

The Report OF Violation Against Media Freedom – Yemen First Half Of 2018



Violation
Media

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Introduction

It is unfortunate that the state of media freedoms in Yemen continues to decline. Yemen continues to be among the worst countries in press freedom violation. In recent years, Yemen has been included in the black list of press freedom violators, a country that was experiencing a reasonable margin of press freedom up to the pre-war period.

With the continuation of the war and the domination of armed groups on multiple areas in Yemen and in addition to the fragility of the government institutions and their collapse in several governorate s, the illogical practices against media freedoms are expanding. The media scene in Yemen has been characterized by repression and violations since 2014, when the means of solidarity with the victims has deteriorated and the notion that the crime culprits are far from justice and punishment has prevailed.

In this high-risk environment, The Observatory of Media Freedoms documented 53 violations against media freedom during the first half of 2018, ranging from killing, wounding, kidnapping, torture, arresting and burning media institutions.

Al-Houthi (Ansar Allah) militants leads the list of violations against journalists, where 14 journalists have been kidnapped for more than three years. In addition, violations of media freedom continue in areas under the control of the internationally recognized government of Yemen.

The Observatory of Media Freedoms, which documents these crimes against journalists and social media activists, renews the call to protect journalists from being targeted and subversion campaigns. It also stresses the need to hold perpetrators accountable for unforgettable crimes and criminals cannot go unpunished.

Many journalists in Yemen can no longer easily travel and transfer the facts while being away from influence, polarization and fear of oppression, those obstacles lead to a widespread rumors and fabricated news that exacerbate the conflict and deepen the state of community division.

It is a pity that kidnappings and torture continue against journalists, while hundreds of journalists are denied an access to their homes because of their work.

Mostafa Nasr

Chairperson of the Center of Studies and Economic Media

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

The report on violations against media freedom in Yemen during the first half of 2018 monitored (53) cases of violation against individuals (journalists and activists in social media) and media institutions (storming, burning and targeting media organizations)..

The focus of violation cases documented by *The Observatory of Media Freedom* was targeting the governorates of (Aden, Taiz, Sana'a, Hodeida, Al-Bayda, Al-Jawf, Hadramout, Lahj, Mareb, Ibb, and Al-Dalie)

The report monitored (47) violation cases against media freedoms in Yemen, practiced against individuals (journalists and activists in social media) during the first half of this year, distributed into (8) cases of killing, (5) cases of attempted murdering, (6) cases of injuries, (5) cases of abduction, (6) cases of assault, (7) cases of arrest, one case of attempted attack, (3) cases of threat, (5) cases of incursion and looting of media staffs' houses and one case of incitement.

The report monitored (6) cases of violations committed against media institutions, where unknown gunmen set fire to the printing presses of the *Candles Foundation* and *Akhbar al-Yawm Newspaper* in Aden governorate, the gunmen attacked the journalists and the employees of the institution and injured a number of them. Another violation was that the Supreme Security Committee in Taiz governorate ordered the closure of al-Jazeera TV channel office and stopped the channel's staff from working. Moreover, unknown gunmen attacked and looted the Aden 24 newspaper, the eighth day newspaper and the tower of Bandar Aden radio, the report observed blockage of the of the new dawn website. The channel Rushd and Sanaa TV channels stopped broadcasting because of the difficult financial situation endured by many TV channels.

The cases of severe torture and starvation that led to the death of journalist Anwar al-Rukn in al-Houthi group's prisons were the worst violation against the media freedom during the first half of this year. Al-Houthi Militants kidnapped Anwar a year ago and put him in Al-Saleh city's prison in Taiz. He was not aware of anything and his family was prevented from visiting him, he was released after one year in a difficult medical condition, he has deceased two days after release.

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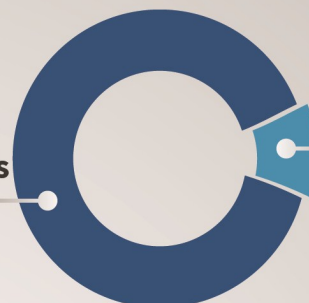
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journalists
during
the first half
of 2018

Violations Cases Against Media Freedom in Yemen – First Half of 2018

53
Violations Cases

47
Against
Individuals

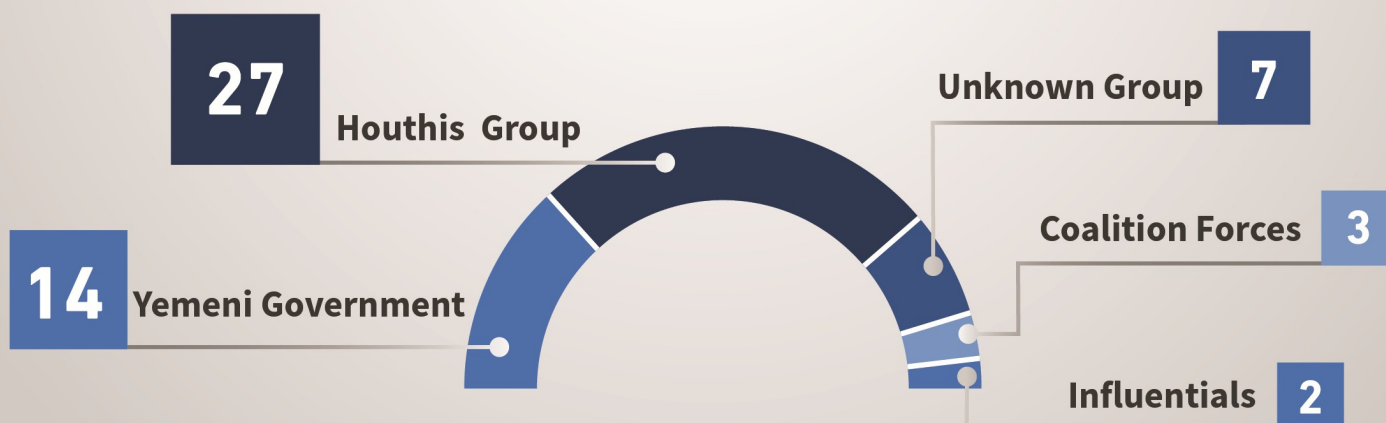
6
Against
Institutions



Violations Types



Violations Responsibilities



Violations Areas



Types of Violation

The report recorded during the first half of this year (53) violations cases against media freedoms, (47) cases of violation were against individuals (journalists and activists in social media) by 88% of the total recorded violations scaling from (8) cases of killing, (5) cases of attempted murdering, (6) cases of injuries, (5) cases of abduction, (6) cases of assault, (7) cases of arrest, one case of attempted attack, (3) cases of threat, (5) cases of storming and looting of the media staffs' houses, one case of the incitement, and (6) cases of violation against media institutions by 12%, varied between the storming, burning and targeting media organizations.



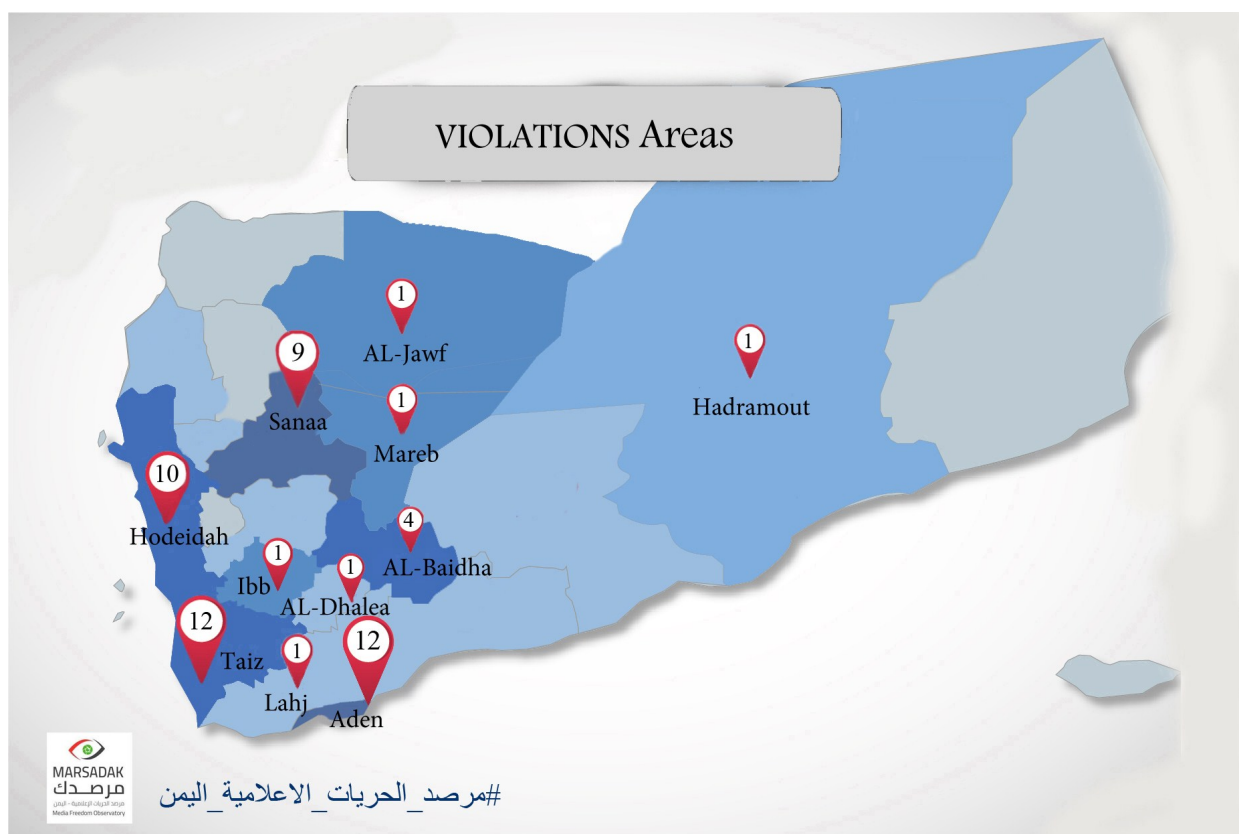
RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIOLATIONS

Houthi Militants is the most offender parties in violating the freedom of the media, reaching the number of (27) violation cases, however (14) violation cases were committed by parties belonging to the Yemeni government, while (7) violations are carried out by unknown persons. Furthermore, there are (3) violations by the Arab-led coalition forces and two violations committed by influential individuals.



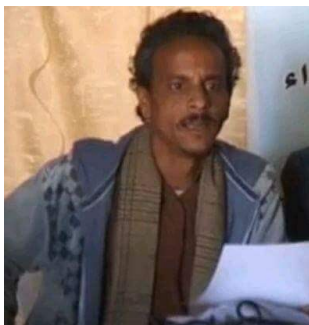
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF VIOLATIONS AREAS

Different regions in Yemen have witnessed many cases of violations against the media, where the report monitored 12 cases of violation in Aden city, and 12 cases of violations in Taiz, 10 cases of violation in Hodeida, 9 cases in Sana'a, 4 cases of violation in Al-baydha'a, and one case of a violation in Al-Jawf, Hadramout, Al-Dalie, Lahj, Mareb and Ibb each.



CASES OF KILLING

The number of killing cases during the first half of this year was 8 death cases distributed between the city of Hodeida 4 Cases, 3 cases in Taiz city, and one case in Albaydha'a, the 16% of the total violations of the media was while the media staff were doing their work and coverage of the battles and events in Yemen.



Among the number of killings during the first half of this year was the death of journalist Anwar Al-Rukn which was considered to be one of the worst violations and inhumane practices against journalists. Al-Houthi Militants kidnapped him from Taiz city and imprisoned him in Al-Saleh City's prison and practiced the worst torture and hunger on him for a year, after his health condition had deteriorated, he was released and he died a week later.



Media correspondent Abdullatif al-Qadri, a reporter for the Balqis channel, was killed by a bullet from a shell fired by al-Houthi militant on a group of journalists in Al-Baydha governorate .



Journalist and photographer Ali Abu al-Hiyya died on 17 May. He was injured by an explosive device that exploded in a car he was using to cover the battles on the western coast of the city of Hodeida, he was evacuated to Aden and his leg was disrupted. As his health deteriorated he was sent to have a medical treatment in Egypt, but died and was buried there.



In January of this year, Mohammed al-Qudsi, the correspondent of the Balqis channel, and media photographer Osama Salam al-Maqtari were killed during their coverage of the Houthi shelling over the Ma'afer area and the battles at the eastern zone in Taiz city.

On February 10th, coalition aircraft killed the Alsahat TV channel correspondent Abdullah Al-Montaser while he was covering the battles in Hodeida city.

Cases of Injuries

The number of injury cases during the first half of this year was 6 cases caused by Al-Houthi Militants, distributed to 3 cases in Al-Bayda city, and 3 cases in Taiz city.



Journalist Bashir Aklan was exposed on January 22 to a head injury during his coverage of the events in Al-Khayamy district in Taiz governorate, as a result of the shelling of the Houthi Militants. After his health deteriorated, Prime Minister Ahmed Obaid Bin Dajr gave an order to send him abroad for medical treatment.



A number of journalists in April: Dhiyab al-Shater, correspondent of Yemen Youth channel, Khalil al-Taweel, correspondent of Bilqis TV channel, and Walid al-Jaouri, photographer of Yemen Youth TV channel, were injured by a number of shrapnel from a shell fired by al-Houthi Militants on journalists while they were covering battles in Kania area. Dhiyab al-Shater was severely injured and was transferred to the hospital and remained unconscious and unable to speak, then he was transferred to Jordan for a medical treatment and conducted a number of operations.



On January 27, journalist Azzam al-Zubairi was hit by shrapnel from a mortar shell while covering the battles between Houthi Militants and Yemeni government forces supported by the popular resistance in the neighborhood of the Protocol Camp east of Taiz city.



Media cameraman Hudhayfah al-Athuri was wounded on January 28 by a shell fragment fired by al-Houthi gunmen while covering battles between the army and al-Houthi militants east of Taiz city, where the photographer lost some of his left foot functions. One of the shrapnel was lodged in his left foot under the knee this led to a total obstruction of the spinal nerve with a partial damage to the spine nerve above the knee.

Abductions

The number of kidnapping cases recorded by the Observatory during the first half of this year was (5) cases: (3) cases in Sanaa city and one case in each of Taiz and Hodeida.



Yemeni journalist at Al-yemen Al-yawm Ahmed wahaas was kidnapped on June 14 by the Houthi Militants in the capital city while heading from his house into one of the market at the 30th street in Shamlan, he was released after six days of kidnapping.

Houthi gunmen also kidnapped journalist Abad al-Jaradi, while doing his work and preparing for the launch of the annual summer sports camp.



On June 21st, Houthi gunmen raided the home of journalist Qasim al-Baysi in Hodeida, and took him to a prison in the city and released him a day after his abduction, the contents of the journalist's house was tampered with and the children and women were frightened.



On June 22, gunmen also besieged the house of journalist Sami Noman in Mawia District transferred him to Al-Saleh city's prison; later he was released after five days.



A number of armed men on March 25 kidnapped journalist Rashid Al Haddad from a street in Sana'a and placed him in an prison. The gunmen tracked down the journalist on a Hilux without numbers after leaving the Ministry of Public Works and Roads and taking him to a prison inside a house belonging to the gunmen, he was released two days after his abduction

Other cases



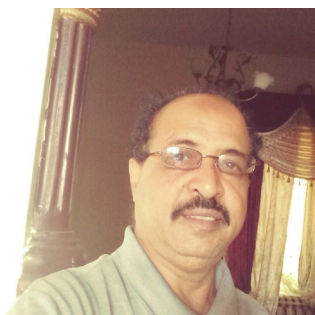
The number of attempted killing during the first half of this year was (5) cases committed by the Houthi Militants as an attempt to target the media team of Alarabia Al-Hadath channel with a shell which fell near the journalists during a live television interview on Alarabia channel in the city of Hodeida, they are Radfan al-Dibis, Abdullah al-Sufi, Saleh al-Dabbis al-Debis Abu Majd and Fikri Munasser.



Al-Houthi Militants in Sana'a capital issued a circular to the government and commercial banks to suspend bank accounts of a number of journalists and media institution, including the deceased journalist Arafat Medabesh, Marwan Damaj, chairman of the Center of Studies and Economic Media Mustafa Nasr and a number of agents of the Ministry of Mass Communication, Suhail TV Channel, Radio Shabab FM and Al-Masdar Newspaper.



The criminal investigation in Aden governorate called on the journalist and the editor of Aden al-Ghad newspaper Fathi Ben-Lazraq for his press writings, the criminal investigation is not authorized to summon journalists, but the press and publications prosecutor solely has the right to summon journalists and prosecute them. Journalist Ben Lazraq revealed on a plot to kill him by one of the leaders of the Transitional Council in Aden.



On June 22, journalist Mohammed al-Lawzi was threatened by a Huthi leader in his area named Hashim al-Huthi, for his writings on social media as he called all parties for peace and stop the war, but he was threatened to stop his writing, otherwise he would be imprisoned and would not see the sun.

VIOLATIONS AGAINST MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS



In March, unknown gunmen stormed and burned the printing presses of the *Candles Foundation* and *Akhbar al-Yawm Newspaper* in Madinah Al-Khadra in Aden governorate. They attacked journalists and employees of the Foundation and injured a number of them in front of everyone in a blatant violation of freedom of the press and expression. *Candles Foundation* Press has asked the authorities for a permit to transfer its equipment outside the city to operate from a safer area out the Aden city, but the authorities refused to issue such a permit..



An unknown people in Aden city stormed the headquarters of the Aden 24 newspaper and looted its contents. In the 17th of February, an unidentified gunmen targeted the headquarter of the eighth day newspaper with a barrage of bullets, which caused damage to offices and devices, and in the 28th of February, an unidentified people target Bandar Aden radio tower with an RPG missile. The radio tower is targeted in the context of the ongoing attempts to terrorize and restrict the media freedom. Those attempts are practiced almost daily against journalists and the media institutions.



At the beginning of January, the security committee in Taiz issued a decision to close the office of Al-Jazeera TV channel in Taiz and prevented its crew from practicing their job claiming that Al-Jazeera is seeking to divide the national unity.

Media Freedom Observatory — Yemen

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The Media Freedom Observatory Platform
is a professional and independent
monitoring and information platform that
contains maps and information on press
violations and freedom of expression
throughout yemen