

REPORT

VIOLATIONS FREEDOMS
MEDIA
YEMEN

MARCH - APRIL

2019

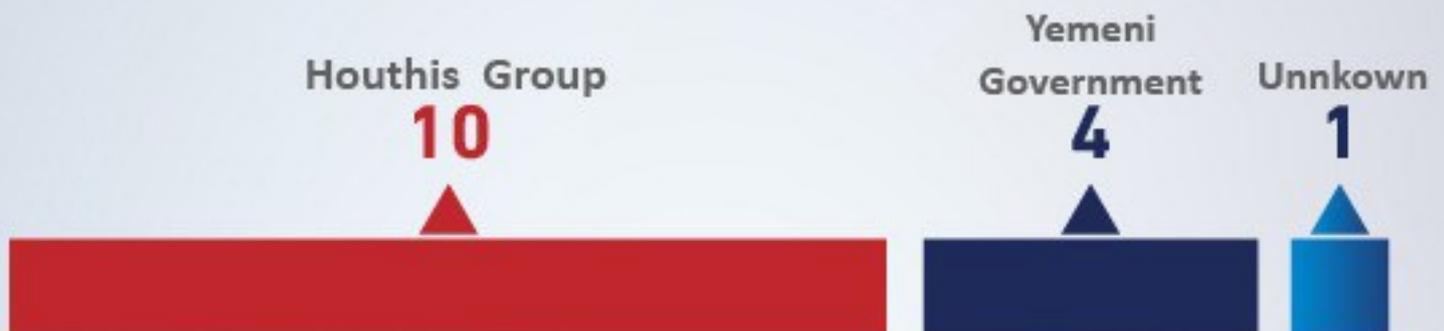


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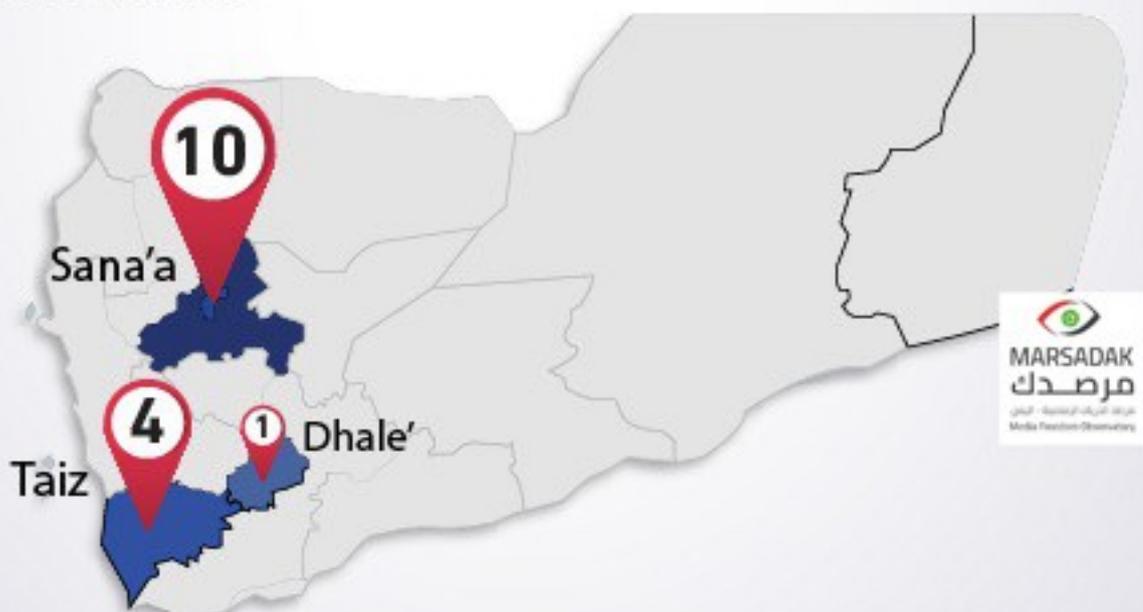
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Introduction:

Abuse of journalists by the conflicting parties in Yemen continues. Press freedom in Yemen goes through the most turbulent season in its history. Journalists are subjected to various kinds of violations, including murder, persecution, and psychological and physical intimidation for practicing their profession and attempting to convey events and truths to the public.

Such practices include the arbitrary Houthi measures of kidnapping, forced disappearances, and inflicting various types of torture against journalists Abdul-Khaliq Imran, Akram Al-Walidi, Tawfiq Al-Mansouri, Hisham Al-Yusufi, Hisham Tarmoum, Haitham Al-Shihab, Hasan Annab, Issam Balghith, Salah Al-Qaedi and Harith Humaid. Moreover, Houthi authorities referred these journalists to the Specialized Criminal Prosecution on charges of collaboration with foreign countries. In April, the Houthi authorities denied them visits by relatives, and increased the number of interrogation sessions. They were also subjected to various forms of intimidation including beating and torture individually and collectively. They were ultimately placed in solitary confinement.

Fearing no accountability or punishment, these parties have multiplied their brutal measures of targeting journalists, including murder, torture and death threats. Such measures are squarely located in the midst of a systematic campaign against journalists, writers and social media activists, especially those who decline to get engaged in mobilization on behalf of a certain party.

The Yemeni Media Freedom Observatory (YMFO) documented 15 cases of violation of media freedom in various Yemeni provinces over the two-month period of March and April 2019. Violations included assaults, threats and arrests.

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.

Types of Violation

In March-April 2019, 15 cases of violation of media freedom were documented. These violations targeted individuals (journalists and social media activists).

Violation included 12 assaults, a single threat, a single arrest, and 1 other case.



Responsibility for Violations

The Houthis top the list of perpetrators of violations against journalists in March and April, claiming 10 cases of violation, followed by parties related to the internationally recognized government in whose dominions 4 cases were perpetrated. Another single case against unidentified perpetrators was documented.

Violations Responsibilities



Geographical distribution of Violations

Various governorates witnessed violations of press freedom. The majority of cases (10 cases) of violations were documented in Sana'a, whereas 4 cases were documented in Taiz and one in Al-Dhali'.

Violations Areas



Implications of the Salaries Crisis

Since early 2015, violations and arbitrary practices against journalists have intensified. The YMFO has recorded 2,041 cases of abuse against journalists and media institutions, including 43 cases of murder of journalists and media activists. Several journalists were kidnapped and inhumanely tortured. More than 400 journalists have been displaced and sought safer havens both inside Yemen and abroad. Yemen has also ranked 168 in a press freedom index of 180 countries.



About 1,000 journalists and other staff of official media institutions experience difficult living conditions because of the salary crisis which started in late 2016, when the Houthis ceased to pay salaries to all civil servants on the pretext of financial deficit.

Large media institutions whose staff have gone unpaid include Yemen TV, Yemen Radio, Saba News Agency and Al-Thawra newspaper. Employees of these media institutions appeal to the internationally recognized government to pay their salaries, just as it pays some other institutions.

Assaults

Over the two-month period March-April 2019, 12 cases of assaults targeting individuals (journalists and social media activists) were documented. Ten cases were documented in Sana'a, and a single in each of Taiz and Al-Dhali'.

On 8 April, cameraman Mus'ab al-Qadasi was attacked by gunmen in the Bab al-Kabeer area in Taiz while covering the march in the city. The assailants confiscated his camera memory.

Al-Qadasi is a freelancer who covers events and activities for several websites and newspapers.



On March 28, the Education Office director in Ka'taba, Abdulbasit Al-Marih, assaulted correspondent of Yemen Youth Channel in Al-Dhali', Abdulaziz Al-Laith, while the latter was covering events in the Beit Al-Shawkani Front in Qa'taba, west of Al-Dali'.



Assaults

Ten journalists who have been kidnapped for nearly five years in the Political Security prison of Houthi authorities in Sana'a were beaten and tortured individually and collectively in April 2019. They were placed in solitary confinement and denied visits by relatives.

Kidnapped journalists who were tortured are Abdulkhaliq Imran, Akram Al-Walidi, Tawfiq Al-Mansouri, Hisham Al-Yusufi, Hisham Tarmoum, Haitham Al-Shihab, Hasan Annab, Issam Balghith, Salah Al-Qaedi and Harith Humaid.

Recently they were referred to the Specialized Criminal Prosecution where they are being tried on charges of collaboration with foreign countries following four years of enforced disappearance.



Threat Cases

Mohamed Amin, editor of Al-Mushahid Net, was intimidated by and received threats from several soldiers in Taiz.

Armed soldiers on a patrol vehicle intimidated his family. They made several parades in front of his residence, displaying their weapons. They frequented the place more than once, spending more than half an hour in front of his residence each time before leaving the place without explaining the reasons for such practices.



Arrests

Al-Masdar Online reporter in Taiz, Asim al-Khadhmi, was arrested on April 3 in Taiz. He was detained by the escort of the commander of the special security forces, Col. Jamil Aklan, who gave orders to his escorts to arrest the journalist at the Khalifa General Hospital, where he was detained for more than four hours.



Other Cases

The YMFO received a report from Abu Dhabi TV correspondent in Taiz, Faisal Al-Thabhani, stating that gunmen tried to break into his house in Taiz. They fired shots at the house and insulted his sisters who were in the house at the time.



Media Freedom Observatory — Yemen

[Www.Marsadak.org](http://www.Marsadak.org)



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