



2018

REPORT

Violations Freedoms Media



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Introduction:

Another black year for the Yemeni press has closed. For the fourth year in a row, Yemeni journalists face a campaign targeting their right to life and work, and even their right to live safely among their families after many of them gave up their press profession.

The most dangerous development was the escalation of violations by all parties, albeit to varying degrees. While Houthi Group (Ansar Allah) continues to top the list of killings and other forms of violations, a case of murder of a journalist was recorded in the territories controlled by the internationally recognized Yemeni government, and this is the first killing of a journalist in those dominions since the outbreak of the war. This development is a serious indicator of the future of Yemeni journalists, especially as hundreds of journalists had to flee from areas controlled by the Houthi Group to areas controlled by the government or parties under its influence.

Journalism is still the most risky profession in Yemen. Unjustifiably, journalists are vulnerable to murder, persecution, torture and attacks. Over the last four years, 43 journalists and social media activists were killed, a situation which calls for a unified effort by all parties concerned with freedom of expression, democracy and human rights. It is unreasonable that Yemeni journalists face this extremely dangerous state alone. In 2018, SEMC-affiliated Media Freedoms Observatory in Yemen documented 12 cases of murder committed by the Houthi Group and Saudi-led coalition fighters and other unidentified perpetrators. Given this reality, Yemen is classified as a high-risk country in terms of press freedom.

The Media Freedom Observatory renews its call to all parties to stop journalist-targeting campaigns and other forms of intimidation such as accusations of treason. It also stresses the need to hold the perpetrators accountable as those violations amount to serious crimes such that will not go unpunished.

Mostafa Nasr

Director, SEMC

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 monitors 144 violations against both individuals (journalists and social media activists) and media institutions (storming and burning of media institutions).

Documented cases were concentrated in Sana'a, Taiz, Aden, Al-Dali', Hodeida, Al-Baidha, Ibb, Sa'ada, Hadramout, Tamar, Marib, Hajja, Lahj and Al-Jouf governorates.

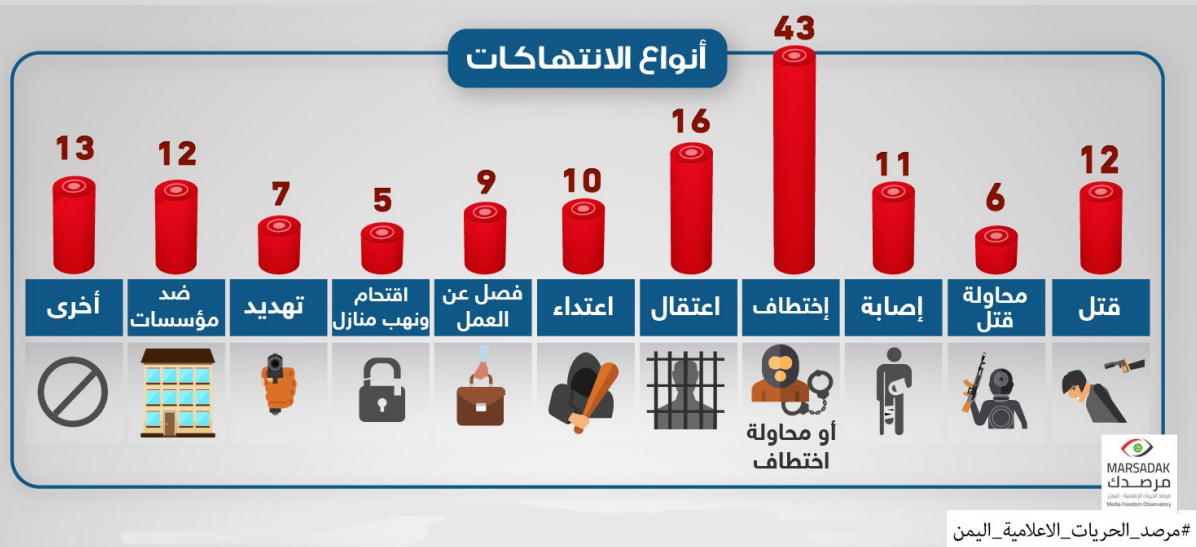
The report documents 132 cases of targeting individuals (journalists and social media activists), including 12 murder cases, 43 kidnappings and attempted kidnapping, 11 injury cases, 6 attempted murders, 16 arrests, 10 assaults, 9 dismissal cases, 7 threats, 5 incursions and looting of journalist homes, and 13 other violations.

The report also documents 12 cases of violations against media institutions, including closure, shelling, storming and various assaults. The most prominent of these was the storming and burning of the Al-Shomou' Printing Press in Aden and the bombing of –Hodeida Radio Station in Bajil by the Saudi-led coalition fighters.

Types of Violations

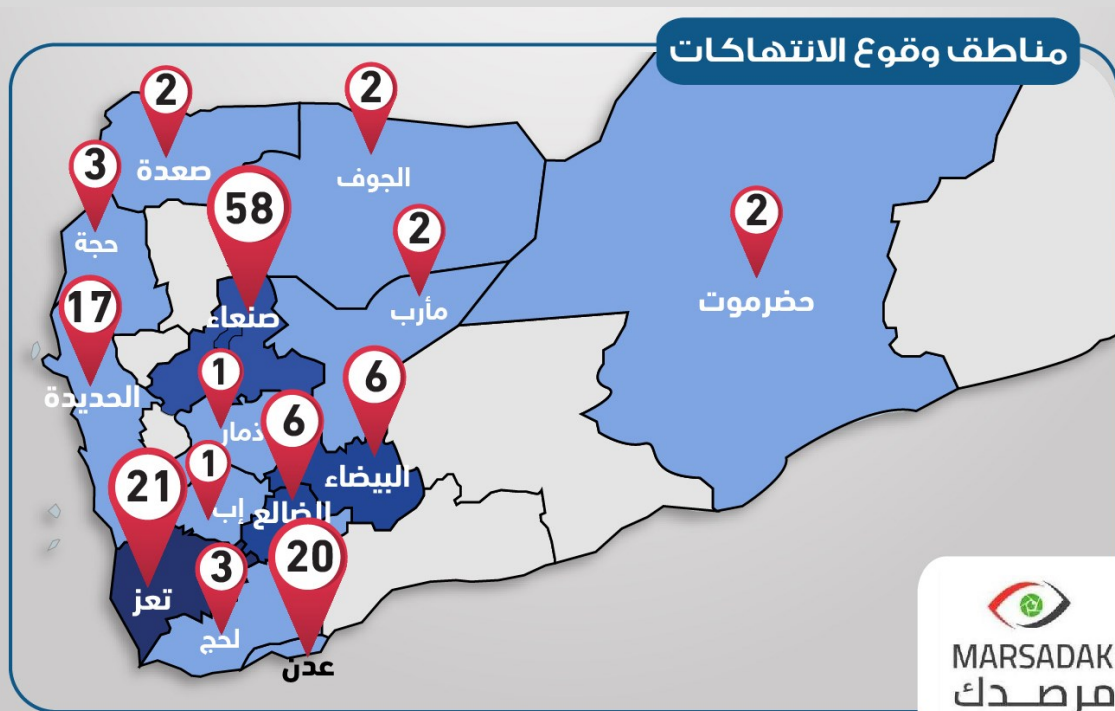
The report records 144 violations; journalists and social media activists were targeted in 132 cases (91% of the total), while 12 cases (9%) targeted media institutions.

Violations were distributed as follows: 12 murder cases, 43 kidnappings and attempted kidnapping, 11 injury cases, 6 attempted murders, 16 arrests, 10 assaults, 9 dismissal cases, 7 threats, 5 incursions and looting of journalist homes, 12 cases of targeting media institutions, and 13 other violations.



Geographic Distribution of Violations

The various provinces witnessed violations of media freedom. Violations were distributed as follows: 58 cases in the capital Sana'a, 21 in Taiz, 20 in Aden, and 17 violations in Hodeida, 6 in each of Al-Dali' and Al-Baida. The remaining number of cases is distributed among Hajja, Lahj, Sa'ada, Al-Jawf, Marib, Ibb and Tamar governorates.

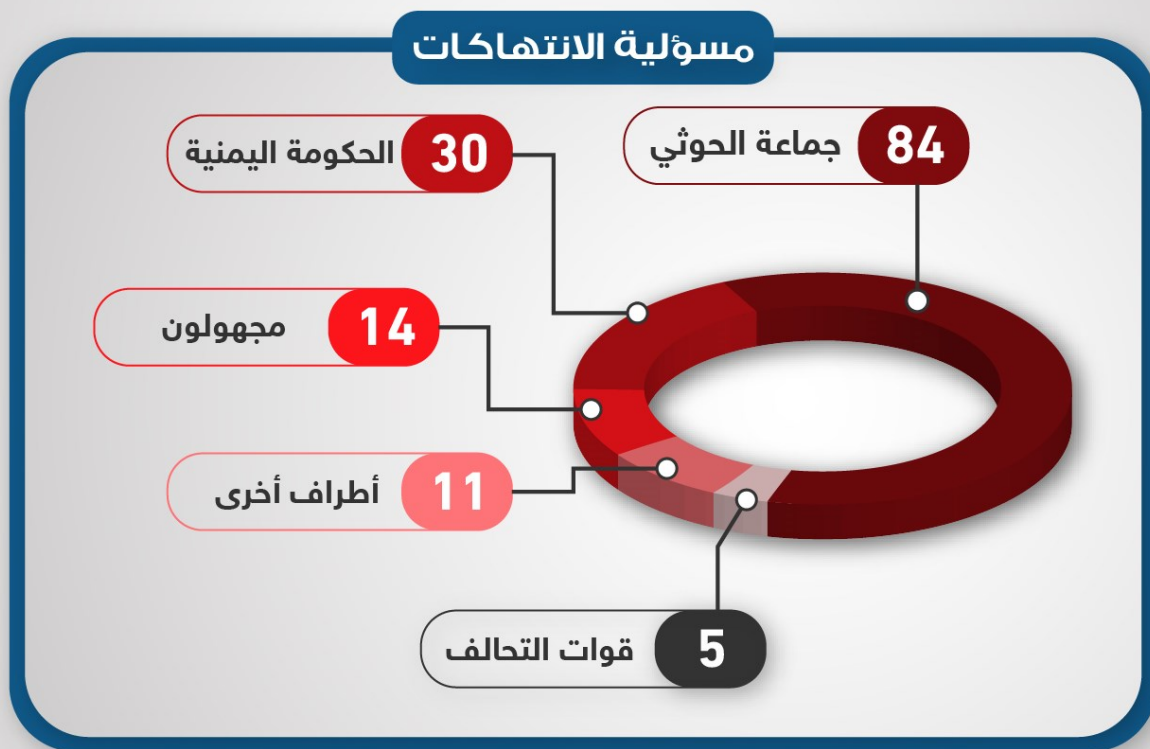


#مرصد_الحريات_الاعلامية_اليمن



Responsibility for violations:

Al-Houthi Group (Ansar Allah) continues to top the list of perpetrators of violations against journalists in Yemen, claiming 84 violations. The Yemeni government comes next, with 30 violations committed by the government or in its dominions. The remaining number of cases were as follows: 14 violations by unidentified perpetrators, 5 by Saudi-led coalition forces, and 11 violations by other parties.



Killings

A total of 12 cases of killing were documented in 2018. Taiz and Hodeida claimed 4 cases each. Two cases were documented in Al-Dali' and a single case in Sa'ada.



Balquis Channel reporter, Abdullah al-Qadiri, was fatally wounded by shrapnel of a projectile fired by the Houthis at a group of journalists who were covering clashes in the Qana district in al-Baidha governorate.



In January 2019, Balquis Channel reporter, Mohammed al-Qudsi, and cameraman Osama Salam al-Maqtari were killed while covering Houthi bombing of Al-Ma'afer and the battles in the eastern front of Taiz.



Journalist and cameraman, Ali Abu al-Haya died on May 17, 2018, after he had been fatally wounded in a roadside bomb explosion that hit his car while in his way to cover battles in the Hodeida. He was admitted to a hospital in Aden where his leg was amputated. As his health condition worsened, he was transferred for treatment abroad, but he died in Cairo where he was buried.



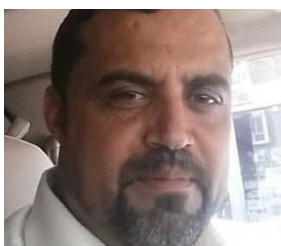
A team of the Houthi-run Yemen Satellite Channel was targeted in an Saudi-led coalition airstrike, while shooting in Bajil of Hodeida governorate. Two member of the team, Abdullah Al-Najjar and Mohammad Nasir, were killed in the attack.



Reporter, Abdullah al-Qadiri, a reporter for the Bilqis channel, was fatally wounded by shrapnel of a projectile fired by the Houthis at a group of journalists who were covering clashes in the Qana district in al-Baidha governorate.



Cameraman Mohammed al-Tahiri was killed by unidentified gunmen on September 3, while helping a wounded person near Muzaffar Hospital in Taiz. The journalist was buried next day, and no investigation was conducted.



Editor-in-chief of Al-'Ata 'newspaper, Zaki al-Saqladi, was killed by unidentified gunmen on October 5, when his car was showered with bullets in the southern town of Al-Dhali'



On February 10, al-Sahaat Satellite Channel correspondent, Abdullah Al-Montaser, was killed in the town of Hays, Hodeida governorate, in an Arab coalition airstrike, while covering battles between Yemeni government troops and Houthi forces in the governorate.



On August, 30, 2018, Saba News Agency Director, Ahmed Al-Hamzi, was killed in Al-Baidha in an explosion of a mortar projectile fired by the Houthi militia, while covering events in Qaniya, Al-Baidha. Al-Hamzi had been injured a month before his death in the same spot while covering clashes. Targeting of journalists in Yemen is on the rise, while in international law targeting of journalists is considered a war crime and a crime against humanity.



Yemen Shabab Channel cameraman, Issa Al-Nu'mi was killed on August 1, 2018 in a mine explosion while covering the battles in Abwab Al-Hadeed, Alib Front in Sa'ada governorate. The mine was laid by the Houthis.

The 33-year-old Issa is from the Wadi Mor region, Hodeida governorate. The Houthis kidnapped one of his brothers while on his way to Marib to follow up Issa's stipend. He has not been released to date.

Injuries

A total of 11 cases of injury were document: 4 cases in Al-Baidha town, and 3 cases in the city of Taiz, and one case in each of Hajja, Hodeida, Al-Dali' and Sa'ada.



In April, a number of journalists were wounded by shrapnel from a shell fired by the Houthis at journalists who were covering the battles in the Qana district of Al-Baidha governorate. Wounded journalists were Thiab al-Shater of Yemen Shabab Channel, Khalil al-Taweel of Balquis Channel, and cameraman Walid al-Jaouri. Al-Shater went into a tumor while in hospital, Then he was transferred to Jordan for treatment and underwent several operations. The Suhail TV cameraman Salih al-Mursi was also injured by a landmine laid by the Houthis in Al-Dali' governorate. Yemen Satellite Channel cameraman Majid Al-Ghuli was wounded in his right while covering battles in the Ahim Triangle, Haradh.



On January 22, Bashir Aklan was seriously injured in his head while covering activities in the Khayyami camp, Taiz governorate as Houthis shelled the area. On January 27, Azzam Al-Zubairi was wounded by a mortar shell shrapnel while covering the battles in Taiz.

On January 28, cameraman Hudhayfa al-Athuri was wounded by a shrapnel of a projectile fired by Houthi militants, while covering battles to the east of Taiz. Al-Athuri lost some of his left foot functions as a shrapnel was lodged in his left leg, causing a total obstruction of the spinal nerve and a partial damage to the supine nerve above the knee. Cameraman Abdulwahid al-Shouki was wounded and had his left leg amputated. He was injured in an explosion of a landmine laid by the Houthis in Baqim, Saada governorate.

Kidnappings

Forty three kidnappings and attempted kidnapping were documented by the Media Freedom Observatory in 2018. The majority of these cases were carried out in Sana'a (32 cases), while 6 cases of kidnapping in Hodeida were documented. A single case was documented in each of Taiz, Tamar, Hajja and Marib.



On June 14, Ahmad Wahhas was kidnapped by the Houthis in the Shamlan area and was released six days later. Sports journalist, Obad al-Jaradi, was kidnapped by Houthi gunmen while participating in arrangements for launching the Annual Summer Sports Camp.

On June 21, Houthi militants raided the home of Qassim al-Bu'aisi in Hodeida. Al-Bu'aisi was detained, but released next day by the militants who had tampered with the contents of his home and terrorized children and women.



Journalist Sami Nu'man was kidnapped from his home in the Mawiya District and detained Al-Saleh City Prison. He was released five days later.

On March 25, Journalist Rashid Al-Haddad was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen in Sana'a. On August 16, journalist Kamal Al-Shawush was also kidnapped by Houthi gunmen from a cafe in Hodeida. Al-Shawush whereabouts were unknown during his detention. He was released 20 days later.



On October 25, Houthi gunmen kidnapped 20 journalists who were covering a press conference on fighting hatred and incitement to violence in Yemeni media.

The Houthi gunmen stormed the venue of the conference and detained the 20 journalists in the hotel for about an hour, before more cars and military personnel arrived to take them to the Intelligence (National Security) Prison where they were forced to sign undertakings not to attend such 'unlicensed' events.

Among the kidnapped journalists were former Chairman of the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate, Abdalbari Taher, Ashraf al-Rifi, Adel Abdulmughni, Mohammed Shamsan, Ma'een Al-Najri, Zakaria al-Husami, Mohammed al-Jilani, Saleh al-Orami, Wael Hizam, Muhid Jahlan, Murad Mohammed, Abdulaziz Hussein, Alauddin Al-Shallali, Iyad Mohammed, Nabil al-Shara'bi, Muhammad Sharaf al-Din, Badr al-Qubati and Abboud al-Sufi.

Arrests

Sixteen cases of arrest were documented: 6 cases in Aden, 2 in Hadramout, 3 in Al-Dali' and 2 cases in each of Lahj and Taiz, and one case in Marib.



A number of journalists were arrested by Security forces in Aden. In March, a number of correspondents were arrested while covering the inauguration of Queen Balquis Airlines in Aden. The arrested journalists were Yemen Youth Channel reporter, Adam Fahd, cameraman Lutfi Ba Khuwar and Balquis Channel correspondent Adam Al-Hosami, and Yemen Satellite Channel correspondent, Sadiq Al-Ratibi, and were released a few hours later, as a number of journalists conducted a sit-in in the airport area, refusing to leave the airport before the release of detained journalists. Editor-in-chief of Aden Al-Ghad newspapers, Fathi ben Lazraq, was arrested by so-called security ring militants in Mansoura, Aden on July 3, and was detained for a few hours.



On Feb. 21, t journalist Awad Kashmim, was kidnapped by the security forces in Hadhramout. for criticizing the situation in the governorate and for writing about the military campaign against al-Qaeda.



On July 24, Haikal Al-Ariki, a journalist, was arrested by Abu Al -Abbas group militants in Taiz, while performing his job. He was released two days later.

Other cases



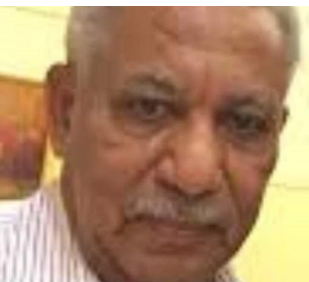
The Houthi group in Sana'a distributed a circular to local authorities and commercial banks ordering the freezing of the accounts of a number of journalists and media institutions. Among the journalists affected by the circular were late Arafat Mudabesh, Marwan Dammaj, SEMC director - Mustafa Nasr, and a number of Deputy Ministers of Information. Media outlets included Suhail Satellite Channel, Shabab FM Radio and Al-Masdar newspaper.



Houthi gunmen stormed the home of the press secretary of the late president Saleh, Ahmed al-Sufi. In Ibb, Houthi gunmen stormed the house of Suhail Channel correspondent in Ibb, Abdul-Ilah al-Bouri. They also stormed the residence of journalist Aziz al-Khamiri, and looted equipment, including several cameras, a laptop and an audio unit.



Journalists Abd al-Raqib al-Hudyani, Firas al-Yafi'e, Jihad Mohsen and Awad Kashmim were targeted in an incitement campaign by a news website (Hadramout Post). The website published inciting news that could endanger the journalists' lives.



The UAE Al-Ittihad newspaper refused to hand over financial dues to journalist Ahmad al-Jabali and denied his intellectual rights of more than 20 years.

Al-Hayat newspaper also refused to hand over financial dues of journalist Ali Salem for an accumulative period of six months after he was suspended from work.

Violations against media organizations:



In March, unidentified gunmen stormed and burned the headquarters of Al-Shomou' Printing Press and Akhbar Al-Youm newspaper in the Green City, Aden. A number of journalists and other staff members of the former were assaulted and wounded. Security forces in Aden denied Al-Shomouh printing press permission to transfer equipment outside the city.



On September 16, Hodeida Radio Station in Bajil was targeted in a Saudi-led airstrike. Broadcasting was interrupting and three service staff members were killed.



In a similar vein, unidentified gunmen assaulted the headquarters of Al-Yawm Al-Thamin newspaper on February 17. The assailants showered the building with a barrage of bullets, causing damage of offices and equipment. On February 28, the Bandar Aden Radio Tower was targeted by an RPG missile fired by unidentified assailants. This incident comes in the context of the ongoing attempts to terrorize and restrict media freedoms. Such attacks on journalists and media outlets are carried out on an almost daily basis.



In January, Security Committee in Taiz issued an order of closure of Al-Jazeera office in the city, and stopping Al-Jazeera office team from work on the pretext of inciting discord in the ranks of the national front.



Media Freedom Observatory — Yemen

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

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