# REPORT

# Violations Freedoms Media Yemen



July _ Aug

2019



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Media Freedom Observatory

# Freedoms Media Yemen July — Aug 2019

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# Violations Cases Against Media in Yemen

## July - August 2019

Yemen

**37** Cases

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5** Arrest | **4** Abduction | **6** Assault | **2** Threat | **20** Others |

## Violations Responsibilties

Southern Transitional Council **9**

Yemeni Government **6**

Unknown **4**

Houthies Group **18**

## Violations Areas

**18** Sanaa

**2** Taiz

**12** Aden

**1** Shabwah

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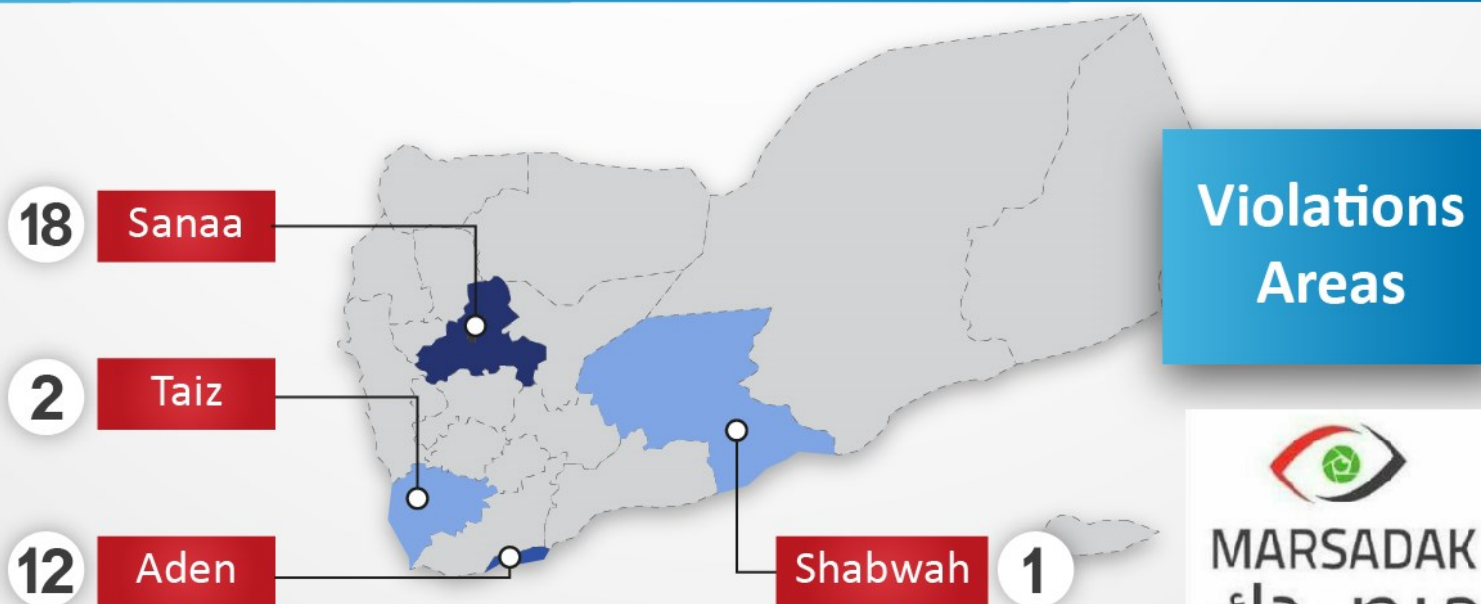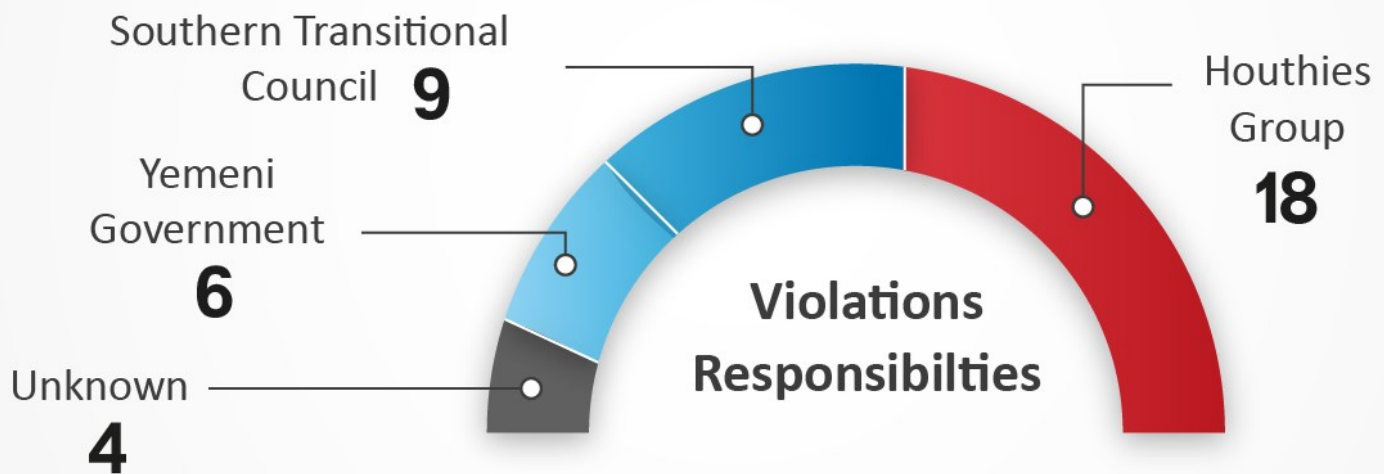
# Introduction

Day by day abuses and arbitrary practices violating press freedom by conflicting parties in Yemen intensify.

Journalists work in a highly risky environment that poses a threat to their lives and future. In many parts of Yemen, journalism as a profession has become a sufficient accusation for a journalist to be punished in a country dominated by rival parties backed by regional actors.

In this report issued by the Yemen Media Freedom Observatory (YMFO), we monitored and documented 37 cases of violations of media freedom during July and August. Individual journalists were targeted in 32 cases, while media institutions were targeted in 5 cases. Violation ranged from 5 arrests to 4 kidnappings, 6 assaults, 2 threats and 20 other cases.

Data show that the Houthi group continues to top the list of perpetrator of press freedom, being implicated in 18 cases of violations during the past two months.  Besides, 18 journalists are still detained in Houthi prisons, some of them for more than three years. Similarly, journalist Mohammed Ali is still detained by the legitimate government in Mareb, whereas no information is available on the fate of Mohammed al-Muqri, who was kidnapped by al-Qaeda in late 2015.

The YMFO renews its call on all parties to immediately stop targeting journalists and urges them to abide by the Constitution and international conventions on freedom of the press. It also calls on the conflicting parties, especially the Houthis, to release detained journalists, while holding all .parties fully responsible for endangering the lives of journalists.

# Report Methodology

Data in this report were collected by a professional team of SEMC-affiliated observers, distributed in the five main governorates

Observers relied on direct contact with the victims, victim relatives' testimonies, media releases, and reporting of violations to the Observatory. The team reviewed and verified all data and information monitored through a verification mechanism comprising at least 3 different sources.

Data contained in this report do not suggest that all violations have been monitored. In fact, many cases are not reported due to fears of further consequences inflicted on the victims by the oppressors.

This report does not cite all stories of violations for the sheer reason of keeping the report short. Only stories of the most important violation are covered in this report.

# Executive summary

**This report documents 37 violations perpetrated against individuals (journalists and social media activists) and media institutions in July and August 2019.**

**Violations were distributed in Sana'a, Taiz, Aden and Shabwa governorates.**

**Documented cases included 5 arrests, 4 kidnappings, 6 assaults, 2 threats and 20 other cases.**

**Most of the violations monitored by the YMFO were perpetrated by parties affiliated to the Houthi group, being responsible for 18 violations of the total number of documented cases.**

# Types of Violations

The report documents 37 cases of violations of media freedom in July and August. Individuals (journalists and social media activists) were targeted in 32 cases, including 5 arrests, 4 kidnappings, 2 assaults, 2 threats and 19 other cases.

Media institutions were targeted in five cases, including 3 assaults, firing live ammunition at the headquarters of the Aden Al-Ghad newspaper, and storming the office of the Yemeni News Agency (Saba) in Aden.

**20** أخرى   **2** تهديد   **6** اعتداء   **4** اختطاف   **5** اعتقال

# a Responsibility for Violations

**The Houthi group tops the list of perpetrators of violations of media freedom during July and August, being responsible for 18 violations. Southern Transitional Council (STC) operatives were implicated in 9 cases. Parties affiliated to the Yemeni government perpetrated 6 violations, and 4 cases were perpetrated by unidentified individuals.**



الإنتقالي الجنوبي
9

الحكومة اليمنية
6

مجهولين
4

مسؤلية الانتهاكات

جماعة الحوثي
18
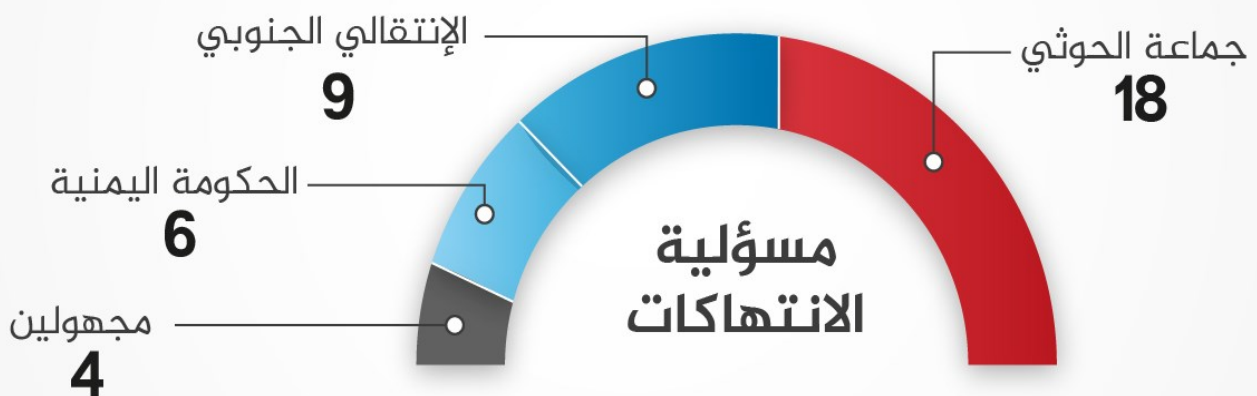
# Geographical Distribution of Violations

Violations of media freedom were recorded in various parts of the country. Sana'a emerged as stage of the majority of violations (18 cases), followed by Aden (12 cases), Taiz (6 cases), and finally Shabwa where a single case was recorded.
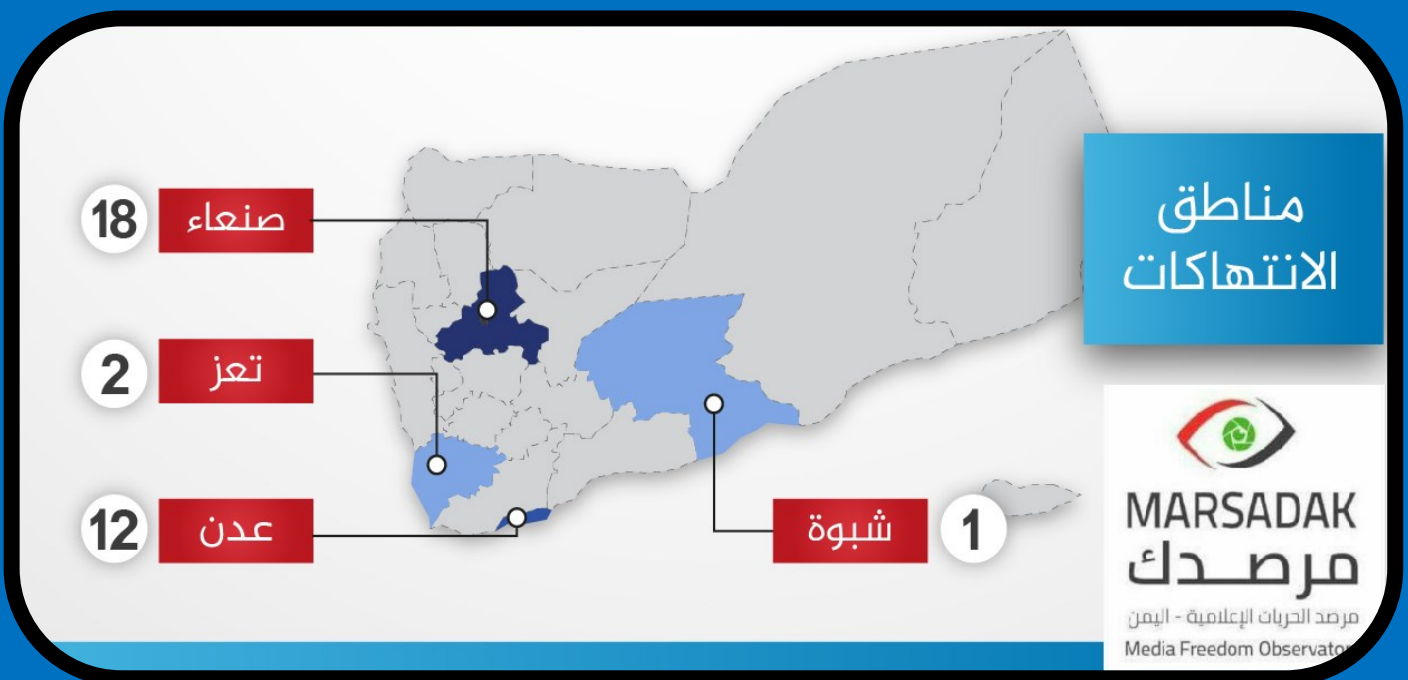
# Kidnappings

**Four kidnappings of journalists were recorded in July and August. A single case was documented in each of Sana'a, Aden, Taiz and Shabwa.**

On July 27, masked informally dressed gunmen belonging to the Houthi Preventive Security apparatus, in 3 vehicles besieged the neighborhood where Abdulhafez al-Samadi, a journalist, lives. Al-Samadi was taken to an unknown location. Three days later, the kidnapped journalist's brother, Mua'th al-Samadi, received a call from an unidentified number. A person with a shaking scared voice hastily said, "Mu'ath! Give them the laptop. If you don't, they will arrest all of yAs Mua'th asked about the location of the kidnapped journalist and tried to inquire about his health, Abdulhafez's voice was immediately interrupted and someone else stated, "Don't worry! He's OK." The call was over.  ou."

On August 30, Ihab al-Shawafi, a cameraman, was kidnapped by Houthi gunmen at a security checkpoint in al-Hawban while on his way to Sana'a. he was taken to an unknown location.

Editor of Mareb Today website, Iyad Saleh Naji, was kidnapped by STC gunmen who broke into apartment and detained him for four days in an STC prison where he was subjected to torture. He was released on the condition that he should leave Aden because he belonged to the northern part of the country.

On August 25, Yemen Satellite Channel cameraman, Anwar Abdullah Laqlaf, was assaulted and kidnapped by STC-affiliated Shabwa Elite gunmen while covering battles in Shabwa governorate. He was detained for a few hours.

# Arrests

**There were five cases of arrest recorded during the months of July and August, 4 cases in Taiz and a case in Aden.**



Military intelligence agents in Taiz stormed a hotel in the city, arrested three journalists: Munir Talal, Yahya al-Bu'athi and Mahfouz al-Bu'athi, and confiscated their cellphones and electronic devices. The journalists were detained for three days.



Sami Nu'man, a journalist, was detained for more than an hour at an STC checkpoint in Aden. After being interrogated and his phone inspected, he was released.



Al-Mushahed net website secretary, Mohammed Amin, was detained by the Passport Department in Taiz. The journalist was arrested while filming the long queues of citizens applying for passports at the Passport Office.
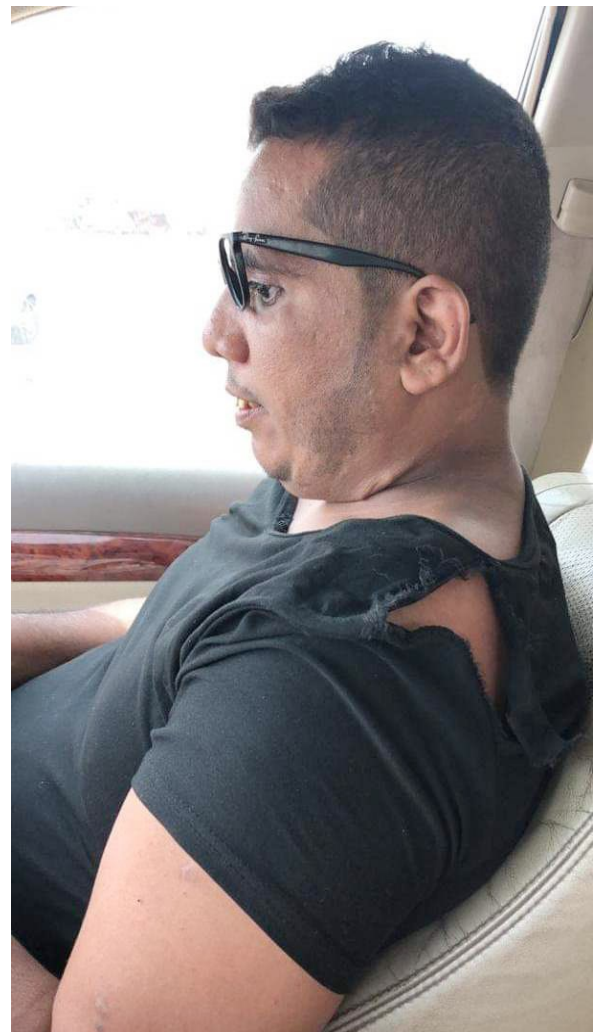
# Assaults

Six assault cases against journalists and social media activists were recorded in July and August. The cases took place in Taiz and Aden.

**Saleh al-Obeid, a cameraman, was assaulted by soldiers with links to Yemeni government Riot Squads on the backdrop of his FB page posts. He was assaulted and beaten with rifle butts. Soldiers also fired live ammunition at him as he was on his way to a market.**

**Mujahid Hamoud, a journalist, was assaulted by a Passport Office guard in Taiz because of his documentation of soldiers attacking citizens who demanded their passports**

# Violations Targeting Media Institutions



On July 4, Southern Transitional Council (STC) supporters stormed the building of the Yemeni News Agency (Saba) in Aden, prevented journalists from doing their work, assaulted some of them, and threatened to punish those who would come to office again. Assailants destroyed and removed the agency metal plaque, and wrote graffiti warnings not to open the building again.

On Aug. 18, STC gunmen prevented a number of journalists from working at the 14th October newspaper and the radio and television headquarters which were taken over by the STC. Only select journalists were retained and allowed to run the newspaper, and the radio and television services.

Unidentified gunmen riding a motorcycle fired live ammunition at the Aden Al-Ghad newspaper headquarters in Mansoura district, Aden. Assailants fled. No casualties were recorded.

# Media Freedom Observatory — Yemen

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