

Press and Cultural Freedom
In Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine

Annual Report
2013

SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom
Samir Kassir Foundation

Cover picture:

This report is dedicated to James Foley, Edouard Elias, Samir Kassab, Austin Tice, Nicolas Hénin, Pierre Torres, Javier Espinosa, Ricardo Garcia Vilanova, Didier François, Isaac Moctar, Bashar Fehmi Al-Qadoumi, and all other journalists kidnapped while covering the conflict in Syria.

© 2014 Samir Kassir Foundation

Address: 63 Zahrani Street, Sioufi, Ashrafieh, Beirut - Lebanon

Tel/Fax: (961)-1-397331

Email: info@skeyesmedia.org

<http://www.skeyesmedia.org>

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the Samir Kassir Foundation and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Translation: Nada Sleiman

English editing: Eric Reidy

Graphic design: Jamal Awada

Printing: Chemaly & Chemaly, Beirut

Contents

FOREWORD	5
SKEYES IN 2013	7
LEBANON	11
SYRIA	22
SYRIA - CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT	38
JORDAN	40
PALESTINE	44
PALESTINE - CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT	59
PROSPECTS	61
FRENCH VERSION	65

Foreword

Breaking the Silence

Ayman Mhanna

In 2013, the SKeyes Center continued its consistent monitoring of violations against media and cultural actors in the Levant region. If the nature of these violations has not changed over the last three years, their intensity and the level of violence involved have increased dramatically.

The pages of this report are full of details about the killings in Syria, where more than 140 journalists, citizen journalists, writers, artists, and intellectuals lost their lives in 2013. Also, dozens of media professionals were kidnapped while trying to tell the world about the suffering of the Syrian people and the horrific battles in various regions of Syria. In Lebanon, radical demonstrators and partisan activists, who feel stronger than the state and mightier than the law, frequently assaulted journalists. In Jordan, the increasing state control over media outlets and the closure of hundreds of news websites severely constrained the space for liberty. Furthermore, the wounds of the Palestinian press corps remained open as journalists and photographers were once again victims of systematic attacks by Israeli forces and the ever-widening divisions among Palestinian factions.

Within this context, a more dangerous risk to free speech is spreading throughout the region: silence.

The extremists that kidnap journalists in Syria remain silent as to the fate of their captives. Not a word is spoken by those who currently detain Samir Kassab, Javier Espinosa and Ricardo Garcia Vilanova, Didier François and Edouard Elias, Nicolas Hénin and Pierre Torres, Bashar Fehmi Al-Qadoumi, Isaac Moctar, James Foley and Austin Tice, and many others who came from all over the world to bear witness to the Syrian tragedy.

Silence is crippling peaceful activists who, in 2011, wanted to bring spring to Damascus and showed the world unprecedented courage when met by the worst kind of repression. Today, their dreams are shattered and the last ones dreaming may very well face the same fate as Razan Zaitouneh.

The silence of international organizations allows Israeli soldiers and policemen to target Palestinian journalists, and Israeli authorities to adopt racist laws and violate the internationally recognized civil, political, and cultural rights of the Palestinian people.

Silence is what Jordanian authorities also seek through their attempts to curtail freedom of expression and impose self-censorship on journalists and artists. After tightening their grip over the editorial boards and the economic sustainability of print and audiovisual media, Jordanian services restricted access to free and independent online news sites.

Silence is how Lebanon's security services, judiciary, and what is left of its state institutions react after each assault on a journalist or a photographer. Militias and armed thugs beat photographers, detain reporters, and check journalists' identities while security forces do nothing but watch. These assailants are protected by their feeling of impunity, by confessional powers, or by a government policy statement – if not all of the above.

Silence is also what censorship authorities expect every time they ban a theater play or cut scenes from a movie. It is what reactionary forces push for under religious motives and self-declared sectarian rights.

Silence, torpor, and inaction... What every tyranny wants.

Silence is what SKeyes will never surrender to. We are committed to breaking the silence.

SKeys in 2013

January 18-20	SKeys holds its fourth international conference, entitled “Media Coverage of International Justice”, at the Riviera Hotel, Beirut, in partnership with the Global Center for Journalism and Democracy and with the support of the European Union, the Foundation for the Future, and Canal France International.
February 7	SKeys and L’Orient-Le Jour launch a series of short videos based on interviews with ten Lebanese families in different regions of the country. The weekly videos address the families’ expectations and aspirations ahead of the parliamentary election, which was initially scheduled in June 2013. This series, entitled “ <i>Le poids d’une voix</i> ” (The Strength of a Voice), was produced with the support of the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
February 27	SKeys participates in a panel debate about censorship and freedom of expression in Lebanon held at the Faculty of Law of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik.
March 1	SKeys and the French Institute in Lebanon organize a public discussion with French journalist Christian Chesnot, entitled “Explaining the Middle East”, at the French embassy in Beirut.
March 3	SKeys participates in a conference, entitled “Conflict Reporting and Social Media”, at the Lebanese American University in Beirut organized by BBC Media Action and Agence France-Presse Foundation.
March 10-12	SKeys participates in a workshop, entitled “Monitoring Violations of Press Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa”, organized and hosted by the Doha Centre for Media Freedom in Doha, Qatar.
March 12	SKeys launches its 2012 Press and Cultural Freedom annual report.
March 13	SKeys hosts a debate around “Lebanese Voters’ Expectations from the Media and Politicians” at the Riviera Hotel, Beirut, in partnership with L’Orient-Le Jour and the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections. The debate was part of “ <i>Le poids d’une voix</i> ” project and supported by the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
March 15-17	SKeys holds a training workshop for journalists, entitled “Covering the Oil and Gas Sector”, at the Riviera Hotel, Beirut. The training was organized in partnership with the Global Center for Journalism and Democracy with the support of the European Union.
March 19	SKeys participates in a panel debate on freedoms and human rights in Lebanon at the UNESCO Palace in Beirut on the occasion of the EU-Lebanon cooperation day.

SKeys in 2013

April 15	SKeys participates in a public discussion, entitled “Political Participation, Peace and Reconciliation”, organized by the European Union delegation in Lebanon at Balamand University.
April 18-20	SKeys participates in the Global Security Forum in Bratislava, Slovakia.
May 1	SKeys presents its achievements, future activities, and statistical information about media and cultural freedom violations in the Levant during the Samir Kassir Foundation’s annual gala dinner at Casino du Liban, Jounieh.
May 17-18	SKeys participates in the “Arab-European Dialogue Forum on the Basics of Liberalism” organized by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Cairo, Egypt.
May 19-21	SKeys participates in the second Arab Media Freedom Defenders Forum and the International Press Institute’s annual congress hosted by the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists in Amman, Jordan.
June 4	SKeys and 18 other international and regional press freedom and human rights organizations issue a joint statement expressing concern about the deteriorating health of Syrian human rights lawyer Khalil Maatouq, who had been detained by the Syrian regime since October 2, 2012.
June 13-14	SKeys participates in the 4M conference on “Innovation and Social Media” and in a special public discussion about covering the Syrian conflict organized by Canal France International in Montpellier, France.
June 19-21	SKeys participates in Deutsche Welle’s Global Media Forum and in a special public discussion, entitled “More Economic Freedom, More Media Freedom?”, organized by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Bonn, Germany.
July 4	SKeys issues a book, entitled “A Fractured Mirror: Beirut’s Cultural Scene and the Search for Identity”, by US journalist Eric Reidy.
July 5-7	SKeys holds its fifth international conference, entitled “Freedom, Journalism and Religion”, at Al-Bustan Hotel, Beit Mery, in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and with the support of the European Union and Canal France International.
July 8	SKeys and the Lebanese NGO ALEF-Act for Human Rights publish a booklet, entitled “Arbitrary Detention and Freedom of Expression in Lebanon”, with the support of the European Union and the Foundation for the Future.
July 9	SKeys launches the “Journalist Survival Guide”, a 14-episode web-video series providing physical and online safety guidance to journalists in conflict zones during a public event at Coop d’Etat in Beirut. The series was produced with support from the National Endowment for Democracy.

SKeys in 2013

July 12-14	SKeys hosts a retreat for 45 foreign journalists covering the Syrian conflict at Al-Bustan Hotel, Beit Mery, with the participation of Reporters without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the Rory Peck Trust and support from the European Union.
August 30	SKeys publishes a special report, entitled “Journalists’ Security in War Zones –Lessons from Syria”, by Irish journalist Shane Farrell, based on the discussions that took place during the July 12-14 retreat for journalists covering the Syrian conflict.
September 2-13	SKeys participates in an international training workshop, entitled “Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom”, in Cologne, Germany, hosted by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.
September 11-12	SKeys participates in a conference, entitled “How to Support Journalists Covering the Syrian Conflict – Joint Strategies for Assistance”, organized by the Committee to Protect Journalists and the Rory Peck Trust in Istanbul, Turkey.
October 31	SKeys and the Communication and Information office at the UNESCO delegation in Beirut host a consultation meeting with local and international organizations providing support and training to Syrian journalists in Lebanon.
November 4-5	SKeys participates in a conference, entitled “Freedom, Journalism and Religion”, organized by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the Jordan Media Institute, and the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies in Amman, Jordan.
November 9	SKeys participates in a public debate, entitled “Practices and Challenges of Journalism in Conflict Zones”, during the annual French book fair at the BIEL center in Beirut. The debate was organized by the Francophone University Agency with the support of the Swiss embassy in Lebanon and took place before the announcement of the winners of the Young Francophone Journalist awards.
November 13-15	SKeys participates in the 4M Forum for Journalism and Social Media and in a special panel debate, entitled “Conflict Sensitive Journalism”, organized by Canal France International and BBC Media Action in Tbilisi, Georgia.
November 16	SKeys participates in a solidarity sit-in at Martyrs’ Square, Beirut for Lebanese cameraman Samir Kassab, who was kidnapped in northern Syria on October 15, 2013.
November 22-24	SKeys participates in the Halifax International Security Forum, organized with the support of the Canadian Ministry of Defence in Halifax, Canada.

SKeyes in 2013

December 3	SKeyes' website www.skeyesmedia.org wins the World Summit Award for best e-content in Arabic during a ceremony held in Manama, Bahrain.
December 6	Canal France International launches its "4M Mashreq" program supporting innovative new online media initiatives in Levantine countries in partnership with SKeyes and AltCity during a workshop held at the latter's office in Beirut.
December 8-10	SKeyes participates in a conference on freedom of information in the Middle East and North Africa organized by Chatham House, Oxfam, and Save the Children in Amman, Jordan.
December 9-10	SKeyes participates in a conference on the right to information organized by the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik.
December 10	SKeyes hosts a press conference announcing the kidnapping of Spanish journalists Javier Espinosa and Ricardo Garcia Vilanova in northern Syria on September 19, 2013.
December 11	SKeyes and 15 other regional and international press freedom and human rights organizations issue a joint statement calling for the immediate release of Syrian human rights defender Razan Zaitouneh and her colleagues from the Violations Documentation Center, Wael Hamada, Nazem Hamadi, and Samira Khalil, after their kidnapping in Syria.

Aggression is Left Unpunished and Censorship is Back

Firas Talhouk

The alarming security situation in 2013 had a negative impact on media and cultural freedom in Lebanon. Media institutions and their employees were victims of multiple violations while covering explosions that rocked more than one region of the country as well as other clashes and protests.

The year 2013 also marked the return of censorship to Lebanon. Local and foreign movies and plays were banned. This renewal poses a threat to cultural growth after a significant decline in censorship in the previous year. Also, the Anti-Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Rights Bureau summoned several journalists and bloggers, compounding a general lack of clarity about the legal powers of this new unit at the Internal Security Forces (ISF).

Security institutions also prevented journalists from doing their work on more than one occasion and Hezbollah members detained several journalists. Additionally, groups responsible for sending multiple death threats to journalists via social networks and by phone were not brought in for questioning. This lack of follow up strengthened the sense of impunity felt by freedom violators.

Furthermore, demonstrators beat journalists and broke their equipment in various areas where armed clashes took place because reporters and photographers were seen as representatives of the political parties that own the media institutions where they work. LBCI reporter Edmond Sassine and cameraman Pierre Youssef escaped death after a sniper opened fire on their car in Tripoli's Jabal Mohsen neighborhood on October 26. Also, on December 5, members of an armed group in Tripoli detained New TV reporter Rona Al-Halabi and her colleagues for hours before they were released. Security forces and the army failed to provide journalists with the

necessary protection or bring the perpetrators to justice in these situations and several others.

Photographers from The Daily Star and Reuters were also beaten while covering the prayer at Al-Zaatari mosque in Saida on June 28. Additionally, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir's supporters attacked OTV, New TV, MTV, and Future TV crews in Abra on July 5. Also, security forces did not even attempt to intervene on May 14 when workers at a major construction site in Beirut beat journalist Habib Battah; they also forced him to delete photos he had taken during the demolition of ruins on the same construction site.

On three major occasions, security forces mistreated journalists. Customs officers assaulted and detained a New TV crew in Beirut and broke its cameras on November 26; policemen beat *Al-Akhabar* journalist Qassem Qassem on March 20 during a demonstration demanding the release of George Ibrahim Abdallah, who has been serving a life sentence in France since 1984; and soldiers and ISF officers assaulted dozens of bloggers and civic activists on June 20 during a protest against the extension of the Parliament's mandate.

Additionally, the Syrian crisis had an indirect impact on the status of press freedom. On March 26, just a few days after Spanish journalist Oscar Gutiérrez was denied entry to Lebanon, General Security detained *Al-Arabiya* correspondent Mohammad Dughmush for seven hours at Beirut International Airport because his passport – like the Spaniard's – bore a stamp from the Free Syrian Army.

Hezbollah also encroached upon the powers of security forces and detained journalists in the areas under its control before and after the bombing attacks that shook Beirut's southern suburb. Hezbollah members detained journalist

Rabih Damaj and questioned him for five hours on May 10 and held American journalist Josh Wood for an hour after the Rweis bombing on August 15. Also, journalist Hussein Shamas was arrested for several hours at a checkpoint set up by Hezbollah members in Mar Mikhael at the entrance of the southern suburb; Hezbollah militants insulted him and confiscated his car. And, British journalist Martin Armstrong was detained for 45 minutes in Bir Hassan on November 19 while covering the attack on the Iranian embassy.

ISF's Anti-Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Rights Bureau questioned several journalists and bloggers who published controversial opinion articles on their sites and social network accounts. The editor-in-chief of *Al-Hadath* News website, Abdallah Qameh, was interrogated for nine hours. The bureau also interrogated journalist Mohannad Hage Ali for five hours following a complaint filed by the Lebanese Forces against the author of an article published on a blog launched by Hage Ali. Writer Lokman Slim and journalist Rasha Al-Amin were questioned about the same case as well.

In the cultural scene, censorship resurged after a significant decline in 2012. General Security banned the play "*Bto2ta3 aw ma Bto2ta3*" (Will it Pass or Not?), written and directed

by Lucien Bourjeily and produced by March, a Lebanese freedom of expression NGO. Bourjeily said that this form of censorship pushes playwrights to practice self-censorship, which threatens artistic creation in Lebanon. The censorship committee asked the Interior Ministry to ban Farah Al-Shaer's short film "*Wababtuka al-Mutad*" (I Gave You Pleasure) and Alain Guiraudie's French movie "*L'inconnu du lac*" (Stranger by the Lake). The films were subsequently withdrawn from the Beirut International Film Festival.

Unofficial censorship also continued. "Farewell Beirut", a painting by Mohammad Saad that depicted several Lebanese politicians, was withdrawn from an exhibition organized at Le Gray hotel in May. And, Eagle Films Company cut 30 minutes of Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street" before reinstating most deleted scenes two weeks later.

All these violations show that media and cultural freedoms in Lebanon continue to face three major obstacles: impunity of those who harm journalists, attacks carried out by security forces as well as non-state groups, and the return of censorship on artistic and cultural works. Lebanon will continue to drop in international freedom of expression indexes as long as these challenges are not addressed.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

January

1/22 Journalist May Chidiac receives online death threats.

February

2/1 Libyan cameraman Walid Mohammad arrested upon landing at Beirut airport and transferred to the military justice because his name appeared on the wanted people's list.

2/5 Policemen at Al-Burj police station force blogger Abir Ghattas to remove a post from her blog criticizing Spinneys supermarket's general manager in Lebanon.

2/8 *Al-Anwar* correspondent Fathi Al-Masri assaulted and his camera smashed during a sit-in in Tripoli.

2/21 Political writer Saleh Al-Machnouk summoned for questioning after posting a status on Facebook criticizing the Maronite Patriarch.

March

3/8 New TV Bekaa correspondent Hassan Al-Jarrah beaten by protesters during a sit-in organized in Jlala, after the arrest of a Muslim cleric.

3/11 Distribution of the latest edition of French magazine VSD suspended because it contained a report on the gay lobby in the Vatican.

3/16 Armed militants steal New TV's live broadcast vehicle in Tripoli.

3/16 Theater actor Joe Kodeih receives death threats.

3/17 New TV crew, comprised of reporter Nawal Berri, cameraman Samir Asmar, and technician Mohammad Al-Molla, attacked with stones in the Qasqas neighborhood of Beirut.

3/18 New TV reporter Nawal Berri assaulted in Corniche Al-Mazraa, Beirut, and the TV station's live broadcast vehicle attacked.

3/20 Writer Rami Olleik receives death threats after voicing anti-Hezbollah positions.

3/20 Policemen beat *Al-Akbar* journalist Qassem Qassem near the residence of the French ambassador in Beirut.

3/26 General Security detains *Al-Arabija* correspondent Mohammad Dughmush for seven hours at Beirut airport because of a Free Syrian Army stamp on his passport a few days after Spanish journalist Oscar Gutiérrez was denied entry to Lebanon for the same reason.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

April

4/9	<i>Al-Mustaqbal</i> newspaper's website hacked.
4/11	The Anti-Cybercrime Bureau at the Internal Security Forces (ISF) interrogates the editor-in-chief of <i>Al-Hadath</i> News website, Abdallah Qameh, for nine hours.
4/11	<i>Al-Romad</i> News website hacked.
4/18	Sky News Arabia cameraman Alain Khoury attacked by young Syrian men in Hamra.
4/26	Minister of the Interior Marwan Charbel bans Ziad Doueiri's movie "The Attack" on the grounds that several scenes were shot in Israel and many actors were Israeli.

May

5/8	The NGO March cancels the screening of Ziad Doueiri's "The Attack" citing "security reasons."
5/8	A painting by artist Mohammad Saad, entitled "Farewell Beirut", portraying several Lebanese political leaders, removed from a public exhibit.
5/9	Hezbollah militants arrest journalist Rabih Damaj at an Internet café, where he was using a computer to send an article about Lebanon's Press Martyrs' Day, and interrogate him.
5/14	Journalist Habib Battah beaten and forced to erase pictures he took at a construction site in Beirut.
5/20	A sniper shoots at an OTV vehicle in Tripoli.
5/27	A gunman shoots at a camera belonging to an <i>Al-Jazeera</i> English crew in Tripoli.
5/28	A camera belonging to LBCI smashed in Bab Al-Tebbaneh, Tripoli.
5/31	Gunmen beat up AFP photographer Ghassan Sweidan in Tripoli.

June

6/1	Gunmen surround journalist Domouh Al-Asmar's house in Tripoli and force her to apologize for an article she published about Salafists.
6/9	Gunshot at the car of Future TV correspondent Sleiman Amhaz in Baalbeck.
6/18	Two gunshots at an MTV live broadcast vehicle in Saida.

6/20	Soldiers and policemen beat bloggers and civil society activists during a rally in downtown Beirut protesting the postponement of the parliamentary election.
6/24	<i>Al-Mayadeen</i> cameraman Ali Ayash assaulted in Qasqas, Beirut.
6/28	MP Nadim Gemayel's bodyguards assault civil society activists near the office of the feminist NGO Nasawiya in Beirut.
6/28	Photographers Ahmad Mantash, Mohammad Al-Zaatari, and Ali Hosheish assaulted while covering the Friday prayer at Al-Zaatari mosque in Saida.
6/28	Civil society activist and blogger Tarek Abu Zeinab beaten by a Popular Nasserite Organization militant in Saida.
6/28	MTV crew prevented from filming in Tripoli.
6/29	MP Nadim Gemayel's bodyguard runs over journalist Nidal Ayoub with his car in front of the Gemmayzeh police station in Beirut.

July

7/5	OTV, MTV, New TV, and Future TV crews assaulted in Abra.
7/9	MTV and LBCI crews prevented from covering the aftermath of the explosion in Bir Al-Abed in Beirut's southern suburb.
7/26	The Anti-Cybercrime Bureau interrogates journalist Mohannad Hage Ali about an article published on <i>Al-Muhasaba</i> blog accusing Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea of war crimes.

August

8/3	NBN's website hacked.
8/15	Hezbollah security agents detain US journalist Josh Wood for one hour after an explosion in Rweis in Beirut's southern suburb.
8/27	The Anti-Cybercrime Bureau interrogates writer and publisher Lokman Slim about the <i>Al-Muhasaba</i> article accusing Samir Geagea of war crimes.
8/28	General Security bans a play criticizing censorship of cultural activities produced by the NGO March.

September

9/11	The Anti-Cybercrime Bureau summons journalist Rasha Al-Amin for questioning about the <i>Al-Muhasaba</i> article accusing Samir Geagea of war crimes.
------	---

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

9/13 Journalist Hussein Shamas detained at a Hezbollah checkpoint in Beirut's southern suburb.

9/20 New TV cameraman Abbas Hayek detained at a Hezbollah checkpoint in Beirut's southern suburb.

October

10/3 The censorship committee bans the projection of Lebanese movie "Wahabtuka Al-Mutaa" (I Gave You Pleasure) and French movie "L'inconnu du lac" (Stranger by the Lake) at the Beirut International Film Festival.

10/26 A sniper shoots at an LBCI vehicle in Tripoli.

10/31 An LBCI vehicle is damaged after a bomb went off in Jlala, Central Bekaa.

November

11/19 Hezbollah security agents detain British journalist Martin Armstrong for 45 minutes after the bombing of the Iranian embassy south of Beirut.

11/23 New TV receives threats through Twitter.

11/25 The Military Tribunal sentences journalist Rami Aysha *in absentia* to six months in prison on charges of illegal arms trade.

11/26 Customs officers assault and detain New TV journalists and cameramen in Beirut.

December

12/5 Gunmen detain New TV crew, led by reporter Rona Al-Halabi, in Tripoli.

12/9 The Military Tribunal sentences journalist Rami Aysha to two weeks in prison after he appealed the previous decision.

12/24 MTV cameraman Elie Shahwan injured while filming the arrest of a drug trafficking gang in Beirut.

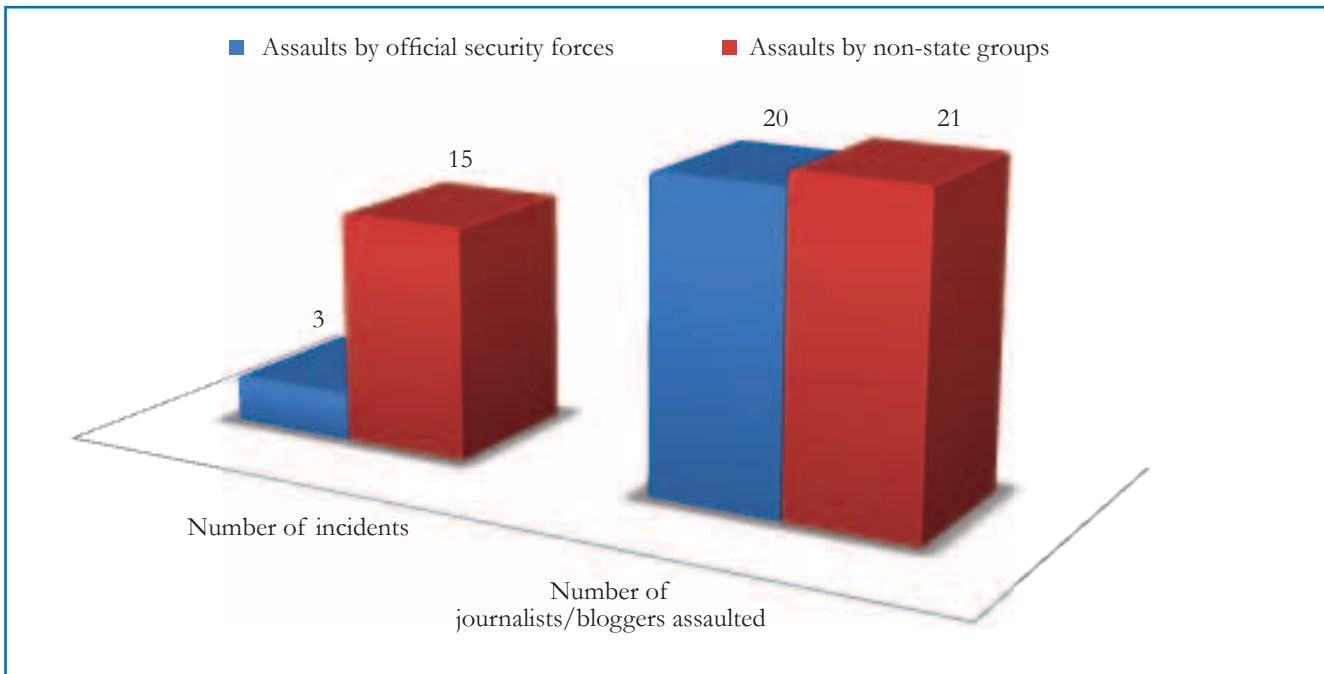
12/27 Journalist May Chidiac receives death threats.

12/29 *Al-Mustaqbal* newspaper photographer Ibrahim Bikal injured during the funeral of Mohammad Shaar at the Khashokji mosque in Beirut.

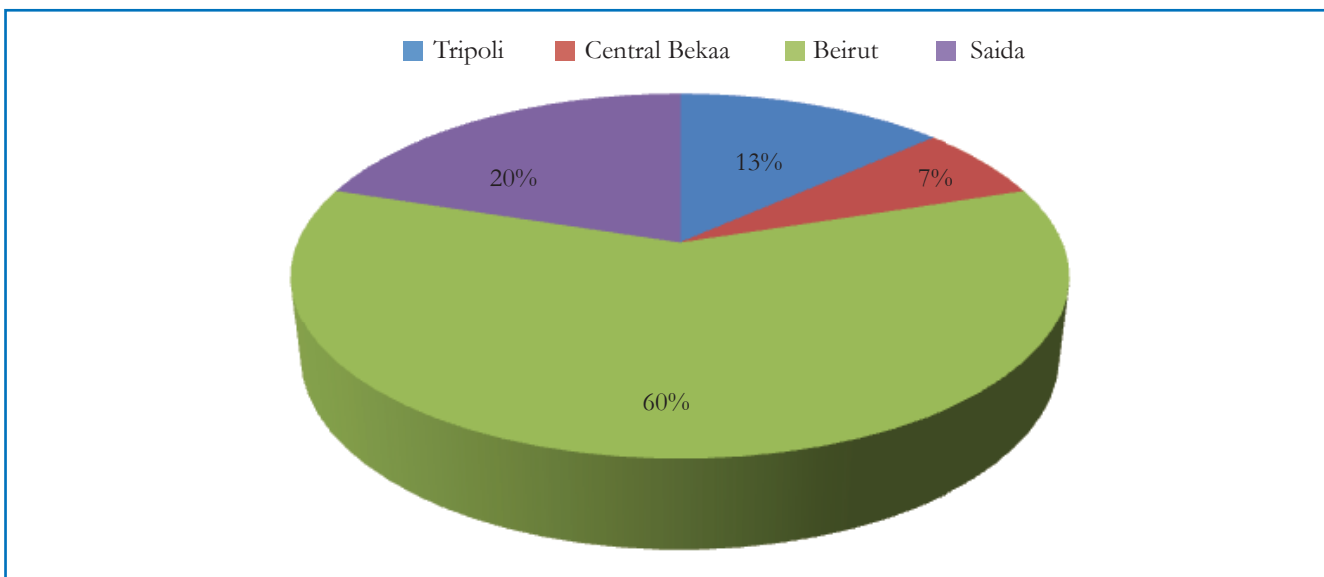
12/30 Thirty minutes of Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street" cut by the film importer.

Facts & Figures – Lebanon 2013

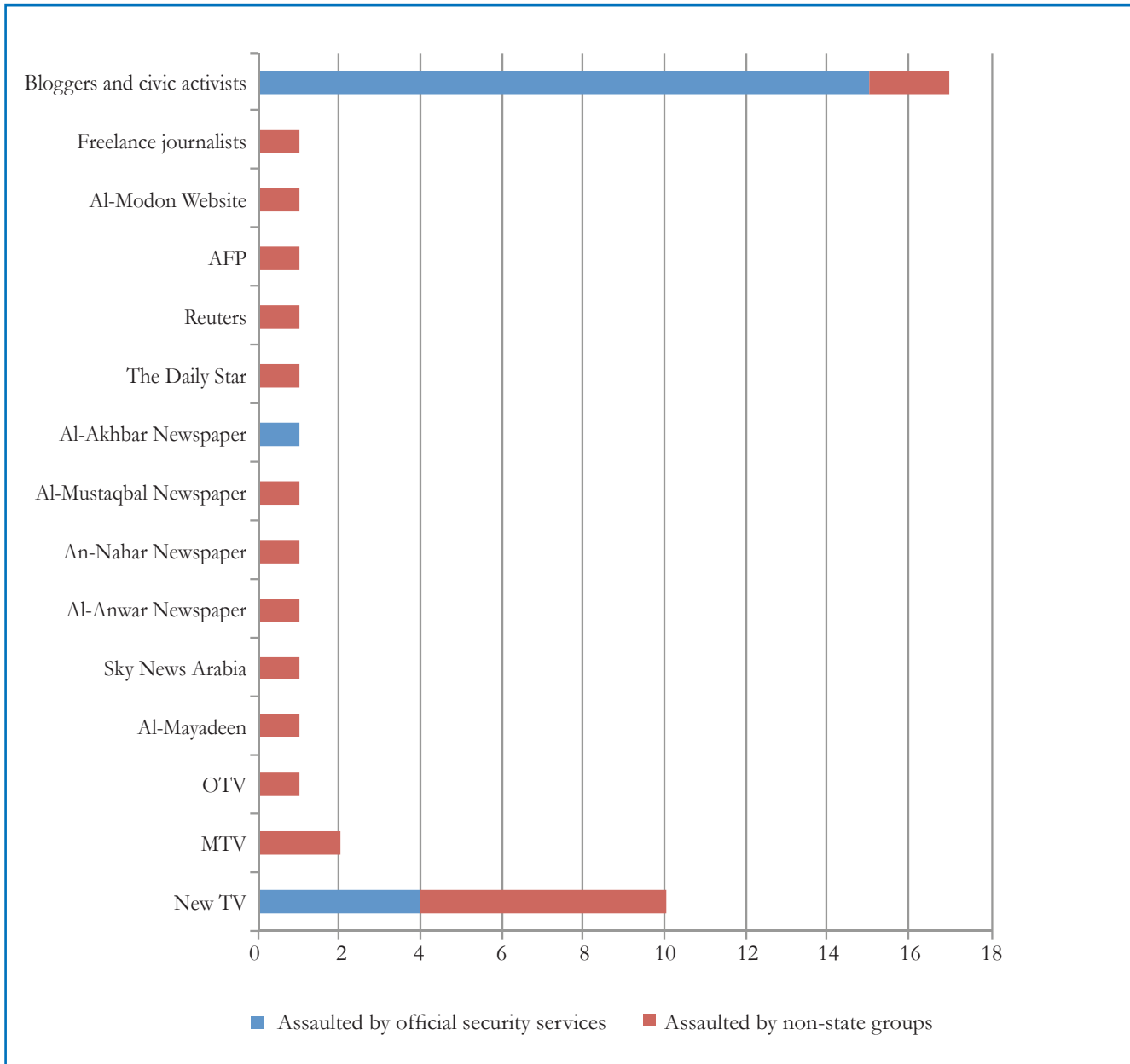
Physical assaults on journalists, bloggers, and civic activists



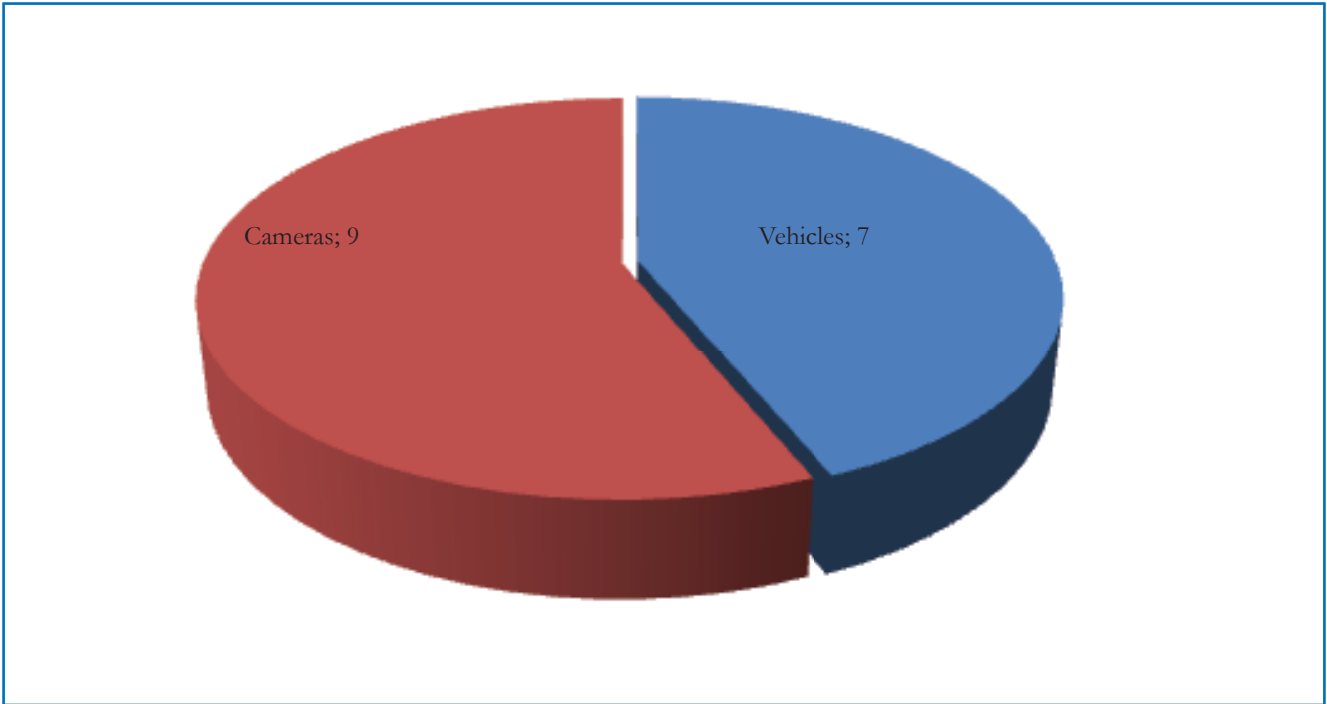
Physical assaults on journalists by non-state groups per region



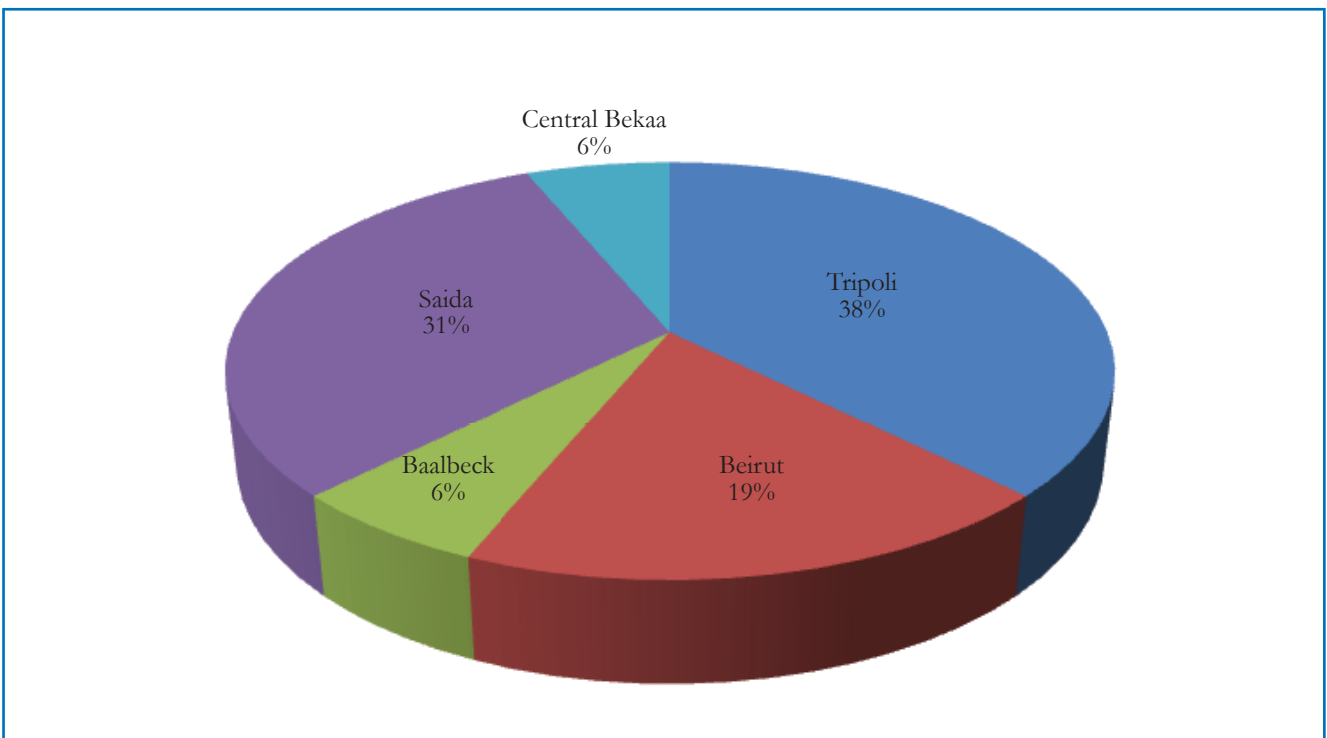
Employers of assaulted journalists, bloggers, and civic activists



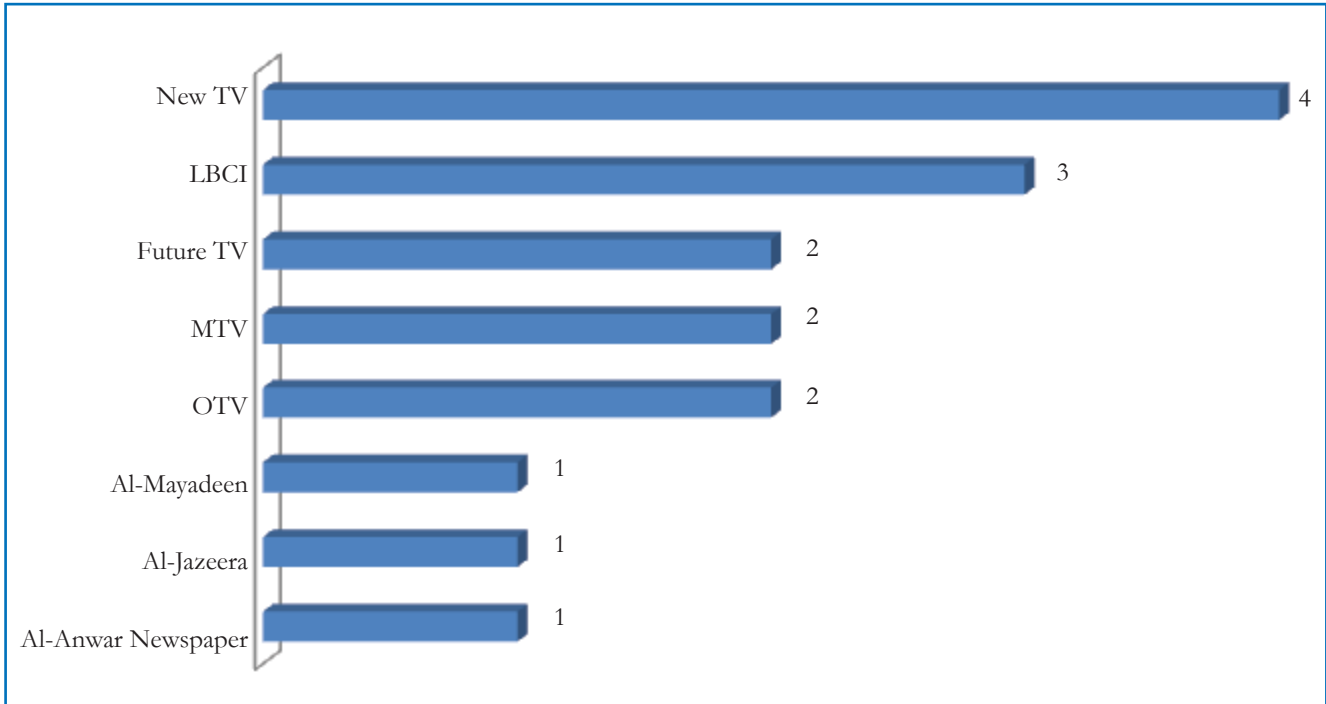
Attacks on media outlets' equipment and property



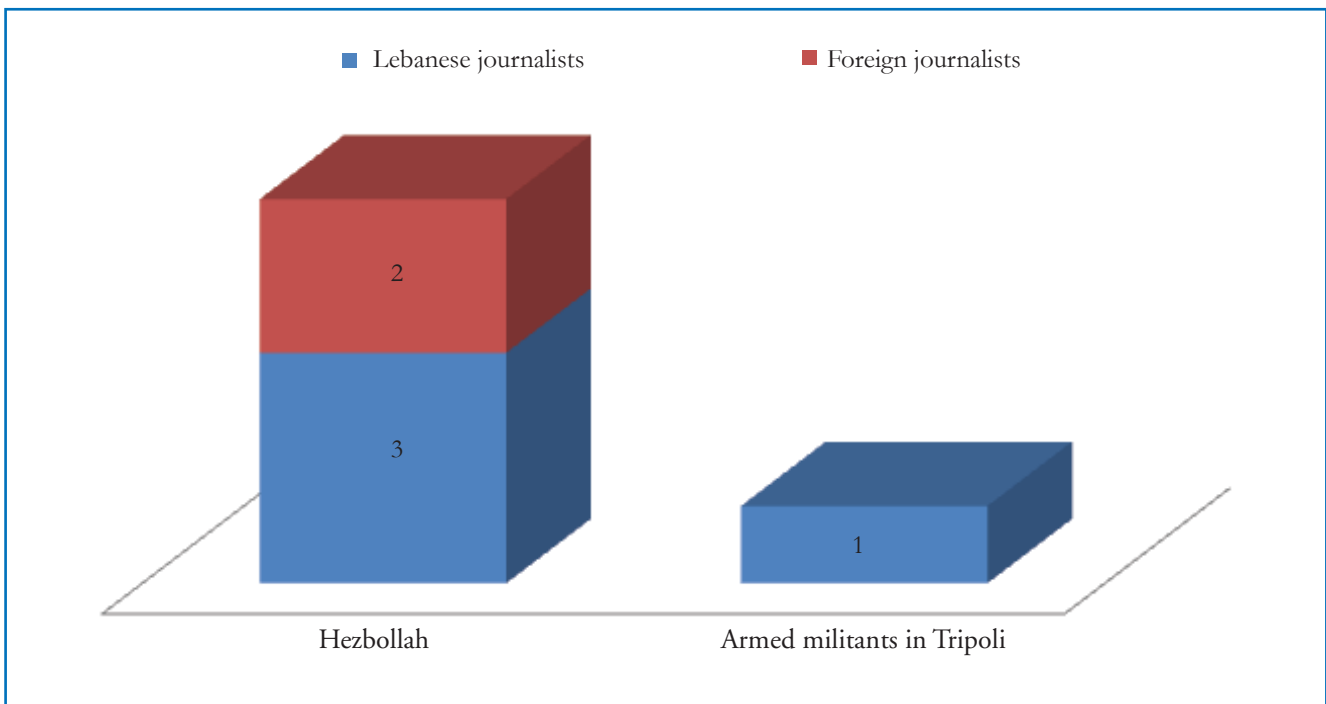
Attacks on media outlets' equipment and property per region



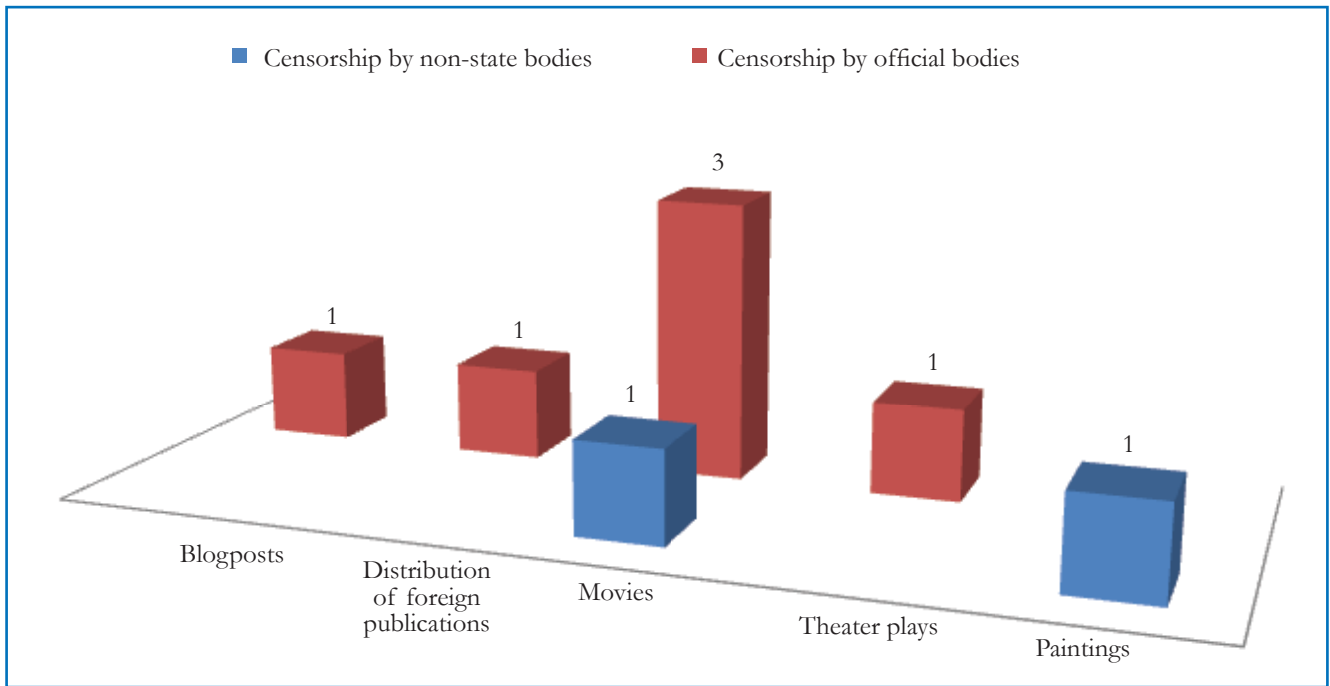
Media outlets whose equipment and property were attacked



Arrest and detention of journalists by non-state groups



Censorship on media and culture



The Two-Front Battle of Journalists and Civic Activists in Syria

Jaber Bakr

After three years of struggle, today, the Syrian people have nothing left but their pens and camera lenses to face the daily massacres in their land. Death has been tirelessly knocking on their doors for the past three years. More than 150,000 citizens have been killed, 200,000 people are reported missing, more than 3.5 million Syrians have sought refuge in neighboring countries, and seven million others are now internally displaced. Also, 148 journalists, artists, filmmakers, writers, and citizen journalists, including two Frenchmen, one Iraqi, and three Palestinians, were killed in 2013. The number of casualties within the fields of media and culture has increased by 70 percent between 2012 and 2013.

The Syrian regime often banned foreign media from entering areas under its control, particularly during the first half of 2013. As a result, many journalists entered Syria illegally in order to cover developments on the ground. The armed opposition was providing many foreign journalists with help in 2012 through early 2013.

However, the support given to foreign journalists and reporters only lasted a few months. They soon became victims of the division within the armed opposition, whose organizational structure remains extremely fragmented. Also, thousands of foreign jihadist fighters have entered the country. Radical Islamist groups have taken control of large areas in northern Syria and established a new authoritarian regime in these regions. Their actions mirror the record of the Assad regime in terms of murder and intimidation, including the targeting of both Syrian and foreign news providers.

Nonetheless, the Assad regime remains one step ahead when it comes to the nature and level of violations it commits. Since the beginning of the Syrian revolution, the regime has not spared any effort to muzzle the people by targeting citizen

journalists, including those providing insight into daily life across Syria and those covering the fighting embedded with the Free Syrian Army (FSA). For instance, the regime's warplanes shelled the offices of several of the media institutions that have been established during the revolution in both Al-Qaboun and Aleppo. It is worth noting that while the regime knew only too well where radical Islamist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) and Al-Nusra Front, had their headquarters, air raids often spared them.

The regime resorted to other cruel techniques as well. Its troops shelled safe residential neighborhoods and civil institutions and then blamed the armed opposition. The Aleppo University massacre, where the regime's air raids killed more than 80 students, is just one example of this tactic. The official media accused the rebels of carrying out this attack almost instantly.

Additionally, intelligence services and security agencies continued arresting writers and journalists and many perished during torture, such as the prominent Syrian writer and economist Omar Aziz. Others are still held without charges or trial, as in the case of lawyer and human rights defender Khalil Maatouq and dozens of other activists.

The regime also uses its repressive judicial institutions, specifically the anti-terrorism court, to detain dozens of Syrian activists and journalists, including three members of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression. The court leveled accusations of terrorism and issued many arbitrary sentences. For example, Syrian journalist Bilal Bilal was sentenced to 15 years in prison, which shows that the court is nothing more than an arm of the Syrian intelligence services. Its aim is to leave journalists and activists behind bars for

as long as possible. This also proves that the Syrian government continues to hide behind an institutional structure to reinforce the message that the regime has been spreading since the beginning of the revolution. While on the surface Assad's government suspended martial law, it replaced it with the concept of "fighting terrorism." The rhetoric of terrorism has a strong resonance with Western governments and justifies the regime's actions of arresting and killing its enemies.

Again under the pretext of fighting terrorism, the regime received the direct support of its traditional allies, namely Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, and various Iraqi Shiite militias that entered Syria to fight alongside Assad's army. Therefore, the new battle between a myriad of radical Islamist groups has further complicated the conflict. Thousands of foreign jihadist fighters arrived to Syria and joined ISIS. In the spring of 2013 the Syrian conflict evolved from a revolution against a dictatorship aimed at regaining freedom and dignity into a sectarian battleground. This shift allowed ISIS to establish a foundation in northern Syria. ISIS has implemented its own repressive methods including detention centers and religious courts. Furthermore, it abducted dozens of Syrian civic activists and news providers. Also, ISIS was responsible for the execution of a number of citizen journalists who opposed its policies.

ISIS's actions helped the regime promote the "it's either Al-Qaeda or us" argument. ISIS kidnapped Italian priest and writer Paolo Dall'Oglio in Raqqa and more than 15 foreign journalists and photographers in different areas of northern Syria. It has refused to negotiate for their release. ISIS members also broke into several media offices in the Aleppo, Raqqa, Idlib, and Latakia governorates, stole the equipment, arrested the employees, and put them in prisons similar to those of the Assad regime.

But, ISIS is not the only organization that perpetrated violations against journalists and media professionals. An Islamist faction

abducted human rights activist Razan Zaitouneh and her colleagues in eastern Ghouta. Other groups have kidnapped foreign journalists in Al-Qussair, Qalamoun, Yabroud, Rankous, and Flita in Rif Dimashq before negotiating their release. These actions show that repression is still widespread and requires both a political and a military solution from the Syrian opposition forces. Additionally, Kurdish factions also played a significant role in the repression of Syrian journalists and media activists in provinces they control.

Banning access to foreign press will erase Syrian news from international media and, subsequently, from the international community's set of priorities. The regime's media institutions would then find it easier to promote their version of the facts.

At the same time local, pro-democracy media efforts need more support, skill development, and resources to ensure the emergence of a free press in any transitional phase. Fixing the many flaws of the Syrian revolution can only be done through the initiation of a Syrian civilian dynamic that is capable of operating despite the lack of security in the regions under the control of the armed opposition.

This long and painful description of violations in the media and cultural scene highlights the tragic reality in Syria today and in the foreseeable future. The emergence of radical Islamist groups converged with the Syrian regime's need to use Iranian forces, Iraqi extremist militias, and Lebanon's Hezbollah to create an environment conducive to sectarian tensions and killings. The Assad regime used this development as a lifeline and declared itself the protector of secular values and confessional minorities.

Yet, amidst the blood and destruction, Syrian civil society is still alive and is trying its best to oppose all forms of repression. Today, the revolution continues on two fronts. The first is against the Assad regime and its allied militias, and the second is against ISIS and its henchmen.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

January

1/1	Syrian regime forces arrest writer Mufid Dayoub in Tartous.
1/2	Citizen journalist Yasser Nadam killed in Rif Dimashq.
1/4	Khaled Al-Khatib, director of Maadamiyat Al-Sham's local council media office, killed.
1/4	Photographer and citizen journalist Moataz Mansour killed in Rif Dimashq.
1/4	<i>Ad-Downia</i> TV correspondent Suheil Al-Ali killed in Rif Dimashq.
1/6	Citizen journalist Wissam Burhan killed in Zabadani, Rif Dimashq.
1/13	Pro-opposition security forces arrest Orient TV correspondent Mossaab Al-Hamadi in Hama.
1/14	Citizen journalist Bassem Al-Zoabi killed in Deraa.
1/15	Syrian soldiers execute citizen journalist Ahmad Al-Shehab in Homs.
1/16	Opposition brigade kidnaps citizen journalist Haytham Hesso in Ras Al-Ain.
1/17	Belgian-French journalist Yves Debay killed in Aleppo.
1/18	<i>Al-Jazeera</i> correspondent in Deraa, Mohammad Al-Masalma, killed.
1/18	Citizen journalist Faisal Al-Basha killed in Al-Hassaka.
1/23	Three foreign journalists, Temoris Grecko (Mexican), Balint Szlanko (Hungarian), and Andoni Lubaki (Spanish), kidnapped in Aleppo then released after 12 hours.
1/25	Pro-regime popular committees in Damascus execute journalist Mohammad Abdul-Rahman and his father.
1/29	Russian journalist Sergeï Berejnoi injured by a sniper in Daraya.
1/29	Air Force Intelligence arrests Palestinian photographer Ali Fares in Damascus.

February

2/1	Kurdish journalist Kamal Hanan killed by a sniper in Aleppo.
2/2	Citizen journalist Nabil Al-Nabulsi killed in Deraa.
2/2	Journalist Abdel-Latif Khodr killed in Rif Dimashq.
2/4	Citizen journalist Saleh Abu Banoun injured by a sniper in Deir ez-Zor.
2/7	Painter Ahmad Jomaa killed by a sniper in Aleppo.
2/7	Citizen journalist Nour Kelze injured during shelling in Aleppo.
2/8	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Dohoun killed during shelling in Deraa.
2/10	Citizen journalist Farouq Al-Nayef killed in Deir ez-Zor.
2/11	Sports journalist Louay Daaboul killed in Aleppo.

2/11	Musician Mohammad Fetyan kidnapped by unknown gunmen in Damascus.
2/12	Citizen journalist Hamada Al-Khatib killed in Homs.
2/14	Journalists arrested in Aleppo by the Free Syrians Brigade, an armed rebel group, for publishing news about a member of the brigade killing a child in the Qadi Askar neighborhood.
2/14	Citizen journalist Youssef Adel Al-Bakri killed in Aleppo.
2/15	Citizen journalist Mohammad Mohammad killed in Damascus.
2/16	Writer Omar Aziz tortured to death in the Damascus central prison.
2/17	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Hamawi killed in Damascus.
2/19	Citizen journalist Adnan Abu Abdo killed in Rif Dimashq.
2/22	Mohammad Ibn Halab, correspondent of the Aleppo Media Center, goes missing for six days.
2/23	Citizen journalist Alaa Abazeed injured by mortar shrapnel in Deraa.
2/23	Citizen journalist Mohammad Abazeed shot in the head by a sniper in Deraa and transferred to Jordan for medical treatment.
2/23	French photojournalist Olivier Voisin succumbs to his wounds in a Turkish hospital after being injured during shelling in Aleppo.
2/24	Comedian Yassin Bakoush killed by a Syrian army rocket attack on his car in Damascus.
2/24	Citizen journalist Abu Abdul-Rahman Al-Dirani injured in Daraya.
2/25	Field photographer Wael Hammoud killed in Homs.
2/28	Citizen journalist Mohannad Al-Najjar injured in Aleppo.

March

3/2	Citizen journalist Abdallah Yassin killed in Aleppo.
3/3	The Syrian National Telecommunications authorities block access to Swaida Voice website.
3/5	Syrian forces arrest musician Obeid Al-Youssef in Al-Hassaka.
3/7	Reuters photographer Mohammad Al-Abdallah injured by a rocket in the Joubar neighborhood of Damascus.
3/7	Photographer Ahmad Jomaa killed in Homs.
3/8	Citizen journalist Mohammad Shakhashiro killed in Damascus.
3/10	Citizen journalists Ghayath Abdel-Jawad and Amer Ajnid killed in Damascus.
3/10	Citizen journalist Omar Al-Tallawi injured by shrapnel in Homs.
3/11	Journalist Shaza Al-Maddad referred to the anti-terrorism court in Damascus.
3/11	Citizen journalist Osama Taleb killed during shelling in Al-Qussair.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

3/12	Ahmad Shehadeh, editor-in-chief of <i>Enab Baladi</i> newspaper, killed during shelling in Daraya.
3/13	Citizen journalist Anas Al-Batsh killed by a sniper in Harasta, Rif Dimashq.
3/14	Citizen journalist Mahmoud Nattouf killed in Rif Dimashq.
3/14	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Sharaa injured in Deraa.
3/16	Citizen journalist Omar Baloush killed in Lattakia.
3/17	Syrian forces arrest painter Tarek Abdel-Hay in Damascus.
3/18	Orient TV correspondent Nabil Al-Amir injured in Damascus.
3/23	Journalist Ahmad Al-Ahmad and his brother, citizen journalist Wael Al-Ahmad, injured in Hama.
3/23	Playwright Abdel-Aziz Al-Houlani killed in Homs.
3/24	Citizen journalist Abdul-Rahman Daadaa killed by a mortar in Damascus.
3/27	Citizen journalist Hamed Abu Yasser killed in Rif Dimashq.
3/28	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Assemi killed in Deraa.
3/29	German ARD TV reporter Jörg Armbruster injured in Aleppo.
3/30	Citizen journalist Amer Diab killed in Rif Dimashq.
3/31	Citizen journalist Adham Al-Hassan killed by a sniper in Aleppo.

April

4/2	<i>Watan</i> FM broadcast director Mohammad Al-Ghazali tortured to death in Damascus.
4/3	Citizen journalist Mahmoud Al-Ezzo killed in Idlib.
4/3	Syrian-Palestinian citizen journalist Abdul-Rahman Al-Khadra killed in Douma.
4/5	Al-Nusra Front kidnaps four Italian journalists in Ghassanieh for eight days: RAI TV reporter Amedeo Ricucci, freelancers Elio Colavolpe, Andrea Vignali, and Syrian-Italian journalist Susan Dabbous.
4/8	Syrian security officers assault and detain Sky News journalists in Damascus for several hours.
4/8	Revolutionary Military Police in Aleppo arrests citizen journalist Aref Al-Kreiz in Aazaz.
4/13	Citizen journalists Mohannad Mohebbeddin and Abul-Huda Al-Homsi injured in Homs.
4/13	Citizen journalist Ahmad Qtaifan killed in Deraa.
4/14	Syrian State TV crew, comprised of reporter Shadi Al-Helou and cameramen Yahya Mossalli and Ahmad Sleiman, injured in a car bomb attack in Aleppo.

4/14	Iranian <i>Al-Khabar</i> TV correspondent Mohsen Khozai injured in Rif Dimashq.
4/15	Citizen journalist Khalil Al-Hajj Ali killed in Deraa.
4/15	<i>Al-Alam</i> TV correspondent Mazen Salmo injured in Rif Dimashq.
4/17	Belgian writer Pierre Piccinin and Italian journalist Domenico Quirico kidnapped near the Syrian-Lebanese border. They were released on September 9.
4/22	Citizen journalist Mohammad Abu Yazan succumbs to his injuries in Rif Dimashq.
4/22	Air Force Intelligence arrests poet Wael Saadeddin in Damascus.
4/24	Citizen journalist Youssef Yunis killed in Rif Dimashq.
4/24	Air Force Intelligence arrests Kurdish journalist Shiar Khalil in Damascus.
4/28	Citizen journalist Ahmad Al-Sayed Taha executed in the Damascus central prison.
4/29	French-American journalist Jonathan Alpeyrie kidnapped in Yabroud. He was released on July 27.

May

5/1	Citizen journalist Mohammad Atwan killed in Deir ez-Zor.
5/2	Citizen journalist Mohammad Khalaf killed during an air raid on Idlib.
5/2	Air Force Intelligence arrests playwright Omar Al-Jubaï in Damascus.
5/4	Citizen journalist Tarek Soueid killed in Aleppo.
5/4	Citizen journalist Zaher Khreiba killed in Deraa.
5/5	Regime forces arrest German journalist Armin Wertz in Aleppo and release him on September 29.
5/8	Citizen journalist Omar Al-Adeem killed by a sniper in Damascus.
5/14	Citizen journalist Mohammad Sweidan killed in Deraa.
5/16	Syrian security forces detain actress May Skaff for several hours.
5/17	Sharia Committee in Aleppo arrests citizen journalists and civic activists who were waving the flag of the Syrian revolution.
5/20	Citizen journalist Mohammad Khassawna killed in Deraa.
5/21	The youngest citizen journalist in Syria, Haytham Qtaifan (14 years old), killed by a sniper in Deraa.
5/25	Sharia Committee in Aleppo detains journalist Shaaban Al-Hassan for three days.
5/26	Syrian police arrests journalist Waad Al-Mhanna for ten days in Damascus.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

5/27 Syrian TV correspondent Yara Abbas killed by a sniper on the Homs - Al-Qussair road.

5/30 Citizen journalist Ibrahim Qabbani killed in Aleppo.

June

6/1 Citizen journalist Majd Al-Balkhi killed in Deraa.

6/2 Popular singer Abdul-Rahman Rustom's body found in the Quwaiq river in Aleppo.

6/6 French journalists Didier François and Edouard Elias kidnapped in northern Syria.

6/6 Orient News correspondent Mohammad Al-Zahouri goes missing in Al-Qussair.

6/6 Orient News correspondent Mohammad Moaz injured in Rif Dimashq.

6/6 Syrian security forces arrest video technician Abdul-Rahman Raya in Damascus.

6/6 Citizen journalist Mohammad Zein killed in Aleppo.

6/9 Syrian authorities sentence journalist Bilal Bilal to 15 years in prison.

6/9 Al-Nusra Front arrests citizen journalists Mossaab Al-Hamadi and Yalmaz Basha in Raqqa.

6/10 Egyptian authorities deny entry to Syrian filmmaker Nidal Hassan upon request from the Syrian embassy in Cairo.

6/13 Al-Nusra Front detains citizen journalist Mostafa Al-Ahmadi for three days in Aleppo.

6/15 Syrian soldiers shoot at *Al-An* TV crew at the Menagh airbase in Aleppo.

6/15 *Al-Souri Al-Horr* (The Free Syrian) YouTube channel correspondent Amer Hweidi goes missing in Deir ez-Zor.

6/15 Citizen journalist Oday Al-Bardan injured in Deraa.

6/17 Syrian authorities issue an arrest warrant against *Al-Jazeera* talk-show host Faisal Al-Qassem.

6/18 Syrian forces arrest writer Samer Radwan on his way back from Lebanon and release him ten days later.

6/18 Citizen journalist Raad Rustom tortured to death in Aleppo.

6/19 Citizen journalist Omar Al-Qabouni injured by shrapnel in Damascus.

6/19 Syrian authorities cancel the accreditation of Sky News Arabia journalists in Damascus.

6/21 Aleppo News network correspondent Najib Darwish killed in Aleppo.

6/22	French journalist Nicolas Hénin and photographer Pierre Torres kidnapped in Raqqa.
6/26	Al-Jazeera correspondent Ammar Al-Hajj injured in Deir ez-Zor.
6/26	Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) detains citizen journalist Abboud Al-Haddad in Idlib.
6/27	Syrian forces arrest scriptwriter Fouad Hmayra in Lattakia and release him after 12 days.
6/29	Citizen journalist Kinan Al-Mahameed killed in Deraa.
6/29	Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) militants assault journalist Farhad Ahmeh in Qamishli.

July

7/1	West Aleppo Province Sharia court arrests citizen journalist Abdallah Merhi.
7/5	Orient News correspondent Fida' Al-Baali succumbs to his injuries in Damascus.
7/5	Syrian-Palestinian citizen journalist Jihad Al-Shehabi killed in Damascus.
7/7	Syrian security forces arrest and torture journalist Kamal Sheikho in Damascus.
7/9	ISIS detains citizen journalist Mohammad Matar for two days in Raqqa.
7/9	PYD militants arrest citizen journalist Abdul-Rahim Al-Takhoubi in Amouda.
7/10	Sharia Committee in Aleppo arrests citizen journalist Zeid Mohammad, accuses him of blasphemy, and gives him three days to show repentance.
7/12	<i>Al-Thawra</i> newspaper cameraman Ihsan Al-Bunni assassinated in Daraya.
7/16	Journalist Shiar Khalil and poet Wael Saadeddin referred to the anti-terrorism court in Damascus.
7/18	Political security agents arrest painter Youssef Abdelki in Tartous and release him on August 22.
7/19	Al-Nusra Front detains <i>Welati</i> Net correspondent Ahmad Omar for several hours in Raqqa.
7/20	Citizen journalists Wassim Hijazi and Mahmoud Al-Wahesh injured in Aleppo.
7/21	Russia Today correspondent Ibrahim Issa injured in Rif Dimashq.
7/21	Al-Nusra Front arrests <i>Yekiti</i> Media correspondent Zakaria Hajj Jamo in Raqqa.
7/22	Citizen journalist Ibrahim Al-Ghazi kidnapped for 24 hours in Raqqa.
7/22	Citizen journalist Seif Al-Ansari killed in Homs.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

7/23	Aleppo Media Center correspondent Yunis Al-Mteir killed by a sniper in Aleppo.
7/24	Orient News correspondent Ammar Dandash injured in Idlib.
7/24	Gunmen assault citizen journalist Manhal Barish and kidnap Polish photographer Marcin Suder in Saraqeb. Suder is released on October 31.
7/25	Orient News crew, comprised of correspondent Obeida Al-Batal and technicians Hussam Nizameddin and Abboud Al-Ateeq, kidnapped from their office in Tal Refaat, Aleppo province.
7/26	Cartoonist Khaled Al-Qadi killed in Rif Dimashq.
7/26	Rebel brigade detains <i>Al-An</i> TV correspondent Ali Abul-Majd for hours in Raqqa.
7/27	Citizen journalist Qassem Hammad killed during an air raid on Idlib.
7/28	Citizen journalist Majd Al-Tawil killed in Homs.
7/28	Citizen journalist Wael Karnaba killed in Damascus.
7/29	Syrian authorities arrest journalist Mahmoud Nawara in Damascus.
7/29	Orient News correspondent Bishenk Allaw injured in Aleppo.
7/30	Sham News Network correspondent Abu Hassan Al-Dimashqi killed in Damascus.

August

8/4	Citizen journalist Abu Al-Hassan Ammar killed in Lattakia.
8/5	ISIS arrests citizen journalist Omar Al-Khani and his wife in Aleppo.
8/7	Syrian forces detain artist Kifah Ali Dib for hours in Damascus.
8/7	Poet Talal Salim and his wife kidnapped in Lattakia.
8/8	Citizen journalist Abu Malek Al-Shami killed in Aleppo.
8/8	Journalist Jihad Mohammad goes missing in Damascus.
8/8	Citizen journalist Abdallah Dawara killed in Damascus.
8/11	Citizen journalist Anwar Hazwini kidnapped in Aleppo.
8/11	Citizen journalist Hassan Al-Rafih assaulted in Raqqa.
8/11	State news channel correspondent Ahmad Fayad arrested by opposition groups in Raqqa.
8/14	Citizen journalist Mohammad Matar killed in Raqqa.
8/14	ISIS detains journalist Sami Jamal in Aleppo.
8/16	Citizen journalist Abu Al-Yaman and journalist Shaher Maadamani killed in Rif Dimashq.
8/17	Ammar Attia, member of the Syrian National Coalition's media office, injured in Deir ez-Zor.

8/18	Citizen journalist Ali Al-Sayasna succumbs to his injuries.
8/21	Citizen journalist Mohammad Hassan Safi Al-Masalma killed in Deraa.
8/21	Iranian documentary filmmakers Ismail Haidari and Hadi Baghbani, embedded with a commando unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, killed in Rif Dimashq.
8/21	Citizen journalists Samar Saleh and Mohammad Al-Omar kidnapped in Aleppo.
8/22	State news channel correspondent Hassan Mhanna and actor Ahmad Maamar killed in a suicide bombing at a restaurant in Aleppo.
8/22	Journalist Noubar Ismail goes missing in Qamishli.
8/23	Filmmaker Ma'moun Naufal tortured to death in Damascus.
8/23	Citizen journalist Bibars Al-Abiad injured in Damascus.
8/24	Journalist Ziad Arfa tortured to death in Damascus.
8/26	ISIS detains citizen journalist Omar Al-Hweidi for hours in Raqqa.
8/28	Rebel group in Raqqa opens fire at citizen journalist Hammoud Al-Moussa.
8/28	Al-Nusra Front arrests citizen journalist Mohammad Mosallem in Raqqa.

September

9/2	Aleppo News Network correspondents "Abu Al-Kheir" and "Abu Taim" injured in Aleppo.
9/2	Citizen journalist Kinan Al-Balkhi killed in a Syrian army ambush in Rif Dimashq.
9/3	Citizen journalist Mohammad Darwish killed in Rif Dimashq.
9/3	Photographer Abu Bakr Al-Hajj injured by shrapnel in Deraa.
9/4	El Périodico Spanish reporter Marc Marginedas kidnapped in Hama. He is released on March 2, 2014..
9/5	Citizen journalist Abdel-Aziz Hassoun killed by shrapnel in Damascus.
9/5	Citizen journalist Abdel-Karim Al-Bakr killed in Rif Dimashq.
9/8	Citizen journalist Mohammad Bitar killed in Idlib.
9/8	Citizen journalist Hassan Rifai killed with poison at the Raqqa hospital.
9/8	Citizen journalist Iman Al-Halabi assassinated by masked gunmen in Raqqa.
9/8	Citizen journalist Fadi Abu Ajaj killed by a rocket in Damascus.
9/12	Citizen journalist Yaman Khattab killed in Deraa.
9/13	Citizen journalist Mohammad Khasharfa killed in Deraa.
9/15	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Nashef killed in Raqqa.
9/15	Journalist Fakhreddin Hassan killed in Idlib.
9/15	Citizen journalist Hazem Dakel kidnapped in Idlib.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

9/16	ISIS kidnaps Spanish journalist Javier Espinosa and photojournalist Ricardo Garcia Vilanova in Tal Abyad.
9/17	Citizen journalist Mohammad Amin Hallak injured in Aleppo.
9/18	Citizen journalist Omar Diab killed by a sniper in Aleppo.
9/19	Citizen journalist Nasr Abul-Oyoun killed in Hama.
9/19	Citizen journalist Omar Al-Balkhi injured in Deraa.
9/21	Ahrar Al-Sham brigade arrests Kurdish artist Khalil Ham Surk in Raqqa.
9/22	Citizen journalist Tarek Ali killed in Aleppo.
9/27	Rebel group arrests and tortures three Aleppo News Network correspondents in Aleppo.
9/29	Citizen journalist Morhaf Modahi killed in Deir ez-Zor.
9/29	Citizen journalist Nouredin Al-Hofeiri killed in Rif Dimashq.
9/30	Citizen journalist Abdul-Nasser Al-Shanburi injured in Deraa.

October

10/1	Citizen journalist Abdul-Nasser Al-Shanburi succumbs to his injuries in Deraa.
10/1	Citizen journalist Oday Al-Bardan killed in Deraa.
10/1	ISIS kidnaps citizen journalist Rami Razzouq in Raqqa.
10/2	Citizen journalist Mo'men Al-Dalati killed during shelling in Zabadani.
10/6	Citizen journalist Mohammad Sharifeh succumbs to his injuries in Damascus.
10/7	Citizen journalists Maher Ahmad Hamza and Moaz Al-Shami killed in Rif Dimashq.
10/8	Journalist Abdul-Hadi Qashit tortured to death in Aleppo.
10/9	Citizen journalist Ayham Al-Dimashqi killed in Rif Dimashq.
10/9	<i>Shabba</i> Press correspondent Hussam Al-Halabi injured in Aleppo.
10/12	Citizen journalist Osama Al-Sweidani killed by a landmine explosion in Deraa.
10/12	Liwa'Al-Tawhid rebel brigade kidnaps Russian photographer Konstantin Zhuravlev in Aleppo.
10/13	State news channel temporarily suspends broadcast after two bombs go off near the channel's headquarters in Damascus.
10/15	ISIS storms Radio Ana premises in Raqqa.
10/16	Sky News Arabia crew, comprised of Lebanese cameraman Samir Kassab and Mauritanian reporter Isaac Moctar, kidnapped north of Aleppo.
10/16	Sham News Network correspondent Nidal Al-Harbi injured in Deir ez-Zor.

10/21	Citizen journalist Mohannad Habayebna killed in Raqqa.
10/23	Choir conductor Shadi Shalhoub killed in Damascus.
10/27	Syrian security forces arrest French Paris-Match Magazine contributor Jean-Pierre Duthion and deport him to Lebanon on October 31.
10/28	Citizen journalist Hassan Al-Othman killed in Aleppo.
10/28	ISIS detains photographer Ziad Homsy on the Syrian-Turkish border.
10/29	Extremists assassinate <i>Al-Arabiya</i> correspondent Mohammad Saïd in Aleppo.
10/30	Citizen journalist Hassan Qassem tortured to death at the Air Force Intelligence detention center in Damascus.

November

11/1	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Idlibi kidnapped in Idlib.
11/1	ISIS kidnaps journalist Mo'ayed Salloum in Aleppo.
11/5	Citizen journalist Hadi Al-Abdallah injured in the Homs province.
11/5	Citizen journalist Qassem Al-Hazouri killed in Homs.
11/5	Lawyer and human rights defender Al-Moatassem Bellah Abu Dabbous killed in Deraa.
11/5	Syrian Intelligence agents storm writer Abdullah Amin Hallak's house in Salamiya.
11/6	Citizen journalist Diab Al-Batran killed in Aleppo.
11/6	Citizen journalist Abu Fahd Al-Halabi loses his legs in a landmine explosion in Aleppo.
11/6	Orient News correspondent Mohammad Al-Zahouri injured in Homs.
11/7	Citizen journalist Abdul-Wahab Al-Mulla kidnapped in Aleppo.
11/8	Citizen journalist Abdallah Al-Ghazzawi killed in Deraa.
11/10	ISIS kidnaps citizen journalist Tarek Sheikho in Lattakia.
11/11	Syrian security forces arrest journalist Omar Al-Shaar in Rif Dimashq.
11/12	Citizen journalist Jomaa Moussa kidnapped in Aleppo.
11/16	Citizen journalist Ahmad Brimo kidnapped in Aleppo.
11/16	Air raid on the Aleppo Media Center offices injures four citizen journalists.
11/19	Citizen journalist Moder Al-Massalma killed in Deraa.
11/20	<i>Shabba</i> Press correspondent Yasser Al-Sattouf kidnapped in Aleppo.
11/21	Citizen journalist Abdallah Al-Akhras killed in Deraa.
11/23	Citizen journalist Abdul-Rahman Shawlah killed in Rif Dimashq.
11/23	ISIS detains citizen journalist Maan Mohammad for several hours in Aleppo.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

11/23	Citizen journalists Mohammad Ammar Tabajo, Hassan Haroun, Akram Al-Sleik, Yassin Haroun, and Omar Kheiti killed by an air raid on Eastern Ghouta, Rif Dimashq.
11/23	Swedish journalists Magnus Falkehed and Niklas Hammarström kidnapped in Rif Dimashq, near the Lebanese-Syrian border. Released during the first week of 2014.
11/24	Citizen journalist Yamen Naddaf killed in Aleppo.
11/25	Citizen journalist Ahmad Al-Shayeb killed in Rif Dimashq.
11/26	Kurdish police arrests state news channel crew in Ras Al-Ain.
11/26	Citizen journalist Mohaymen Al-Halabi kidnapped in Aleppo.
11/28	Citizen journalist Loay Abul-Jood goes missing in Aleppo.
11/30	Citizen journalist Omar Al-Hassan kidnapped in Aleppo.

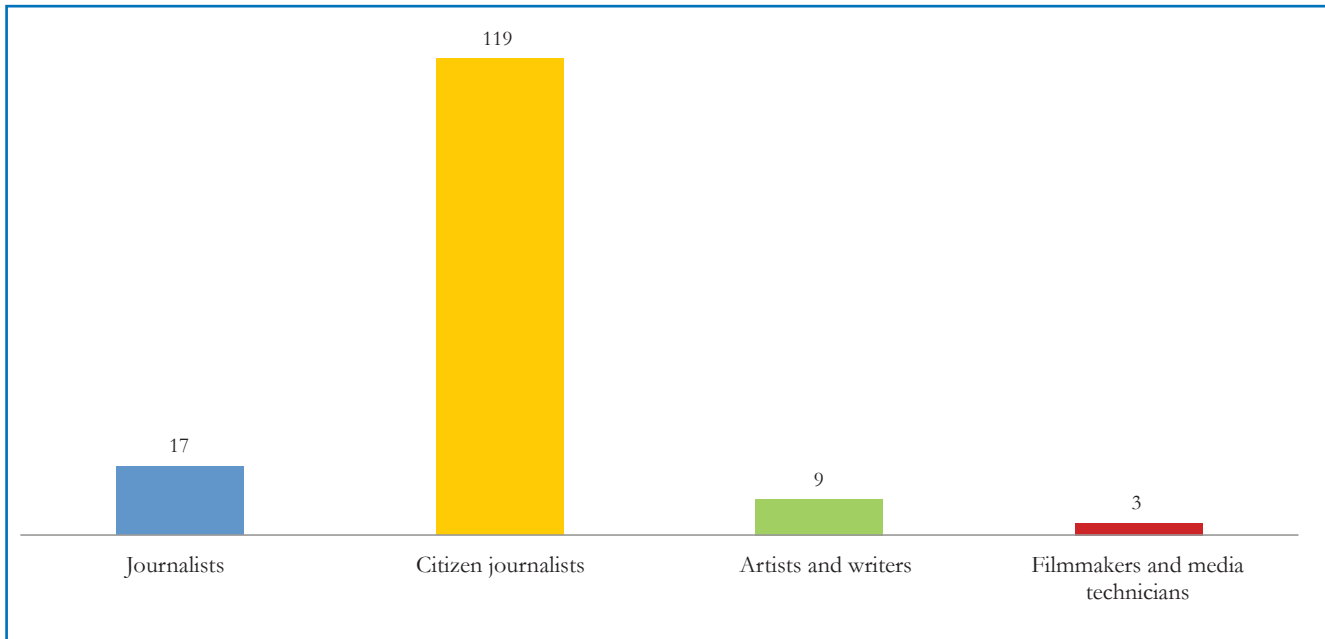
December

12/2	Citizen journalists Sharif Al-Tabaji and Ahmad Al-Nafouri killed in Rif Dimashq.
12/3	ISIS kidnaps citizen journalist Ahmad Al-Khodr near Raqqa.
12/4	Citizen journalist Mohammad Khalil Al-Barnawi killed in Rif Dimashq.
12/4	ISIS executes Iraqi cameraman Yasser Al-Jumaili in northern Syria.
12/8	Syrian security forces arrest human rights defender Abdul-Hadi Al-Sheikh Awad on the Lebanese-Syrian border.
12/9	Human rights defender Razan Zaitouneh, and her Violations Documentation Center colleagues Wael Hamada, Nazem Hamadi, and Samira Khalil, kidnapped in Douma.
12/12	Islamist brigade detains citizen journalist Mohannad Al-Fayad in Raqqa.
12/15	Citizen journalist Mahmoud Hebbo injured in Aleppo.
12/15	Palestinian artist and citizen journalist Hassan Hassan killed in Damascus.
12/17	Citizen journalist Mazen Jarkas killed in Aleppo.
12/17	Syrian security forces arrest artist Leila Awad on the Lebanese-Syrian border.
12/17	Turkish photographer Bunyamin Aygun kidnapped in northern Syria. Released on January 5, 2014.
12/20	Reuters photographer Molhem Barakat killed in Aleppo.
12/21	Syrian regime forces detain the head of the Opposition Coordination Committee's media office, Munzer Khaddam, for hours.
12/24	ISIS burns copies of local newspaper <i>Tlo'na Al-Horriya</i> in Raqqa and prevents the distribution of <i>Al-Gherbal</i> newspaper.

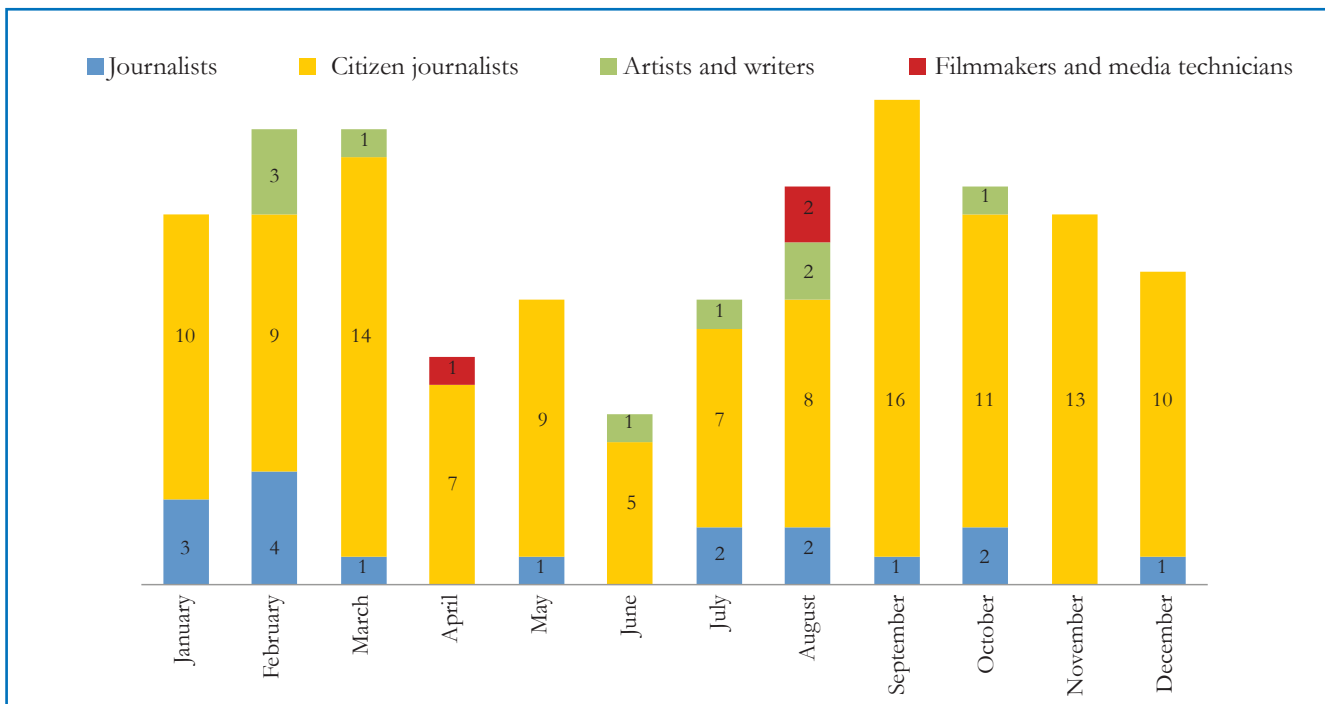
12/26	Citizen journalist Munzer Al-Zoabi killed while covering the fighting in Quneitra.
12/27	ISIS gunmen storm the office of <i>Shaza Al-Horriya</i> , a local YouTube channel in Aleppo, and kidnap seven citizen journalists.
12/27	ISIS kidnaps citizen journalist Milad Al-Shehabi and steals equipment from the office of Massaken Hanano news network in Aleppo.
12/28	Citizen journalist Ahmad Tohmeh killed during shelling in Rif Dimashq.
12/28	ISIS storms Farsh radio station's office and the Kafranbel media office and detains citizen journalists Hammoud Al-Juneid, Abdallah Al-Salloum, Saad Al-Abi, Salah Al-Jaar, Ahmad Mohammad Al-Hannak, Abdallah Muaffaq Al-Hamadi, and Ahmad Hamdo for five hours.
12/28	Citizen journalist Ahmad Al-Hajji killed during shelling in Aleppo.
12/29	ISIS storms the office of Syria <i>Mubasher</i> network in Lattakia and kidnaps journalist Tarek Sheikho.
12/29	Citizen journalist Mohammad Al-Ashmar killed in Rif Dimashq.
12/30	ISIS storms the office of <i>Al-Gherbal</i> newspaper in Idlib and kidnaps its editor-in-chief Mohammad Al-Salloum.

Facts and Figures – Syria 2013

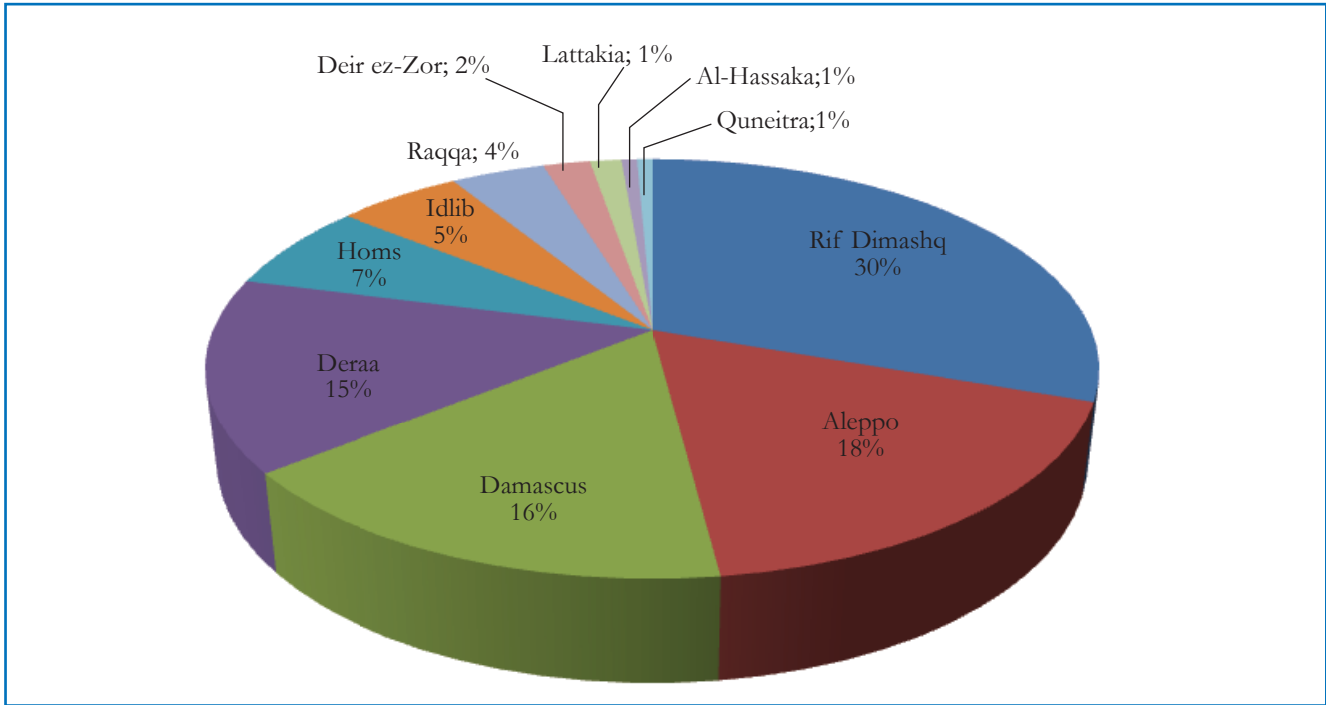
Number of journalists, citizen journalists, and artists killed in 2013



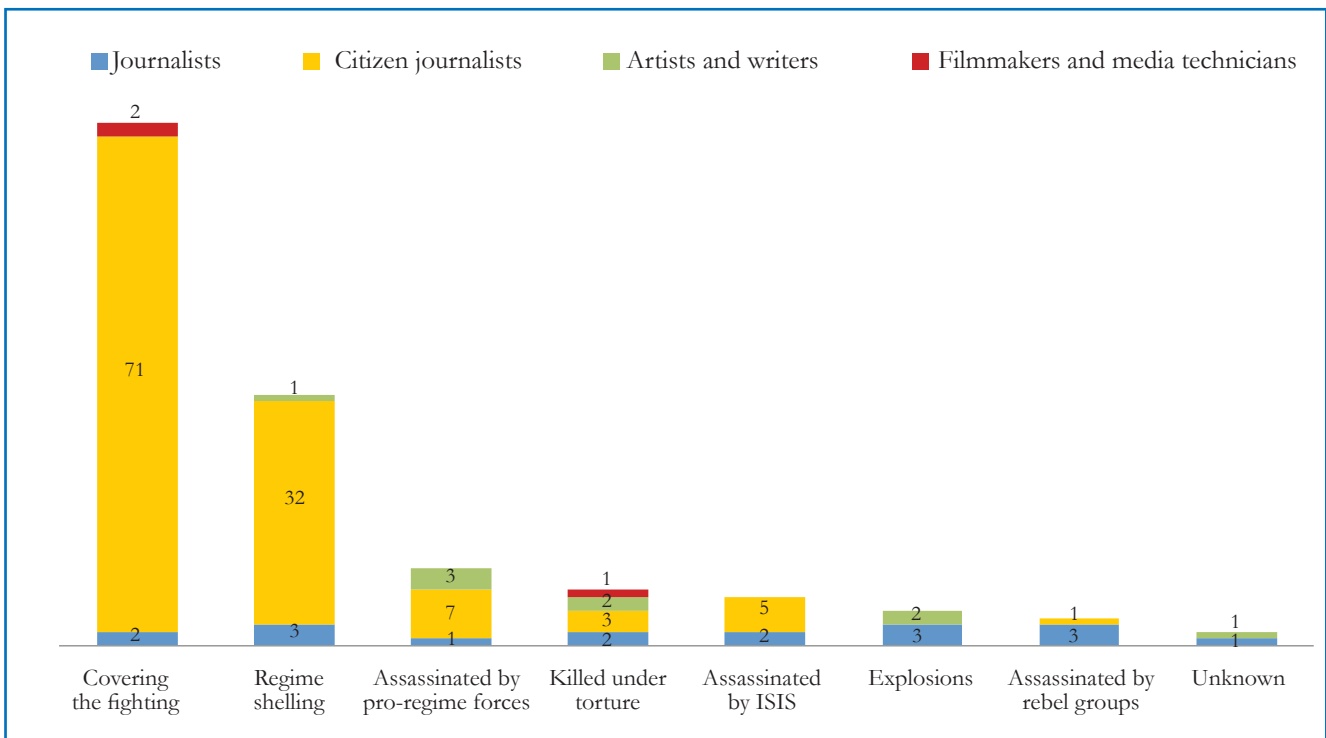
Number of journalists, citizen journalists, and artists killed per month



Journalists, citizen journalists, artists killed by region



Circumstances surrounding the deaths of journalists, citizen journalists, and artists



Syria - Cultural Spotlight

In Syria Only Art Is Immortal

Abdullah Amin Hallak

It may have been a pure coincidence that Syrian filmmaker Omar Amiralay died on February 5, 2011. But, this exact date was dubbed a “day of rage” by Syrian activists who wanted to show support to the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions as part of an Arab Spring, which had yet to reach Syria.

Omar Amiralay directed the wonderful documentary “A Flood in Baath Country”. He is one of the Syrian intellectuals who have paid dearly for their commitment to a culture of critique by portraying the reality in Syria. A month after his death, the revolution against the Assad regime erupted. Had Omar been alive, he would have undeniably filmed the developments in Syria with unequalled creativity and genius. He did not, but many others outside of the circles of intellectuals and artists did.

The revolution against the regime was also a rejection of the monopoly on culture, arts, and all other fields of creativity, which had been devoted to the praise of the ruling party. This new space for expression is why the Syrian people shared their experience through photographs, movies, songs, and theater plays.

The camera played a vital role and new filmmakers, artists, and journalists were born. Many who did not study journalism in universities run by the regime have learned to handle cameras to show the world what is happening in Syria’s narrow streets that filled with protesters.

The Syrian revolution traveled the world through films and documentaries. As a result, the Syrian regime targeted many photographers and killed Bassel Shehadeh before his film won the “People’s Choice” award in the Arab Cinema Festival in Rotterdam.

Each protest had its own banners, slogans, and songs inspired by local folklore. One of the most famous banners demonstrates the radical, innovative change in mentalities that took place. The banner reads: “Your bullets are killing nothing but our fear.”

However, everyone is aware of the tragic situation in Syria with the rise of religious extremism and the recruitment of jihadist groups from outside and inside the country. These groups, represented by Al-Nusra Front, the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS), and other fundamentalist organizations, have played a major role in repressing the revolution’s civil, artistic, and media movement. Instead, they are pushing a radical religious ideology that is currently spreading. Nonetheless, the spread of fundamentalism must not hide the broader picture or obscure the popular uprising that sparked the revolution. ISIS, the Army of Islam, Al-Qaeda, the Syrian regime, and other oppressive forces were not the ones that printed the revolution’s stamps and posters. They were never the ones that released clever and inspiring new songs and slogans. They never produced movies telling the story of a people thirsty for freedom. They never protected artists. Unfortunately, these groups are only creative when it comes to oppressing, persecuting, and killing creativity. Their innovative spirit only awakes to write songs praising the Baath party and its supreme leader, or Islamic hymns for Al-Qaeda’s *muhajirin* (immigrants) and local jihadists. Between these two camps, Syrians have an identity to reinvent.

The challenge for artists is not only about telling the outer world the story of the Syrian revolution or about Syria as a country after it has spent four decades away from the spotlight. Today, the challenge is to highlight regions that surprised

the world with their cultural, media, and political messages. In this regard, Kafranbel is undeniably the first city that comes to mind.

Ahmad Jalal and Raed Al-Fares, along with many other natives of the region, designed Kafranbel's banners. Their banners were the first to be displayed in the Syrian revolution's protests in 2011. The banners were initially signed "Occupied Kafranbel". However, after the region was freed from the regime's grip, the banners were signed "Liberated Kafranbel". Finally, after ISIS invaded the region, one could read "Raped Kafranbel" on the banners. Kafranbel's signs have now become closely followed. They have been documented and archived because the first protest launched from the city was violently attacked by the regime's media, which accused it of being staged. Kafranbel's banners draw inspiration from famous Syrian and Arab songs. They carry slogans that mock the regime and its rhetoric and criticize the opposition and the international community's lack of determination to take a stance on what is happening in Syria. Above all, Kafranbel's banners celebrate the long-awaited freedom.

Sometimes, banners have a greater impact than a protest by itself. They can express far more influential and lasting ideas. But, most of the times, protests in Kafranbel are as moving as the slogans brandished by its residents. The most painful example was when the people of Kafranbel staged a protest where they stood up out of their own coffins. In this protest, they carried signs on which they wrote: "We need new coffins for the martyrs of the presidential pardon."

The people of Kafranbel very clearly understood the importance of media in their struggle against the regime. Their slogans are messages sent to the entire world in Arabic, English, Russian, and Chinese.

Theater also plays an important role in the revolution. Theater groups roam in different regions that fell outside regime's control. One of

the most significant experiences is the "*Massasset Maté*" (Maté Drinkers) group.

Maté is a famous drink in Syria. Syrians gather around maté to talk, debate, and discuss important issues. "Maté Drinkers" was formed eight months after the beginning of the revolution. Most of its members were professional artists working in various fields, including theater, cinema, fine arts, and design. It is a traveling group that performs drama workshops within so-called liberated regions. The group performed its last show in December 2013 in Manbej.

Most members perform under pseudonyms because they still live inside the country. During their last tour in northern Syria, they had to be particularly vigilant not to fall into the hands of ISIS. Their performances were often clandestine, and their most famous plays are: "The First Thug", "Journal of a Small Dictator", and "Who Wants to Kill Millions?"

In the uprising, Syrians rebelled against both Assad and four decades of silence. They gave their revolution an artistic dimension with their vocal chords, their modest means, and their musical instruments. They managed to shake Assad's "Kingdom of Death." However, Syrians are now facing another enemy: the religious extremism of ISIS and other affiliated organizations. These Islamist groups are strongly rejected by the new Syrian art scene. Ever since ISIS emerged in Syria, Syrian people have been fighting two enemies who pretend to represent eternal dynasties: the Assad dynasty on the one hand and the Islamic dynasty on the other.

The regime's attempts to regain ground and the extremists' promises to impose their caliphate are threatening Syria's future. But, the "Syrians have had enough of eternal." This is a slogan put into music by the "Syrian Bear", a new band that has tried to translate the feelings of the Syrian people and their aspiration for freedom. Today, Syrians across the country are singing their song.

Authorities Tighten Grip on Media and Block Access to News Websites

Rima Awad

In 2013, media and cultural freedoms declined significantly in Jordan. Authorities blocked access to dozens of news websites, arrested journalists, and referred them to the State Security Court. Also, security forces broke into the offices of newspapers where journalists protested the government's interference in their editorial policy. Security services have long been trying to turn journalists and media institutions into mouthpieces of the state and force them to comply with the policies of Jordan's government.

At the beginning of the year, the Jordanian government's Press and Publications Department blocked access to several news websites under the pretext that they did not have the necessary licenses. The number of blocked websites reached 291 by June. The official reason given for these sites being blocked was their non-compliance with the Press and Publications Law, which regulates how news websites can obtain a license. This law has historically been amended at the whim of successive governments to serve their political agenda, according to Jamil Al-Nimri, chairman of the National Guidance and Media Committee.

The ban on news websites appeared as a state attempt to control both the electronic media and the flow of information. The Supreme Court of Justice dismissed appeals submitted on behalf of the websites challenging the constitutionality of the Press and Publications Law. Critics of the law argued that it "infringes on constitutional rights, particularly freedom of expression, under the pretext of regulating electronic media." "The court should have overturned the law, which does not meet the constitutional rights," said Mohammad Qutaishat, the lawyer who submitted the appeals. Some website publishers tried to circumvent the censorship by changing the domain names of their sites. Yet, this strategy did

not succeed in improving the situation or lifting the ban on news websites. The blocked websites were eventually forced to apply for a license as a last recourse to lift the ban and guarantee public access, according to a statement released by AmmanNet, Jo24, All of Jo, and *Ain* News publishers.

Also in 2013, authorities delayed the license applications for satellite channels and radio stations even though they met legal requirements. *Al-Yarmouk* satellite channel managers said the delay was "an attempt to muzzle the press and repress freedoms." Additionally, *Sawt Al-Aghwar* (Voice of the Jordan Valley) radio station strongly criticized this delay, calling it an "infringement on press freedom."

Furthermore, security services and judicial authorities referred a number of journalists to tribunals and hampered the work of media outlets. *Jafra* News website publisher Nidal Faraaneh and editor-in-chief Amjad Maala were referred to the State Security Court on accusations of straining Jordan's relations with Qatar. The Court refused to release them on bail five times. Faraaneh and Maala were eventually released on December 31 after civil rights activists and the Association for the Defense of Prisoners of Conscience launched a campaign calling for ending their detention.

During the month of November, journalist Issam Al-Omari was referred to the trial court of Amman for criticizing Prime Minister Abdallah Ensour in his morning show *Sawt Al-Muwaten* (The Citizen's Voice). This was further evidence of the arbitrary decisions by authorities to repress critical voices. Also in November, the Jordanian police broke into *Al-Ra'i* newspaper's building and put an end to a peaceful sit-in. The sit-in was organized by employees to denounce the government's interference in the daily's editorial

policy and ask for the resignation of its board of directors. State interference in the media and its relentless attempts to control editorial lines are the most burdensome challenges facing print press in Jordan.

Media professionals also suffer from the lack of job security. *Al-Arab Al-Yawm* dismissed 14 journalists following a decision that its staff deemed “arbitrary, illegal, and immoral” since it was taken after the daily decided to suspend publication. Also, the Jordanian publishing house *Al-Dustour* for Press and Publications announced a restructuring plan that employees saw as “an attempt to dismiss them and muzzle any person who would defend their rights.” *Al-Dustour* journalists staged a sit-in to ask for a timely payment of wages, after a delay of several months, and the resignation of the board,

which they accused of deepening the company’s financial crisis.

Jordan has fallen seven places in the 2014 Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index and is now ranked 141st. This regression is undoubtedly a result of the state’s repeated attempts to control electronic media, the ban on dozens of news websites, arrests of journalists, the storming of media institutions, and lack of job security. It is crucial to amend all Jordanian laws, particularly the Press and Publications Law, which undermine freedom of expression. But above all, it is vital to change the mentality of Jordanian authorities who keep taking measures aimed at preventing any social movement that might echo the recent uprisings in the Arab world. These moves, taken out of fear, curtail the legitimate rights and freedoms of the Jordanian media.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

January

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1/8 | Jordanian security forces hamper the organization of a training workshop for journalists by the NGO Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ). |
| 1/18 | Unlicensed Jordanian news websites blocked by the Press and Publications Department. |

February

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2/22 | <i>Roya</i> TV correspondent Youssef Al-Bustanji beaten by an anti-drug trafficking police unit. |
|------|--|

March

- | | |
|------|---|
| 3/14 | Jo24’s Facebook page and YouTube accounts hacked. |
|------|---|

April

- | | |
|------|--|
| 4/30 | Journalist Walid Hosni receives threats after breaking a story about a Jordanian member of parliament’s visit to Israel. |
|------|--|

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

May

- 5/7 Jordanian security forces prevent journalists from covering a sit-in by employees at the Amman Justice Palace.
- 5/12 Jordanian security forces prevent *Roya* TV reporter from covering a sit-in near the Iraqi embassy in Amman.

June

- 6/2 213 news websites blocked by the Press and Publications Department.
- 6/6 Segments of “Hamilton”, a Swedish movie, censored before a screening at Al-Hussein theater.

July

- 7/17 *Al-Arab Al-Yawm* newspaper suspends publication.
- 7/28 National Jordanian Library refuses to grant Walid Hosni’s new book a registration number before a committee approves its content.

September

- 9/3 Jordanian border authorities deny entry to Palestinian journalist Hosni Sheilo.
- 9/16 Jordan’s Supreme Court turns down appeals contesting the constitutionality of the Press and Publications Law that blocked unlicensed news websites.
- 9/18 *Jafra* News publisher Nidal Faraaneh and editor-in-chief Amjad Maala referred to State Security Court for straining the relations between Jordan and Qatar.
- 9/18 News websites that changed their domain names to circumvent blockage threatened with legal action.

October

- 10/2 The Ministry of Culture suspends a subsidy program for cultural activities citing financial constraints.
- 10/7 *Al-Yarmonk* satellite channel decries delays in receiving broadcast license.
- 10/14 Jordanian security forces beat Jo24 correspondent Ahmad Al-Harasis.
- 10/23 Gunmen shoot at journalist Islam Al-Mashaqba.
- 10/28 Syrian refugees assault an *Al-Arabiya* crew in Zaatari camp.
- 10/31 Jordanian radio host Issam Al-Omari referred to the trial court of Amman for airing news criticizing Prime Minister Abdallah Ensour.

November

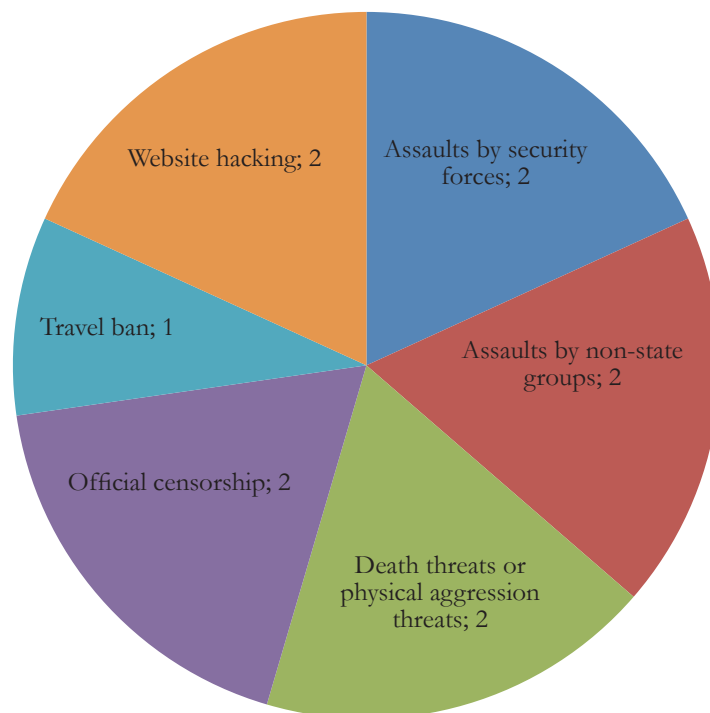
- 11/4 Saraya News publisher Hashem Al-Khalidi sued for articles posted on his website.
- 11/6 Jordanian security forces storm *Al-Ra'i* newspaper's building where journalists were staging a peaceful sit-in.

December

- 12/1 *Al-Dustour* journalists hold a sit-in to demand the payment of their salaries.
- 12/31 Jordanian Writers' Association asks to approve all social media posts written by its members before publication.

Facts and Figures – Jordan 2013

Major violations against journalists and artists in Jordan



Occupation and Division Cripple Free Speech in Palestine

Widad Jarbough

Violations against freedom of opinion and expression flared up in Palestine throughout 2013. The violations came at the hands of both Israeli and Palestinian security services and occurred in clear violation of local laws and international human rights conventions. 101 journalists, artists, and media professionals were arrested or detained this year. 56 of these arrests took place in the 1948 Territories, 30 in the West Bank, and 15 in the Gaza Strip. Today, nine journalists are still detained in Israeli prisons.

Israeli forces attacked journalists and photographers with real and rubber-coated bullets, teargas, and stun grenades. These assaults occurred while journalists were covering demonstrations and clashes between young Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. 94 journalists and photographers were injured in these incidents. 68 were injured in the West Bank and 26 in the 1948 Territories. The most violent attacks remain, without a doubt, those perpetrated during the storming of the village of Bab Al-Shams (The Gate of the Sun) and the clashes between Israeli police and Palestinian worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Furthermore, the Egyptian crisis had negative repercussions on free speech in the Gaza Strip. The Hamas government, which voiced its support to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, has undertaken arbitrary measures against journalists and media institutions that supported the June 30, 2013 protests in Cairo.

The West Bank

Israeli soldiers have persisted in their violations against journalists, photographers, and Palestinian rights activists. Many media professionals were violently beaten and their equipment was destroyed. The most intense

violations of this nature occurred during the coverage of peaceful demonstrations in Bilin and Nabi Salih. Journalists also faced egregious assaults while covering the storming of Bab Al-Shams, Kanaan, and Al-Nawateer, three villages built by Palestinian activists near Jerusalem in locations that are under threat of being claimed by Israeli settlement projects. Several Palestinian journalists were severely wounded during these incidents. Photojournalist Jihad Al-Qadi, who was shot in the stomach, had to undergo surgery to remove his spleen and part of his liver. Additionally, photographer Mohammad Al-Ezza suffered broken facial bones from being shot in the face.

Israeli forces have also continued the arbitrary arrests of journalists with the aim of intimidating them and stopping them from performing their duties. Journalists were often tried and sentenced to prison or forcibly denied entry to large areas of the territory. Some were forced to pay exorbitant fines. Cartoonist Mohammad Sabaaneh was arrested for five months for “cooperating with hostile parties” following his involvement in writing a book on the art of caricature that was published in Iran. Nine journalists are still being held in Israeli prisons. Four of these journalists are being detained without proper charges or sentencing. Israeli authorities have simply extended their administrative detention, sometimes up to three times in a row as in the case of journalist Osama Shahin.

Internally, Palestinian security services are still monitoring statements posted on social networking websites, Facebook in particular. Several journalists and bloggers were summoned for questioning and arrested for expressing their opinion and publishing comments on Facebook. Charges ranged from “inciting sectarian strife” to “libel, slander, and defamation.”

Palestinian journalists enjoy very little legal protection. For example, journalist Mamdouh Hamamra was sentenced to one year in prison. He was charged with insulting President Mahmoud Abbas by posting a picture that was deemed offensive to the president on his Facebook page. However, Abbas eventually pardoned Hamamra. Additionally, the Palestinian Preventive Security (PPS) threatened to arrest journalist Iman Al-Silawi if she did not shut down her Facebook account. Palestinian security forces also arrested other journalists without abiding by legal procedures. For instance, Mohammad Awad, Tarek Khamis, Khaldoun Mazloum, and Mossaab Saïd were detained without an arrest warrant from the prosecutor general. Moreover, a number of journalists were violently beaten and mistreated during interrogation, such as George Kanawati and Salim Al-Salman.

Yet, the most dangerous abuse in 2013 was the grenade placed next to the house of Nasser Abu Mayala. Abu Mayala is a member of an investigative program's crew on Palestine TV, who has received numerous death threats in reaction to the program's revelations.

The Gaza Strip

Violations of media and cultural freedoms in the Gaza Strip reflected the ongoing division between the Fatah and Hamas movements. The Hamas government's security services continued to crack down on journalists affiliated with Fatah by summoning them for questioning. Journalists Hussein Karsoua, Ibrahim Abrash, and Talal Al-Sharif were detained and interrogated for criticizing the "resistance" and Hamas' governance in their articles.

Additionally, political unrest in neighboring Arab countries, especially Egypt, had a negative impact on free speech in the Gaza Strip. With regard to Egypt, Hamas' support of the Muslim Brotherhood translated into restrictive measures taken against a number of journalists and media institutions. Hamas authorities issued an arrest warrant for journalist Yahya Rabah because of an article he wrote, entitled "Long Live Egypt", that was critical of the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas supporters have also launched a smear campaign against him, threatening to burn him alive and hurt his family. Moreover, the

prosecutor general in Gaza decided to shut down the offices of *Ma'an* news agency and *Al-Arabiya* for "broadcasting false news, threatening civil peace, and inciting against the government in the Gaza Strip." After four months, the prosecutor general reversed his decision.

Furthermore, a new movement called Tamarrod (Rebellion) was created in Gaza. It mirrored the movement that coordinated the demonstrations in Egypt leading to the ouster of President Mohammad Morsi. Similarly, Gaza's Tamarrod movement demanded the resignation of the Hamas government. This development led the Hamas security services to launch a wide campaign of arrests against journalists and activists, accusing them of collaboration with the Tamarrod movement.

Additionally, Israeli authorities banned nine journalists and filmmakers from going to the West Bank to participate in professional meetings and cultural events.

The 1948 Territories

The arrest of Palestinian journalists, artists, and activists by Israeli authorities intensified in 2013. Many were arrested while covering clashes between the Israeli police and demonstrators near Al-Aqsa mosque. Some were also arrested for participating in protests against the Prayer plan, which aims to expel Bedouin residents from their villages in Negev. Artists Wassim Kheir and poet Ali Muassi were two of those arrested during these protests. Others were forced to pay fines and banned from entering Jerusalem or Al-Aqsa mosque.

Also in 2013, Palestinian singer Shafik Kabha was killed. Investigations later cited professional disputes as a motive for the murder.

The Israeli police put dozens of social media activists in prison on charges of "inciting riots, chaos and terrorism." After their arrest, blogger Razi Nabulsi and 25 other activists were forced to sign a pledge not to reveal to the media the details of their arrest and not to publish critical comments on their Facebook pages.

In an attempt to curtail Palestinian identity, Israeli authorities replaced the Palestinian

school curriculum with an Israeli one in five Arab schools in Jerusalem. Moreover, festivals aiming at promoting Palestinian identity among Arab residents in the 1948 Territories were banned. The Jerusalem Festival, the Palestinian Prisoners' Day, and the Palestinian Child's Festival were among the banned events.

Additionally, young Palestinians supporting the Syrian regime assaulted an *Al-Jazeera* crew and its correspondent, Elias Karram. The assault took place under the pretext that the youth were not satisfied with the "channel's coverage of developments in Arab countries, especially in Syria." Moreover, Islamist supporters launched

smear campaigns against journalist Maqboula Nassar. They claimed that "she constantly attacks Islamists" and supported the toppling of Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi.

Overall, Palestinian writers, activists, and artists continue to endure hardship due to almost daily aggressions and the negative impact of Arab crises on media and cultural freedoms. Defending democracy, freedom of expression and opinion, protecting Palestinian intellectuals, and promoting media and cultural diversity should now, more than ever, be the very core of the Palestinian struggle to build a free and prosperous state.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

January

1/4	<i>Al-Quds</i> radio correspondent Muthanna Al-Najjar injured during a stampede at a Fatah rally in Khan Yunis.
1/4	Journalist Hoda Naïm receives threats after posting pictures on Facebook of Fatah supporters celebrating the anniversary of their movement.
1/5	Fatah official Nabil Shaath's bodyguards assault journalist Khaled Thabet and photographer Mohammad Al-Zaaneen at the Gaza museum.
1/13	Israeli forces beat 11 journalists and prevent the press from covering the storming of the Bab Al-Shams village.
1/15	Israeli forces attack the press in Bab Al-Shams and injure seven journalists.
1/20	Hamas security services storm the houses of six journalists in Gaza and arrest them.
1/21	Journalist Ashraf Abu Amra assaulted during a sit-in organized by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Gaza.
1/21	Israeli forces beat <i>Raya</i> FM correspondent Shadi Hatem and prevent him from covering the storming of the Bab Al-Karama village.
1/21	Israeli authorities arrest journalist Anan Ajjawi at Al-Karama crossing point between Jordan and the West Bank.
1/22	French channel TF1 boycotts the Likud party convention after security agents conducted an invasive body search of cameraman Jamil Qodmani.
1/24	Israeli police prevents journalists from filming the arrest of Palestinian Minister Maher Ghoneim and summons researcher Ahmad Sabb Al-Laban who was accompanying the minister.
1/25	Anadolu news agency correspondent Qais Abu Samra hit in the chest with a teargas grenade near Ramallah.
1/28	Israeli forces detain researcher Mahmoud Qarain for eight hours.

February

2/1	Hamas security agents ban the projection of a film about the Syrian revolution produced by Hizb ut-Tahrir (Liberation Party) in Gaza.
2/1	Israeli forces storm journalist Amin Abu Wardeh's house and interrogate him.
2/2	Israeli forces beat four journalists during the storming of the Al-Nawateer village.
2/3	Hamas security agents summon journalist Hussein Abdel-Jawad Karsoua three times for questioning.
2/4	An Israeli court sentences journalist Iyad Rifaï to four months in prison for "providing services to enemy organizations."
2/5	Israeli forces renew the administrative detention of journalist Amer Abu Arfa.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

2/7	Palestinian Preventive Security (PPS) officers arrest journalist Mohammad Awad after storming his house and the offices of Ramasat news agency.
2/7	PPS summons journalist Alaa Al-Titi for questioning.
2/8	Photographer Ahmad Siam hit with an Israeli rubber-coated bullet in Al-Issawiya.
2/9	Israeli forces arrest photographers Abdel-Ghani Al-Natsheh and Nasser Al-Shoyoukhi while storming the Kanaan village.
2/11	Photographer Amer Abdeen hit in the foot with an Israeli rubber-coated bullet.
2/12	Israeli authorities issue an arrest warrant against musician Omar Saad for refusing military service in the Israeli army.
2/13	Shams radio station receives threats.
2/14	Hip-hop concert in Tulkarm cancelled after pressure from security services and the deputy governor.
2/15	Photographers Ahmad Siam and Majd Ghaith injured by stun grenades in Al-Issawiya.
2/15	Four journalists injured while covering clashes between Israeli forces and protestors near the Ofer prison.
2/16	Israeli forces arrest cartoonist Mohammad Sabaaneh.
2/19	Grenade thrown at the house of journalist Hikmat Ghorra in Jit.
2/19	Israeli forces detain journalists Mamdouh Hamamra, Samer Hamad, and Abdul-Rahman Yunis and prevent them from covering a military operation in Bethlehem.
2/21	Photographer Fadi Madi hit in the abdomen with a teargas grenade near the Ofer prison.
2/22	Israeli forces prevent Reuters photographer Abdul-Rahim Al-Qussini from covering clashes with Palestinian protesters in Nablus.
2/22	Israeli police detains cameraman Jamil Qodmani for three hours.
2/22	Photographers Joseph Hanzal, Yosri Al-Jamal, and Abdel-Hafiz Al-Hashlamoun hit with Israeli rubber-coated bullets and photographer Hussam Abu Allan arrested in Hebron.
2/23	Israeli security agents assault photographers Alaa Badarneh and Jaafar Ashtieh south of Nablus.
2/26	Palestinian Intelligence Services (PIS) summon journalist Khaldoun Mazloun for questioning.
2/27	Hamas police detains Palestine Today TV crew while filming a report in Rafah.

March

3/1	Israeli forces shoot at photographer Jihad Al-Qadi near the Ofer prison.
3/2	PIS detain journalist Mustafa Al-Khawaja and photographer Rami Abu Rammoun and prevent them from covering a sit-in near the Jericho prison.
3/2	Hamas police summons the vice-president of the Journalists' Syndicate Tahsin Al-Astal and writer Sami Al-Astal after writing articles criticizing police actions in Khan Yunis.
3/4	Hamas security prevents journalist Sami Abu Salem from traveling to Egypt twice.
3/6	Israeli forces arrest journalist Bakr Ateily in Nablus and writer Thamer Sabaaneh in Ramallah.
3/7	Israeli forces arrest journalist Mahmoud Abu Khdeir and deny him access to Jerusalem for 50 days.
3/7	Israeli police closes Al-Quds Cultural Club and prevents a cultural event that was scheduled under the patronage of the Palestinian Authority.
3/8	Israeli forces arrest <i>Al-Aqsa</i> TV correspondent Tarek Abu Zeid in Kfar Kadoum.
3/8	Photographers Mahfouz Abu Turk and Ata Oweissat injured while covering clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian protesters near Al-Aqsa mosque.
3/9	Israeli forces detain <i>Wattan</i> TV correspondent Hamza Al-Salayma in Hebron for four hours.
3/10	Israeli forces arrest journalist Walid Khaled after storming his house in Eskaka.
3/10	PIS arrest journalist Tarek Al-Sarakji then release him only to summon him again for questioning two days later.
3/15	Hamas destroys large sections of Al-Balakhya archaeological site in Gaza to turn it into a military training area.
3/15	Israeli authorities ban Jerusalem-based journalist Abdel-Latif Ghaith from entering Palestinian territories four times in a row.
3/17	Hamas bans journalist Majed Abu Salama from traveling to Ramallah.
3/17	Hamas policemen beat Anadolu news agency reporter Matin Kaya.
3/18	Israeli authorities ban Gaza-based filmmaker Youssef Natil from traveling to the West Bank.
3/21	Israeli security forces arrest journalist Rabih Eid for interrupting US President Barack Obama during his speech in Jerusalem.
3/24	Israeli forces detain journalist Abdel-Aziz Naufal in Hebron.
3/27	Israeli authorities ban eight Gaza-based journalists from traveling to Ramallah to attend a professional meeting.
3/28	<i>Al-Quds</i> TV reporter Mamdouh Hamamra sentenced to one year in prison for insulting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

3/29	Israeli police arrests photographer Mohammad Al-Fateh Abu Sneina and bans him from entering Al-Aqsa mosque for 15 days.
3/30	Pro-Syrian regime demonstrators assault <i>Al-Jazeera</i> crew and reporter Elias Karram in Sakhnin.
3/30	Israeli authorities detain journalist Mohammad Al-Lahham at the Allenby crossing point and photographer Abdel-Hafiz Al-Hashlamoun north of Hebron.
3/30	<i>Wafa</i> news agency's website hacked.

April

4/1	PIS summon journalist Abdel-Karim Msaytef for questioning in Ramallah.
4/2	Israeli policemen beat five journalists at Damascus Gate (Bab Al-Amoud) in Jerusalem.
4/2	Photographer Abdel-Ghani Al-Natsheh shot in the arm by an Israeli soldier in Hebron.
4/4	<i>Al-Buraq</i> radio correspondent Anas Al-Qadi hit in the head by an Israeli rubber bullet in Hebron.
4/7	Palestinian security officers force citizen journalist Iman Al-Silawi to close her Facebook page.
4/8	Photographer Mohammad Al-Ezza hit in the face with an Israeli rubber bullet while covering the storming of a refugee camp north of Bethlehem.
4/13	Israeli authorities ban Anadolu news agency correspondent Moaz Meshaal from traveling to Turkey.
4/17	Israeli forces arrest <i>Al-Khalil</i> radio station journalist Mohammad Al-Atrash.
4/17	Israeli policemen beat and arrest journalist Jawad Siam.
4/18	Israeli authorities ban the organization of two festivals on the occasion of Palestinian Prisoner's Day and Jerusalem Shopping Week.
4/18	Israeli forces storm journalist Raed Al-Sharif's house in Hebron.
4/20	PIS arrest journalist Tarek Khamis inside a hospital in Ramallah.
4/24	Israeli forces detain Pal Media photographer Abdel-Ghani Al-Natsheh for four hours.
4/26	PPS agents arrest journalist Khaldoun Mazloum.
4/29	Israeli forces deny Gaza-based journalist Khaled Bolbol entry to the West Bank.
4/30	Radical Israeli settlers assault photojournalists Jaafar Ashtieh, Nasser Ashtieh, and Alaa Badarneh south of Nablus.

May

- 5/1 Israeli police arrests members of Shomu' *Al-Quds* (Jerusalem Candles) dance company and prevent their participation in a festival in Al-Issawiya.
- 5/2 Journalist Tarek Abu Zeid sentenced by an Israeli court to three months in prison for taking part in an unauthorized rally.
- 5/7 Journalist Mossaab Shawar sentenced to five months in prison by an Israeli military court on charges of incitement against Israeli authorities.
- 5/7 Hamas policemen beat an *Al-Mayadeen* TV crew, comprised of reporter Ahmad Ghoneim, cameraman Abdel-Aziz Al-Afifi, and assistant cameraman Oday Abu Shahmeh, and detain them alongside photographers Mohammad Al-Baba and Mohammad Taha in Khan Yunis.
- 5/8 Israeli policemen beat five journalists and arrest three during a demonstration in Jerusalem.
- 5/9 Journalist Ruba Al-Najjar receives death threats after presenting a TV report on street beggars in Ramallah.
- 5/12 PPS agents detain journalist Omar Abu Arqoub a day after his detention by PIS.
- 5/13 PIS summon journalist Haroun Abu Orra for questioning.
- 5/15 Israeli policemen beat photojournalists Toufiq Saliba and Moammar Awad, and the director of the Prisoner's Club, Nasser Qaws, during a demonstration commemorating the *Nakba*.
- 5/17 Journalist Moaz Meshaal injured by an Israeli stun grenade.
- 5/18 Photographer Majd Ghaith injured by an Israeli stun grenade at Damascus Gate (Bab Al-Amoud) in Jerusalem.
- 5/19 PPS agents arrest journalist Mohammad Bisharat in Toubas.
- 5/21 PIS arrest journalist Salim Al-Salman and beat him during interrogation.
- 5/22 Israeli security agents detain Palestinian singer Rim Banna for one hour at the Allenby crossing point.
- 5/23 Hamas security agents summon writer Ibrahim Abrash for questioning twice in a row.
- 5/25 Bomb found near the house of journalist Nasser Abu Mayala alongside a threat letter addressed to the crew of an investigative television program on Palestine TV.
- 5/27 Israeli forces arrest journalist Oday Hreibat west of Hebron.
- 5/29 Palestinian security forces beat journalist Rawan Farhat in Ramallah.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

June

6/2	Israeli police summons blogger Abir Copti for questioning.
6/3	Bethlehem prosecutor general arrests journalist George Kanawati for inciting sectarian tensions and releases him the next day on bail.
6/5	Photographer Nasser Al-Shoyoukhi hit in the shoulder with an Israeli rubber bullet near the Ofer prison.
6/6	Israeli forces ban journalist Nawaf Al-Amer from traveling to Jordan.
6/7	Palestinian policemen beat photographers Shadi Hatem and Munzer Zahran while covering clashes that followed a sports game in Ramallah.
6/8	Israeli policemen arrest journalist Saïd Al-Qaq after beating him.
6/9	Israeli police denies Jordanian journalist Walid Hosni entry to the Palestinian territories.
6/10	Israeli police summons artist Rim Banna for questioning after her participation in a humanitarian convoy to assist Syrian refugee children in southern Turkey.
6/14	<i>Ehna</i> TV and <i>Al-Arṣ</i> production house receive threats after airing a report on young Arab Christian men enlisting in the Israeli army.
6/21	Israeli forces beat Palestine TV reporter Ahmad Shawar and cameraman Bashar Nazzal before arresting them.
6/21	Israeli police closes <i>Al-Hakawati</i> theater and bans the Palestinian Child's Festival.
6/24	Hamas policemen beat journalist Mohammad Othman after arresting him.
6/28	Israeli authorities deny Jordanian artists Omar Abdel-Lat and Mais Shalash entry to the West Bank.

July

7/1	PIS summon writer Amina Al-Tawil for questioning.
7/3	Israeli soldiers beat photographer Imad Saïd and pepper spray him.
7/4	Journalist Imad Al-Dreimly receives death threats.
7/5	Journalist Majed Abu Salama receives threats of physical aggression.
7/8	Khan Yunis municipal police detain Palestine TV crew, comprised of reporter Safa Al-Habil and cameraman Ayman Al-Swisi, while filming a report on water problems in the city.
7/11	PIS summon journalist Mossaab Saïd for questioning twice in a row.
7/11	Israeli forces detain <i>Al-Jazeera</i> TV crew for four hours and <i>Al-Aqsa</i> TV crew for two hours south of Nablus.
7/13	Israeli forces beat six journalists on the Qalandia checkpoint during a demonstration demanding freedom of movement for journalists.

7/15	Hamas security forces summon journalist Hatem Abu Daqqa for questioning in Khan Yunis.
7/15	Hamas security agents arrest journalist Majed Abu Salama during a protest against the Praver plan.
7/15	Settlers assault journalist Diala Jweihan while covering a protest against the Praver plan in Jerusalem.
7/18	Palestinian presidential guards assault photojournalist Munzer Al-Khatib in Ramallah.
7/25	Hamas government authorities close the offices of <i>Al-Arabiya</i> , <i>Ma'an</i> news agency, and a film production house in Gaza.
7/28	Israeli police arrests the director of the Galilee Society, Bakr Awawda, for taking part in a demonstration against the Praver plan in Kfar Kanna.
7/28	Israeli forces arrest journalist Ahmad Al-Arouri after storming his house north of Ramallah.
7/30	Hamas security forces summon <i>Ma'an</i> news agency director in Gaza Imad Eid and MBC's Gaza representative Islam Abdel-Karim for questioning.

August

8/1	Hamas security forces detain journalist Amjad Yaghi and Abdallah Obeid during a demonstration against the Praver plan.
8/1	Israeli police arrests artist Wassim Kheir and poet Ali Muassi during a demonstration against the Praver plan.
8/1	Israeli forces beat five journalists on the Hizma military checkpoint.
8/1	PIS arrest photojournalist Mossaab Saïd.
8/7	Israeli forces arrest Quds Press agency correspondent Mohammad Mona in Nablus.
8/11	Director of the Prisoner's Club, Nasser Qaws, arrested after posting a picture on Facebook.
8/11	Palestinian police detain journalist Hamza Al-Salayma for not having a permit to take pictures.
8/13	Israeli authorities arrest journalist Mohammad Awad in the village of Budrus.
8/13	A Gaza prosecutor summons writer Talal Al-Sharif for questioning twice in row for writing articles criticizing Hamas and its interior minister in Gaza.
8/16	Israeli forces beat and detain journalist Abdul-Rahman Yunis.
8/16	Palestinian security forces beat six journalists and photographers in the West Bank and prevent them from covering a pro-Hamas rally.
8/16	Hamas security forces issue an arrest warrant against writer Yahya Rabah for publishing an article criticizing the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

8/18	Hamas security forces arrest writer Tarek Al-Farra for giving an interview to a British newspaper.
8/23	Palestinian security forces assault photographers Ahmad Melhem, Moaz Meshaal, and Mohammad Al-Arouri during a pro-Hamas demonstration.
8/27	Palestinian curriculum replaced by Israeli curriculum in five Arab schools in Jerusalem.
8/28	Hamas security forces summon journalist Seifeddin Shahin for questioning for interviewing a member of the Tamarrod movement.

September

9/1	Israeli authorities ban journalist Omar Abu Arqoub from traveling to Jordan.
9/1	Israeli police accuses the director of the Prisoner's Club, Nasser Qaws, of inciting violence near Al-Aqsa mosque and summons him for questioning.
9/2	Hamas security forces summon the president of the Palestinian Network for Press and Media, Nasr Abul-Foul, for questioning twice in a row.
9/4	Israeli police prevents journalists from covering clashes with Palestinian protesters at Bab Hutta in Jerusalem.
9/6	Journalist Sleiman Khodr hit with a rubber bullet in the thigh.
9/9	Hamas security forces interrogate journalist Mohammad Abu Fayad for whistling in support of the Tamarrod movement.
9/9	Hamas security forces summon journalist Fathi Tubeil for questioning and make him sign a pledge not to take part in anti-government movements.
9/10	Hamas security forces summon journalists Ra'fat Tuman, Yahya Al-Madhoun, and Hussein Abdel-Jawad Karsoua for questioning about their relation with the Tamarrod movement.
9/11	Israeli policemen assault four journalists in Bab Hutta in Jerusalem.
9/12	Hamas security forces accuse journalist Alaa Ahmad of incitement against the government and summon him for questioning.
9/12	Israeli forces confiscate and break photographer Nidal Ashtieh's cameras.
9/13	Photojournalist Jaafar Ashtieh hit in the foot with two Israeli teargas grenades.
9/14	PIS detain journalist Zaher Al-Shemali for insulting high authorities.
9/18	Hamas security agents detain filmmaker Mohammad Al-Majdalawi while filming a documentary on women's conditions in Gaza.
9/18	<i>Al-Furat</i> TV correspondent in Gaza Ayman Al-Aaloul receives death threats.
9/22	Journalist Mohammad Al-Madhoun receives threats of physical aggression.
9/24	Israeli forces detain journalist Mahmoud Abu Ata and ban him from entering Al-Aqsa mosque compound for two weeks.

9/24	Five journalists injured by stun grenades and rubber bullets at Damascus Gate (Bab Al-Amoud) in Jerusalem.
9/27	Israeli forces assault seven photojournalists in Hebron.
9/27	Photographer Ahmad Gharableh hit in the knee with an Israeli rubber bullet at Damascus Gate (Bab Al-Amoud).
9/27	<i>Wafa</i> news agency photographer Hadhifa Srouf hit with a stun grenade in Naalin.
9/27	Journalist Shaza Hammad arrested by Israeli forces at a checkpoint near Silwad.
9/30	PIS interrogate <i>Al-Aqsa</i> TV correspondent in Ramallah Mustafa Al-Khawaja.

October

10/4	PIS arrest Anadolu news agency correspondent Alaa Al-Rimawi.
10/8	Israeli police arrests blogger Razi Nabulsi for eight days on charges of inciting terrorism.
10/10	PIS arrest photojournalist Mossaab Saïd in Al-Bireh.
10/10	Israeli police arrests photographer Soheib Salhab and bans him from entering Al-Aqsa mosque compound for 15 days.
10/11	Israeli forces detain <i>Wafa</i> news agency photographer Mohammad Farraj and a Palestine TV crew, comprised of reporter Anal Al-Jadaa and cameraman Mohammad Inaya, in Kfar Kadoum.
10/22	Palestinian artist Shafik Kabha killed by gunmen in Umm Al-Fahm.
10/22	<i>Wattan</i> agency photographer Amjad Shuman hit in the head with a stun grenade.
10/22	Israeli forces detain a <i>Wattan</i> TV crew for three hours and confiscate their equipment.
10/27	Israeli forces detain <i>Ma'an</i> news agency crew in Jenin after taking pictures of a house occupied by Israeli soldiers in Yaabad.
10/29	PIS summon photographer Hazem Nasser for questioning in Tulkarm.
10/30	Hamas policemen beat Nur Photo agency photographer Ahmad Deeb.
10/30	PPS summons researcher Ibrahim Al-Abed for questioning in Ramallah.

November

11/1	<i>Sawt Al-Ghad</i> (Voice of Tomorrow) radio director Majdi Taha arrested by Palestinian security forces in Salfit.
11/6	Israeli authorities arrest 25 Palestinian Facebook activists in Jerusalem.
11/6	Israeli authorities arrest journalist Mohammad Abu Khdeir and prevent him from seeing his lawyer.
11/7	PIS arrest TransMedia photographer Hazem Nasser and release him after three days.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2013

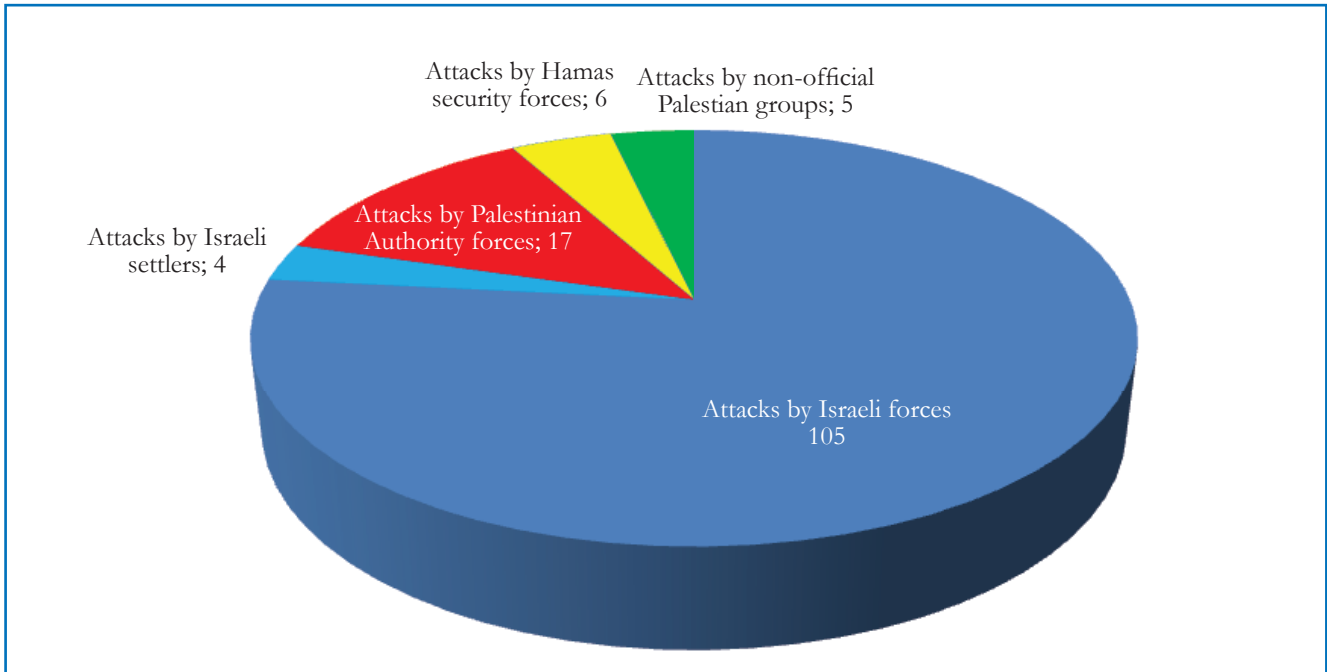
11/10	Palestinian policemen beat and arrest journalist George Kanawati.
11/11	Hamas security forces detain seven journalists who conducted interviews in commemoration of Yasser Arafat's death.
11/13	Unknown assailants attack <i>Al-Arabiya</i> assistant cameraman Shaaban Meima and steal the channel's broadcast vehicle in Gaza.
11/15	Journalist Tarek Hamdi and photographers Abbas Al-Moumni and Majdi Ashtieh hit with Israeli teargas grenades and rubber bullets in Bilin.
11/17	Hamas media office and Gaza's prosecutor general summon a <i>Louloua</i> TV station crew for questioning.
11/21	Israeli forces detain journalist Mamdouh Amamra and photographer Abdel-Ghani Al-Natsheh near Bethlehem.
11/24	Palestinian presidential intelligence agents detain a <i>Wattan</i> news agency crew, comprised of correspondent Ibrahim Anqawi and photographer Nael Al-Rajjoub, and confiscate their cameras.
11/24	Israeli policemen beat and arrest researcher Taha Al-Sanea.

December

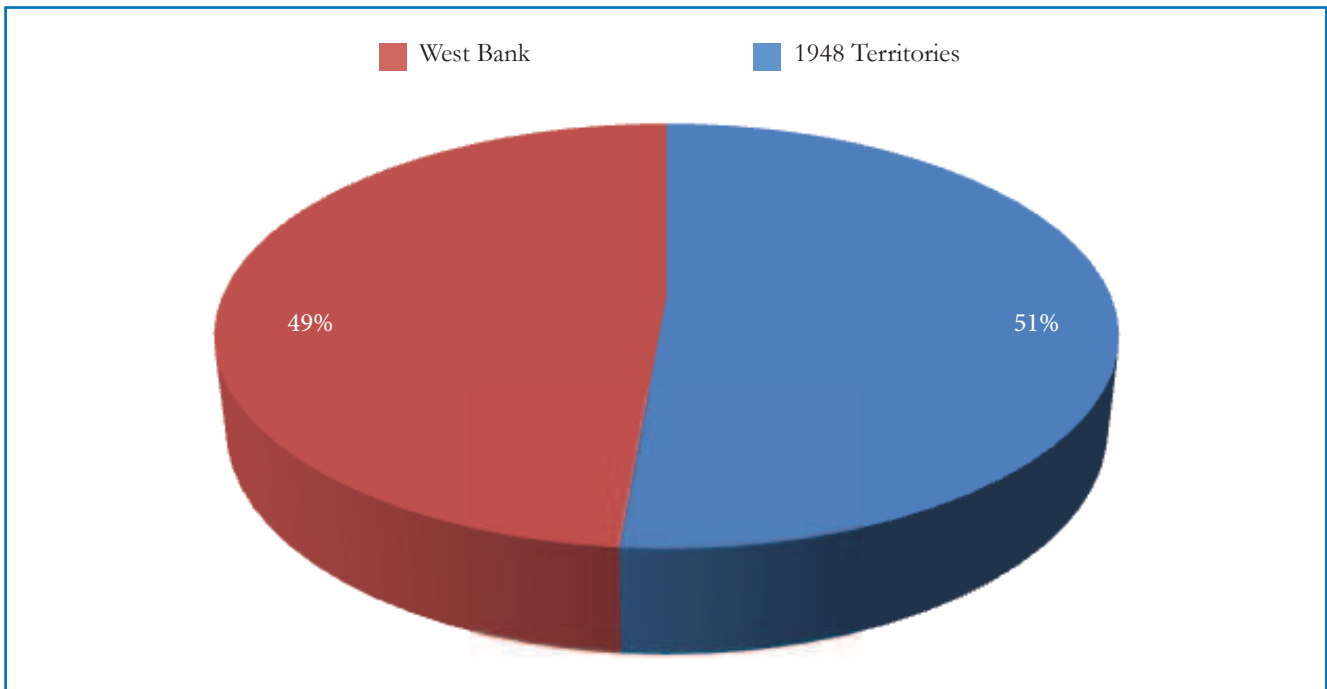
12/4	Israeli police summons artist Wassim Kheir for questioning twice in a row about his participation in protests against the Praver plan.
12/5	Musician Omar Saad sentenced to 20 days in prison by an Israeli court for refusing to serve in the Israeli army.
12/6	Israeli policemen beat photographer Ata Oweissat during clashes with Palestinians near Al-Aqsa mosque.
12/12	Israeli intelligence services summon journalist Mohammad Kheiri and interrogate him for five hours at Al-Jelma prison.
12/17	Photographer Mohammad Qaddoura hit in the head with an Israeli stun grenade in Tulkarm.
12/19	Israeli forces detain journalist Moaz Meshaal and photographer Shadi Hatem at the Zaatara checkpoint south of Nablus.
12/26	Journalist Hamdi Abu Dheir held at gun point by an official at the Nablus governorate headquarters.
12/27	Journalist Moaz Meshaal and photographer Abbas Al-Moumni hit with Israeli rubber bullets in Nabi Salih.
12/29	Hamas security forces ban a meeting between a number of journalists and the Journalists' Syndicate in Gaza to discuss professional issues.
12/31	Israeli police interrogates journalist Ata Oweissat and denies him access to Al-Aqsa mosque compound for two weeks.

Facts and Figures – Palestine 2013

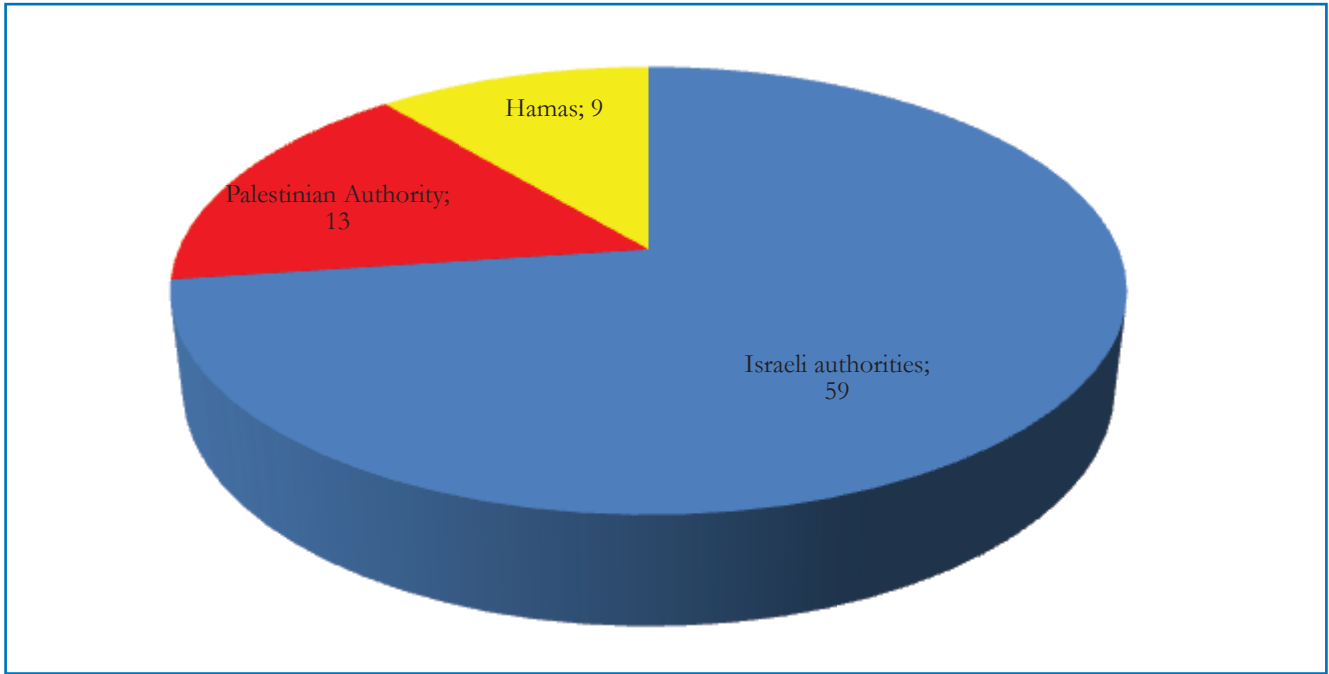
Physical assaults on Palestinian journalists, photographers, and artists



Geographic location of Israeli assaults on Palestinian journalists, photographers, and artists



Arrest of Palestinian journalists, photographers, and artists



Palestine – Cultural Spotlight

Palestinian Culture Pushes Forward Against a Difficult Backdrop

Eric Reidy

The winner of this year's "Arab Adol", Mohammad Assaf, who grew up in the Gaza Strip's Khan Yunis refugee camp, captivated audiences across the Arab world with his musical talent and personal journey. Many media outlets also brought the 24 year old's story to audiences in Europe and the United States and Assaf has become a symbol of hope and possibility for Palestinians throughout the world.

The feature film "Omar" and short film "Condom Lead" also brought Palestinian cinema to the world stage. "Omar" was nominated for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Film category and has picked up accolades at various international festivals. And, "Condom Lead" became the first film from the Gaza Strip to be entered into the Cannes Film Festival.

Away from the attention of international media and audiences, 2013 was also a busy cultural year within Palestine. During her first month in Ramallah, Rula Khoury, who moved from Haifa to Ramallah to work as the director of the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, said she tried to attend all of the cultural events, but there was too much going on.

Among the mix of festivals and events, *Sareyyet* Ramallah's Contemporary Dance Festival and *El-Funoun's* Dabke Festival stand out as having strong, unique identities, according to Kamel El-Basha, a Palestinian playwright, actor, and artistic director of Quds Art.

Sareyyet Ramallah's dance festival invites international and local contemporary dancers to challenge audiences to expand their cultural horizons beyond traditional Palestinian culture. At

the same time, *El-Funoun's* festival is a powerful affirmation of Palestinian identity and political aspirations that shuns the interests of international donors.

The prevalence of aid in sponsoring Palestinian cultural activities has created a gap between the needs of Palestinian audiences and the types of activities international donors are interested in sponsoring. "Gradually, you start to think like the funders," El-Basha says. "The needs of Palestinian society should be decided by the Palestinians themselves, not foreign experts."

Quds Art, along with several other initiatives in recent years, has grown out of the desire to establish an independent Palestinian cultural agenda. "We were tired of the ideas and strategies of NGOs," Ramzi Maqdisi, a founding member of the group, explains.

In 2013, Quds Art produced two movies that are both in post-production, one music album, several theater productions, and published its first book. The group also hosts a monthly open reading event for poetry and theater and is running a free training program in cinema, theater, and plastic arts for youth in East Jerusalem.

Quds Art's activities are run by a dedicated, core group of artists who volunteer their time to close the gap between culture and the community. Other artists participate in their events and take part in their training workshops. Quds Art also reaches out to groups in Hebron, Nablus, and the 1948 Territories to help promote activities that share a similar cultural vision.

In Ramallah, the Mahmoud Darwish Museum also offers an array of interactive events that aim to encourage participation in cultural life, cultivate young talents, and connect Palestine to the broader Arab and international cultural world. The museum, according to its director Sameh Khader, is “meant to be a place for Palestinians to build their own cultural scene.”

Since opening its doors in 2012, the museum’s work has sought to promote respect for diversity and the acceptance and observation of cultural changes. It does not try to impose these values. Instead, it encourages their adoption by offering events that connect with and challenge audiences.

The museum hosts a monthly cultural symposium entitled “Innovator in the Presence of Darwish” that brings cultural luminaries from the Arab world and beyond to share their work and interact with Palestinian audiences. In 2013, the program featured Algerian novelist Wasini Al-Aaraj and Palestinian-Jordanian poet Ibrahim Nasrallah, among others. Seven to eight hundred people showed up to see Al-Aaraj and Nasrallah in Ramallah. The museum also organized opportunities for the two writers to connect with Palestinians in Nablus and Hebron, acknowledging the importance of spreading cultural activity throughout the West Bank.

Another event, called “A Book I Already Read”, offers anyone the opportunity to speak in front of an audience about any book they feel passionately about. “It’s a free space to speak and express yourself,” Khader explains. “We want to enhance reading behavior and to break the fear between being an audience member and a speaker.”

By putting young intellectuals and artists directly in front of audiences, the museum opens up more spaces for people to discuss, debate, and learn how to listen, Khader continues. “We want every young intellectual to remember his start... to say his first time was in the Mahmoud Darwish Museum,” he concludes.

The Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center has also been working to bridge the gap between audiences and culture. The center put on a festival that featured video and installation art in various public places around Ramallah. It also ran a program to bring arts education to schools in Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, and Nabi Salih and to train teachers from those areas on how to teach the arts.

The center is planning to launch an e-journal for Palestinian art and cultural critique in 2014. The e-journal is the second phase of a project started in 2013 that trained 15 artists, organization directors, and journalists on writing cultural critiques. It is meant to address the lack of professional outlets that talk about Palestinian art and art in the Arab world, Khoury says.

Additionally, a number of youth-led cultural groups are starting to emerge in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. Groups like *Zedne* (Give me More) and *Shabab Al-Balad* (Youth of the Country) have developed out of a sense of frustration with political factions, slogans, and lack of direction in Palestinian society. “For the new generation,” El-Basha says, “they are lost, but discovered that they must find their own way.”

All of this cultural activity is taking place against a backdrop of daunting challenges. The Palestinian cultural scene remains physically fragmented between East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, and the 1948 Territories. It is difficult to obtain permits for Arab artists to come visit and for Palestinians who want to present their work in other parts of Palestine. Widespread cultural conservatism, inadequate support by the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian investors, and the effects of international aid agendas also pose separate obstacles that prevent Palestinian culture from reaching the level of recognition it longs for and deserves.

Winning the Ethical Challenge

Youssef Melhem El-Hachem

In 2013, journalists faced unprecedented difficulties and dangers in the four countries monitored by the SKeyes Center. In Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine journalists have been confronted with the need to demonstrate outstanding professionalism in the face of colossal challenges. These challenges include the deepening of the Syrian crisis, the rise of abductions, suicide bombings, and humanitarian emergencies, amid mounting emotional and political pressures.

Journalists, reporters, and photographers inevitably seek media scoops. Many are prepared to break stories at just about any price, regardless of the possible negative consequences. But should getting a scoop be their only goal? The answer is: Of course not.

The race to break a story is a fundamental motivation in journalism. However, under no circumstance can it encapsulate the noble cause that journalists risk their lives to defend. That quest is the search for democracy and truth. The following questions must therefore be raised in this context:

Does the race to break a story legitimize the broadcasting of human remains or interviewing wounded people at the scene of an explosion instead of helping them?

Does the race to break a story justify the early publication of victims' names before making sure of the exact number of casualties and checking their identities? Is it acceptable to rebroadcast images published by other media outlets and forsake giving credit to their legitimate owners?

Should the race to break a story allow journalists to publish information that is likely to distort an investigation or show the sobs of bereaved mothers, wives, children, and relatives of the victims?

Does the race to break a story explain the determination to communicate unverified information when official authorities have denied its truthfulness? Do we serve the truth when we publish footage of previous attacks from other countries and claim that it is live coverage?

Last but not least, does the race to break a story justify the publication of photos that have been manipulated to serve the interests of the political camp with which the media institution is affiliated?

There are probably other questions to be asked. However, the answers to the above questions - and professional journalists know these answers only too well - can protect the noble mission of journalism. This is paramount even if it involves delaying breaking the story for several minutes. This slight delay will undoubtedly be compensated for by the precision and credibility of the information later relayed.

Arab correspondents and photographers are constantly exposed to danger while covering civil and sectarian conflicts on the battlefield. However, few of them have undergone the adequate training to report in such trying conditions. Covering wars, terrorism, and suicide bombings requires a strong technical and theoretical preparation. Otherwise, journalists are susceptible to being carried away by their emotions and succumbing to hate speech, intimidation, and what has become known as “bang-bang” journalism.

A fundamental part of this training is about fact-checking information before spreading false or misleading information. Objectivity is a golden rule, and journalists should not surrender to bigotry and spreading hatred under the pretext of interviewing witnesses or other methods of letting people share their emotions.

A successful reporter, photographer, or citizen journalist is the one who finds a balance between two pillars of his or her profession. The first is the cultural pillar. This is demonstrated through the careful choice of words used to condemn criminal acts while maintaining an acute sense of professionalism. The second is the technical pillar. This focuses on sharing information from reliable sources while respecting intellectual property rights.

Amid growing violence in the region, more than ever, journalists must rise to the high standards demanded by this major ethical challenge.

