



The Syrian Center for Journalistic Freedoms

SCJF المركز السوري للحرية الصحفية
رابطة الصحفيين السوريين

Syria

Prison Of Journalism



Violations Committed
Against Media Professionals
in Syria

The 2021 Annual Report



www.syja.org

freedom@syja.org

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The Syrian Center for Journalistic Freedoms is an administrative organization affiliated with the Syrian Journalists Association, aiming to defend journalistic freedoms in Syria. It works on documenting violations against media professionals and -centers, including those that occur against Syrian media professionals outside Syria. Hence, covering reports are issued, in addition to issuing press releases on various occasions.

SCJF was established on June 1st, 2014, This to pursue the work of the Journalistic Freedoms Committee of the Syrian Journalists Association. SJA was founded in February 2012, and works on documenting violations against media in Syria.

The SJA is a non-governmental organization registered under French law of associations.
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THE SYRIAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION  رابطة الصحفيين السوريين

**This report is issued in conjunction with
The tenth anniversary of the founding of the Syrian Journalists
Association, February 2012
And with the anniversary of the start of the Syrian revolution in
2011**

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executive summary

Since its foundation in February 2012, Syrian Journalists Association **SJA** has been documenting many violations that take place against Media and journalists in Syria. Later in the same year, the committee of journalistic freedoms started in June to issue monthly reports explaining those violations.

The Syria Center for Journalistic Freedoms **SCJF** has been founded by SJA in June 2014. It took the responsibility of documentations, and publishing monthly, yearly and semi yearly reports, along with specific occasions reports, for example Women's day report.

The data that was filed and audited by the center included 1421 violations against Media between the beginning of Syrian revolution in 2011 till the end of 2021 which has witnessed 68 violations.

The people in **SCJF** totally believed that it's the center's duty to document the violations against journalists, defend their freedom, try to protect their future rights and repair the damage they suffered, and make sure that criminals wouldn't go on without punishment, in order to achieve a free and independent Media as a part of justice and equality in the future of Syria.

Although there have been a lot of difficulties getting and verifying the information, we make sure in **SCJF** after we get notifications either from the

journalist him/herself or from his/her relatives or close friends, that we go through researching, monitoring and contacting many sources before publishing the information, then keep updating the news through different sources.

The definition of who exactly are journalists or citizen journalists that have been facing violations is a very important point to which **SCJF** is committed, including specifying the military journalists and other criterias that correspond with legal and international standards of documenting Media violations.

According to these standards, we don't only document violations against professional journalists, but also those against citizen journalists and news service providers on whom different Media institutions and outlets have depended to get information of what's going on inside Syria.

Media categories that have faced violations were not only male journalists, but also female journalist, institution and centers, military journalists, and foreign journalists.

Violations against female journalists were the less comparing to other categories, whereas the number of violations against male journalists is the highest. This comes due to dangerous nature of Media ambient in Syria that made numbers of female journalists very little comparing to numbers of male journalists.

It's important to mention that **SCJF** added to its data those violations committed by Democratic Union Party PYD and Syrian Democratic Forces SDF which are practically a part of PYD.

We conclude concerning the most important criteria that the center follows in its work:

1- Media Victims: The Syrian Center for Press Freedoms documents the violations against media professionals in Syria, regardless of their nationalities, gender, race, sect, the entity they work for, or the perpetrator, in addition to documenting attacks against Syrian media professionals abroad. The same applies to violations against offices, media centers, and institutions. Also, the center does not publish any violation if the victim or his family so requests.

2- The occurrence of the violation during the media work: The Syrian Center for Press Freedoms documents the violations that occur against media professionals during their media work, whether they are direct or indirect targets.

3- Media professionals involved in armed conflict: SCJF does not document the assault committed against media professionals involved in armed conflict.

4- The media professional in the armed forces: SCJF documents the violations committed against the journalists of the armed forces, provided they are not involved in armed action, according to the previous criterion.

Syria: The prison of journalism

The year 2021 was not different from the previous years. It was full of proofs concerning the riskiness linked to work in the Media field, and the worst repression in the world against Media workers as it looks.

We in **SCJF** being a part of **SJA** could document plenty of violations that allow us to describe Syria as a huge journalism prison with several jailers as a realistic description.

The difference between the painful obvious and continuous suffering journalism in Syria till present and other parts of the world is that all the parts who controlled separated areas of Syria geography dealt with Media in the same way, they all wanted to monopolize and use Media to be their tools to Perpetuate tyranny and authoritarianism. It seems that all tormentors are almost alike, they all fear free word and their policy is to

make people believe what they want them to get.

Their ways don't stop at pursuing anyone who publishes what they don't approve, it goes to control all the Media environment including any union or institution they did not establish according to their standards. They simply won't allow free professional or independent Media.

This would not be all, these authorities insist on lowering all indicators by which media freedom is measured. There is no freedom in obtaining information, nor are there laws and legislations that guarantee the independence of the media or guarantee the freedom of journalists in their work. Any coverage or media activity must go under their consent and with permission of the military or a civilian run by the military.

But despite all these obstacles there are still some who deal with professionalism and honesty of their job, who work hard to convey the truth to public opinion and keep trying to open a window to the light. And for those and also for Syria we dream of, **SJA**, which celebrated its 10th anniversary just a while ago, keeps working on documenting all kinds of violations against media in Syria, advocating the victims of truth and supporting media workers regardless of their diverse identity.

This annual report is only evidence of the association's effort and endeavor to bring the suffering of Syrian journalists to relevant forums with the intent of making a positive impact that will bring change to Syria so that we eventually reach an independent press in a free country.

In this report **SCJF** reviews the violations committed against Media

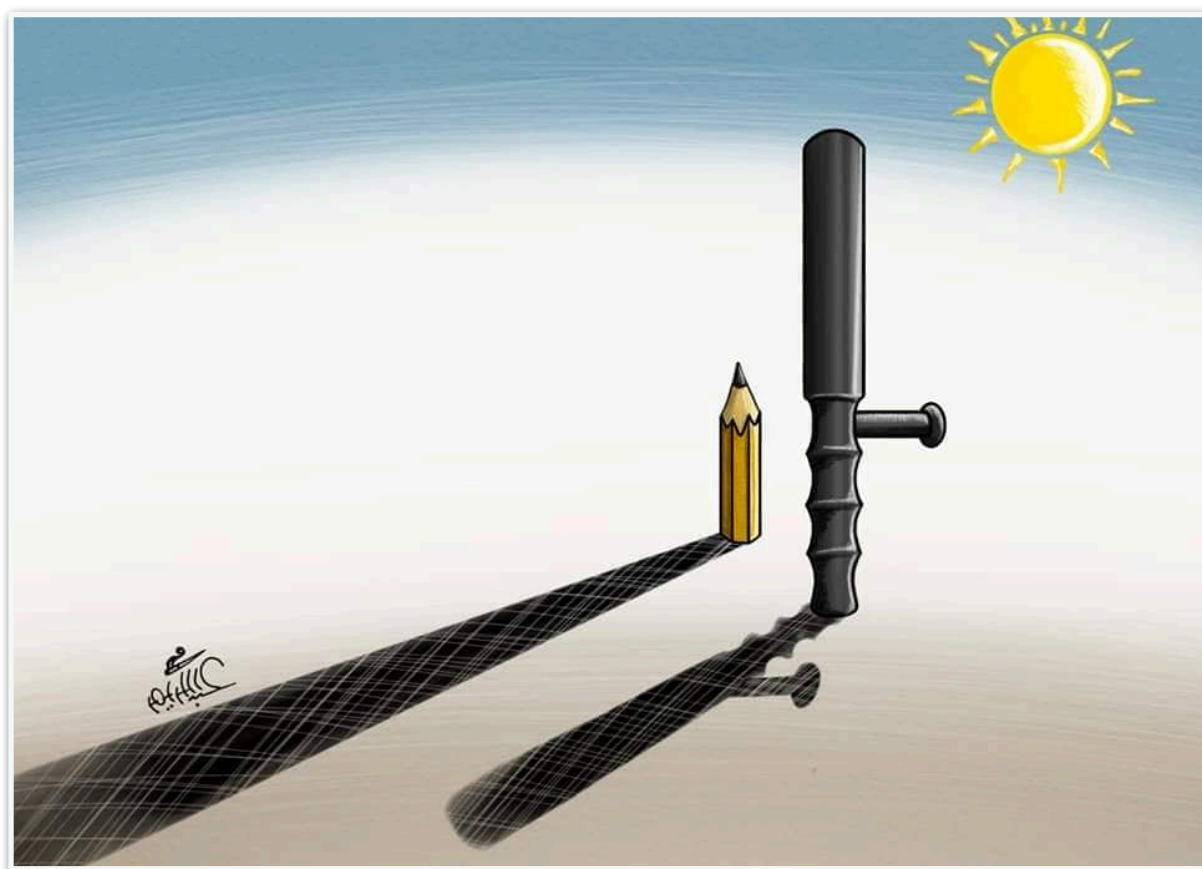
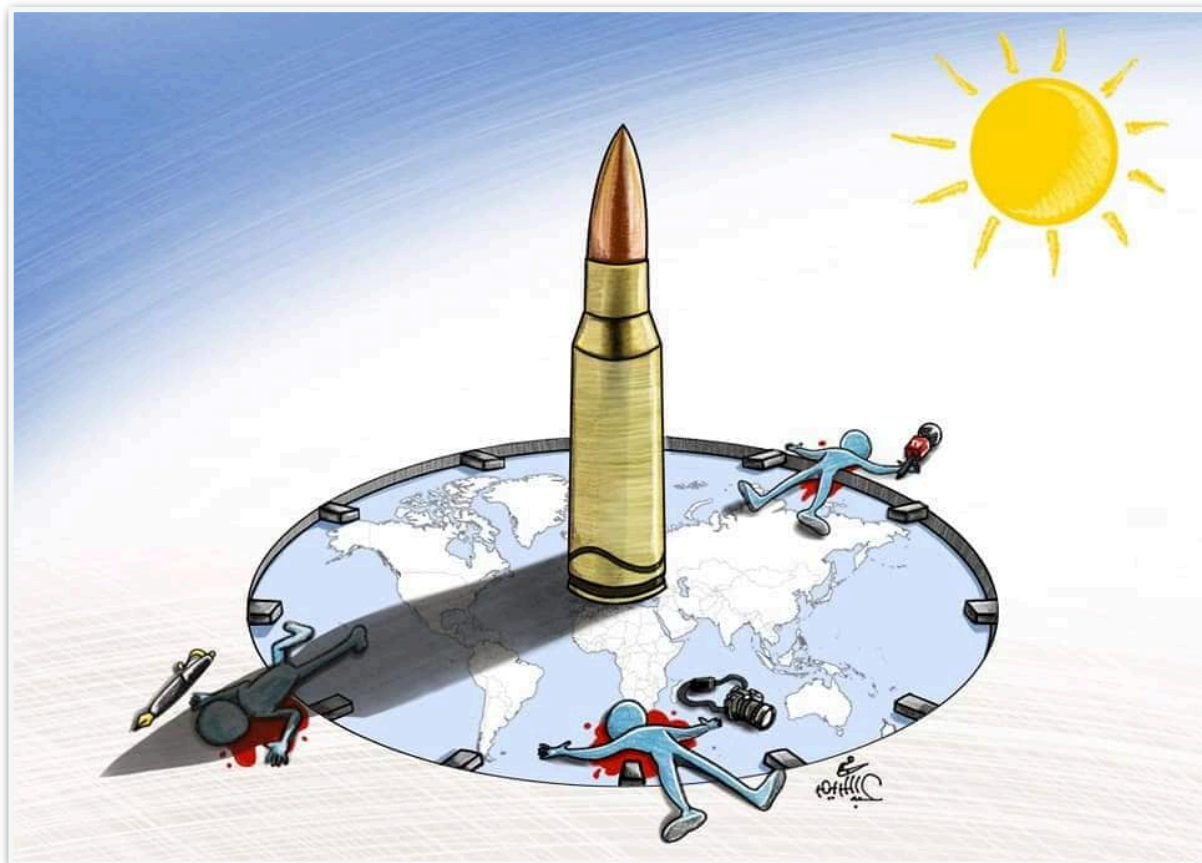
in Syria in the year 2021 in comparison with the previous years. It includes graphs and infographics illustrating those violations in terms of (numbers, gender, geographical distribution and the parties responsible of committing them), as well as the names of the journalists who are still in detention and enforced disappearance.

Thus, we put a reference in the hands of those interested, that enables them to analyze the media reality and developments in Syria, negatively and positively, hoping that this will be a contribution to finding solutions that guarantee stopping or at least minimizing these violations, as well as to remind the whole world of the importance of the principle that Criminals should not go unpunished for their crimes.

15-03-2022

The Syrian Journalists Association

Syrian center for journalistic Freedoms



Presented by colleague Abdel Karim Abdel Karim, a member of the Syrian Journalists Association

Violations against the media

1- In terms of the number

Year 2021: Documenting 68 new violations

Most of the violations committed in 2021 were caused mainly by various restrictions on media freedom, and the intermittent bombing by Syrian regime with its ally Russia was behind the most deadly violations against media professionals.

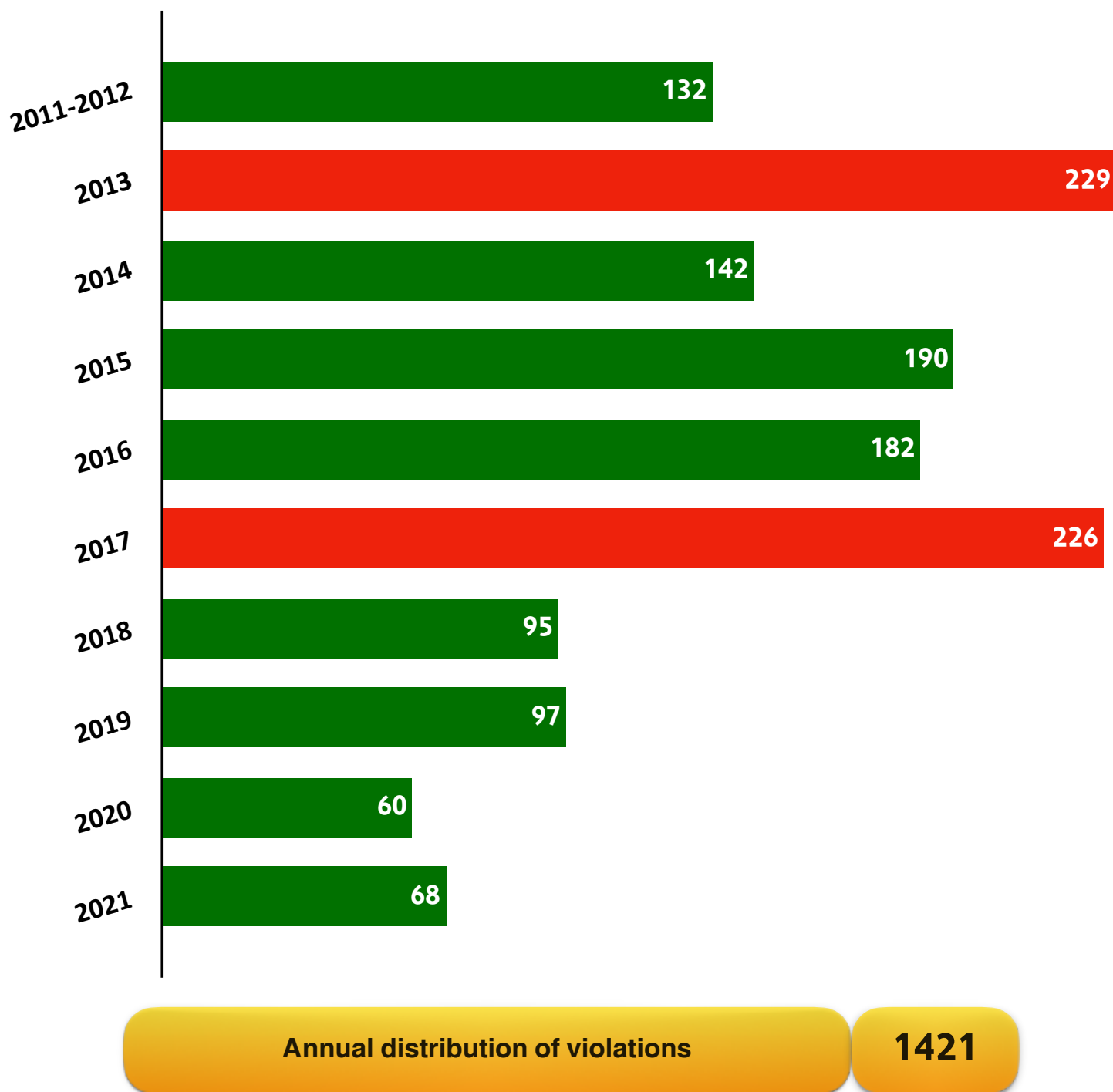
Numbers of documented violations increased

In comparison with 2020, the number of documented violations registered by **SCJF** of **SJA** is increased to 68, one of them was committed at the beginning of 2020 but documented by the center after it was recognized and fit the necessary standards.

The highest number of violations happened in January, September, October, June and July, whereas the months of August, March and May witnessed less violations. There were 41 violations in the second half of the year and 27 in the first half.

With the tally mentioned above, there have been 1421 violations against media and media workers in Syria and abroad documented by the Center since 2011.

Last year had a slight increase in documented violations in comparison with the year before. The least number was in 2020 whereas the highest number 229 violations was in the year 2013.



2- The bodies responsible for committing the violations

In 2021: For the first time, the PYD is in the lead and the opposition is absent

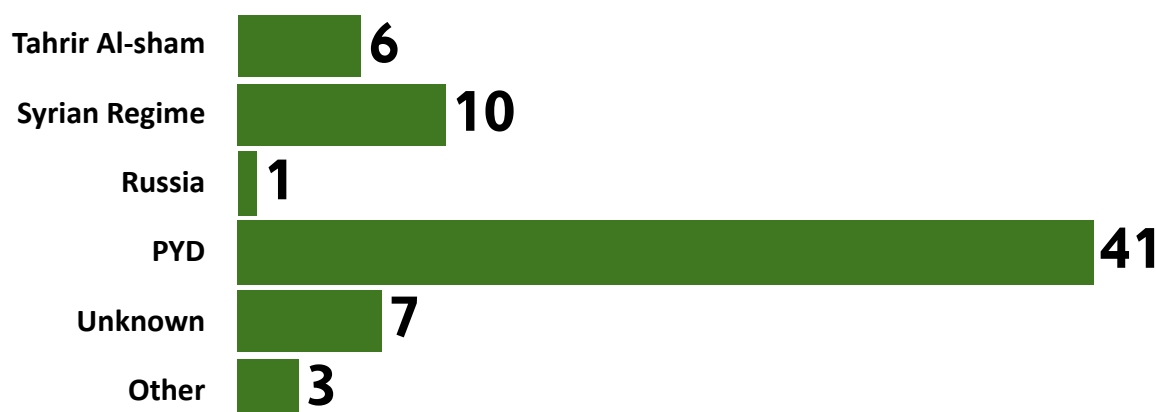
For the first time in previous years, the forces of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) topped the list of those responsible for committing violations during the year 2021, with responsibility for committing 32 violations, in addition to 9 violations committed by the Syrian Democratic Forces, the military arm of the party. In its areas of influence in northeastern Syria, the PYD has tightened the screws on media freedoms.

On the other hand, the Syrian regime and its ally Russia were responsible for committing the most deadly

violations against journalists, as usual. The regime came second with 10 violations, while Russia committed one violation, killing a media person in Idlib.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham came in the 3rd place. It was responsible for committing 6 violations, after it had been at the forefront of violators during the two years earlier.

The Syrian opposition was absent for the first time from the list of violators during the past year, and the center recorded 3 violations outside the country, while the parties responsible for 7 violations were unknown.

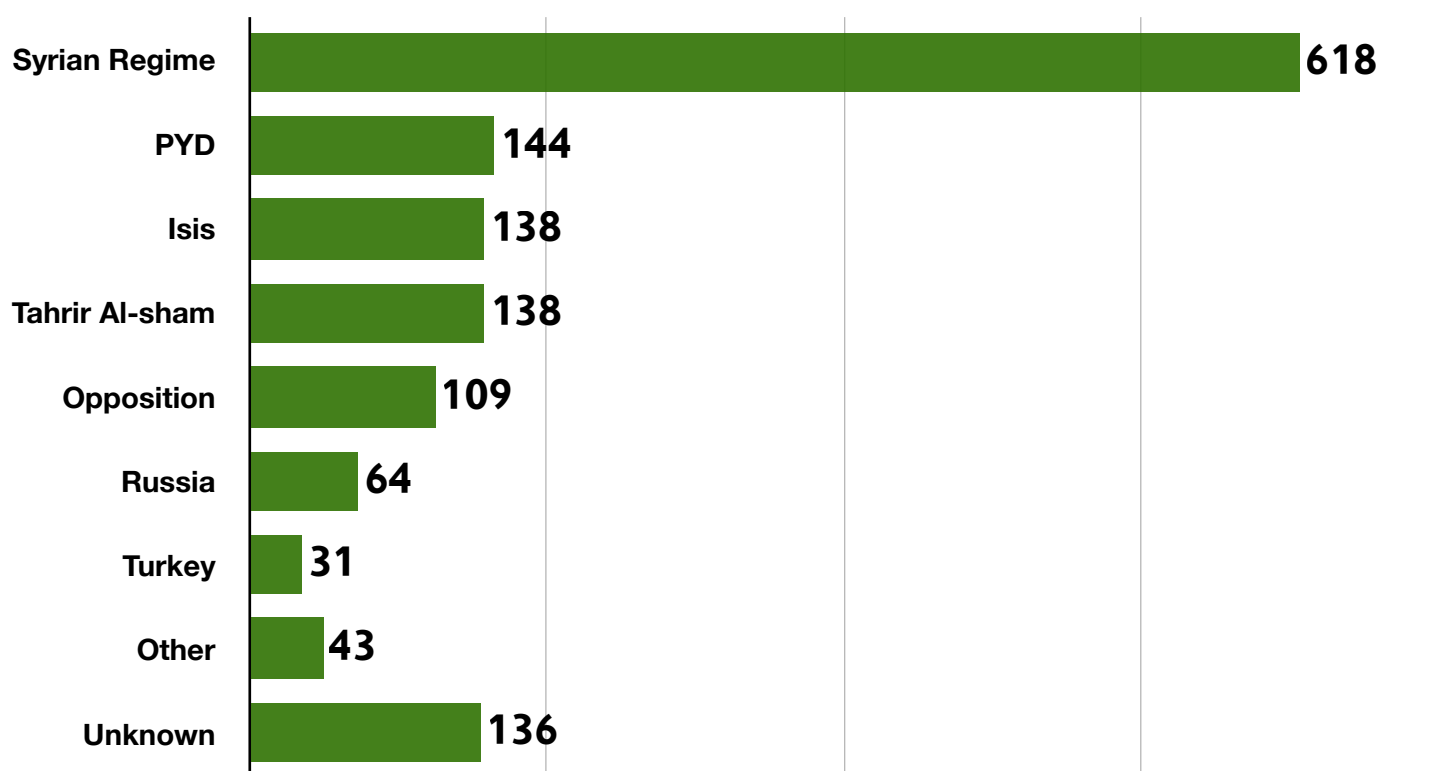


Those responsible for committing violations in 2021

From 2011 to 2021: 1421 violations documented, with the Syrian regime in the lead

The Syrian regime remains at the top of the list of parties responsible for violations against the media in Syria, with its responsibility for committing 618 violations in 10 years, out of a total of 1,421 violations, while the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in all its formations was secondly responsible for 144 violations.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and ISIS came third with 138 violations each, followed by the opposition on the list with 109 violations, and Russia with 64 violations.



Those responsible for committing the violations from 2011-2021

3- Types of violations

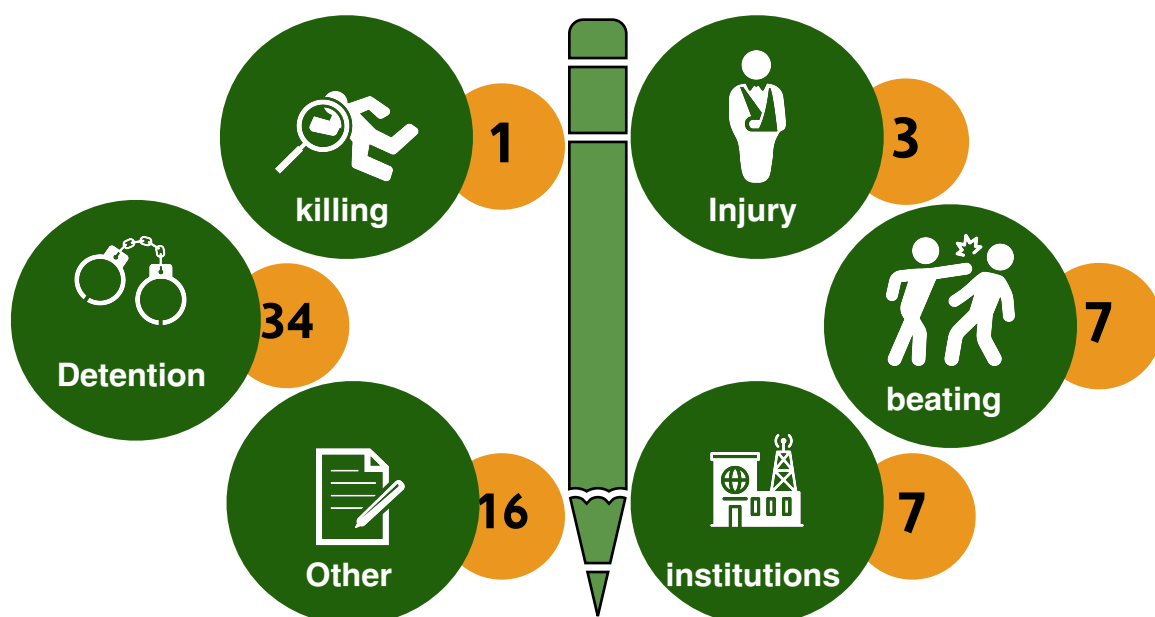
For the fourth year in a row... Detentions and arrests cases at the forefront of violations

Different sides on the Syrian ground are committing violations of all kinds. The most prominent violation in the year 2021 was the killing of a journalist and the injury of three others, while seven media personnels were assaulted.

And the largest percentage of violations committed and documented during 2021, was the detention and arrest cases, with 34 cases. The same case was in 2020, 2019 and 2018.

A remarkable rise in specific types of violations

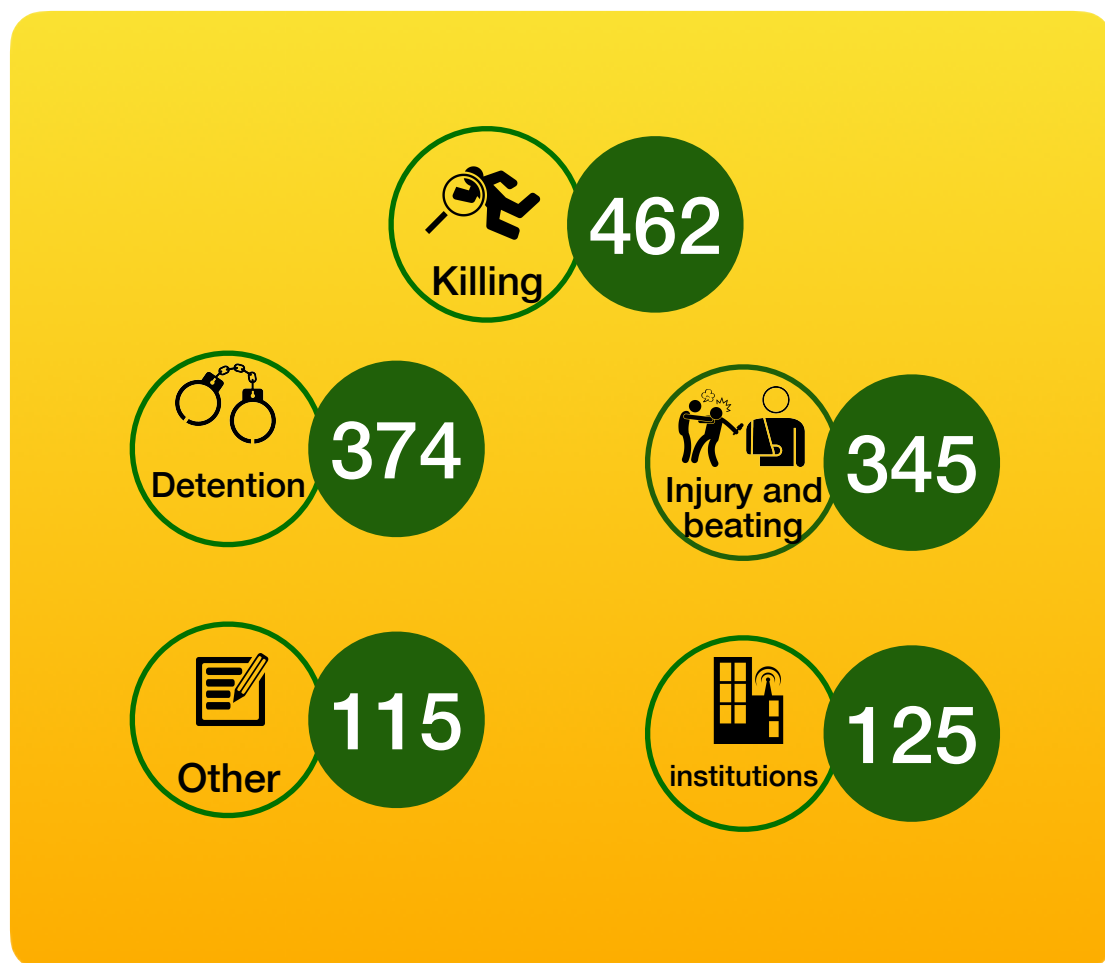
Over the past year, cases of other violations have risen, such as being prevented from covering and threats, the center documented 16 violations, compared to 2020, which witnessed 10 violations. In addition to, the violations against the institutions witnessed have been increased in their numbers compared to the years 2019 and 2020, as the Center documented 7 cases during the past year, compared to 3 violations in each of the previous two years separately.



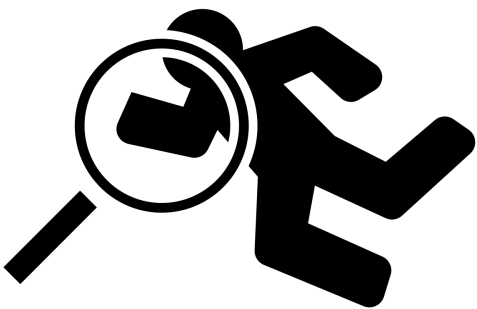
Type of violations in 2021

The killing is one of the most serious violations committed against media professionals since 2011

The order of violations in terms of type was different from the previous years. The Killing is considered the most committed type of violation, as the number amounted to 462 cases out of the total number of violations documented by the center between mid-March 2011 until the End of 2021. The number of arrest, detention and kidnapping cases were almost close to the cases of injury and beating. The center in the first case documented 374 violations and 345 in the second case, while 125 violations were committed against centers and media institutions, in addition to 115 cases of other violations.



Type of violations in 2011-2021



Killed

* Killed

One journalist was killed

The number of murder cases last year decreased from the cases that were documented during the previous years, as the center recorded one case, for the first time since 2011.

Despite this, the documentation of 68 violations last year makes Syria one of the most dangerous countries around the world for journalists and media workers.

The cessation of battles and the military operations in northern Syria, and the decrease in the frequency of bombing, for most of the past year, had its direct effects on the decrease in the murder cases.

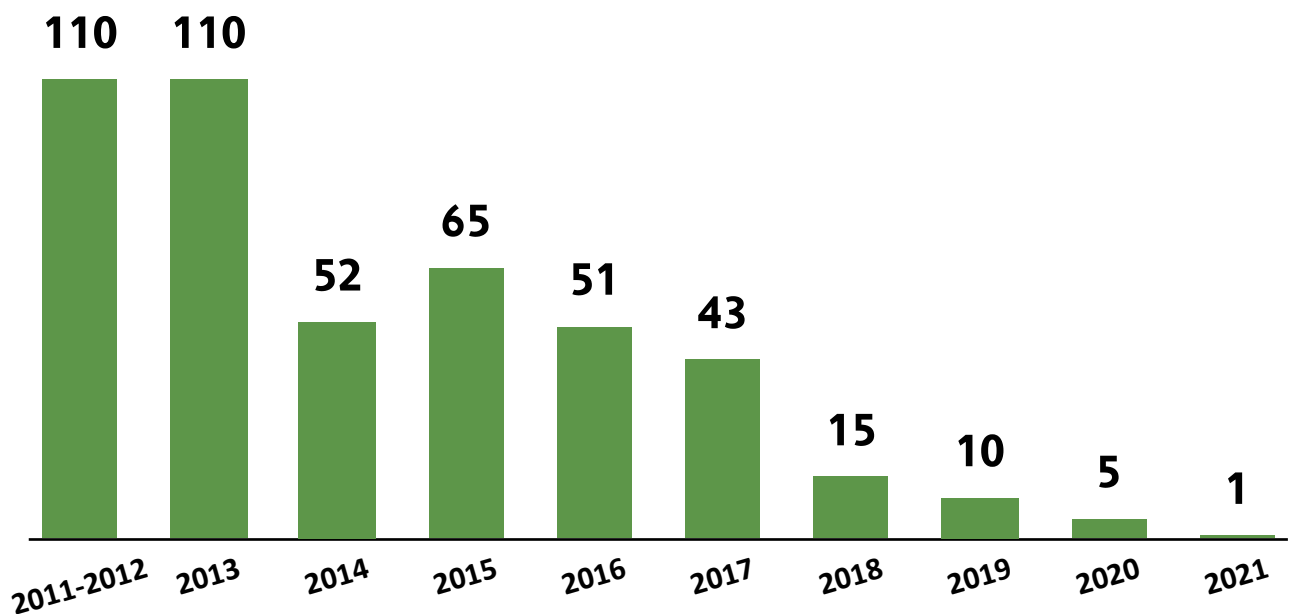
The double bombing, which was launched by the Russian forces on Idlib governorate during the month of July, was a direct cause of the killing case which has been documented during the past year.



**Violators responsible for killing media professionals in Syria
During 2021**

The killing 2011-2021

The graph of the number of murder witnessed a gradual decrease since 2011/2012 until the End of 2021, which has been considered the year with the lowest number of killing recorded , while 2013 witnessed to be the largest proportion of killing with 110 cases.



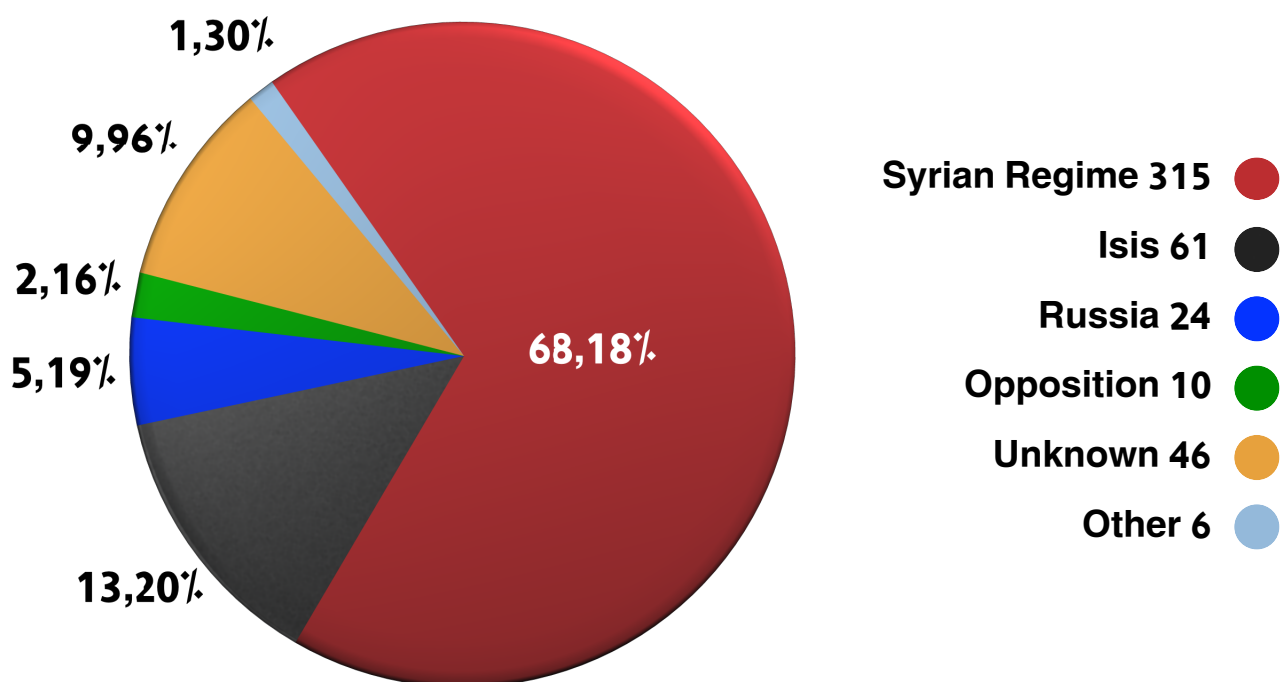
462 Journalists were killed since 2011.. 315 of them were killed by the Syrian regime

With the outcome of the year 2021, the center has documented in its records the killing of 462 media professionals from mid-March 2011 until the End of last year.

The Syrian regime remained at the top of the list of those responsible for killing journalists, of 315 journalists out of the total number since 2011, meanwhile, the Islamic State (ISIS) came second for the killing of 61 journalists.

and the death of journalists by the Russian forces has increased up to 24, and 10 journalists were killed by the Syrian opposition, while the “Hayat Alsham” was responsible for 3 journalists death, however the Democratic Union Party (PYD) was responsible for the killing of two journalists, and those 46 journalists were been killed them killers were not identified.

The categories of journalists as (Type, gender, nationality or even abroad) who were killed varied, within (462 Journalists) the total death toll which has been documented by the Center, 33 of them were Journalists who lost their lives under torture in the prisons of the Syrian regime, 5 of the Syrian Journalists were killed abroad, 65 Journalists (war correspondent) were killed through their duties with military groups in Syria, 7 journalists (Syrian and foreign Femals) were killed in Syria, and 7 of the were killed by the ISIS.



**Violators responsible for killing media professionals in
Syria 2011-2021**



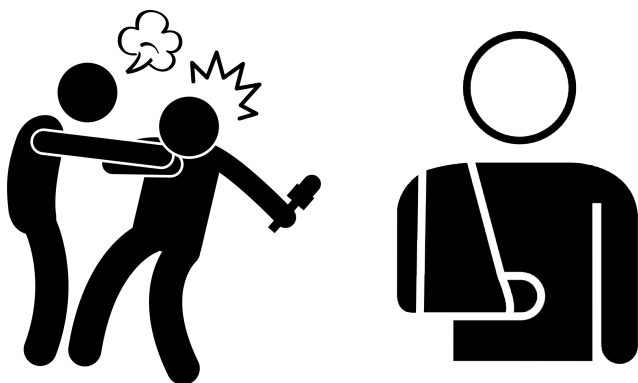
Date 7/17/2021

Name: Hammam Al-Asi

On Saturday 17/7/2021, media activist Hammam Al-Asi was killed as he succumbed to a wound he sustained while documenting a double bombing by Russian forces on the town of Sarja in the southern countryside of Idlib.

Al-Asi worked for the Syrian Civil Defense Center in the village of Bazabour, south of Idlib. He was born in the village of Bazabour in 1991.





The Injury and assault beating

* The Injury and assault beating

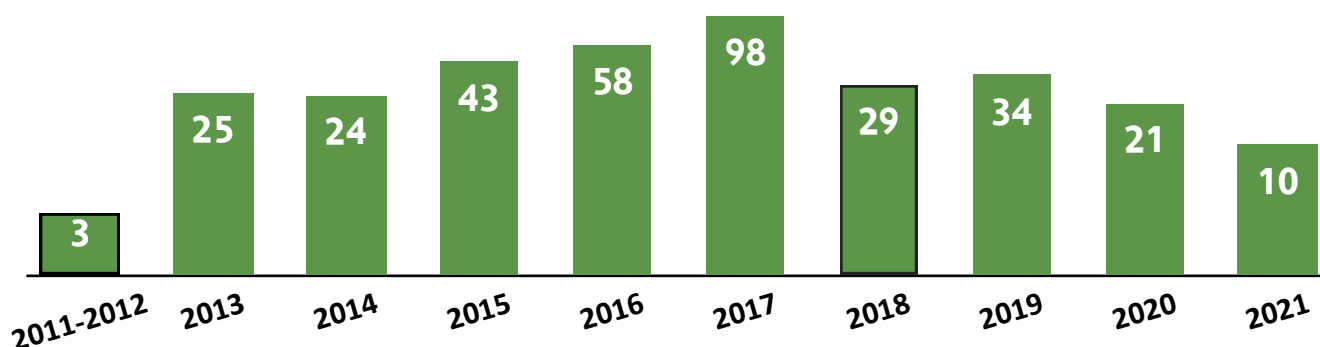
The cases of the injuries and assault beating has been decreased during the last year, compared to the rest of the past years, as the center recorded 3 cases of the injuries in the months of January, March and July. The Syrian regime was responsible for one case, while the responsible for the remaining two cases were not known..

The Center also documented 7 cases of the assault beating, 4 of them in September and 3 in November, all of them were perpetrated by the Democratic Union Party (PYD), in ist territory of control in the north and the east Syria.



Violators responsible for injury& beating-2021

Since 2011 until the End of the year 2021, the center has documented 345 cases of injuries and beating, the largest percentage of the cases of the injuries and beatings was 98, they were documented in 2017, while 2011/2012 had the lowest percentage with only 3 cases. The Syrian regime was responsible for this type of violations during the previous years, by committing 163 cases.



Annual distribution of cases of injury & beating



Syria regime



Russia



Opposition



Isis



Turkey



PYD



Tahrir Al-sham



Other



Unknown

Violators responsible for injury& assaults 2011-2021



The Arrest, detention and kidnapping

* The Arrest, detention and kidnapping

In 2021: 34 cases were documented, and the PYD was at the head of the violators

For the fourth year in a row, cases of arrest and detention were among the most common types of violations committed against media professionals. During the past year, the Center documented 34 cases, most of which ended in release, while two media workers are still being held by parties affiliated with the Democratic Union Party until the date of publication of the report.

The Democratic Union Party and its affiliates were responsible for committing most of the 24 cases of the total cases committed during the past year, and the regime came second with responsibility for 7 cases, the Lebanese authorities committed two cases and the Turkish authorities one case.

The most arrests and detentions were committed in December with 9 cases, in October with 6 cases, and 5 cases in June.

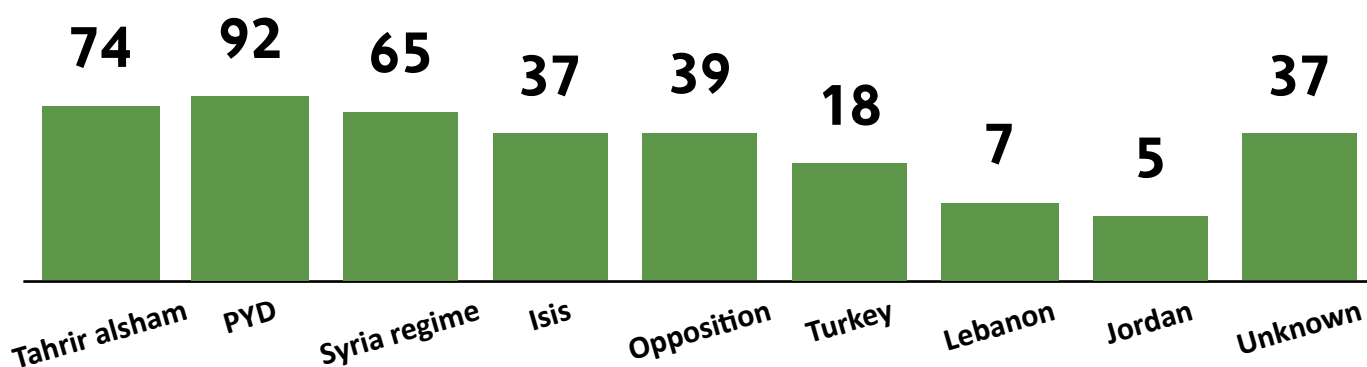


Violators responsible for arresting, kidnapping & detaining-2021

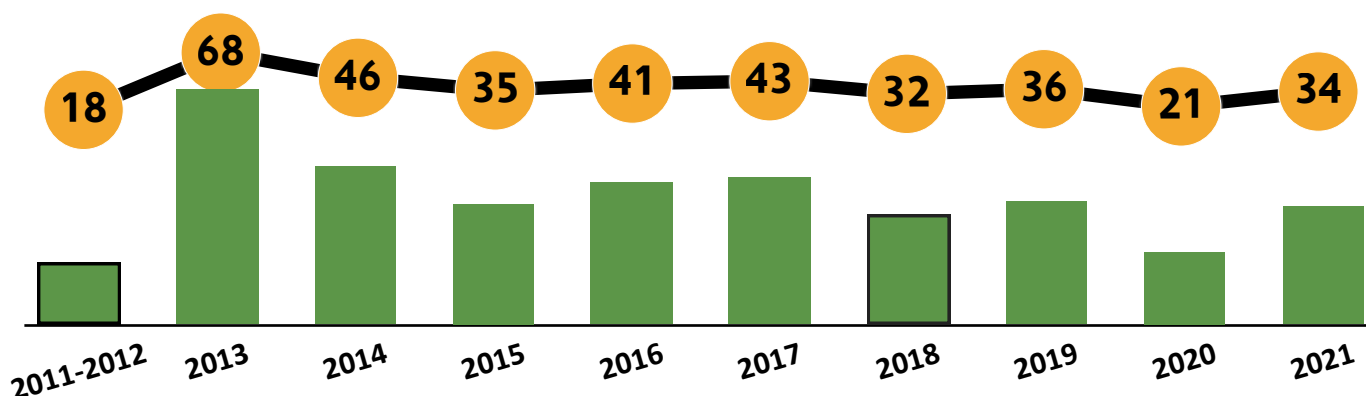
Over the past years: 374 cases of arrest and kidnapping, with the PYD in the lead

With the addition of the last year (34 violations), the center has documented 374 cases of arrest, detention and kidnapping from 2011 until the End of 2020. The Democratic Union Party forces were the most responsible for this type of violations, responsible for 92 cases, while Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham was for 74 cases responsible and the regime was for 65 cases responsible.

In 2013 has been shown the largest number of the occurrence with 68 cases, while the center during the years 2011 and 2012 the lowest number of this type of violations with only 18 cases documented.



Violators responsible for arresting, kidnapping & detaining 2011-2021



Annual distribution of arresting, kidnapping & detaining

In 2021: Two journalists were still captured in PYD prisons

The Democratic Union Party authorities are still capturing two journalists in their own prisons, since they were detained last year in their territories under ist control in northeastern Syria.

On Saturday 9/1/2021, the Syrian Democratic Forces which is belong to the Democratic Union Party had detained the media activist Ayham Abdel Aziz Al-Khalaf in the city of Al-Buseira in the countryside of Deir Ezzor, under the pretext of filming in the city without permission, as he is still under detention and his fate is unknown until the date of publication of the report.



The Democratic Union Party's Syrian Democratic Forces also detained media activist Ali Saleh Al-Wakaa, on Friday 5/2/2021, while he was in Hajin Hospital, east of Deir Ezzor.

Al-Wakaa is still in detention and his fate is unknown until the date of publication of the report. He was born in the town of Abu Hamam in the countryside of Deir ez-Zor in 1990. He works as a correspondent for the "Baz" news agency, and recently worked with the detainees' defense.

35 MEDIA PROFESSIONALS ARE STILL IN DETENTION OR ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN SYRIA

The statistics of SCJF show that 34 media professionals are still being held and forcibly disappeared by various actors in Syria. However, the fate of these people remained unknown until the end of 2020. It is worth noting that more than half of them have been forcibly disappeared since 2013.

ISIS is at the top of the parties accused of detaining these media professionals, with its responsibility for 17 cases, of which it committed 13 in 2013. The Syrian regime comes second with responsibility for seven violations, three in 2012, and HTS is responsible for three cases; the armed opposition was responsible for two. The parties responsible for four violations are unknown.



**Entities responsible for enforced disappearances of journalists
from 2011-2021**

* The violations against the centers institutions of the Media

Media institutions are one of the main pillars for media professionals to pursue their work. The role of media institutions widely appeared after 2011 in the Syrian media scene. The developments in Syria helped to establish several agencies, channels, websites, and newspapers. It began its work away from the domination of the ruling authority in Damascus, which controlled media in Syria before 2011, either directly or indirectly, through the means and security agencies affiliated with it.

These centers and institutions had a vast role in developing the Syrian media experience and providing media with cadres. They are also expanding their spread, and most international media outlets rely on them to cover the events in Syria. Some of the conflicting parties deliberately targeted them over the past years, especially the Syrian regime. The thing led to a decrease in their number after it had increased since 2012.

In 2021: an increase in the number of documented violations

The Syrian Center for the Press Freedoms in the Syrian Journalists Association had 7 of the violations documented, that accrued against media centers and institutions during the past year. Last September, two of the violations were committed, while 6 other of the violations were distributed over different months of the past year. Al-Hasakah governorate witnessed 4 violations, and two of the violations were committed in Idlib. And one of the violation was accrued in Damascus.

The Democratic Union Party was for 3 of the violations responsible, while Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham was for two of them responsible, and one of the violation was committed by the Syrian regime, while it was not known who was responsible for the latest violation...



PYD



Syria regime



Tahrir al-Sham



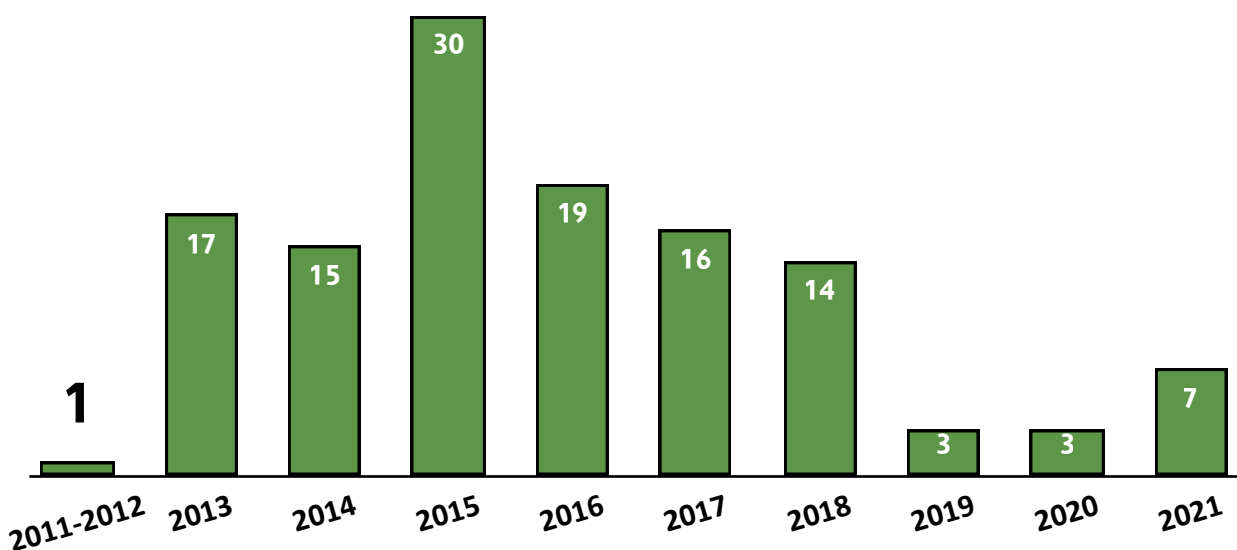
Unknown



those responsible for committing violations against media organizations in 2021

The violations against the centers institutions of the Media since 2011

By adding the outcome of the past year (7 violations), SCJF would have been able to document 125 of violations against Media centers and institutions since March 2011. These numbers are distributed over the previous years with varying rates at times and relatively close other times. The year 2015 has witnessed the largest percentage of these violations with 30 of the Violations, 20 of them were committed in Aleppo and Idlib, while 2012 witnessed the lowest percentage with one violation, that was in Aleppo Governorate.



Annual distribution of violations against media centers and institutions

The regime is at the forefront of the authorities who were in charge of the violations against centers and institutions

The Syrian regime remained at the forefront for those who were in charge of the violations against the centers and institutions of Media, the Syrian regime was responsible for 46 of the violations from the total of (125) violations over the previous years, and the Syrian opposition came into the second range with responsibility for committing 21 of violations, while the Democratic Union Party (PYD) was in charge for 17 violations.



Syria regime



Opposition



PYD



tahrir al-sham



Isis



Management of
Bab Al-Hawa crossing



Other



Unknown

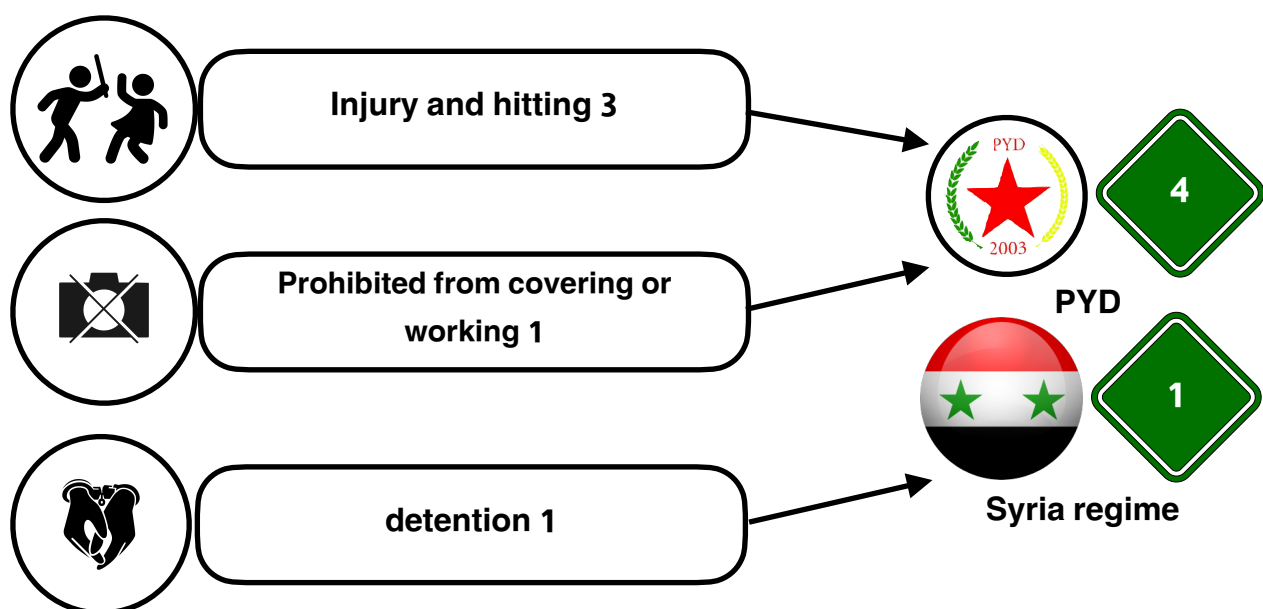
The authorities responsible for violations against media centers and institutions since 2011

* Violations against female media professionals

In 2021: Documenting 5 new violations against female media professionals

During 2021, The Syrian Center for Press Freedoms documented the occurrence of 5 violations against female media professionals, centered in northeastern Syria in the Hasaka governorate, with 4 violations committed by the Democratic Union Party (PYD), while the remaining violation was committed in Damascus governorate, at the hands of the Syrian regime.

The five violations were distributed between the months of September with two violations, and January, April and November, with one violation for each of them separately. These violations also varied between injury, beating, detention and prevention from coverage.



Types of violations against female media professionals and those responsible for them in 2021



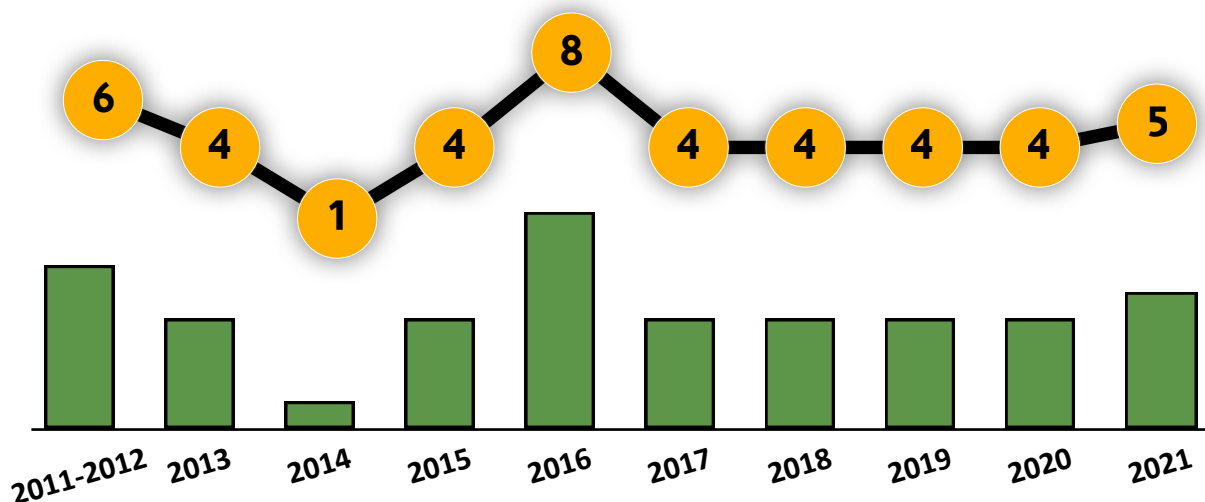
(The female journalist, **Vivian Fattah**, was banned from reporting on 4/22/2021, she was also beaten twice during her media coverage in the city of Qamishli, on September 24 and November 9 last.

These three violations were committed against the journalist “Vivien” by members of the Democratic Union Party (PYD). “Fattah” works as a reporter for the “Rudaw” satellite channel in northeastern Syria, and she was born in 1992 in the city of Qamishli.)

2011-2021: Documenting 44 violations against female journalists

With the outcome of last year (5 violations), the Center has documented in its records the occurrence of 44 violations against female journalists in Syria and outside Syria.

The graph of documented violations against female media professionals converged during previous years, and the largest percentage of them were committed in 2016 with 8 violations, the year 2012 witnessed the occurrence of 6 violations, while one violation was committed in 2014.









Annual distribution of violations against female journalists

Types of violations committed against female journalists since 2011

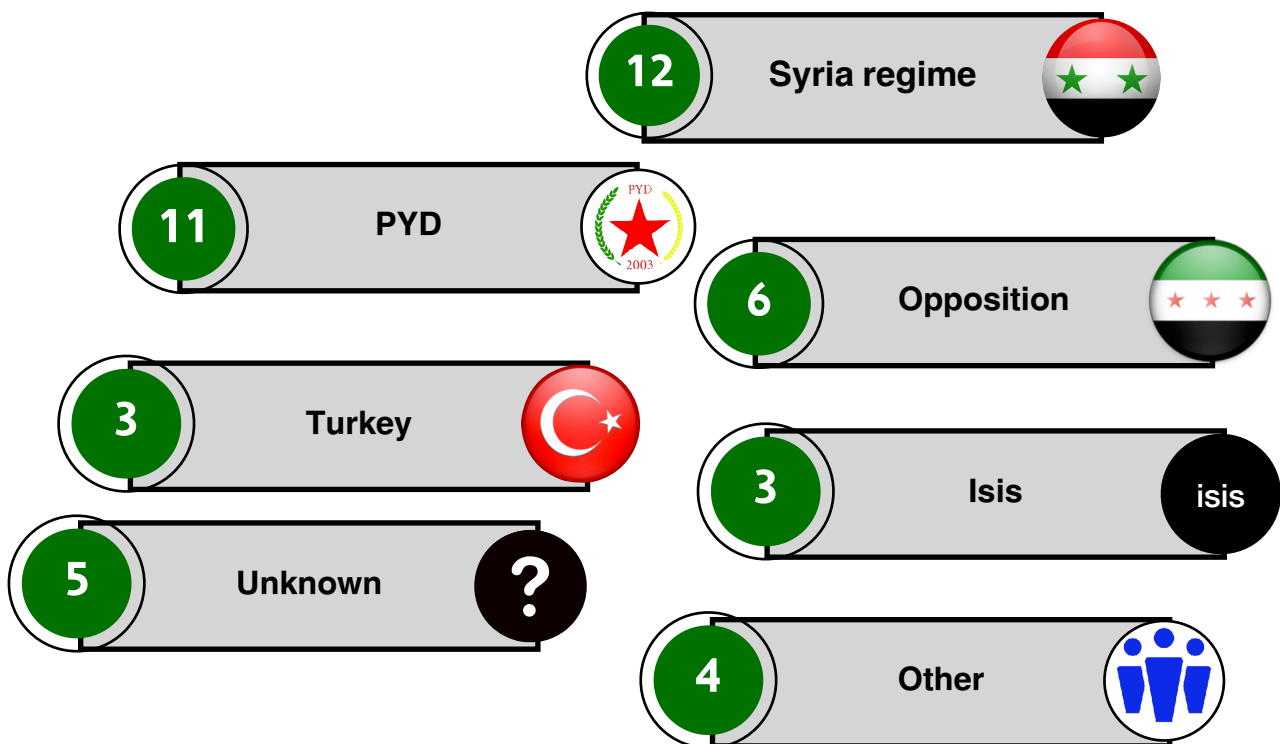
The most notable violations documented by the Center since 2011 was the killing of 7 female journalists out of a total of 44 violations, including the killing of two foreign journalists in Syria.

The largest percentage of violations committed against female media workers varied between arrest, detention and kidnapping, with a total of 16 violations. The Center has also documented 9 cases of injury and beating of female media workers since 2011, including the injury of two foreign media workers, in addition to 12 different violations, such as the prevention of coverage or work, in addition to Multiple threats.

Type of violation		2011-2021	2021
	killing	7	0
	Detention	16	1
	Injury and hitting	9	3
	Pressure and threat	3	0
	Insulted and prevented from covering or working	6	1
	Other	3	0
Total violations against female media professionals		44	5

Types of violations committed against female media professionals from 2011-2021

The Syrian regime is considered the most prominent party responsible for committing violations against women in the media, over the previous years, as it was responsible for committing 12 violations out of the total number of violations (44 violations), and the Democratic Union Party came second with responsibility for committing 11 violations, while the Syrian opposition was Responsible for 6 violations.



Entities responsible for committing violations against female media professionals since 2011

Syrian Female Journalists in Daraa Governorate: Continuous Confrontation with Dangers



Hala Qassem

Female journalists in Daraa Governorate, southern Syria, face multiple difficulties and challenges in practicing journalistic work and performing their media and humanitarian duty.

These challenges lie in the dangers surrounding them on the one hand, and their being working women in a society dominated by a "masculine" character, on the other.

The first challenges that hinder the work of female journalists in southern Syria are the security pursuits and their consequences, specifically after the

regime took control of the area in the summer of 2018, which prompted female journalists to practice their work in complete secrecy.

In very difficult circumstances, each of them performs their media duty in disguise from society and authorities, restricting movement and depriving freedom, and seeks to carry out its journalistic mission without revealing its true identity in order to avoid, with her family, security prosecution.

These fears make them work from their homes amid very limited facilities and services linked to the weak Internet and

almost complete power cuts. They live in great fear of being exposed. A fear that affects their freedom of work and deprives them of working in a safe and independent environment.

The suffering of female journalists is not limited to this point, but goes beyond it to what is worse. In a patriarchal society that doesn't appreciate working women, especially those of the media field, women journalists usually are exposed to abuse and harassment by some men, realistically and electronically.

The suffering of female journalists in southern Syria is obvious in the absence of a safe work environment, along with an absence of special press centers that allow them to work freely and safely, as well as the absence of sponsors for their work and the lack of support.

Regarding my experience as a journalist working in south Syria, I practice my journalistic work as a volunteer from home with limited facilities due to the difficulty of movement freely and my inability to reveal my identity for fear of security persecution. I live in constant panic of being discovered so that my family would be harmed. This comes as security crackdowns on activists and journalists have increased recently in

order to impose complete control over the area and suppress voices supporting human rights and curb freedom of expression.

As for the challenges that I face while working, I find it very difficult to gather the necessary information because of people's fears of communicating with journalists on one hand, and on the other hand, I am the object of some weak souls who use electronic harassment as a way to express their bad manners, which is a type of violence that we women are subjected to a lot during our work.

This comes amid unavailability of the Internet in southern Syria and its almost permanent interruption, which is a major obstacle to our journalistic work. We also suffer from electricity shortage cuts most of the time, and this makes permanent coverage of events and happenings in the region very difficult.

But despite all these dangers and challenges, we are trying seriously to accomplish our work to the fullest, to be the voice of truth in our country and to convey the suffering of our people in southern Syria. We strive to change the deteriorating human reality in these areas, dreaming of a better tomorrow and a prosperous future.

* Violations against foreign journalists in Syria

The violations against foreign journalists in Syria decreased over the past year, the center documented only one violation committed by HTS - Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham - in Idlib governorate, by preventing a foreign journalist from working for a period of 6 months.

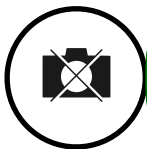
In 2019, the freedom center of the Syrian Journalists Association issued a special report, in which it reviewed various stages of the work of foreign

media and foreign professionals in Syria since March 2011.

The report sheds light on the suffering of these journalists and show the violations they were subjected to during their work in Syria, with the aim of recalling the sacrifices of Arab and foreign journalists, who had a major role in stressing the importance of the media and the effective role played by the various foreign media in covering events and revealing their course.



Tahrir Al Sham



Banned from appearing in the media

Entities responsible for violations against foreign journalists during 2021



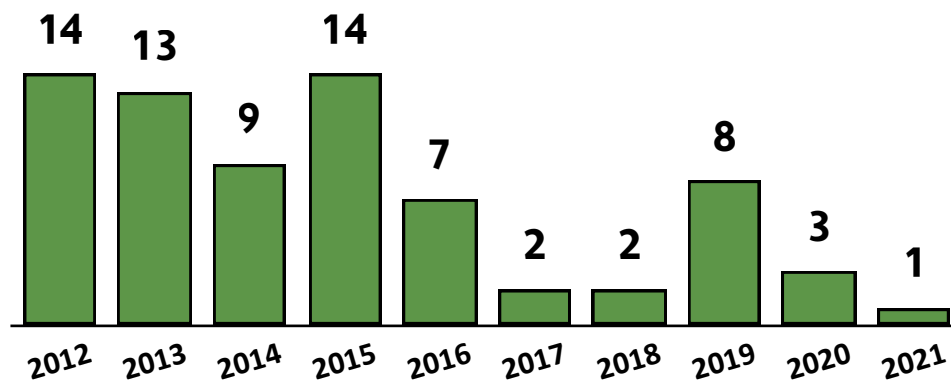
Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham banned the American journalist Daryl Phelps, known as "Bilal Abdul Karim", from appearing in the media for a period of 6 months starting from the date of his release on February 17, 2021, and also prevented the "OGN" media network from publishing news about Syrian affairs for a period of 3 months. .

From 2011 - 2021: Documenting 73 violations against foreign journalists in Syria

By adding the outcome of the year 2021, the center will have documented in its records 73 violations committed against foreign journalists in Syria, the most prominent of them were the killing of 20 foreign journalists in Syria, the injury and beating of 10 others, and 11 different violations were committed against them, while the largest percentage of violations committed against foreign journalists were arrest, detention and kidnapping counted with 32 violations.



The years 2012 and 2015 witnessed the largest percentage of documented violations, with 14 violations each year separately, while the lowest percentage was last year with one violation.

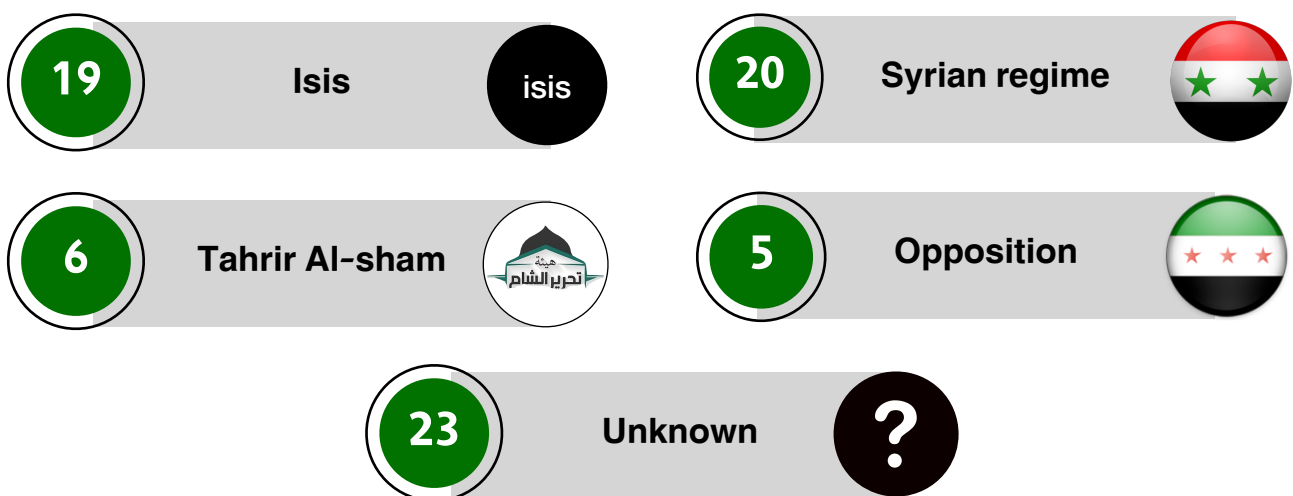


Annual breakdown of violations committed against foreign media professionals

The regime and ISIS are the most responsible for violations

The Syrian regime came at the top of those who abused and committed violations against foreign journalists, with his responsibility for committing 20 violations out of a total of 73 violations since 2011, while ISIS was responsible for 19 violations, thus the regime and ISIS are responsible for more than half of the violations committed against foreign journalists in Syria.

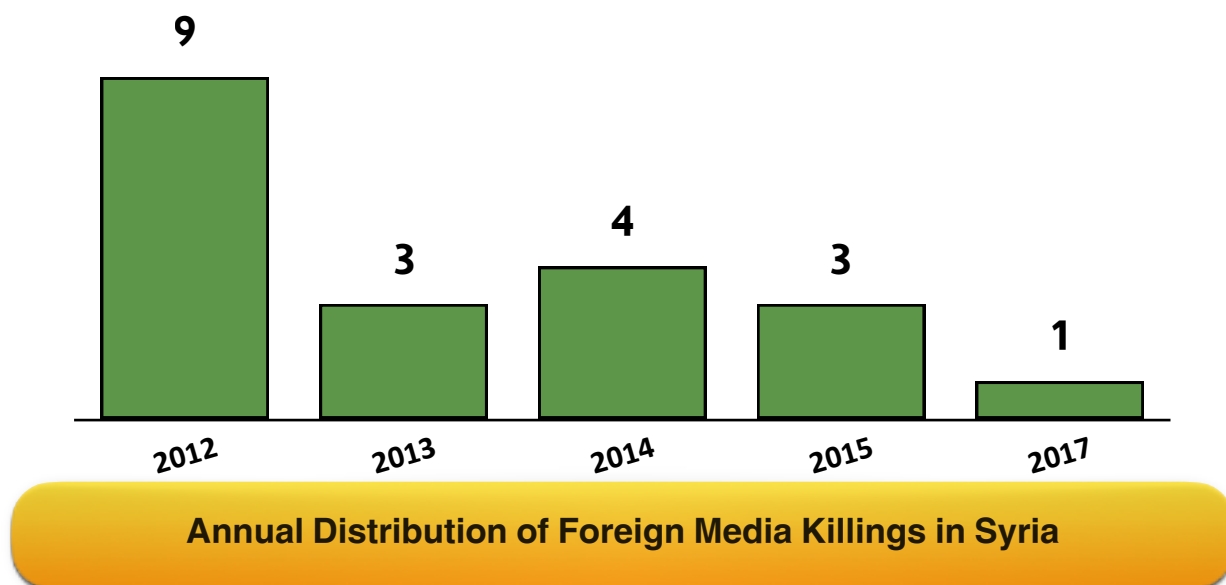
HTS - Hayat Tahrir Al Sham - committed 6 violations, the Syrian opposition committed 5 violations, while the responsibility for 23 violations is not known.



Entities responsible for violations committed against foreign media professionals since 2011

20 foreign journalists have been killed in Syria since 2012

The Freedom center has documented the killing of 20 foreign journalists in Syria since 2012, and 2012 witnessed the most killing of foreign journalists with 9 cases, while 4 foreign journalists were killed in 2014, and 3 journalists were killed in 2013 and the same in 2015.



The Syrian regime was responsible for the killing of 7 foreign journalists, the same number of whom were killed by ISIS, while the parties responsible for the killing of 6 foreign journalists were not known.



4- Geographical distribution of violations

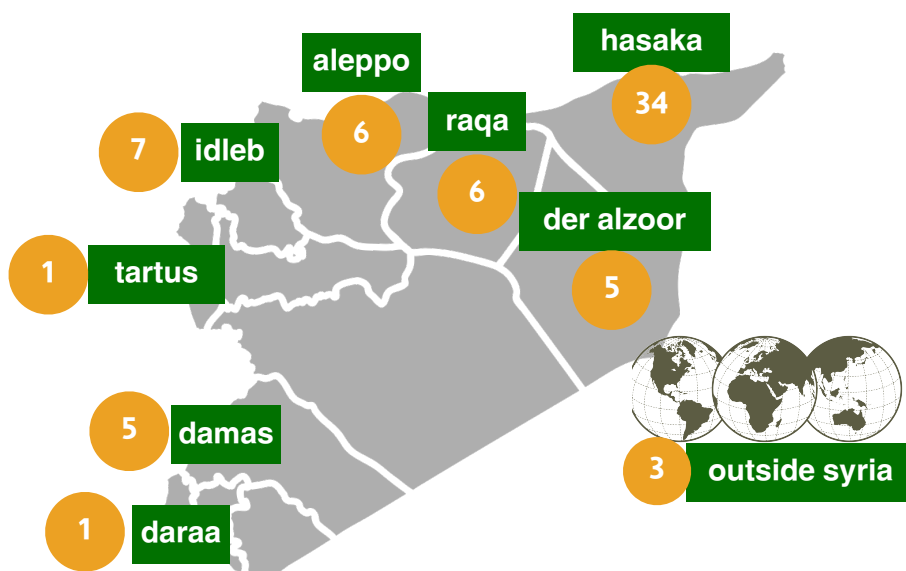
In 2021: 68 violations, half of them in Al-Hasakah Governorate

Most of the violations took place in the north and north-east of Syria during the past year, and for the first time, Al-Hasakah governorate came at the top of the geographical areas, with half of the documented violations occurring in it, with 34 violations, whereas the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib were at the forefront of reports over the previous years.

Idlib governorate witnessed 7 violations, while Aleppo witnessed 6 violations and the same in Raqqa, while the Center documented 3 violations committed outside Syria, committed against Syrian media professionals, 2 violations in Lebanon and 1 violation in Turkey.

The map of geographical violations that organized by the center during the year 2021, according to the responsible authorities, indicates that the Democratic Union Party (PYD) committed 31 violations in Al-Hasakah governorate out of the total violations committed in the governorate, while HTS - Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham - was responsible for 6 violations out of 7 violations committed in Idlib governorate.

The Syrian regime's violations were also distributed geographically in several governorates, as he committed 5 violations in Damascus, 2 violations in Al Hasaka, and 1 violation committed by the regime in Aleppo and the same in Daraa and Tartous, while Russia committed the only violation in Idlib.



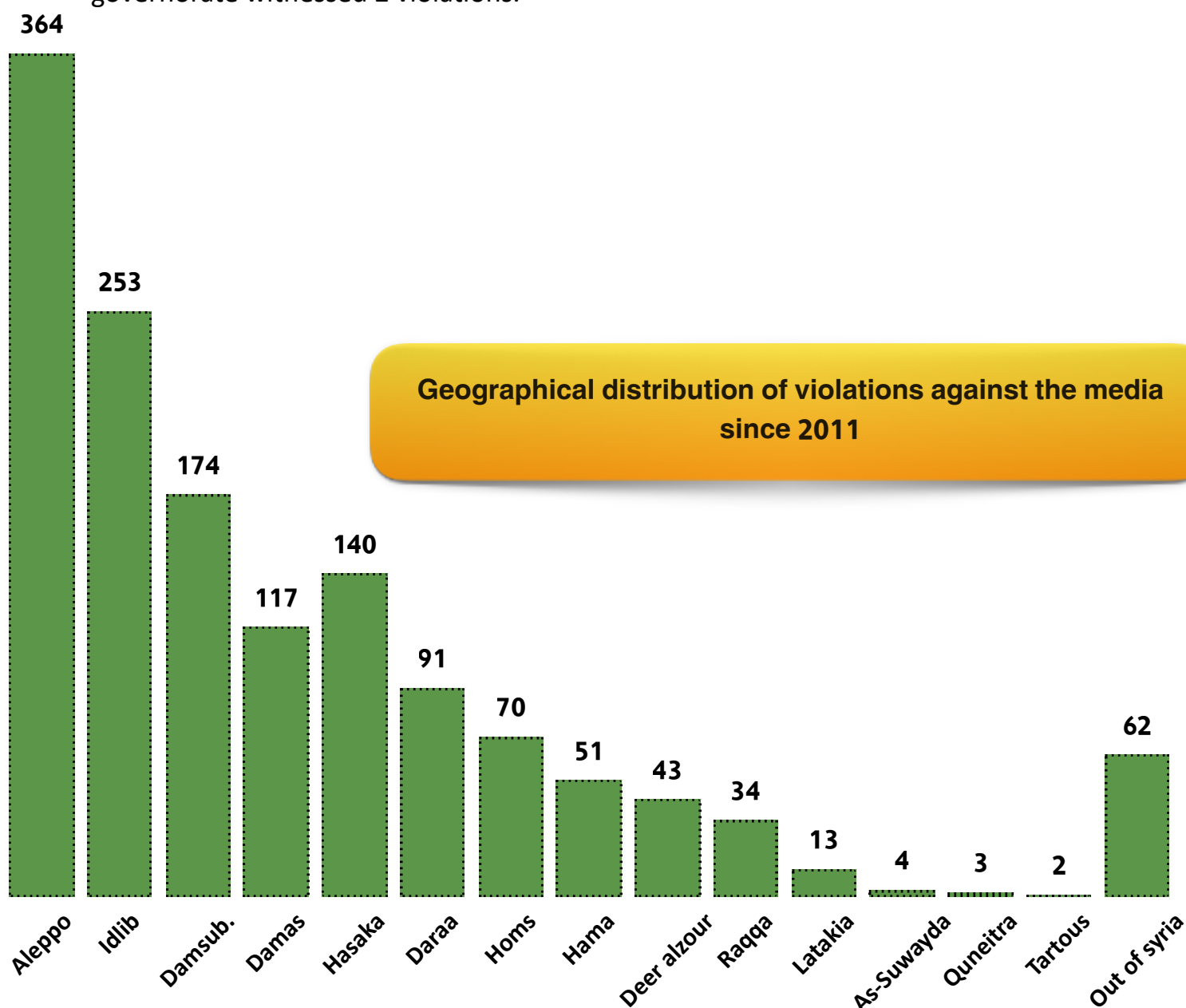
Geographical distribution of violations against the media during 2021

2011-2021: Aleppo remains at the top

Aleppo governorate remains at the forefront of the areas where violations were committed against the media in Syria over the previous years since 2011, as it witnessed the occurrence of 364 violations out of the total number of 1421 violations from 2011 until the end of last year, the largest percentage of which occurred in 2016, with 77 violations, and in 2013 with 66 violations.

Idlib governorate came second with 253 violations of the total number of violations, of which 59 violations were committed in 2017.

The lowest percentage of documented violations over the previous years had been committed in Latakia governorate with 13 violations, As-Suwayda governorate with 4 violations, and Al-Qunaitra governorate with 3 violations, while Tartous governorate witnessed 2 violations.



*** Violations against Syrian media professionals overseas**

The ongoing war in Syria and the violations committed by various parties have pushed many Syrian media professionals to emigrate to neighboring countries or countries of asylum. The last three years witnessed the displacement of media professionals in several Syrian regions. However, the situation for Syrian media professionals outside their country is not much better than it was inside Syria due to the various difficulties and challenges they encounter, whether they were security risks or obstacles at work.

For the fourth year, violations against Syrian media professionals outside Syria have decreased compared to the previous years, which reached their peak between 2014 and 2017.

The freedom center in the Syrian Journalists Association documented 3 violations outside Syria during 2021, with a slight increase from what it documented during 2020, slightly higher than it documented during 2020, which was only 1 violation.

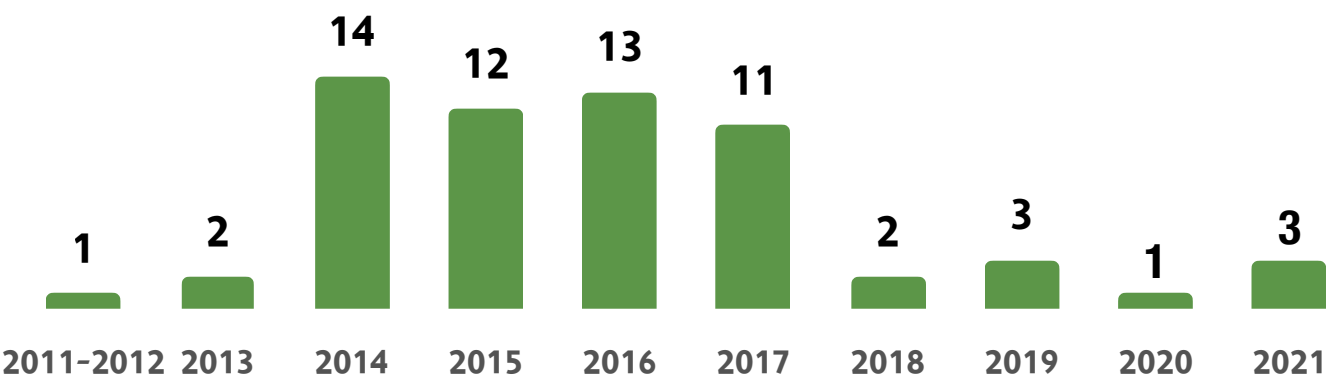
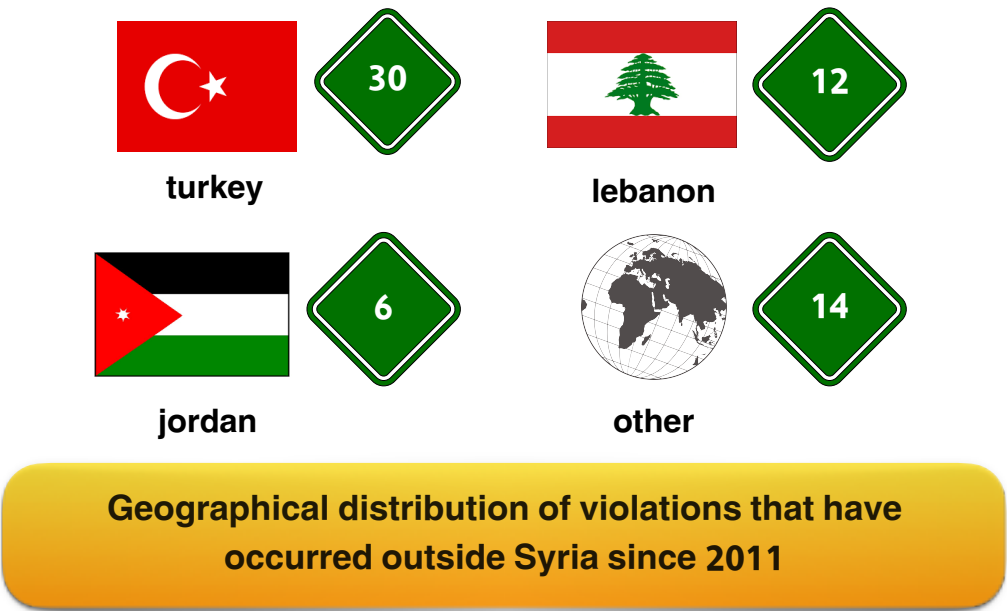
The violations committed outside Syria were limited to temporary detention, as the Lebanese authorities committed 2 violations, while the last violation was committed in Turkey by the Turkish authorities.

From 2011-2021: Documenting 62 violations against Syrian media professionals outside the country

With the addition of the outcome of the past year, the Center has documented the occurrence of 62 violations committed against Syrian media professionals outside the country, 30 violations were committed in Turkey, of which the Turkish authorities were responsible for 21 violations, and 12 violations were committed in Lebanon, of which the Lebanese authorities were responsible for 11 violations, While in Jordan 6 violations occurred, the Jordanian authorities were responsible for 5 of them.

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the country, 30 violations were committed in Turkey, of which the Turkish authorities were responsible for 21 violations, and 12 violations were committed in Lebanon, of which the Lebanese authorities were responsible for 11 violations, While in Jordan 6 violations occurred, the Jordanian authorities were responsible for 5 of them.



Conclusion

* Legal Conditioning for Violations Against Media in Syria

The report monitors human rights violations against media professionals, news service providers, institutions, and media centers committed by various parties in Syria. Journalists who work in areas of conflict and war are considered civilians, according to Article 79 of Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. They must be protected since they do not harm their civilian status. The right of the war correspondent accredited to the armed forces to benefit from the protection stipulated in the agreement.

The protection of journalists is not limited to the fact that they are civilians and must be kept away from hostile and military actions, as the rules of international humanitarian law have been established. The parties also have obligations to include international law to protect journalists; in local legislation.

The headquarters of the media centers and institutions also enjoy legal protection under the rules of international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions, and additional protocols. Media facilities are considered civilian objects, so they should not be the object of targeting.

Under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, crimes against civilians and objects, including media premises, are considered war crimes and crimes against humanity (Articles 7 and 8).

While Resolution No. 1738 of 2006 issued by the UN Security Council included:

It condemns deliberate attacks against journalists, media personnel, and associated personnel during armed conflicts.

It ensures the safety and security of journalists, media outlets, and aid crews in areas of armed conflict by protecting civilians there.

Freelance journalists and reporters are civilians who must be respected and treated as such.

Media facilities and equipment are considered civilian objects and may not be the target of any attacks or reprisals.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, commenting on the text of Article 51 of Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, considered:

A journalist "loses the legal protection granted to journalists, if he wears a uniform that closely resembles the military uniform, or is very close to it, and if he is required to or follows a military unit during the battles. If he is in areas that may be targeted and the law allows this." On the other hand, the legal protection of media facilities is suspended if they serve contentious purposes in military actions, such as if they include military personnel, supplies, or military equipment.

Extrajudicial killing:

Extrajudicial killing constitutes a grave violation of the rules of international humanitarian law.

Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 prohibited assaults on life and physical integrity, especially murder in all its forms, against civilians and persons hors de combat.

Each of the four Geneva Conventions lists "intentional killing" of protected persons as a grave breach. The prohibition of murder is recognized as a fundamental guarantee in Additional Protocols I and II of 1977.

Murder is also classified as a war crime under the Statute of the International Criminal Court concerning international and non-international armed conflicts in Articles 7 and 8.

Enforced disappearance: The forcible disappearance of individuals constitutes one of the grave crimes and violations as defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute:

the arrest, detention, or kidnapping of any people by a state or political organization, or with its permission or support for this act or its silence on it, and then its refusal to acknowledge depriving these people of their freedom or giving information about their fate or their whereabouts to deprive them of the protection of the law for a long time.

On December 20, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The Convention stipulates the severity and gravity of enforced disappearance, which constitutes a crime and constitutes, in certain circumstances determined by international law, a crime against humanity.

The agreement included the prevention of enforced disappearances and the fight against impunity for the perpetrators of the crime of enforced disappearance. It took into account the right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance and the right of victims to justice and compensation. It affirms the right of every victim to know the truth about the circumstances of enforced disappearance and to know the fate of the disappeared person. Enforced disappearance may constitute a crime of murder, as it may result from the victim being subjected to torture during the investigation, and killing is secret while the body is hidden.

As one of the forms of enforced disappearance is detention if the elements of the crime are present, it becomes a crime of enforced disappearance, and Article 2 of this Convention has noted this by saying:

For this Convention, enforced disappearance means: the arrest, detention, abduction, or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State, or by persons or groups of individuals acting with the authorization, support, or acquiescence of the State. It is followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or Concealing the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, depriving him of the protection of the law.

Article 12 of the Convention mentions several safeguards for a person who has been subjected to the offense of enforced disappearance by saying:

Article 12, paragraph 1 states: Each State Party shall guarantee to whoever alleges that a person has been a victim of enforced disappearance has the right to report the facts to the competent authorities, who shall examine the claim promptly and impartially. It conducts when necessary and without delay, an in-depth and impartial investigation. Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that the complainant, witnesses, relatives of the disappeared person, their advocates, and participants in

the investigation are protected from any ill-treatment or intimidation based on the complaint or any testimony given.

Arbitrary detention (continuous and temporary): It means any process of arresting or detaining people without evidence or suspicion that they have committed any act that violates local laws. It is classified as a grave violation as it violates the rules in international law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides for the absolute prohibition of arbitrary restrictions on the freedoms of individuals in Article 9: "No one shall be arbitrarily arrested, detained or exiled."

All prisoners are also entitled to enjoy the rights and standards enshrined in international law.

The guarantees are in many treaties and agreements that preserve the dignity and rights of the prisoner or detainee and whose violation and failure to observe them are considered crimes against humanity.

Among these agreements are:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966.

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984:

Article 13 of it states the following:

Each State Party shall guarantee to any individual who claims to have been subjected to torture in any territory under its jurisdiction the right to file a complaint with its competent authorities, and these authorities shall examine his case promptly and impartially. Necessary steps should be taken to ensure that the complainant and witnesses are protected from all forms of ill-treatment or intimidation for his complaint or any evidence presented.

Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment” (1998):

This group came up with several principles for the rights of prisoners or detainees, starting with defining the conditions for their arrest/detention and the conditions and guarantees for their treatment in arrest and detention centers. We mention, for example, what was stated in Principle No. 2:

Arrest, detention, or imprisonment may not be carried out except with strict adherence to the provisions of the law and by competent officials or persons authorized to do so.

Accordingly, what the various parties committing violations against media professionals and journalists in Syria are doing, including killing, enforced disappearance, attacking media institutions, and the like, amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, as mentioned above.

* Recommendations of the Syrian Center for Journalistic Freedoms

As the Syrian Center for Journalistic Freedoms of Syrian Journalists Associations publishes the annual report of 2020, it calls for:

- * Implementation of international conventions and law that ensure freedom of media and protections of journalists.
- * To activate the Convention against Torture and to prosecute and hold accountable the perpetrators of torture in Syria.
- * Implementation the resolutions of United Nations General Assembly in regards of protection of all persons from enforced disappearance especially the resolution No. 65/209 signed on 21 December 2010. The resolution adopted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance signed in 1992.

The Syrian Center for Journalistic Freedoms would like to make the following recommendations for consideration by concerned actors in the world:

First, to the Security Council:

- 1-**Referal the Syrian issue to the International Criminal Court so to hold those who committed war crimes or crimes against humanity in Syria accountable and to practically ensure no impunity for violators.
- 2-**Issuing a resolution that requests the Syrian regime to release all detained journalists, media activists and permit inspection missions to enter all jails, prisons, security branches, overt and covert detention centers so to endeavor to halt all activities of torture.

Second, to foreign, Arabic and Syrian organizations concerned with human rights:

1-mobilizing support and advocacy for media professionals who are detained, arrested or forcibly disappeared in Syria.

2-pressure for referral the issue of crimes against humanity in Syria to the International Criminal Court so to ensure no impunity for those who committed such crimes.

Third, to foreign, Arabic and international media organizations:

Focusing on the file of violations committed against media in Syria and carrying out an organized campaign to shed light on the issue of media professionals who are detained, arrested or forcibly disappeared in Syria.

The center also recommends that all parties to the conflict respect the text of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference, to receive and impart information and ideas using any medium and without limits and geographical limitations.

The Syrian Journalists Association
Syrian center for journalistic Freedoms

special accessory

A list of media workers under detention until the end of 2021						
No	Name	place of violation	The violator	Date of violation	position	note
1	Bashar Fahmy Qaddumi	Aleppo	Syrian regime	20/8/2012	Journalist	Jordanian
2	Aboud Haddad	Aleppo	ISIS	26/6/2013	media activist	
3	Obeida batal	Aleppo	ISIS	25/7/2013	Journalist	
4	Hossam Nazem El Din	Aleppo	ISIS	25/7/2013	Technician and activist	
5	Aboud AlMaatak	Aleppo	ISIS	25/7/2013	Technician and activist	
6	Asaad Jihad Mohammed	Damascus	Syrian regime	13/8/2013	media activist	
7	Mohammed Alomar	Aleppo	ISIS	15/8/2013	media activist	
8	Samar Alsaleh	Aleppo	ISIS	15/8/2013	Journalist	
9	Mohammed Wis Muslim	Al- Raqaa	ISIS	27/8/2013	media activist	23 years
10	Rami RazzoukAl	Al- Raqaa	ISIS	1/10/2013	media activist	Deer Ez Zour
11	Yasser Yaser Alsatof/ Abo ahmed alderhafri	Aleppo	ISIS	20/11/2013	media activist	Aleppo
12	AlAhmed Khader/ known as Ahmed alAyish	Al- Raqaa	ISIS	3/12/2013	media activist	Deer Ez Zour

13	Hassan AlHamdou Abou Ayham	Aleppo	ISIS	24/3/2014	media activist	Manbij
14	John Cantley	North of Syria	ISIS	Late 2012	Journalist	British 1970
15	Abdul Karim al-Saleh, aka Abu Jamal al-Halabi	Idleb	AlNosra Front-Tahrir Alsham	15/9/2015	media activist	
16	Tamer Akr	Lattakia	Unknown	23/10/2015	media activist	23 years
17	Mahmoud Hassan	Aleppo	Unknown	12/1/2016	media activist	
18	Omar Rabie Alhassan	Aleppo	Unknown	30/11/2013	media activist	
19	Hossam Alhalabi known as Abu Waseem	Aleppo	Unknown	10/1/2014	Reporter	
20	Farhad Hamo	Hasakah	ISIS	15/12/2014	Reporter	1989
21	Mohamed Abdel Mawla Alhariri	Daraa	Syrian regime	16/4/2012	media activist	daraa 1975
22	Isaac Mokhtar	Aleppo	ISIS	15/10/2013	Journalist	Mauritania
23	Samir Kassab	Aleppo	ISIS	15/10/2013	Photographer	Lebanese
24	Austin Taes	Damsub	Syrian regime	13/8/2012	Journalist	American
25	Mohamed Alhamid	Deer Ez Zour	ISIS	14/11/2014	media activist	
26	Abdul Wahab Mulla/ Abu Setif	Aleppo	ISIS	8/11/2013	Journalist	
27	Isam abbas	Aleppo	Opposition	22/6/2018	Photographer	Hasakah
28	Kaniwar khlef	Aleppo	Opposition	22/6/2018	Photographer	kamishli 1985
29	Moatasem Al-Dairi	idleb	tahrir al-sham	1/2019	media activist	daraa 1987

30	Omaier Musab Al-Gharaibeh	Damsub	Syrian regime	10/2/2019	Photographer	Jordanian
31	Raafat Nabhan	Damsub	Syrian regime	7/3/2019	Photographer	Jordanian
32	Muhammad Tawfiq al-Saghir	Hasakah	PYD	4/6/2019	Reporter	
33	Walid Jadu Al-Rifai	daraa	Syrian regime	18/8/2020	media activist	daraa 1976
34	Ayham Abdul Aziz Al-Khalaf	Deer Ez Zour	PYD	9/1/2021	media activist	
35	Ali Saleh Al-Wakaa	Deer Ez Zour	PYD	5/2/2021	Reporter	

The annual report team
work

Ibrahim Hussein
director of The Syrian
Center for Journalistic
Freedoms

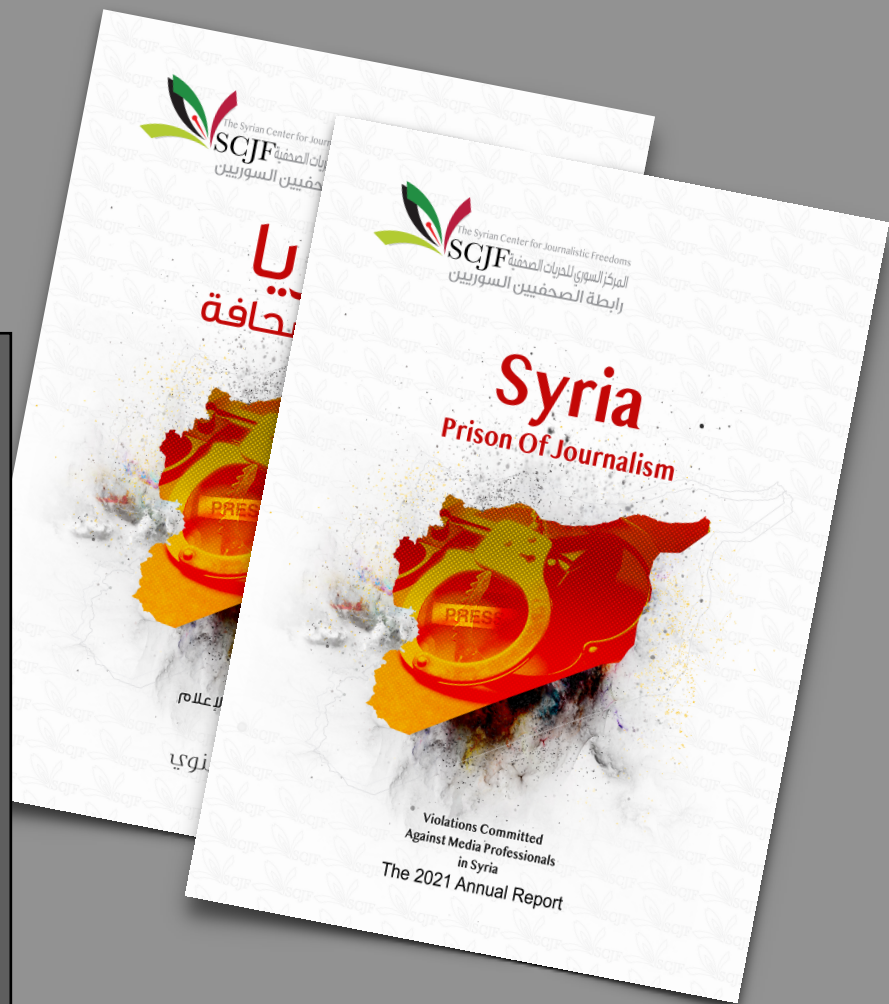
The researcher at the
Center:

Mohammed Al-Sattouf

Syrian Journalists
Association Members:
Maamoun Alboustani
Anwar Mashael
Muhammad Namus

The cover is designed by
the artist:

Yaser Abdulrahmaan



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Syrian Journalists
Association Members:

Maisa Akbik

Peri Othman-Göhringer

Sakher Edris

&

Nabil Nabo