *Al-Raya*.

Challenges faced by international media correspondents in Yemen:

Correspondents in Yemen face many challenges because of the war, including security concerns, and other obstacles related to the suppression of freedom of expression, as well as challenges related to political variables both in areas controlled by the Huthis and those controlled by the legitimate government.

The main challenges may be summarized in the following:

- ⇒ Difficulty in obtaining entry visas: A journalist wishing to visit the country has to obtain two distinct entry visa approvals; one from the Aden-based government led by Hadi, the other from the Sanaa-based Houthi government. It takes a minimum of 10 - 30 days before an application is approved.
- ⇒ Airports of the major cities are shut down, including Sanaa International Airport, Taiz and Hodeidah airports. This makes it very impossible for a foreign journalist to visit various governorates, as travelling by car may pose serious threats to their lives.

- ⇒ Unaffordable airfares: only Yemeni Airways is functioning in the country, and its flights are restricted to two airports; namely, Aden and Sayoun airports.
- ⇒ Warnings and severe restrictions imposed on international media correspondents upon arrival, by Aden- and Sanaa-based governments alike. Such intimidation measures make international correspondents in a state of constant fear as they might be killed or kidnapped by militias or armed groups.
- ⇒ A journey by a four-member journalist team to Yemen can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Many international media outlets refrain from sending their reporters to Yemen due to high costs. Freelance journalists find it also extremely difficult to afford such costs, in addition to the security threats.

Correspondents in Houthi-Controlled Areas

Foreign media correspondents reporting from areas controlled by the Huthi-Saleh alliance have faced an array of challenges over the last three years. Severe restrictions were imposed on press freedom and correspondents faced difficulties in conducting field coverage as they were required to obtain filming and field visit permits.

A storm of hostility pervades Houthi-controlled northern provinces towards media outlets that do not conform to the militia's orientations. Several incidents of photographers attacked by gunmen were reported.

The difficult environment faced by foreign media correspondents spells into low profile correspondent performance. Correspondents instead resorted to discussing humanitarian and living issues, turning a blind eye to stories that might arise resentment of the authorities. In sum, a situation of self-monitoring was in place.

Associated Press correspondent, Ahmed Al-Haj, was subjected to an incitement campaign and received implicit threats from a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official in Sanaa, on account of publishing a report in the *Washington Post*.

Hisham al-Omais, a Yemeni social activist, was arrested by Houthi militants in early August 2017. He had been able to convey a picture of the suffering of the Yemenis and the tragic situation in Yemen as a result of the war. Al-Omais is known for his tweets. He enjoys 25000 followers of his Twitter account, including many international media outlets, journalists and humanitarian workers. He is considered one of the most important few voices reporting what is going on on the ground.

Correspondents in the Legitimate Government-Controlled Areas

Following the Saudi-led coalition-backed expulsion of the Houthi militants from the city, Aden became the most suitable haven for foreign media correspondents who fled Sanaa for fear of violations against journalists by the Houthi militia in Sana'a. Gulf media outlets, including Al Jazeera, Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed, *Al Bayan*, Al Arabiya,

Al Arabiya TV, UAE *Al-Ittihad*, Al-Ikhbariya Channel, Al Jazeera Net, Abu Dhabi Channel, Alhurriya Live, Al Ain website, and other outlets, chose their correspondents from the ranks of Aden and other southern governorate journalists.

Media continued to enjoy a reasonable margin of freedom in Aden following the expulsion of Houthis. However, many foreign media, especially Western media, did not transfer their correspondents to Aden due to instability, security concerns, and the risks of terrorist attacks from time to time

More recently, especially following the internal Gulf States conflict, the margin of freedom in Aden began to narrow gradually, and the authorities began to impose restrictions on Al Jazeera journalists, in addition to incitement against Qatari media outlets, which are prevented from covering events.

The crisis in the Gulf has cast its shadows over Taiz province. Journalist Mohammed Al-Qadi faced a campaign of incitement in social media platforms on account of being the correspondent of the UAE-owned Sky News since the views adopted by the channel are in conflict with those of certain parties in Taiz. This translated into a campaign of incitement against the channel's correspondent.

Foreign Media Correspondents' Association:

Yemeni Correspondents do not have an independent association to advocate their cause, defend their rights, and protect them against

violations. However, the idea of setting up a subsidiary correspondent organ within the framework of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

Although the number of foreign media correspondents in Yemen before the current war exceeded 106 reporters and correspondents, including nine women journalists, their busy schedules precluded establishing an organ within the ranks of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

Many correspondents underscore the importance of establishing such an entity and the role it can play in supporting the journalist cause and forming a bridge between correspondents and other agencies. It will provide correspondents with the information needed to perform their roles, protect their rights, advocate their cause, and monitor violations.

Of the 106 correspondents, 26 are TV reporters, 22 are news agency correspondents, 6 radio correspondents, 41 newspaper and magazine correspondents, 11 photographers and assistants. This number decreased by more than a half following the outbreak of the war in Yemen due to freedom restriction, repression, incitement, harassment and other forms of intimidation to which correspondents were subjected.

The ban on foreign journalists and its impact on the absence of reporting humanitarian issues

3- <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/31/opinion/columnists/yemen-famine-cholera.html>

The entry of foreign correspondents into Yemen requires approval by the authorities. Permits issued by the Ministry of Information have to be obtained. However, since the outbreak of the war, two conflicting sites of power arose, each dominating certain parts of the country. While the Houthi group took control of Sana'a and most of the northern governorates, the coalition-backed government controlled land, sea and air ports. Consequently, it became difficult for correspondents to get in and cover the war. This reality persisted until some correspondents were able to enter into Yemen via UN relief and humanitarian aid flights.

Complex procedures meant to hinder journalists traveling on United Nations flights from Djibouti Airport to Sanaa Airport have been put in place. Any journalist who intends to enter into the country is required to obtain a visa from the Huthi authorities in Sana'a and another from the Hadi government in Aden. On departure, a journalist has to take a commercial flights via Aden airport or Sayoun airport. The cost of a return ticket is about \$ 1100, plus the boring routines they have to go through.

Moreover, the equipment that a journalist needs to cover events in conflict-ridden areas such as jackets, helmets and satphones is not allowed on United Nations flights, intensifying journalists' fears of working in Yemen.

"Victims like Buthaina aren't on our television screens and rarely make the news pages, in part because Saudi Arabia is successfully blocking foreign journalists from the rebel-held areas." Says *New*

York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof.

"I know, because I've been trying for almost a year to get there and thought I had arranged a visit for this week — and then Saudi Arabia shut me down," he adds. "With commercial flights banned, the way into rebel areas is on charter flights arranged by the United Nations and aid groups. But Saudi military jets control this airspace and ban any flight if there's a journalist onboard. I don't think the Saudis would actually shoot down a plane just because I was on it, but the U.N. isn't taking chances. This is maddening: Saudi Arabia successfully blackmails the United Nations to bar journalists so as to prevent coverage of Saudi atrocities. The Saudis don't want you to see children like this one, Alaa, severely malnourished and photographed by a World Food Program team. Two days later, Alaa died." New York Times journalist Nicholas Christof.

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Entry into the country is not the only challenge faced by foreign journalists in Yemen. Journalism in Yemen is a risky profession. British Foreign and Commonwealth Ministry issued a warning meant mainly for journalists and other attack-vulnerable groups. In addition, editors are concerned about sending journalists to war zones where abduction is a major threat to journalists' lives. It is very difficult for editors to obtain approval to arrange missions to Yemen. Many newsrooms do not have the sufficient budget to keep official offices around the world and pay for security needs to protect journalists in conflict areas.

Due to these obstacles to the entry of foreign journalists into Yem-

en, the war in Yemen has become a forgotten war, despite the magnitude of the ensuing humanitarian disaster, which is approaching its third year.

Permits Granted to Foreign Journalists

The legitimate government and the Saudi-led coalition prevented foreign journalists from entering Yemen, refusing to grant them visas to enter the country and cover the war. Yet, recently in June 2017, the government issued a statement welcoming the entry of foreign journalists to Yemen, especially areas under its control. The statement explained that foreign journalists wishing to visit Yemen simply need to apply for a visa at any Yemeni embassy. The Yemeni government will grant them permission to visit all areas under its control (80% of Yemeni territory) and will not prevent them from traveling to Houthi-controlled areas if they wish, as long as they are willing to accept the risk of traveling to those areas.

"It is now possible for international journalists to enter into the country through the legitimate government," said Baleegh Mikhlaifi, media adviser at the Yemeni embassy in Cairo. A journalist shall apply to any Yemeni embassy, which in turn sends the request to the Foreign Ministry. The application is then forwarded to the Office of the President for approval.

He adds, "We have received 10 approvals so far. Yet, sometimes we face some problems with Yemen Airlines, which does not al-

lowed journalists onboard unless approved by local authorities.

Recently, three journalists, a Swiss correspondent, a Reuters' reporter and a German newspaper correspondent, were allowed into Aden. The entry of a press delegation consisting of 15 journalists representing several international newspapers was also mediated. The delegation visited Marib. Coordination between the local authority and the government was successful.

Six international journalists are currently preparing to go to Aden in coordination with the Foreign Ministry and security apparatus in the interim capital, Aden.

Al-Mikhlafla explains the process of entry visa application. According to Mikhlafla, the applicant shall submit the application at a Yemeni Information Attache or directly at a Yemeni embassy. The attache or embassy in turn sends the application to the Foreign Ministry which addresses the President's office. The Ministry of Information also mediates a security approval from local authorities to ensure the journalist's safety and facilitate their mission.

Although the legitimate government allows foreign journalists into the country, Yemen Airways, the only airline allowed to fly in Yemeni airspace, presents another obstacle. Foreign journalists face difficulties getting onboard. Yemen Airways flights are not allowed to land in Sanaa airport, forcing many foreign journalists whose destination is Sanaa to use United Nations flights instead.

Difficulties in Obtaining Information

Correspondents in Yemen face great difficulties in obtaining infor-

mation due to the following:

- ⇒ Lack of access to all regions of Yemen due to risks of harassment and detention. Certain Houthi-controlled areas are inaccessible to many foreign media correspondents due to the Houthis' attitude towards those media outlets, which it views as belonging to the Saudi-led coalition. Access to information in those areas is very difficult, and reporting to negatively classified media outlets is strictly banned. Political figures, activists and analysts are not allowed to cooperate with those channels or appear on their screens. Coverage remains weak and inaccurate.
- ⇒ The various parties in Yemen refuse to deal with a media outlet if it had previously aired or published information that contradicts that party views or criticized their attitudes and policies. Therefore, such outlets are not invited to meetings or press conferences.

Violations Suffered by Foreign Media Correspondents (4)

- ⇒ Mohammed al-Qadi, Sky News correspondent, was detained by Houthi militants on the pretext of filming a Houthi checkpoint in Sanaa.
- ⇒ Al-Maydeen reporter, Abd al-Khaleq al-Houd and assistant cameraman were detained by soldiers belonging to criminal investigation forces in Aden, under the pretext of filming a camps adja-

- cent to the Exhibitions Square where sit-ins were conducted. The team's camera and cellphones were confiscated and al-Houd was charged with sympathizing with the Houthis.
- ⇒ Norwegian NRK Channel correspondent, Raymond Lidal: On 28 March 2015, she disappeared from the capital Sana'a. The channel revealed that Lidal was detained by the police in the capital Sanaa. She was arrested while filming the aftermath of an airstrike in the Old City of Sanaa. According to the Norwegian channel, she was charged of illegal entry, using a tourist visa. She had filmed several reports for the channel from inside Yemen.
 - ⇒ BBC correspondent, Abdullah Ghorab: Houthi gunmen swarmed the BBC office in Sana'a searching for him, but did not find him.
 - ⇒ Al-Hurra TV Photographer, Mohammed Ayda: arrested while conducting a video interview with a citizen about the humanitarian situation. He was jailed by the Houthis at al-Himyri prison in Sana'a.
 - ⇒ Reuters reporter, Mohamed Al-Ghubari: detained by Sanaa Airport security upon his return from Cairo for allegedly participating in the Riyadh conference, a charge denied by Al-Ghubari.
 - ⇒ The first deputy of the Yemen Journalists Syndicate and the director of the Al Jazeera Office in Sana'a, Saeed Thabet Said, received a death threat by phone on January 12, 2015, on account of his journalistic activity.
 - ⇒ Al-Jazeera correspondent, Hamdi al-Bakari: a death threat was tweeted by a user under the name of Saifuddin on January 18, 2015.
 - ⇒ Director of the Al-Arabiyya Office in Sana'a, Hamoud Munassar, was intimidated by the office of former President Saleh. The office issued a statement that clearly included incitement against him.
 - ⇒ Al-Jazeera correspondent, Hamdi al-Bakari: on May 4, 2015 he suffered a social media campaign of murder incitement by individuals and media outlets with links to the Houthi –Saleh alliance.
 - ⇒ Al-Hurra correspondent, Mohammed Ayda: his camera was confiscated by Houthi gunmen while he was filming their assaults on a march in Sana'a. The camera was returned to him later.
 - ⇒ Rafat Al - Ma'amari, Journalist working in the BBC Office in Sana'a: his own camera was confiscated by Houthi gunmen while covering a march in the Bab al-Yemen area.
 - ⇒ Al-Arab Channel office staff: Asim Sabri (journalist) and Mohammed Al-Shamiri (photographer): January 26, 2015 - Al-Houthi militia beat them and confiscated their camera and cellphones in Al-Taghyeer Square near al-Qadisiya roundabout in Sana'a. The assailants were gunmen in civilian dress, who chanted the slogan of the Houthi militia.
 - ⇒ British journalist Bert Ascot: attacked by the armed Houthi militia in Sana'a while covering a march against the Houthi coup.

His cameras and cellphones were confiscated.

- ⇒ France 24 correspondent, Ghamdan Duqaimi: attacked along with team by businessman and Houthi representative in the City of Old Sana'a, Yahya al-Habari, while filming the hubris of a number of houses in Old Sana'a City hit in an airstrike.
- ⇒ Al-Jazeera correspondent in Taiz, Hamdi al-Bakari, Abdulaziz al-Sabri, and Mounir al-Sabai: 19-1-2016: kidnapped in Taiz by an unknown armed group on account of their journalist activity.
- ⇒ Sky News correspondent, Mohammed al-Qadi, and cameraman Taha Saleh were arrested by gunmen who identified themselves as followers of the Salafist group in Taiz while covering events in the city. The gunmen threatened to kill the correspondent.
- ⇒ Al-Rai newspaper correspondent, Taher Hizam: 28/3/2016 - kidnapped by Houthi militants in Taiz while on a press mission in the province.
- ⇒ Correspondent of the London-based Arabi 21 newspaper, Ashraf al-Falahi: 15/8/2016 - subjected to prosecution and search by the Huthi militia on account of his journalistic activity.
- ⇒ Al-Ghad Al-Arabi correspondent in Sana'a, Majd al-Din Shukri: detained for two days after being induced to go to the neighborhood of the Saudi Embassy in Sana'a.
- ⇒ Al-Arabi Al-jadeed news website correspondent, Wajdi al-Salmi: 17/2/2016 - beaten by unknown assailants on account of

his journalistic activity.

- ⇒ Sharjah TV correspondent, Mohammed Taher: 6 - 4 0: injured by shrapnel while covering clashes as shells were being fired by Houthi and Saleh militants.
- ⇒ VOA correspondent, Mekdad Majali: 17/1/2016 - Killed in a Saudi-led coalition airstrike in Hammam Jarf, Bilad AL-Rus, Sana'a province while filming the aftermath of a bombing that had hit the area earlier.

Recommendations

- ⇒ It is crucial for foreign media correspondents to adopt impartial and unbiased positions with regards to the conflicting parties in Yemen. This would enable them to report events from the various parts of the country without compromising their freedom and independent professional character.
- ⇒ Stopping all violations and movement restrictions imposed on foreign media correspondents while carrying out their duty of covering events, and punishing perpetrators .
- ⇒ Facilitating the entry of foreign journalists into Yemen, clarifying procedures for obtaining visas and facilitating their access to flights, whether through United Nations or Yemen Airways flights.
- ⇒ Ensuring the protection and safety of foreign media correspondents and facilitating their movement into and out of the country as well as in-country travels.
- ⇒ Foreign media outlets shall employ female journalists as correspondents, rather than restrict this role to male journalists only.
- ⇒ To train female journalists in Yemen in a manner that enables them to compete with male journalists as correspondents, and to create a work environment that contributes to enhancing the capabilities of women in the media field.
- ⇒ Setting up an Association of foreign media correspondents within the framework of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate to protect the rights of foreign and local correspondents.
- ⇒ Opening Sana'a International Airport and all other Yemeni air-

ports to facilitate the task of foreign journalists to reach the various regions in Yemen and cover the humanitarian disaster in the country.

- ⇒ The international community, including human rights organizations and press freedom bodies, shall bear its responsibilities, and pressurize all parties in Yemen to respect freedom of expression and to enable the media to play its role in covering events and human suffering.

Studies & Economic Media Center (SEMC) is a high-profile NGO ,specializing in training in economic and media fields, working towards the enhancement of transparency, good governance, public engagement in decision-making, the creation of professional and free media and empowering youth and women economically..

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