

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/syria-number-of-citizen-journalists-01-06-2012,42715.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Syria

News stream on Syria

Number of citizen journalists killed and arrested rises daily

27 July 2012

27.07.2012 - Citizen journalist held since her arrest in Latakia a month ago

Read in Arabic / بالعربية

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Fatima Khaled Saad**, a young citizen journalist based in the port city of Latakia, has been held for the past month following her arrest on 28 June.

"We constantly discover violations of freedom of information that have been concealed by the regime," Reporters Without Borders said. "It seems that Saad's only crime was to have possessed recordings of songs praising the uprising by Syria's youth.

"She has been subjected to a great deal of physical and psychological violence during her arbitrary detention, which must end. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Saad and all the other journalists and citizen journalists detained in Syria."

Security officials arrested Saad, her father, Khaled Saad, and her brother during a search of their home in 28 June in which they seized her digital camera, memory card and telephone. Her father and brother were released but Fatima Saad was rushed to Latakia military hospital after being mistreated during a lengthy interrogation by intelligence officers.

On 17 July, she was transferred to the headquarters of the general intelligence department in Damascus where, according to some sources, she is being held in Section 291. Reporters Without Borders is very concerned about her present physical condition.

The way the regime tends to treat its opponents is grounds for concern about Saad's fate. It is clear that the nature of her past activities is such that her life could now be in danger.



24.07.2012 - State TV presenter kidnapped

Read in Arabic / بالعربية

Reporters Without Borders is worried about TV presenter **Mohamed Sayeed**, who was kidnapped from his home in the southwestern Damascus district of Jaydet Artoz on 20 July. His family has received no word of him since then and no one has claimed responsibility for his abduction. He hosts a current affairs programme on the Syrian state TV station.

Reporters Without Borders urges Sayeed's kidnappers to release him and points out that news media and journalists – both professional and citizen journalists – should not be targeted by any of the parties in a war or civil war.

17.07.2012 - Syrian citizen-journalist arrested

[Read in Arabic / بالعربية](#)

Syrian security officers have seized citizen-journalist **Salim Qabbani**, who has played an active role in first-hand reporting on that country's conflict.

Qabbani, 23, was arrested on July 14 while on assignment in Damascus. A member of the Local Coordination Committee in Homs, Qabbani has made regular appearances on news broadcasts, as we can see on [this video](#) on *Al-Jazeera*. He was an important source of news, reporting on the repression and fighting taking place in his city, a centre of the Syrian insurrection.

Reporters Without Borders expresses its grave concern for Qabbani's safety. These concerns also apply to dozens of other citizen-journalists and media professionals who are detained in Syria – a country where security services are notorious for torturing prisoners.



12.07.2012 - Targeted murders of citizen journalists

[Read in Arabic / بالعربية](#)

Reporters Without Borders is deeply saddened to learn of the murders of two more citizen journalists. Confirmation has also been received of the deaths of three others, of whom at least one lost his life in the course of journalistic activity.

Suhaib Dib was the victim of a targeted killing by the security forces in the Damascus suburb of Al-Meliha on 4 July. Although still a secondary school student, he was one of the city's most energetic activists, and was always circulating news reports and content about the uprising and the government crackdown.

Omar Al-Ghantawi, 19, was killed by a sniper while filming the shelling of the districts of Jobar and Al-Sultaniyeh in Homs on 21 June. He had given up his job as a mobile phone technician in order to cover the revolution and had shot hundreds of photos and videos documenting the Assad regime's atrocities.



Ghantawi was previously shot and wounded in the chest by a sniper after tearing down a poster of the late President Hafez Al-Assad, the father of the current dictator, Bashar Al-Assad, in the district of Baba Amr. After being confined to bed for three months, he had resumed filming as soon as he recovered.

Reporters Without Borders has been able to confirm that **Ghias Khaled Al-Hmouria** was shot dead while filming an operation by the rebel Free Syrian Army in the Damascus suburb of Douma on 25 June.

The deaths of citizen journalist **Mohamed Hamdo Hallaq** during the shelling of Azaz, a town to the north of Aleppo, on 2 July and citizen journalist **Samer Khalil Al-Sataleh** during the shelling of Douma on 28 July have also been confirmed but Reporters Without Borders has not

yet been able to establish the exact circumstances.

Release

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that **Abderahman Matar**, a reporter for the pan-Arab daily *Al-Hayat*, was released on 9 July after being held for a month. Anti-government sources said he was arrested because of his coverage. He was reportedly accused of publishing false information, undermining national sentiment, attacking the government's image and participating in unauthorized demonstrations.

Matar's release should not eclipse the fact that dozens of other professional and citizen journalists continue to languish in Syrian jails. They include the blogger **Hussein Ghreir**, who was arrested along with 15 other activists during a raid on the Damascus-based Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression on 18 February.

According to Front Line Defenders, he recently began a hunger strike in protest against the fact that the authorities continue to hold him incommunicado.

Reporters Without Borders reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of all the professional and citizen journalists held in Syria and points out that the Syrian authorities undertook to release all political detainees under Kofi Annan's peace plan.

07.07.2012 - At least seven more citizen journalists killed since late May

Reporters Without Borders is appalled to learn that five other Syrian citizens have been killed in the course of pursuing journalistic activities since late May. They are:

- **Wael Omar Bard**, who was shot dead in the northern city of Jarjanaz on 26 June.
- **Hamza Mahmoud Othman**, who was shot by a sniper in the central city of Homs on 21 June.
- **Bassim Barakat Darwish**, who was injured during an air raid in the northern town of Rastan on 13 June and died two days later.
- **Ayham Youssef Al-Hariri**, who was fatally injured by a shell in the southern city of Deraa on 13 June.
- **Abdelhamid Idriss Matar**, who was fatally injured by a shot fired from a tank in the central town of Al-Qussair on 31 May.

Reporters Without Borders has also learned that two citizen journalist died in detention – **Hassan Mohamed Al-Azhari** on 17 June and **Rami Ismael Iqbal** shortly after his arrest on 21 December 2011.

For more information about these people and how they died, read our [7 July press release](#).

19.06.2012 - Two citizen journalists killed while filming army shelling

[Read in Arabic / بالعربية](#)

Reporters Without Borders condemns the deaths of two citizen journalists, who were killed by government forces in the cities of Homs and Al-Qassir in the past nine days while trying to cover the continuing ruthless crackdown on the Syrian population.

"Their names will be added to the grim list of all those who have fallen with their cameras in their hand," Reporters Without Borders said. "We offer our heartfelt condolences to the victims' families and we urge the international community to do what is necessary to ensure that the Annan peace plan leads to a ceasefire without delay."

Ahmed Hamada, a 26-year-old cameraman, was fatally shot by a sniper in Homs on 16 June while filming on a street in the district of Bab Amr during heavy shelling and while trying to rescue a fatally-injured friend, Abd Al-Hadi Al-Qoumal (video with sensitive content).

Hamada was always patrolling the city's streets with his camera and had filmed hundreds of videos showing the regular army's shelling, especially its shelling of the old town and the district of Khaldiye.

Khaled Al-Bakir, 30, was killed by a shell in Al-Qassir (about 10 km south of Homs), while covering the army's shelling of the town on 10 June. Also known as **Abu Sliman**, he used to film the army's bombardments and atrocities against the civilian population, as well as the street demonstrations held every Friday in Homs.



Khaled Al-Bakir

Reporters Without Borders also strongly condemns the targeted shooting of a foreign journalist in the north of the country four days ago.

Ahmed Bahaddou, a Belgian freelance cameraman working for the Associated Press, sustained a gunshot injury on 15 June, 13 days after arriving in Syria with two colleagues. He was flown to London on 17 June and is now being treated in a hospital there.

05.06.2012 - Citizen journalist arrested nearby Raqqah

Read in Arabic / بالعربية

Reporters Without Borders is very worried about **Ibrahim Hajji Al-Halabi**, a citizen journalist also known as Abou Al-Tayeb Al-Souri, who was arrested at dawn on 12 May in Tel-Abyad, near the Turkish border, and was taken to the nearby northern city of Raqqah. Halabi's fate since then is not known.

The police seized his camera, laptop and three memory cards at the time of his arrest. They also searched his home, confiscating another laptop.

Civilian detainees are often tortured and it is feared that Halabi has suffered the same fate, if not worse. Reporters Without Borders calls for his immediate release, and for the release of all the professional journalists, citizen journalists and netizens currently detained in Syria.

Born in 1981, Halabi is the opposition spokesman in the northeastern province of Al-Hasakah and a member of the Syrian Revolution General Commission. He often appeared on TV stations describing what was taking place in his region. The Union of Syrian Writers called him "the voice of the revolution in the Jezireh [northeast]."

Halabi is from the Raqqah region but he and his family were relocated to Al-Hasakah after their land was expropriated to build the Tabqa Dam on the Euphrates.

01.06.2012 - Bloodbath

Read in Arabic / بالعربية

The young Syrian filmmaker **Bassel Shahade** was shot dead by a sniper in the Bab Saba district of Homs two days ago. Shahade studied photography in the United States before returning to Syria at the start of the popular uprising.

For the past three months the talented photographer and filmmaker had been covering the clashes in Homs and was one of the principal citizen journalists reporting on, among other things, the shelling of the Baba Amr district in February. His assistant and fellow director, **Ahmed Assam**, was also killed.



Two days earlier, three media activists of the Sham News Network (*SNN*) were shot dead by government forces in the Khaldieh district of Homs. The circumstances of their deaths are still unclear:

- **Ammar Mohamed Souhail**, director and Khaldieh correspondent for *SNN*.
- **Ahmed Adnan Al-Ashlaq**, an engineer working for the network.
- **Laurens Fahmi Al-Naimi**, media activist and filmmaker for *SNN* in Khaldieh. He was also its director of live broadcasting.

Reporters Without Borders has also learned of arrests on 27 May of two journalists, **Mohamed Omar Al-Khatib** and filmmaker **Bilal Ahmed Bilal**, by air force intelligence in Damascus.

Al-Khatib was arrested after being shot and wounded. Reporters Without Borders is concerned about his medial condition. According to our information, Bilal was reported to have been taken from the capital's Mezzeh airport to Sednaya prison. Both journalists had already been detained by syrian security in the past year.

The writer **Khaled Khalifa**, author of "In Praise of Hatred" published in 2006, was arrested on 25 May while he was attending a funeral and released three days later.

In February, he published an open letter to journalists and fellow writers criticizing the Chinese and Russian vetoes of a U.N. Security Council resolution on Syria.

You can download those documents on our website :

- Number of citizen journalists killed and arrested rises daily (In Arabic), (PDF - 57.8 kb)
 - 05.06.2012 : Number of citizen journalists killed and arrested rises daily (In arabic), (PDF - 140.8 kb)
 - , (JPEG - 61.4 kb)
 - 19.06.2012 : Two citizen journalists killed while filming army shelling - In arabic, (PDF - 204.9 kb)
 - 17.07.2012 - Syrian citizen-journalist arrested (in Arabic), (PDF - 35.8 kb)
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