

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

Annual Report
2011

SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom
Samir Kassir Foundation

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Foreword

Press and Cultural Freedom in the Levant Faces Repression, Censorship, Racism and Murder

Ayman Mhanna

“Crackdown was the word of the year in 2011... Never have journalists, through their reporting, vexed the enemies of freedom so much. Never have acts of censorship and physical attacks on journalists seemed so numerous”. This is how Reporters Without Borders summarized the state of press freedom in 2011 in its latest report. Developments over the same period in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine, the four countries that the SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom monitors, unfortunately confirm this sad reality.

Press and cultural freedom in the Levant was characterized in 2011 by the following trends:

In **Lebanon**, two phenomena raised concerns among defenders of liberty. First, the physical assaults on journalists by non-state actors, whether members of political parties, demonstrators, or a new category of activists commonly called “the inhabitants” (*Al-Ahali*) of some delicate regions. All sides of the Lebanese political spectrum were responsible for such acts. Supporters of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri attacked journalists on January 25, 2011, during what was called the “Sunni day of rage”, following the appointment of Najib Mikati as head of the government. Similarly, Hezbollah supporters in the village of Lassa, in the southern suburbs of Beirut and in villages across South Lebanon, attacked several reporters and photographers who were covering the cases of illegal construction and disputes over land ownership.

The second phenomenon was censorship that particularly targeted the film industry, with more than ten movies either totally or partly censored. Censorship officials justified their decisions claiming that some movies threatened civil peace or endangered Lebanon’s relations with Syria and Iran.

Also in Lebanon, the government has shown desire to regulate the electronic media sector. Lebanon has long been held up as the vanguard for electronic freedom in the region. Hence, the recent drive to regulate the electronic media sector, something which is common to other countries in the region, is a major concern. The government, moreover, is yet to demonstrate its commitment to public freedoms and its technical knowledge of technology-related issues.

In **Jordan**, the beginning of the year was marked by repeated attacks against journalists. These occurred during protests in Amman and other cities demanding political reforms, and were carried out by the security services and government supporters, who deliberately targeted the press corps. As for the second half of

the year, press freedom was affected by political interference in media affairs, particularly through government pressure to appoint newspapers' board members, dismiss editors, and influence the decision to publish or conceal information in print and online media outlets.

In **Palestine**, press and cultural freedom was greatly affected by the conflict between Fatah and Hamas. Authorities in both Gaza and the West Bank summoned and arrested journalists thought to be affiliated with the opponent group and subjected them to politicized trials. Moreover, the Hamas police did not hesitate to attack journalists, bloggers and human rights activists with a rarely witnessed violence, when a group of young Palestinians launched a movement in March 2011 to end inter-Palestinian divisions. In the West Bank, journalists remained the target of Israeli teargas canisters, stun grenades and rubber bullets during weekly demonstrations against settlements and the separation fence; a fate their Arab counterparts in the 1948 Territories also shared.

Moreover, Arab citizens in the 1948 Territories faced a dangerous rise in the number of racist Israeli laws and administrative measures, limiting their linguistic and cultural rights, and restricting the ability of Arab human rights organizations to defend their cause.

But the region's real gaping wound was undoubtedly **Syria**, with hundreds of journalists, artists, and activists arrested, dozens physically assaulted, and eleven murdered. These abuses were carried out with a degree of violence rarely seen to serve as a lesson to all those involved in the struggle for democracy and freedom. Most gruesomely, the eyes of the photographer Ferzat Jerban were torn out, the singer Ibrahim Kashoush was slain and had his throat cut, and the hands of the cartoonist Ali Ferzat were broken.

In 2011, Syria was probably one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists. Because of the Syrian government's decision to deny access to journalists in the early months of the uprising, many international reporters sneaked into Syria, facing grave danger. Consequently, citizen journalists and bloggers became the principal channels for information on developments on the ground and the violent massacres and bombings, despite the difficulty in confirming the accuracy of amateur videos posted on blogs and social networking websites.

The year 2011 was undoubtedly one of the worst for press and cultural freedom in the region. While some improvements appear to have taken place in Palestine since the beginning of 2012, official interference in the media in Jordan should remain under close surveillance, in order not to let self-censorship become irreversible in the minds of Jordanian journalists. In Lebanon, it is time to take bold and effective measures to combat censorship and attempts by non-state actors to impose their cultural standards on all Lebanese people. Also needed is a strong stand against measures that curb electronic liberties. However, eyes, hearts and minds remain turned to Syria, where the safety of journalists as well as Syrian and foreign reporters is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Without delay, international legal organizations must take all possible measures to bring to justice those responsible for the killings and be given universal jurisdiction over crimes against journalists, as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Committed to Samir Kassir's belief that "frustration is not fate", the SKeyes Center wishes that the pains of 2011 were nothing but signs announcing the birth of an era of freedom and dignity for every Arab citizen.

More Censorship and a Surge in the Aggression of Journalists

Rima Awad

The struggle by Arabs for freedom and democracy did not lead to a freer Lebanese media and cultural scene in 2011. The Lebanese media coverage of the protests spreading from one country to another revealed the impact of the Lebanese political division on journalists.

Several journalists received threats after they expressed support for the Syrian revolution. Journalist Nadim Koteich received explicit anonymous warnings on his Facebook page, threatening to attack him and his daughter. Also, gasoline was poured on an Al-Jadeed (New TV) transport vehicle, in an attempt to intimidate the crew covering an anti-Syrian regime rally in North Lebanon.

The Lebanese Army banned journalists from accessing the Lebanese Syrian border areas and to report on the Syrian refugees who have settled there. Several foreign reporters and journalists were barred access to the Wadi Khaled region in Akkar, without prior written authorization. Similarly, TV crews were stopped at the Army checkpoint in Shadra (North Lebanon), and were forced to turn back.

In August, Lebanese and Syrian thugs attacked human rights activists with stones, sticks, belts and even knives during a peaceful protest in front of the Syrian embassy in Beirut, in solidarity with the Syrian citizens, causing serious injuries. Also, a fire was deliberately sparked in the offices of First Link, the production company twinned with the pro-Jamaa Islamiya Hayatona satellite TV channel in the Karakol Al-Druze neighborhood in Beirut.

The Egyptian, Tunisian, Bahraini and Libyan uprisings also had significant repercussions on the Lebanese media scene. Political pressure was exerted on journalist Rimielle Nehmé after she voiced support for the popular uprising in Egypt.

She subsequently resigned live on air from Radio Orient. Members of the Internal Security Forces and the “Metropolitan Hotel” security beat up Tunisian journalist Monsef Ben Ali and activist Idriss Al-Mliti, who were handing out a statement supporting the Tunisian revolution and warning against the counter-revolution. There was also a massive jamming of news bulletins broadcasted on twelve Lebanese TV channels and three radio stations, in reaction to their coverage of events in Libya and Bahrain.

The political conflict had a flagrant impact on media personnel as well: supporters of the March 8 and March 14 coalitions attacked journalists and prevented them from performing their duties. The Al-Fajr Radio correspondent, Abdul-Rahman Arabi, was prevented from covering the fight that took place at Makassed hospital; an Orange TV (OTV) team was also attacked at the same place. Journalists have therefore been seen to be representing the political party that owns their media institution, legitimizing, in the general public’s mind, attacks against them as well as violations of their rights. This occurred amidst a climate of impunity.

Censorship also played a major role in restricting media and cultural freedoms in Lebanon. Minister of Energy and Water, Gebran Bassil, prevented Rabih Shantaf, a Future News TV correspondent from entering the Ministry three times in a row, because he had “asked him inappropriate questions” during one of his press conferences. General Security banned the export of Faraj Bayrakdar’s book “The Treasons of the Language and Silence – My Experience in Syrian Services’ Prisons”, although the book has been available on the Lebanese market since 2006. The Iranian movie “Green Days”, which revolves around the Iranian opposition protests after the 2009 presidential election as well as Danielle Arbid’s movie “Beirut Hotel”, which refers to the

2005 Rafik Hariri assassination, were also banned in Lebanese theaters. The National News Agency censored several parts of a press conference held by MP Mohammad Kabbara, during which he called on Syrian authorities to put an end to “massacres against civilians”. Kabbara also complained about the repetitive visits of the security services to Arab media institutions, asking for copies of statements made by Syrian citizens, who fled the violence in Syria to settle down in Lebanon.

The Lebanese documentary “Shou Sar” (What Happened) was also banned. The name of the producer and director Steven Spielberg was hidden on a “Tintin” movie poster because Spielberg’s name appears on the General Security’s “Boycott Israel” blacklist; but the decision was eventually revoked because of pressure from civil society organizations. On the other hand, direct religious censorship has considerably increased compared to previous years. For example, Christian extremists sent threat messages to the members of the band LMFAO, who were forced to cancel their concert in Lebanon. Moreover, Jamaa Islamiya leaders called for banning the “Scene Scene” comedy play in Saida, considering it immoral, but the show continued normally.

Many events proved the decline of public liberties in Lebanon in 2011: singer Zeid Hamdan was arrested for calling upon General Suleiman to “go home” in one of his songs. Some activists at the Lebanese Center for Human Rights were summoned after publishing a report containing the testimonies of prisoners, who claimed to have been detained and tortured by Amal Movement members before being handed over to the Lebanese security services. The Lebanese

Army Intelligence arrested Saadeddine Shatila, from the Al-Karama (Dignity) International Organization for Human Rights, and then released him on bail after questioning him for several hours. Shatila had addressed reports in 2010 to the United Nations related to acts of torture taking place in Lebanese prisons. The Criminal Investigation Unit at the Beirut Justice Palace arrested Georges Alam, the author of “Al-Maassara” (The winepress), following a complaint filed against him by the Ministry of Defense in response to a book he wrote that chronicles his experience in the Ministry’s prison and includes details of the torture he underwent; he was then released on the condition that he remains in the country. The NGO Kafa denounced pressure from political and religious officials on several television channels to remove an advocacy ad for the campaign to criminalize violence against women.

Dozens of websites, dealing with sensitive issues such as politics and human rights, were hacked, including the website of the SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom, which was attacked in February 2010. Internet speed and the low quality of telecommunications also limited freedom of expression.

In addition to this, an Electronic Media bill was drafted by the Minister of Information Walid Daouk. The text does not guarantee freedom of expression, turns a blind eye to the rights of online journalists, and does not protect intellectual property. This draft law raised further doubts about the Lebanese government’s intention of controlling the surging online sphere, which has so far escaped all forms of filtering and censorship.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

January

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|------|--|
| 1/18 | The offices of the Palestinian Organization for Human Rights stormed. |
| 1/25 | 16 journalists attacked during the protests against the appointment of Najib Mikati as Prime Minister. |

February

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| 2/5 | Broadcaster Rimielle Nehmé resigns from Radio Orient because of pressure she endured after voicing support for the Egyptian revolution. |
| 2/17 | The signal of twelve Lebanese TV channels and three radio stations jammed because of their coverage of the Libyan and Bahraini uprisings. |
| 2/22 | Al-Fajr Radio reporter and OTV crew attacked next to Makassed Hospital in Beirut. |

March

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|------|---|
| 3/10 | The Jassem brothers, two Syrian activists, disappear in Lebanon. |
| 3/10 | Journalist Ibrahim Dsouki receives death threats after his criticism of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. |
| 3/15 | Officials of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights summoned after their publication of a report accusing Amal Movement members of torturing prisoners. |
| 3/17 | Journalist Hussein Saad attacked in Tyre. |
| 3/21 | Tunisian journalist Monsef Ben Ali and activist Idriss Al-Mliti beaten and arrested next to the Metropolitan Hotel. |
| 3/22 | Dynamite detonated next to Radio Free Lebanon's building. |
| 3/27 | Photographer Wael Al-Ladki attacked and journalist Nadine El-Ali harassed during the anti-sectarianism protest in Amshit. |

April

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|------|--|
| 4/3 | Journalists Amir Shumar and Mohammad Al-Zaatari attacked during the anti-sectarianism protest in Saida. |
| 4/3 | Journalist and blogger Assaad Thebian beaten by MP Kassem Hashem's bodyguards during the anti-sectarianism protest in Saida. |
| 4/15 | Threats posted on journalist Nadim Koteich's Facebook page. |
| 4/17 | Journalist Haidar Hawila's car attacked in Tyre. |
| 4/22 | MTV crew comprised of reporter Georges Eid and cameraman Roger Hanna attacked in Ghobeiri. |

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

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| 4/22 | New TV live broadcast vehicle attacked in Tripoli. |
| 4/23 | New TV cameraman Hassan Bazzi attacked in Haddatha, South Lebanon. |

May

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| 5/11 | Energy Minister Gebran Bassil denies Future News TV reporter access to the Ministry's building. |
| 5/22 | MTV crew comprised of reporter Georges Eid and cameramen Fadi Skaff and Dany Antonio attacked in Wata Al-Jowz, Kesrwan. |

June

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|------|---|
| 6/20 | General Security bans the Iranian movie "Green Days". |
| 6/20 | Middle East Airlines suspends the distribution of Al-Akhbar newspaper aboard its flights. |
| 6/22 | General Security bans Lebanese director De Gaulle Eid's movie "Shou Sar". |
| 6/24 | Al-Manar TV cameraman Mohammad Harb attacked in Sabra, Beirut. |
| 6/27 | Gunshots on LBC Bekaa correspondent Mohammad Ali Ahmad's car, west of Baalbeck. |

July

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|------|--|
| 7/6 | Al-Jazeera correspondent Ali Hashem beaten by Parliament Police members in downtown Beirut. |
| 7/17 | Photographer Marwan Bou Haidar beaten by Lebanese policemen. |
| 7/18 | MTV reporter Joelle Kozaili and cameraman Khalil Akiki held by Hezbollah members in Beirut's southern suburbs. |
| 7/19 | MTV crew comprised of Pierre Karam and Jonathan Al-Hajj attacked in Lassa. |
| 7/22 | Journalist Anas Mohsen receives threats. |
| 7/25 | Army Intelligence services arrest human rights activist Saadeddine Shatila. |
| 7/27 | Singer Zeid Hamdan arrested because of his song "General Suleiman, Go Home". |

August

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| 8/2 | Bloggers and activists Ali Shreim, Nabil Abdo, Ghassan Makarem, Nisrine Al-Chaer, Sara Wansa, Samer Abu Saïd, Bassem Chit, Saad Kurdi and Khodr Salameh attacked during a peaceful protest in front of the Syrian embassy in Beirut. |
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- 8/4 Al-Liwaa newspaper photographer Mahmoud Youssef attacked in Tarik Jdideh, Beirut.
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- 8/19 LFTV crew attacked in Lassa.
-
- 8/22 British journalist Nicholas Blanford summoned after the publication in Time Magazine of his interview with a Hezbollah member indicted for the assassination of Rafik Hariri.
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September

- 9/16 Export ban on Syrian writer Faraj Bairakdar's book "The Treasons of the Language and Silence".
-
- 9/16 US band LMFAO cancels its concert in Beirut after receiving threats posted online by Christian extremist groups.
-

October

- 10/4 Journalist Maria Maalouf receives threats after the publication of an investigative report on plans to assassinate General Michel Aoun in Cyprus in the late 1980s.
-
- 10/4 Journalist Ali Hamadé receives death threats.
-
- 10/5 General Security bans the projection of Austrian movie "Michael" in the Beirut International Film Festival.
-
- 10/8 Iranian authorities ban several filmmakers from traveling to Beirut, leading the Beirut International Film Festival to suspend the projection of Nader Daoudi's movie "The Red, the White, the Green" and Suhand Samadian's "I Love Tehran".
-
- 10/11 Dhour Shweir municipality prevents Egyptian actor Adel Imam from filming his new TV series in the village, in reaction to his anti-Hezbollah stances after the July 2006 war.
-
- 10/13 Journalists denied access to the Wadi Khaled region in Akkar without prior Lebanese Army approval.
-
- 10/21 National Audiovisual Media Council to open a special register for websites in Lebanon.
-
- 10/24 Saida.Net editor-in-chief receives death threats.
-
- 10/31 The offices of the Jamaa Islamiya-affiliated production house First Link set on fire in Beirut.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

November

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|-------|--|
| 11/1 | Future News TV cameraman Mahmoud Badran attacked at the gate of the Lebanese American University in Beirut. |
| 11/8 | Steven Spielberg's name hidden on the posters of the movie "Tintin" at Cinema City in Beirut. |
| 11/17 | General Security allows the screening of "Rue Huvelin" after censoring a scene showing Lebanese students burning the Syrian flag. |
| 11/19 | Al-Arabiya TV reporter Adnan Ghamloush and cameramen Kamal Abdeen and Mohammad Darwish arrested while filming a simulation of abduction cases that had taken place in Beirut, because of the lack of coordination among security services; some of whom knew about the filming while others did not. |

December

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|-------|--|
| 12/5 | Writer Georges Alam held for three days for investigation after the Ministry of Defense filed a complaint against him because of his book "Al-Maassara" (The winepress). |
| 12/19 | General Security bans the projection of Danielle Arbid's movie "Beirut Hotel" and censors two scenes of Samer Daaboul's "Out Loud". |
| 12/30 | Religious and political authorities exert pressure on Lebanese TV stations to remove a public service message by the campaign to protect women from domestic violence. |

The Walls of the “Kingdom of Silence” Broken amid Violent Repression

Wajih Ajouz

If the beginning of 2011 was Tunisian, its end was undeniably Syrian. The wave of popular uprisings that shook Tunisia and brought down the police state quickly spread eastward to reach regimes considered by Libyan, Egyptian, Yemeni and Bahraini protesters as oppressive and illegitimate. When Tunisian President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali escaped from the country on January 14, the determination of Arabs only grew bigger and they decided to organize protests aiming at overthrowing existing regimes. Many important dates marked the popular anger against single-party and ruling family systems: January 14 was Tunisian, January 25 was Egyptian, and February 17 was Libyan... At the beginning of the year the Syrian calendar remained devoid of significant dates. President Bashar Al-Assad was confident enough to say, in an interview with the Wall Street Journal, that Syrians were at peace with his regime.

But the wind of change found its way to the “kingdom of silence” and, after many vain attempts, Syrians managed to call for an historic protest on March 15, 2011. Unprecedented demonstrations, calling for the downfall of the regime, have been going on ever since. Syrian security services have not succeeded in putting an end to popular uprisings, in spite of the violent repression carried out against demonstrators. At first, Syrian official media ignored the very existence of this protest movement. The most important challenge for protestors was to provide Arab and international media with information. When official media decided to ignore the protests, Syrian activists realized that the non-dissemination of information would stifle the popular uprising and prevent it from spreading through Syrian regions. The main function of activists was, in addition to organizing protests, spreading news and documenting exactions.

Foreign correspondents dispatched to Syria faced the restrictions imposed by the regime. The security services arrested Dorothy Parvaz, an Al-Jazeera correspondent, sending a signal that journalists are *personae non gratae*. A new kind of correspondents subsequently emerged: ordinary citizens and political activists started documenting the violations ignored by the official press and conveyed the information to Arab and foreign media through alternative channels (mainly the Internet) and Thuraya satellite phones, to avoid the risky use of mobile phones.

The media blackout led several foreign media, such as BBC and France 24, among others, to secretly sneak into Syria to cover the protest movement and the violations carried out against activists. In spite of the difficulties, activists succeeded in shedding light on killings, kidnappings and arrests of fellow Syrian citizens who had been covering the protests or filming violations perpetrated by security forces. Another challenge also emerged related to the absence of criteria separating citizen journalists and opposition activists, especially those who were killed while filming the events with their mobile phones. A notable example of this was Bassel Al-Sayed, who was filming the bombardment on the Baba Amr neighborhood in Homs. Security services also killed photographer Farzat Jerban after ripping out his eyes. The authorities did not spare bloggers or people active on social networks. More than 150 journalists and citizen journalists were arrested and Tal Al-Mallouhi, a famous blogger who had been sentenced to 5 years in prison in February 2011, declared an open-ended hunger strike to mark the second anniversary of her arrest.

Events in Syria also highlighted the limits of citizen journalism, in terms of professionalism

and objectivity criteria. Several citizen journalists fell into the trap of exaggeration and emotional reporting; not to mention the spreading of false information. Blogger Amina Abdallah pretended to cover events and violations on her blog “Gay Girl in Damascus” and drew the attention of international media outlets. But soon enough, her blog turned out to be fake; it was created by Tom MacMaster, a 40 year-old American man studying in Scotland.

Syrian press resorted to every possible means to refute information published in the Arab and foreign media outlets, questioning their credibility and calling protestors Islamic fundamentalists. State-owned and pro-regime media denied the existence of protest movements in Syria, claiming that the images broadcasted on TV channels were nothing but fabrications filmed in neighboring countries or specialized studios. Meanwhile, authorities in Damascus banned Arab and foreign media from moving freely and reporting on the protest movement. Several persons resigned from official media services, in protest against their role in fighting the popular uprising and inciting the murder of protestors. The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) bureau chief in Deir Ez-Zor, Alaa Al-Khodr, resigned in protest over the regime’s actions towards civilians, and journalist Ibrahim Al-Jabin resigned from Syrian television.

Artists and intellectuals also played an important price by supporting the Syrian popular uprising.

Kurdish writer and political activist Meshaal Tamo, for example, was killed in Qamishli. Also, Ibrahim Kashoush, famous for his revolutionary songs, was brutally murdered and his throat was cut. The secret services also tried to kill athlete Abdel-Basset Al-Sarout who became a singer and supported the protests in Homs. Masked gunmen attacked Syrian artist Ali Ferzat, who had made stinging drawings of Bashar Al-Assad, and broke his hands.

In Syria, people are arrested and receive death threats only for supporting the call for reform. While intellectual Samar Yazbeck and writer Rima Fleihan decided to leave Syria, others preferred to hide inside the country, such as writer and political dissident Yassin Al-Hajj Saleh. In reaction, there was a surge in anti-regime and dissident art work in Syria, which was never the case before.

The future political map of Syria does not seem clear yet and there are many doubts as to the next phases of the protest movement as well as the possible political and security scenarios. But, as the prominent Syrian opposition leader Riyad Al-Turk said at the beginning of the uprising, “Syria can no longer be qualified as the kingdom of silence”. Syrian citizens will never accept to go back in time to the period before March 15, 2011. The struggle to recover freedom, particularly freedom of opinion, will be at the core of the new phase. Needless to say the credit does not go to the Syrian authorities.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

January

1/12 Kurdish writer Hawas Mahmoud arrested.

February

2/2 Writer Abdel-Salam Hajji Ibrahim sentenced to three months in prison.

2/4 Writer Abdel-Nasser Al-Ayed arrested.

2/14 Blogger Tal Al-Mallouhi sentenced to five years in prison.

2/20 Blogger Ahmad Mohammad Hadifeh arrested.

March

3/5 Lawyer and human rights activist Mohammad Issa arrested.

3/13 Writer Ali Al-Abdallah sentenced to three years in prison.

3/15 Activist Hermine Oussi attacked then arrested.

3/19 Poet Mohammad Dibo arrested.

3/22 Three Agence France Presse and Associated Press journalists arrested on their way to cover demonstrations in Deraa.

3/23 Blogger Ahmad Mohammad Hadifeh arrested for the second time in forty days.

3/23 Journalist and press freedom activist Mazen Darwish arrested.

3/24 Journalist Maan Akil arrested.

3/29 Reuters Amman bureau chief Sleiman Al-Khalidi arrested.

April

4/1 Journalists Amer Matar and George Baghdadi arrested.

4/6 Journalist Mohammad Misto arrested.

4/9 Algerian journalist Khaled Mohannad arrested.

4/9 Tishrin newspaper editor-in-chief Samira Al-Massalma dismissed for criticizing the behavior of the Syrian security forces in Deraa.

4/10 Human rights activist Ahmad Maatouk arrested.

4/11 Journalist Fayez Sara arrested.

4/13 Blogger Wassim Hassan arrested.

4/14 Blogger Khaled Al-Mubarak arrested.

4/16 Human rights activist Mohammad Daghmarsh arrested.

4/17 Poet Ibrahim Barakat arrested.

4/19 Human rights activist Mohammad Issa arrested.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

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| 4/22 | Human rights activists Nawaf Hassan, Abdel-Halim Hussein, Lokman Hussein, and Abu Anwar Hajj Mawloud arrested. |
| 4/23 | Daniel Saoud, president of the Human Rights Defense Committees, arrested. |
| 4/24 | Poet Hozan Karkondi arrested. |
| 4/25 | Human rights activist Abdel-Rahman Sleiman arrested. |
| 4/26 | Human rights activist Kassem Azzawi arrested. |
| 4/27 | Human rights activist Rassem Al-Atassi arrested. |
| 4/30 | Filmmaker Firas Fayad abducted and human rights activist Abdel-Kader Al-Khaznawi arrested. |

May

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| 5/1 | Human rights activist Abdallah Al-Khalil and poet Medhat Kaddour arrested. |
| 5/1 | Journalist Iyad Khalil attacked. |
| 5/2 | Al-Jazeera correspondent Dorothy Parvaz abducted, and journalists Omar Koush and Dana Jawabra arrested. |
| 5/3 | Human rights activist Manhal Barish and photographer Akram Darwish arrested. |
| 5/5 | Human rights activist Ahmad Bakour and journalist Jihad Jamal arrested. |
| 5/6 | Human rights activist Akram Hussein and Lebanese journalist Ghassan Saoud arrested. |
| 5/7 | Lebanese journalist Ghadi Francis arrested. |
| 5/9 | Journalist Malak Shanwani, writer Al-Ammar Diob and human rights activist Shadi Kurdieh arrested. |
| 5/12 | Poet Ali Derbak and human rights activist Mohammad Najati Tayyara arrested. |
| 5/13 | Human rights activist Catherine Al-Talli and journalists Raafat Al-Rifai and Moussa Al-Khatib arrested. |
| 5/23 | Human rights activist Ahmad Al-Khafaji arrested. |
| 5/25 | Human rights activist Ahmad Al-Kurdi and poet Farhan Abdel-Kader Ben Jamil arrested. |
| 5/27 | Human rights activist Mohammad Sleiman arrested. |
| 5/29 | Human rights activist Tamer Al-Jahmani arrested. |

June

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| 6/7 | Arab Organization for Human Rights (OHR) member Mohammad Safi Hammoud arrested in Qamishli. |
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| 6/10 | AOHR member Majid Al-Adl arrested in Idlib. |
| 6/12 | “Gay Girl in Damascus” blog hoax revealed; American Tom MacMaster pretended to be a Syrian female blogger named Amina Abdallah. |
| 6/25 | Writer Khalil Hajj Saleh arrested. |
| 6/27 | AOHR member Mohammad Abdel-Majid Sharif arrested in Aleppo. |
| 6/29 | Human rights activist Ahmad Hajji Khalaf arrested. |

July

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| 7/1 | Human rights activists Bissan Hamed Al-Jassem, Adham Al-Kak, Ola Ramadan, and blogger Anas Al-Maarrawi arrested. |
| 7/3 | Journalist Omar Al-Assaad arrested. |
| 7/3 | Writer Nabil Sleiman’s house in Lattakia stormed. |
| 7/5 | Human rights activist Mohammad Najati Tayyara beaten in the Homs prison. |
| 7/5 | Human rights activist Hassan Hassan arrested. |
| 7/6 | Assassination of singer Ibrahim Kashoush; his throat cut. |
| 7/8 | Theater director Osama Ghanam arrested. |
| 7/11 | Late filmmaker Omar Amiralay’s movies “Al-Dajaj” (The hen) and “Muhawalat An Sadd Al-Furat” (Essay on the Euphrates Dam) banned. |
| 7/11 | The house of Ali Jamalo, director of the Sham Press website, set on fire. |
| 7/12 | Journalist Afa Al-Battah arrested. |
| 7/13 | More than 15 journalists, artists and intellectuals arrested during the “Intellectuals for Syria” rally in Damascus, including Iyad Sharbaji, Bulent Hamza, Mohammad and Ahmad Malas, May Skaff, Rima Fleihan, Majdoline Hassan, Guevara Nembr, Nidal Hassan, Yam Mashhadi, Mozaffar Salman, Bassel Shehadeh, Nabil Al-Maleh, and Rami Al-Ashek. |
| 7/17 | Writer Ali Al-Abdallah arrested a few weeks after his release. |
| 7/18 | Lebanese newspapers Al-Akhbar and As-Safir banned in Syria. |
| 7/20 | Journalist Jamal Tahhan and photographer Khaldoun Al-Batal arrested. |
| 7/23 | Filmmaker Shadi Abou Fakhr abducted. |

August

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| 8/1 | Actress Yara Nseir arrested. |
| 8/3 | Human rights activist Mohammad Al-Bitar arrested. |
| 8/4 | Journalists Ibaa Munzer, Omar Al-Assaad, Assem Hamsho, Rudy Othman, and human rights activists Mohdeen Bananeh and Hanadi Zahlout arrested. |
| 8/6 | Human rights activist Walid Bunni arrested. |

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

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| 8/7 | Human rights activist Mohammad Hajji Darwish arrested. |
| 8/9 | TV series “Chiffon” banned on Syrian television. |
| 8/9 | Assassination of human rights activist Maan Al-Awdat in Deraa. |
| 8/11 | Human rights activist Abdel-Karim Al-Rihawi, poet Fouad Kehl and journalist Miriam Haddad arrested. |
| 8/12 | Human rights activists Ahmad Al-Kurdi and Rushdi Rashid arrested. |
| 8/13 | Journalist Sami Al-Halabi arrested. |
| 8/14 | Journalist Mohammad Al-Tahhan arrested. |
| 8/16 | Human rights activists Islam Al-Dabbas and Majd Al-Kholani arrested. |
| 8/17 | Theater director Daham Al-Sattam, artist Mawloud Daoud and journalist Adel Kharsa arrested. |
| 8/20 | Human rights activist Malak Sayed Mahmoud arrested. |
| 8/22 | Director Samer Barkawi’s TV series “Fawk Al-Sakf” (On the Roof) banned on Syrian TV. |
| 8/22 | Human rights activist Maamoun Nido and journalist Mohammad Al-Kayal arrested. |
| 8/23 | Journalist Abdel-Majid Rashed Al-Rahmoun and human rights activists Abdallah Khalil and Mohammad Zaghoul arrested. |
| 8/24 | Human rights activist Radwan Sido arrested. |
| 8/25 | Cartoonist Ali Ferzat attacked, causing him severe injuries in the hands. |
| 8/25 | MBC channel stops its “Anta Tastahel” (You Deserve) show because of the pro-regime statements of the presenter George Kurdahi. |
| 8/28 | Writers Fayez Sara, Michel Kilo, and Louay Hussein banned from traveling to Lebanon. |
| 8/28 | AOHR member Abdel-Razzak Al-Howaidi arrested. |
| 8/29 | Journalist Amer Abdel-Salam arrested. |
| 8/30 | SANA photographer Samer Al-Shami attacked then arrested. |

September

| | |
|------|---|
| 9/4 | Human rights activist Juan Sleiman Ayo arrested. |
| 9/6 | Human rights activist Yehya Sharbaji arrested. |
| 9/9 | Violent physical assault on the parents of pianist Malek Jandali. |
| 9/9 | Human rights activist Ghayath Matar dies under torture. |
| 9/11 | Human rights activist Delbrin Farhan Mohammad arrested. |
| 9/16 | Human rights activist Mohammad Ibrahim and writer Ibrahim Mustafa arrested. |
| 9/17 | Wordpress blogs blocked in Syria. |
| 9/20 | Writer Moussa Zahkurani arrested. |

| | |
|------|--|
| 9/22 | Human rights activists Mohammad Saleh and Shibal Mohammad Amin Ibrahim arrested. |
| 9/27 | Scholars Nael Al-Dakhil and Mohammad Ali Akil assassinated. |
| 9/29 | Scholar Ouss Khalil assassinated. |
| 9/30 | Filmmaker Ali Al-Sheikh Khodr arrested. |

October

| | |
|-------|--|
| 10/1 | Human rights activist Mansour Al-Atassi arrested. |
| 10/2 | Scholar Mohammad Al-Omar assassinated. |
| 10/7 | Former MP Riyad Seif attacked. |
| 10/7 | Kurdish writer and political leader Meshaal Tamo assassinated in Qamishli. |
| 10/15 | Human rights activist Ziad Al-Obeidi assassinated in Deir Ez-Zor. |
| 10/16 | Writer Ihsan Taleb arrested. |
| 10/24 | Blogger Hussein Ghreer arrested. |
| 10/25 | Journalist Lina Saleh Ibrahim arrested. |

November

| | |
|-------|--|
| 11/3 | Lawyer Asma Al-Sassa arrested. |
| 11/13 | Art center in Soueida stormed; its books and art works destroyed. |
| 11/18 | SANA Deir Ez-Zor bureau chief Alaa Al-Khodr and human rights activist Bahr Abdel-Razzak arrested. |
| 11/20 | Assassination of photographer Ferzat Jerban in Homs; his eyes ripped out. |
| 11/21 | Human rights activist Mustafa Osso arrested. |
| 11/23 | Distribution of Baladna newspaper suspended because of an article by journalist Bassem Juncid criticizing the Baath Party. |
| 11/30 | Filmmaker Firas Fayad abducted at the Damascus Airport. |

December

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|-------|---|
| 12/4 | Blogger Razan Ghazzawi arrested. |
| 12/8 | Photographer Guevara Nemr and actor Mohammad Al Rashi arrested. |
| 12/14 | Journalist Ammar Mossareh arrested. |
| 12/19 | Artist Jalal Al-Tawil attacked. |
| 12/20 | Journalist Mohammad Dahnoun arrested. |
| 12/27 | Photographer Bassel Al-Sayed assassinated in Homs. |

Physical Aggression and Government Interference, Main Challenges for Journalists in Jordan

Firas Talhouk

The year 2011 was marked by repeated physical and political attacks on journalists as well as attempts to restrict press freedom through various legislative and administrative channels.

Authorities resorted to violence, often in a direct way, to prevent the press from shedding light on important issues. Throughout the year, journalists were beaten, media institutions raided, media professionals threatened and the government interfered in the appointment and dismissal of media officials. Authorities also tried to enact laws restricting media freedom, which led the Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications Taher Al-Adwan to resign on June 6, 2011, in protest against legislative amendments that curb freedom of the press and expression. The clearest legislative attempt to muzzle free press was the much-decried Article 23 of the new anti-corruption act, which restricts the ability of Jordanian journalists to denounce acts of corruption.

Physical attacks carried out against journalists also damaged Jordan's press freedom record. Police members and civilians took turns aggressing journalists. March 25 was, for instance, one of the bloodiest days: security agents and government supporters premeditatedly attacked journalists who were covering a rally calling for constitutional reforms and ending the secret services' interference in politics. Abdel-Hadi Al-Ramhi, a Reuters correspondent, and his assistant were savagely beaten up by more than twenty people. The Al-Arabiya bureau chief, Saad Al-Silawi and his team were also beaten up while blogger and journalist Mohammad Omar suffered eye and hand wounds after a violent aggression. Furthermore, security agents and civilians pelted stones at the Al-Arabiya team members, after breaking their cameras and banning correspondent Ghassan Abu Loz from

filming. Four other journalists were also arrested and later released.

Violations also spiked on May 15, when security forces opened fire on journalists who were covering the right-of-return protest commemorating the 63rd anniversary of the *Nakba*: security agents, policemen and government supporters attacked the journalists and broke their cameras. Mohammad Al-Najjar, the Al-Jazeera.Net correspondent in Amman, was attacked in his car while journalist Omar Al-Maharma was wounded by a stone in the eye cornea. In addition, pro-government civilians broke into the office of journalist Jihad Abu Baidar and threatened to burn his office and execute him. He was not the only journalist to be threatened: Yousef Damra also received death threats after publishing an investigation highlighting fraud cases against Jordanian citizens.

The Al-Jazeera headquarters was stormed several times in 2011 and the channel's employees were threatened. The car of Al-Jazeera correspondent Ahmad Jarrar was smashed and his papers stolen. Agence France Presse (AFP) also had its shares of attacks: in June, the Al-Ra'i newspaper harshly criticized AFP correspondent Randa Habib for spreading "false information" and not respecting neutrality, after she published an article on the royal convoy being pelted with stones. Habib received several threatening phone calls and a group of unidentified militants broke into AFP's headquarters. Meanwhile, MP Yehya Al-Saoud asked to shut down the agency's offices and bring Habib to justice. Threats continued through July when dozens of persons protested in front of the agency, asking authorities to shut down its offices. The Jordanian newspaper Al-Ghad was also targeted: a group of assailants stormed into its headquarters in Amman to stop the distribution of the daily and beat up one

of the paper's distributors, leaving him with a broken leg.

Authorities and security services interfered repeatedly in the media. The Royal Palace of Jordan strongly condemned AFP and Reuters for publishing statements criticizing Queen Rania. MP Mohammad Suleiman Al-Shawabkeh uttered threats against the Khaberni website, insulting its correspondents twice. The Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate (GID) asked several news websites to remove an article regarding an attack carried out against a Muslim Brotherhood march in the Mafraq governorate. Journalist Omar Al-Assaf filed a complaint before the National Center for Human Rights against the head of GID Mohammad Al-Rakkad, who had previously intervened to block Al-Assaf's career progression.

Jordanian Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications, Rakan Al-Majali, fired the editor-in-chief of the Al-Ra'i newspaper Samih Al-Maayta, and replaced him with journalist Majid Asfour, a friend of the Prime Minister's. The Al-Ghad editor-in-chief, Mustafa Saleh, submitted his resignation without giving any reason. Also, the editorial board of Jordanian newspaper Al-Arab Al-Yawm resigned. Editor-in-chief Fahd Khitan, Board Chairman Taher Al-Adwan, and the head of the economics news department Salameh Al-Daraawi submitted their

resignations over differences in editorial policies with Al-Arab Al-Yawm's new owner Elias Jreissat.

Poets and cultural activists gathered at a demonstration in Amman, in protest against the security forces' attitude vis-à-vis protesters and journalists. They also demanded serious measures to curb corruption in the cultural sector and lift censorship imposed on publications. In addition, more than 40 Jordanian paint artists signed a petition asking for reforms that would improve the image of their art in Jordan, and submitted it to the Ministry of Culture.

Writer Walid Hosni filed a complaint against the Jordanian Writers' League because his membership was not accepted. Many members of the League resigned because of the "delay in releasing a statement condemning the acts of repression and murder of protesters in Syria". The Jordanian Artists' Association expressed its dissatisfaction with the decision to exclude it from the High Committee for Reviving the Jerash Festival.

The many violations perpetrated against cultural and media freedoms in 2011 tarnished Jordan's image. More than ever, it is essential to undergo radical changes that would meet the aspirations of Jordanian people, promote media and cultural liberties, and destroy all political and legal obstacles restricting free speech.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

January

1/14 Al-Jazeera TV crew attacked in Al-Karak.

February

2/11 Several journalists attacked during a demonstration in Dhiban calling for the downfall of the government.

March

3/25 Journalists Abdel-Hadi Al-Ramhi, Saad Al-Silawi, Ghassan Abou Loz, Mohammad Omar, Nour Al-Amad, Alaa Al-Fazzaa, and Sharhabil Sweilem attacked during a sit-in calling for constitutional reforms.

April

4/18 Supporters of retired general Khaled Jamil Al-Sarayra storm journalist Jihad Abu Baidar's office and threaten to kill him.

4/20 Al-Ra'i newspaper refuses to publish journalist Sami Al-Zubaidi's article criticizing the silence of the Jordanian Press Association after the attack on Jihad Abu Baidar's office.

May

5/12 Gunshots fired at journalist Bassam Sakjaha's house.

5/15 Journalists Mohammad Al-Najjar, Mohammad Al-Ramhi, Rasha Al-Wahsh, Linda Al-Maayaa, Habib Abu Mahfouz, Ashraf Al-Shiab, Rabih Al-Saoub, and Rana Al-Wahsh attacked during a demonstration calling for the "right-of-return".

June

6/1 State Security Tribunal holds journalist Alaa Al-Fazzaa 14 days because of articles and pieces of information he published on his Internet page.

6/11 Journalist Qossai Al-Jaaroun receives threats through his hacked email address.

6/15 Agence France Presse bureau in Amman attacked by protesters who threaten AFP correspondent Randa Habib.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

6/21 Jordanian Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communication Taher Al-Adwan resigns from the cabinet because of various amendments violating freedom of expression.

6/22 Destruction of the car of Ahmad Jarrar, Al-Jazeera correspondent in Jordan.

July

7/15 Journalists Anas Damra, Ahmad Melkawi, Sami Mahasneh, Raed Oratni, Yasser Abu Hilaleh, Mona Al-Joulani, Khalil Mazraawi, Mohammad Al-Kaswani, Yazan Khawas, Ali Al-Zoabi, and Ahmad Keblawi attacked during a sit-in in Ras Al-Ain.

October

10/14 Journalist Omar Maharmeh injured in the eye during a demonstration in Amman.

10/22 Journalist Youssef Damra receives death threats.

November

11/11 Militants storm Al-Ghad newspaper headquarters and attack employees.

11/12 Pro-Syrian regime activists storm Al-Jazeera's Amman bureau.

December

12/20 The Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communication Rakan Al-Majali dismisses Samih Al-Maayta, editor-in-chief of Al-Ghad newspaper.

Israeli Teargas and Hamas Knives... Or How to Violate Media and Cultural Freedom in Gaza

Widad Jarbough

The year 2011 has come to an end, but the Gaza Strip is still suffering the consequences of the Israeli air, sea and land blockade. As for the opening of the Rafah crossing – the only lung allowing Gaza inhabitants to breathe – it largely depends on the mood of the Egyptian authorities. While the Arab Spring is blooming across the region, Palestine has yet to witness a real spring. As young Palestinians have watched uprisings spread throughout the Arab world, they tried to launch a movement around a simple demand: “The people want to end the division”. But their hopes did not last for long. The security services of the Hamas deposed government adopted a repressive policy during protests and popular movements that accompanied Palestine’s UN statehood bid in September 2011. To justify its repressive policy, Hamas pretended, as always, to “protect the national interest”.

The violations of human rights in Gaza reached an alarming level when a group of Salafists kidnapped and killed Italian human rights activist Vittorio Arrigoni, while the Hamas movement carried on its arrests, aggressions and arbitrary detentions, and resorted to intimidation, humiliation and insults during questioning sessions. Israeli authorities also continued their attacks, by firing teargas and rubber-coated bullets at reporters and photographers. Journalist Mohammad Othman was hit by a bullet to his chest, journalist Mohammad Al-Madhoun was severely wounded in the head, and others suffered from acute asphyxia and poisoning, because of the teargas grenades Israeli forces fired at peaceful protests.

The Hamas movement adopted a “double-talk” policy: while more than one government spokesperson stressed the need “not to attack journalists, to end summoning and release

all detained journalists”, the behavior of government authorities was in fact much less tolerant. Hamas security services continued their repression campaign: punches, kicks, wooden and iron truncheons, electroshock weapons and even stabbing.. More than 55 direct aggressions were carried out against journalists, intellectuals, artists, bloggers and activists. Some of them were attacked more than once, such as SKeyes’ correspondent, Asmaa Al-Ghoul, who was jostled, insulted, beaten and searched in a humiliating way both publicly in the street and during her questioning. But the most dangerous exaction was carried out against journalist and photographer Samah Al-Rawagh: she was stabbed in the back while covering a protest aiming at ending the Hamas-Fatah division. In addition to this, Reuters’ photographer Mohammad Shanaa was nearly thrown from the agency’s balcony while another photographer, Mohammad Jadallah, was threatened at gunpoint.

Through threats and intimidation, the Hamas deposed government forced journalists to refrain from what it considered “provocative statements” in their writings. It also increased the pace of summoning, arrests, investigations without legal justification as well as torture during detention. More than 13 journalists were arrested this year and some more than once, such as journalist Salah Abu Saleh. To justify the arrest, Hamas accused journalists of “cooperating with the Fatah movement”; it is on these grounds that Ziad Awad, Mahmoud Al-Barbar and Hani Al-Agha were arrested.

To intimidate journalists and prevent them from upholding their professional duties, Hamas security services resorted to several hour detentions. More than 27 journalists were summoned, and some more than three times, such as blogger and poet Mahmoud

Al-Munirawi, who was accused of “spreading secularism through his articles and poems”. The security services did not spare filmmakers and artists, such as rapper Mohammad Antar and director Jamal Abul-Komsan.

The Hamas government turned a blind eye to the violations carried out against young activists and protesters; security services attacked journalists after confiscating or sometimes breaking their cameras. Reporters were also harassed during on-air discussions, such as Abdallah Mikdad from Al-Quds TV. Security services raided several press offices in Gaza, such as the Al-Mayadin press agency, Japanese TV and Reuters; they also beat employees and ransacked the offices.

The government did not just resort to its official security services to carry out its repressive policy; journalists affiliated with both the Hamas movement and the Islamic Jihad raided the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate headquarters in Gaza twice this year and closed it, claiming that the syndicate was illegal. The syndicate members are still unable to enter their offices. Hamas also imposed travel bans on several journalists and bloggers without any persuasive reason. In addition, many foreign journalists were only allowed to access the Gaza Strip upon signature of a document, in which they agreed

not to undermine the Hamas movement in their writings.

The attacks carried out against civil liberties and the rights of intellectuals had a negative impact on cultural life. Lack of democracy and the marginalization of intellectual pluralism fostered a one-sided cultural policy, established by the fundamentalist religious institution. The Hamas police banned Alaa Al-Aswany’s book “Chicago” and Syrian writer Haidar Haidar’s novel “Walima Li Aashab Al-Bahr” (A Banquet for Seaweed) under the pretext that they “undermine moral values and Islam”. It is also impossible to form mixed gender theater troupes and dance companies, which, according to Hamas, are anti-Islamic. All art performances are subjected to the pre-approval of the Hamas authorities.

Looking back at 2011 in Gaza, it was clear that the government’s fear of contagion by the wave of liberty as well as the internal conflict with Fatah contributed significantly to the decrease of media and cultural freedom. Yet, some positive signs appeared by the end of the year following the first steps of the Hamas-Fatah reconciliation: the distribution of West Bank newspapers, which were banned for over a year, resumed in Gaza and vice versa. Also, the satellite channels of both parties resumed broadcast.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

January

1/26

Alaa Al-Aswany’s novels “Chicago” and Haidar Haidar’s “Walima Li Aashab Al-Bahr” (A Banquet for Seaweed) banned.

1/31

Hamas police attacks SKeyes’ correspondent Asmaa Al-Ghoul and other female journalists and bloggers, including Nazek Abo Rahmeh, Razan Al-Madhoun, Abir Ayoub and Ibaa Zulfikar Swirjo.

February

2/11

German TV correspondent Shawki Yehya Al-Ghorra attacked.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

March

| | |
|------|---|
| 3/8 | Pro-Hamas journalists occupy the headquarters of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate. |
| 3/15 | Attack on SKeyes' correspondent Asmaa Al-Ghoul, photographer Samah Al-Rawagh, and 20 other journalists during the repression of the popular demonstration calling for the end of the Palestinian division. |
| 3/17 | Journalists Issam and Mahmoud Al-Ajrami, Mohammad Al-Baba, Wissam Yassin, Khodr Abu Kweik, and Ismail Al-Zaanoun, as well as researcher Mohammad Abdallah, attacked during a sit-in in front of the UNRWA headquarters. |
| 3/19 | Journalists Manal Hassan Al-Nawajha, Mustapha Al-Bayed, Sami Abu Salem, Khaled Al-Ashkar, Mohammad Jadallah, Mohammad and Abdel-Rahman Shanaa, Munzer Khalil Al-Sharafi, and Nasr Abul-Foul attacked during a Hamas police clampdown on media institutions. |
| 3/27 | Journalist Mohammad Abdel-Nabi attacked. |
| 3/30 | Journalists Ted Nieters, Wissam Yassin, Iyad Talal Taha, Mohammad Al-Hassoum, Mamdouh Al-Sayed, and Wajih Al-Najjar attacked. |

April

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| 4/7 | Journalist Mohammad Al-Madhoun wounded during an Israeli bombardment. |
| 4/14 | Italian Journalist and peace activist Vittorio Arrigoni executed by a fundamentalist Islamist group. |

May

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|------|---|
| 5/3 | Journalist Zakaria Al-Talmas attacked. |
| 5/15 | Journalists Mohammad Othman, Hussein Karsoua, and Mohammad Bakr Al-Lawh beaten by Israeli soldiers. |

June

| | |
|------|--|
| 6/13 | Human rights activist Samer Abu Rahmeh beaten by Hamas policemen during his questioning. |
| 6/15 | Journalist Majed Abu Salameh arrested. |

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

6/22 Writer Assaad Al-Saftawi beaten by Hamas policemen during his questioning.

6/26 France 24 correspondent Salameh Atallah beaten by Hamas policemen during his questioning.

July

7/6 Journalist Samir Hamto beaten by Falastin newspaper officials.

7/10 Failed attempt to set fire to the Gaza bureau of the Wafa press agency.

August

8/21 Journalist Fathi Mahmoud Tubail and bloggers Arafat Al-Hajj, Mohammad Siam, Mohammad Ismail, Fadi Al-Shafei, and Khalil Al-Wazir arrested.

September

9/23 Theater director Jamal Abul-Komsan arrested.

9/27 BBC correspondent Jon Donnison denied access to Gaza.

9/30 Journalist Youssef Al-Helou attacked.

October

10/11 Pro-Hamas and Islamic Jihad journalists storm the headquarters of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate.

10/27 Journalist Salah Abu Saleh arrested.

November

11/22 Journalist Ziad Awad arrested.

11/23 Blogger Mahmoud Al-Barbar arrested.

11/24 Journalist Hani Al-Agha arrested.

11/27 SAMA press agency bureau burgled.

11/29 Journalist Salah Abu Saleh arrested for the second time in one month.

West Bank Journalists: “Living targets” for Israeli Soldiers and Victims of Palestinian Divisions

Widad Jarbough

While the Arab Spring is blooming all over the region, media and cultural freedoms declined further in the West Bank in 2011, despite the presence of supposedly progressive laws and regulations. Palestinian journalists and intellectuals suffered the consequences of the continued Israeli occupation of large tracks of the West Bank. Israeli soldiers targeted them deliberately, in order to intimidate them and prevent them from upholding their duties. The Palestinian Authority security services also carried out many violations against journalists. Amid this complex reality, unknown gunmen killed actor, director and peace activist Juliano Saliba Khamis in early April, sparking a massive wave of local and international condemnation.

Journalists became “living targets” for Israeli soldiers, who prevented them from reporting the repression of Palestinian citizens, by firing rubber-coated bullets, teargas and stun grenades at them and spraying them with a wastewater and chemical mix. 34 journalists were directly targeted by Israeli forces, particularly while covering anti-fence and anti-settlement peaceful protests; many reporters, journalists, photographers and human rights activists suffered from acute asphyxia and burns. Israeli soldiers also raided several press offices and destroyed media equipment.

Artists and theaters were also violently attacked. Israeli soldiers raided the Al-Hurriya (Freedom) Theater, ransacked it and broke its windows. They arrested the theater director Adnan Ibrahim Nagnaghieh and the chair of the board Bilal Khaled Al-Saadi. Members of the Al-Ahlam (Dreams) Theater company were searched in a humiliating way in another raid and Israeli authorities banned several Palestinian journalists and intellectuals from traveling without any valid reason. Israel also

banned Ahmad Rafik Awad’s book “Pillar of the throne of God, religion and politics in Israel” inside the Palestinian territories; the book sheds light on the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism that permeates the very depths of the Israeli society.

Israeli authorities arrested or summoned more than 19 journalists and subsequently released 12 of them. The “administrative detention” practice increased considerably this year: it consists in arresting a person without any indictment or trial for a renewable period of six months; for instance, the administrative detention of journalist Walid Khaled was extended twice. The year 2011 came to an end, but journalists Nawaf Al-Amer, Walid Khaled, and Raed Al-Sharif were still detained in Israeli prisons.

Internally, the political conflict between the Fatah and Hamas movements had a negative impact on the freedom of expression in the West Bank. Even though the two movements recently signed a reconciliation pact and changed their behavior towards journalists and intellectuals, violations were on a rise, both in Gaza and the West Bank. Fearing harassment, Palestinian journalists resorted to high levels of self-censorship. The Palestinian security services arrested or summoned more than 20 journalists and intellectuals, and some more than once, such as journalist Sami Al-Assi and photographer Asiad Amarnah. Also, many journalists, working at media institutions opposed to the Fatah movement, were arrested, questioned and their equipment confiscated. This happened most often to journalists from the pro-Hamas Al-Aqsa satellite channel.

In contrast with Article 19 of the Palestinian Basic Law, which guarantees freedom of

opinion and expression inside the Palestinian territories, many judicial proceedings were carried out against journalists who were accused of “undermining the prestige of the state”; most of them work in media institutions affiliated with Hamas. In what resembled psychological intimidation and moral torture, trials were delayed and judgments were often postponed without any legal justification, and sometimes up to six times, such as in writer Issam Shawar and journalist Alaa Al-Titi’s cases; they were eventually released. Violations of cultural freedoms in the West Bank also took place. Upon the Prosecutor General’s decision, the satirical TV program “Watan

Aa Watar” was banned, under the pretext it undermined the role of security services, judicial authorities and medical professions. It was the first time the Prosecutor General decided to ban a show on Palestinian state television.

Media and cultural freedoms in the West Bank are caught between the attacks of Israeli occupation forces, and the repercussions of the inter-Palestinian conflict. Nevertheless, nothing seems to deter the Palestinians’ determination to soon live their own spring. Palestinians strongly believe that the real Arab Spring starts in Palestine and ends in Palestine.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

January

| | |
|------|--|
| 1/17 | Palestinian Preventive Security (PPS) arrests journalist Issam Shawar. |
| 1/24 | PPS arrests An-Najah National University researcher Adnan Awdeh. |
| 1/24 | Al-Jazeera bureau in Ramallah stormed. |
| 1/26 | Pal Media office in Nablus stormed. |

February

| | |
|------|---|
| 2/4 | Photographer Haitham Al-Khatib wounded during an anti-fence demonstration in Bilin. |
| 2/15 | PPS arrests journalist Sami Al-Assi. |
| 2/17 | Israeli forces block the reconstruction of the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate headquarters in Hebron. |

March

| | |
|------|--|
| 3/16 | An episode of “Watan Aa Watar”, a comedy show on Palestine TV, banned because of its harsh criticism of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. |
| 3/17 | Arab TV stations banned in the Shata Israeli prison. |

April

| | |
|------|--|
| 4/4 | Theater director Juliano Khamis assassinated in Jenin. |
| 4/15 | Israeli forces raid the Al-Ahlam (Dreams) Theater in Hebron. |
| 4/17 | PPS extends the detention of journalist Islam Al-Halaika. |

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

4/19 Photographer Wajdi Ashtieh arrested.

4/21 Israeli forces arrest writer Ahmad Katamesh.

May

5/15 Israeli authorities place journalist Walid Kahled Ali in administrative detention for a six month period.

5/15 Israeli policemen beat up journalist Hisham Abdel-Hafiz Al-Sharabati.

5/22 Israeli unit raids the house of Murad Al-Sudani, secretary general of the General Union of Palestinian Writers.

5/26 Israeli unit raids journalist Alaa Al-Titi's house.

5/27 Israeli forces arrest writer Firas Jaber.

June

6/13 Palestinian intelligence services hold journalist Ahmad Al-Khatib and confiscate photographs he had taken.

6/13 Journalist Ibtihal Mansour violently attacked.

6/17 Artist Rabih Turkman hit by a rubber bullet during the weekly anti-fence, anti-settlement demonstration in Bilin.

6/18 Photographer Wajdi Ashtieh injured in the hand by a teargas canister.

6/28 Israeli forces arrest journalist Nawaf Al-Amer and the director of the Al-Ahrar Study Center Fuad Al-Khafash.

July

7/5 Israeli court sentences journalist Nawaf Al-Amer to five months in prison.

7/9 Photographer Hazem Badr attacked in Hebron.

7/10 Israeli forces arrest journalist Mohammad Bisharat.

7/22 Photographer Haitham Al-Khatib hit by a teargas canister during the Bilin demonstration.

7/25 Israel bans the distribution of Ahmad Rafik Awad's book in the Palestinian territories.

7/27 Israeli forces raid the Al-Hurriya (Freedom) Theater in Jenin, arrest its director Adnan Ibrahim Nagnaghieh and its board chairman Bilal Khaled Al-Saadi.

7/29 Journalist Muhib Al-Barghouthi attacked during a demonstration in Nabi Saleh.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

August

| | |
|------|--|
| 8/9 | Israeli intelligence services arrest Al-Jazeera Afghanistan correspondent Samer Allawi. |
| 8/16 | Palestinian Prosecutor General bans the “Watan Aa Watar” comedy show on Palestine TV. |
| 8/21 | Israeli forces arrest journalist Asiad Amarneh. |
| 8/22 | Israeli forces arrest journalist Amer Abu Arfeh. |
| 8/25 | Scholar Abdel-Sattar Kassem held for 15 days upon the Palestinian Prosecutor General’s decision. |

September

| | |
|------|--|
| 9/9 | Israeli forces arrest Mohammad Breijieh, spokesperson for the Popular Resistance Committee against the Fence and Settlements. |
| 9/9 | Palestine TV reporter Haroun Amayra and photographer Fadi Al-Jayoussi hit by teargas canisters during the Israeli repression of the Bilin demonstration. |
| 9/10 | Journalist George Canawati held for two days upon the Palestinian Prosecutor General’s decision. |
| 9/16 | Photographer Alaa Badraneh injured when Israeli forces raided the Kasra village. |
| 9/20 | Photographer Ayman Al-Nubani injured when Israeli settlers attacked a village close to Nablus. |
| 9/22 | Palestinian intelligence services arrest journalist Mohammad Mona. |
| 9/23 | French journalist injured during the Nabi Saleh demonstration. |
| 9/27 | PPS arrests journalist Mohammad Bisharat. |

October

| | |
|-------|---|
| 10/5 | PPS arrests journalist Mohammad Mona for the second time in two weeks. |
| 10/6 | Palestinian Prosecutor General extends the detention of journalist Sodki Moussa. |
| 10/11 | Journalists Firas Tnaineh, Ashraf Katkat, Sara Al-Adra, and Mohammad Radi hit by teargas canisters during the Israeli forces’ repression of a sit-in in front of the Ofer prison. |
| 10/26 | Photographer Majdi Al-Safadi hit by stones thrown by Israeli settlers west of Ramallah. |

10/29 Journalists Fidaa Nasr, Hussam Abu Allan, Abdel-Hafiz Al-Hashlamoon, and Hazem Badr injured during the Israeli forces' repression of a demonstration in Beit Ummar.

November

11/14 Israeli forces arrest journalist Raed Al-Sharif.

11/18 Journalists Majdi Ashtieh, Issam Al-Rimawi, and Mohammad Turkman injured during a demonstration in Nabi Saleh.

December

12/2 Photographer Walid Maamoun hit by a teargas canister during the Bilin demonstration and journalist Majdi Ashtieh attacked by Israeli forces during the Nabi Saleh demonstration.

12/7 Israeli forces arrest Youssef Abdel-Haq, coordinator of the Tanwir cultural forum.

12/9 Photographers Najib Farawneh and Ali Abu Rahmeh injured during the Bilin and Nabi Saleh demonstrations.

19/12 Journalist Linda Shalash hit by an Israeli teargas canister in front of the Ofer prison.

12/28 Israeli forces arrest journalist Amin Abu Wardeh.

12/30 Journalist Issam Al-Rimawi hit by a teargas canister during the Nabi Saleh demonstration.

12/31 Photographer Ahsraf Abu Shawish hit by a teargas canister when Israeli settlers raided the Assira Al-Qiblia village.

12/31 Palestinian police prevents singer Bassel Zayed from finishing a song during New Year's Eve celebration in Ramallah.

Israeli Repression and Racist Legislation Curb Media and Cultural Freedom in the 1948 Territories

Firas Talhouk

The year 2011 was marked by repression in the 1948 Territories, during which the Israeli authorities relentlessly carried out attacks against media and cultural freedom, adopted racist policies and ignored international conventions aiming at protecting liberties and cultural diversity.

Throughout the year, Israeli forces resorted to violent acts against journalists, photographers and reporters, including but not limited to physical attacks, summonings, arrests, forced distancing without charges or trial, banning access to journalists, raiding media institutions as well as the confiscation or destruction of media equipment. Israeli authorities did not hesitate to arrest journalists aboard the Freedom Flotilla and tried to enforce the “Law on Defamation” that Arab and Israeli journalists alike slammed as an attempt to muzzle the press.

Israeli authorities carried on their attacks against journalists in Jerusalem, forbidding them – on a weekly, if not daily, basis – to uphold their professional duties, especially in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa mosque, in the Palestinian neighborhood of Ras Al-Amoud, and in the town of Selwan in Jerusalem. On January 28, 2011, Israeli authorities prevented more than 21 journalists and reporters from covering clashes between soldiers and the Selwan inhabitants. On March 11, Israeli soldiers attacked more than 17 journalists with smoke and teargas grenades and sprayed them with muddy water. Journalist Diala Jwaihan, photographers Ahmad Jalajel, Ahmad Siam, and Muammar Awad, as well as dozens of their colleagues, were physically aggressed on numerous occasions and banned from accessing certain areas. On January 16, Israeli police officers beat journalist Hassan

Al-Abra and another policeman even tried to run him over, to prevent him from filming the destruction of the Al-Araqib village in the Negev desert, despite the fact that Al-Abra had shown his press card.

Israeli authorities also threatened foreign journalists who planned to take part in the Freedom Flotilla and the violations reached their peak when the Israeli navy intercepted the “Freedom Waves to Gaza” boats. After aggressing and arresting journalists and activists aboard the flotilla, the Israelis forced them to sign deportation papers stating that they illegally entered Israel. Israeli authorities also adopted new humiliating techniques in dealing with Arab and Turkish journalists: members of the Shin Beth, Israel’s internal security and counter-intelligence service, searched journalists who were about to cover Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s annual foreign press address in a humiliating and cruel way. The Israeli security even forced Sarah Hussein, an Agence France Presse correspondent, to remove her bra.

Throughout the year, Israeli authorities prevented journalists from entering Al-Aqsa mosque to cover events taking place there including when Israeli settlers invaded the mosque’s precincts. The Israeli Prosecutor indicted journalist Mahmoud Abu Ata in March 2011 for covering clashes at Al-Aqsa mosque in 2009. Also, photographer Farid Saleh was arrested while covering a festival in Jerusalem and banned from the old city for 15 days. Journalists Mona Al-Kawasimi and Mayssa Abu Ghazaleh were arrested, and had their mobile phones and cameras confiscated, while filming the invasion of the mosque by Israeli settlers.

Israeli authorities raided the Hon Falastin website offices, arrested reporter Moaz Qaymari and confiscated all the cameras they found. They also cut off the broadcast of Sawt Al-Salam (Voice of Peace) radio station after raiding its offices and threatening its manager. In addition to this, Israeli forces arrested the Baladee website owner, Imad Al-Merhi, and subjected him to home confinement away from his hometown and workplace. His trial has been postponed several times. Furthermore, police members broke into the Al-Hakawati Theater in Jerusalem, under the order of the Minister of Security, and arrested its director Jamal Ghosheh.

Various bills aiming at eradicating the history and identity of Arabs in the 1948 Territories

accompanied this policy of repression, including the prohibition of the call to prayer by Muslim muezzins, the obligation of Arab citizens to sign an “oath of allegiance to the State of Israel” and the prohibition of the appointment of Arab judges to the Israeli Supreme Court.

Media and cultural freedoms deeply suffered in the 1948 Territories in 2011. Israeli authorities seem more determined than ever to submit and adopt new racist laws in the Knesset. If early elections are held soon, as indicated in various reports, Israeli political parties, in their unbridled race for power, might well resort to legislative and administrative measures that would, once again, reduce the media and cultural freedoms of the Palestinian people.

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

January

| | |
|------|--|
| 1/4 | Jawad Siam, director of the Wadi Hilweh Information Center, arrested. |
| 1/10 | Journalist Zuhair Andraos receives death threats. |
| 1/16 | Journalist Hussein Al-Abra attacked by Israeli policemen. |
| 1/22 | Photographer Hamza Naaji hit by a rubber-coated bullet. |
| 1/28 | Journalist Diala Jwaihan and photographer Ahmad Jalajel hit by a teargas grenade. |
| 1/30 | Amir Makhoul, president of the Freedoms Commission in the 1948 Territories, sentenced to nine years in prison. |

February

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|------|--|
| 2/4 | Journalists Diala Jwaihan, Mahmoud Olayan, Mohammad Abu Sneineh, Moammar Awad, and Mahfouz Abu Turk hit by teargas grenades in Ras Al-Amoud. |
| 2/17 | Artist Fidaa Al-Shaer sentenced to three years in prison. |

March

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|------|---|
| 3/16 | Photographer Ahmad Jalajel beaten then arrested. |
| 3/25 | Photographer Nour Karamah arrested after having taken pictures of a clash between the Israeli forces and peace activists in Selwan. |

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

April

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|------|---|
| 4/5 | Judicial complaint against Arab teachers for having taken part in the “Earth Day” strike. |
| 4/22 | Israeli authorities ban the “Palestinian Prisoner’s Day” festival in Qalansuwa. |
| 4/24 | Photographer Farid Saleh arrested for having taken pictures of a gathering at Al-Aqsa mosque. |
| 4/27 | Israeli forces raid the Al-Hakawati Theater in Jerusalem. |
| 4/29 | Photographer Ahmad Siam hit by a rubber-coated bullet. |

May

| | |
|------|---|
| 5/15 | Al-Jazeera TV crew, comprised of Shirine Abu Akleh, Najwan Samri, Nabil Mazzawi, Maamoun Othman, and Majid Safadi, attacked by pro-Syrian regime supporters. |
| 5/15 | The Hebrew University bans the projection of the movie “Maaloul” on the occasion of the <i>Nakba</i> and the Haifa University bans a conference on the <i>Nakba</i> . |
| 5/17 | The Hebrew University prevents Arab students from participating in the Palestinian Heritage Day celebrations. |
| 5/27 | Journalists Diala Jwaihan, Ata Owaissat, and Sleiman Khodr attacked during a demonstration in Ras Al-Amoud. |

June

| | |
|-----|--|
| 6/1 | Journalists Mona Al-Kawasimi and Mayssa Abu Ghazaleh arrested. |
| 6/5 | Israeli authorities ban a conference titled “Yes to a Palestinian and Arab Jerusalem”. |
| 6/5 | Photographer Ahmad Siam attacked. |

August

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|------|--|
| 8/14 | Mohammad Kanaana, president of the Freedoms Association, arrested. |
|------|--|

September

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|------|--|
| 9/5 | Israeli forces close down the offices of the Palestinian organization An-Najah (Success) in Jerusalem. |
| 9/23 | Photographer Moammar Awad severely wounded in Ras Al-Amoud. |

Major Press and Cultural Freedom Violations in 2011

9/23 Nasser Qaws, director of the Prisoners' Club in Jerusalem, arrested.

9/28 Photographer Ahmad Jalajel arrested.

October

10/10 Journalist Abdel-Latif Ghaith banned access to the West Bank for six months.

10/23 Israeli forces raid the offices of the Hon Falastin website and hold its reporter Moaz Qaymari.

November

11/3 Israeli forces raid the "Freedom Waves for Gaza" flotilla and violently arrest journalists Lina Atallah, Casey James, Ayman Zubair, Jihane Hafez, and Hassan Ghani.

11/16 Journalist Israa Salhab arrested.

11/17 Israeli authorities stop the broadcast of Voice of Peace radio station.

December

12/21 The Haifa University bans Christmas carols in Arabic on campus and a Christmas concert.

How to Put an End to Violations against Freedom of Expression

Joseph Melhem Al-Hachem

The violations carried out against media and cultural freedoms in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan, the four countries that the SKeyes Center monitors took various forms. The significant number of violations in 2011 goes against the aspirations of Arabs, longing for freedom and democracy, after endless decades of repression.

Many journalists and intellectuals were arrested and prosecuted in civilian and military courts. Their trials were often postponed and judgments issued against them were unfair and illegitimate, undermining the image of the judiciary and fostering a self-censorship climate that inhibits freedom of expression and creativity.

The judiciary, however, rarely followed up on aggressions perpetrated against journalists. Journalists, intellectuals and bloggers were physically abused, murdered, beaten up, repeatedly summoned, and detained. But the most atrocious form of violence was the mutilation of bodies, particularly in Syria.

Numerous violations were also carried out against electronic media, including website hacking, restrictive laws, as well using pro-government websites to harm the reputation of journalists and post threats on some journalists' personal Facebook page... Several bloggers were also arrested under false pretenses and authorities, especially in Gaza and Syria, banned some of them from traveling to attend conferences abroad.

Within this context, journalists, artists, intellectuals and bloggers should consider a number of measures, to protect their freedom of expression:

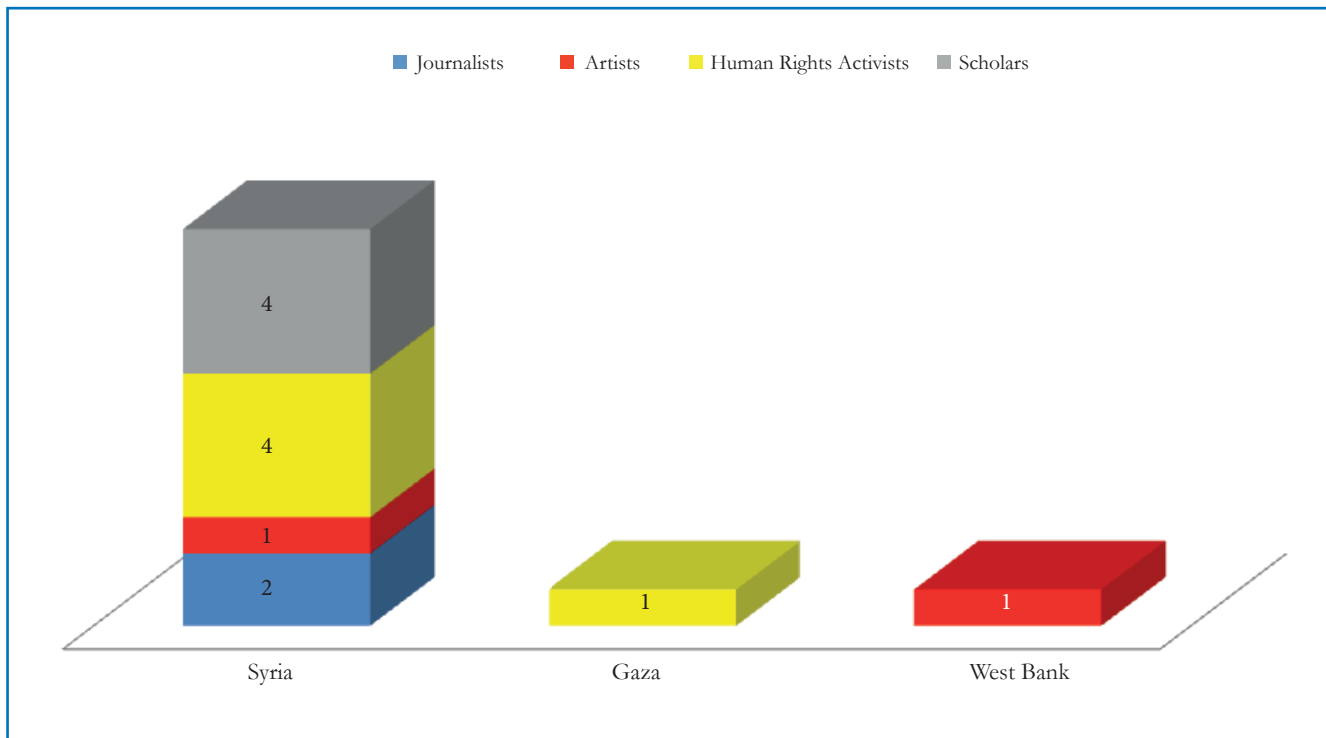
1. Document all acts of violence, threats and attacks, and submit them to human rights organizations and relevant authorities.
2. Strengthen the ties and promote cooperation among members of media and cultural institutions.
3. Recognize that both the freedom and impartiality of the judiciary are essential to the free exercise of journalism, culture and art. Therefore, it is important to create a link between the judiciary on the one hand and the media and cultural institutions on the other, by reporting any pressure exerted on the judiciary and revising restrictive legislation.
4. Fight the ideas at the origin of freedom violations, such as ideologies that justify attacks carried out against journalists and intellectuals, often promoted by religious extremists.
5. Attach special importance to the attacks perpetrated against women journalists, intellectuals and artists and consider them as a particular form of violating women's rights and freedom.
6. Focus on violations carried out against foreign artists, intellectuals and journalists as well, the latest victims being French journalist Gilles Jacquier, American reporter Mary Colvin, and French photographer Rémi Ochlik, who were all killed in Syria.

7. Confront the so-called journalists and intellectuals whom authorities entrust with the task of inciting against their colleagues, liberal ideas, human rights and freedom of expression. Media institutions have to stand up against these persons who, in some instances, may be as dangerous as censors and aggressors.
8. Coordinate between all parties involved in defending media and cultural freedom and hold regular meetings and specialized conferences to study new trends of violations, their causes and how to face them. It is also essential to train journalists and intellectuals as to their rights.
9. Include the principles related to freedom of expression in the faculties of law, political science, and journalism curricula.
10. Adopt new laws that accompany the technological development and prevent any form of restriction and electronic censorship.

These recommendations or “ten commandments” are nothing but a first step on the long road that human rights activists and freedom of expression defenders have to follow to protect the media and cultural scene from all forms of violations.

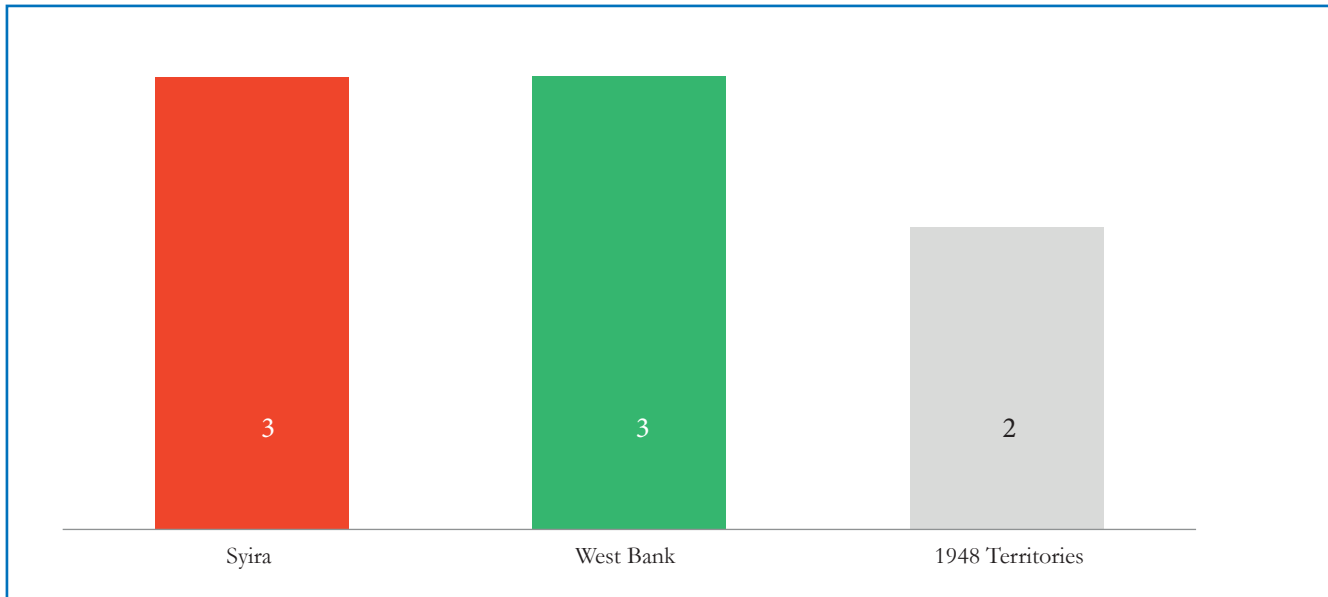
Press and Cultural Freedom Violations... In Numbers

1- Assassination of journalists, activists and intellectuals

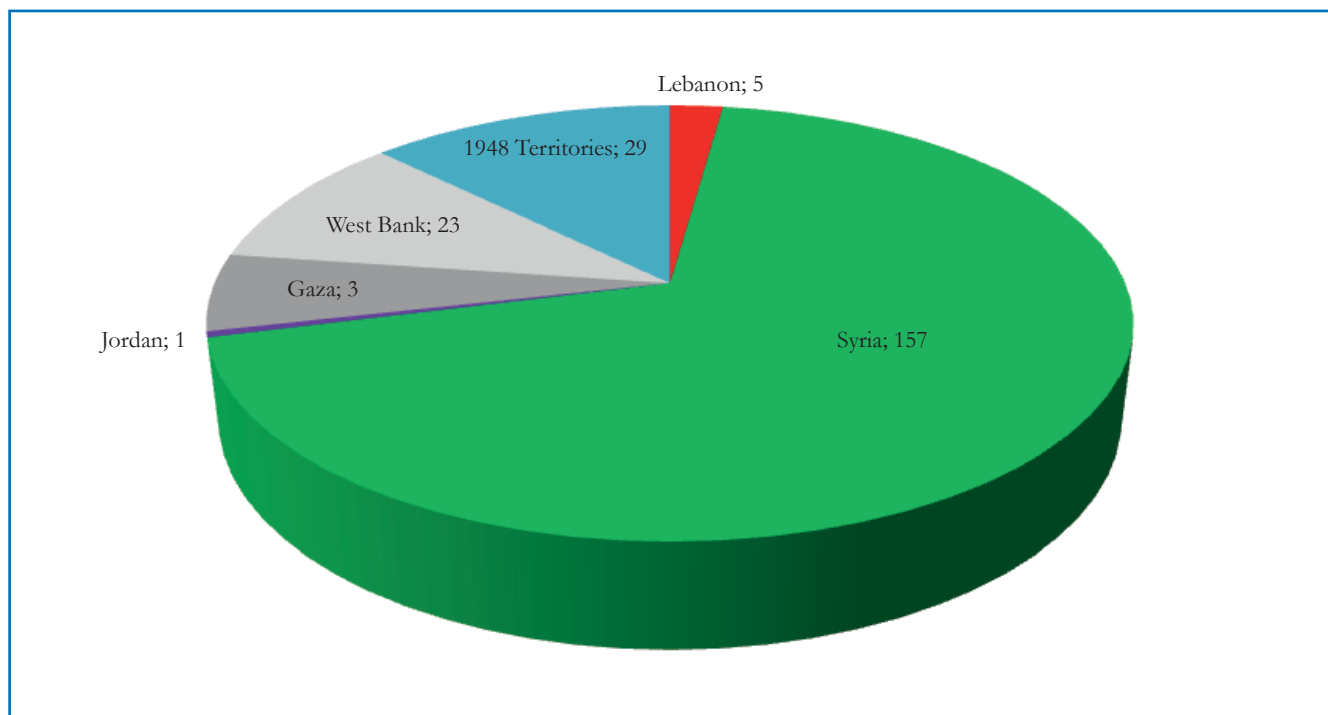


No journalist, intellectual or activist was killed in Lebanon and Jordan in 2011, but this year was particularly bloody in Syria, where the journalists Ferzat Jerban and Bassel Al-Sayed, the singer Ibrahim Kashoush, the writer and political leader Meshaal Tamo, the human rights activists Maan Al-Awdat, Ghayath Matar and Ziad Al-Obeidi, as well as the scholars Nael Al-Dakhil, Mohammad Ali Akil, Ouss Khalil and Mohammad Al-Omar were brutally killed. In Gaza, Italian journalist and peace activist Vittorio Arrigoni was executed by a fundamentalist Islamist group, and theater director Juliano Khamis was murdered in the West Bank.

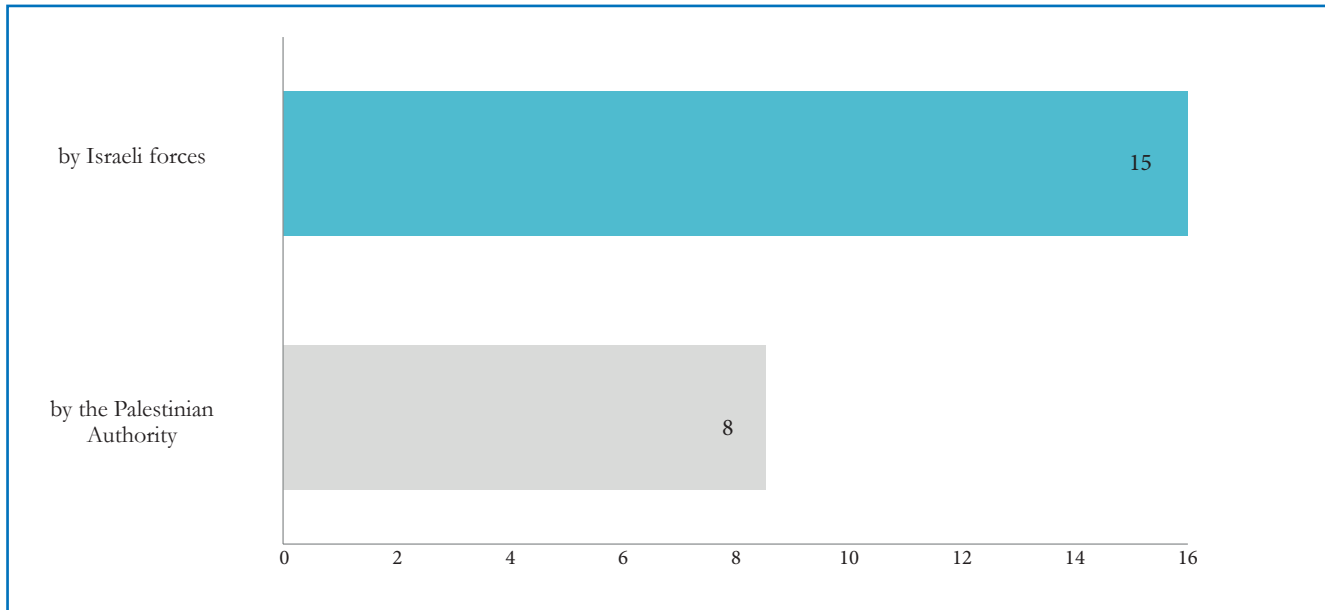
2- Journalists, intellectuals and artists sentenced to prison



3- Journalists, intellectuals and activists arrested

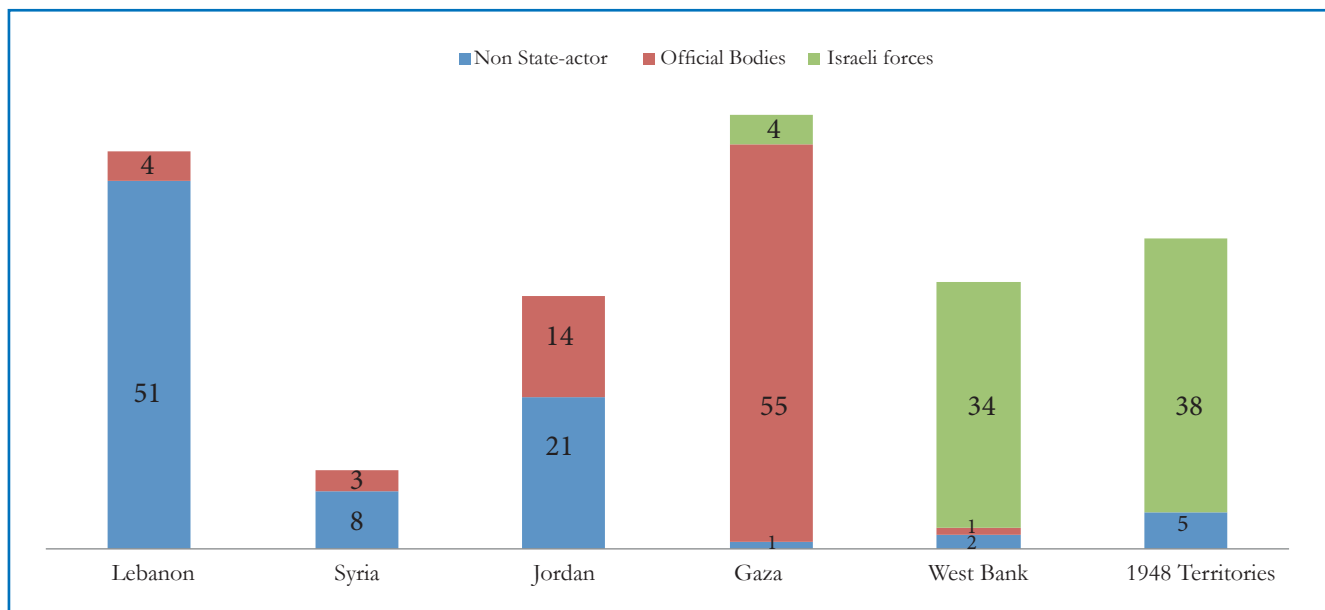


In the West Bank:



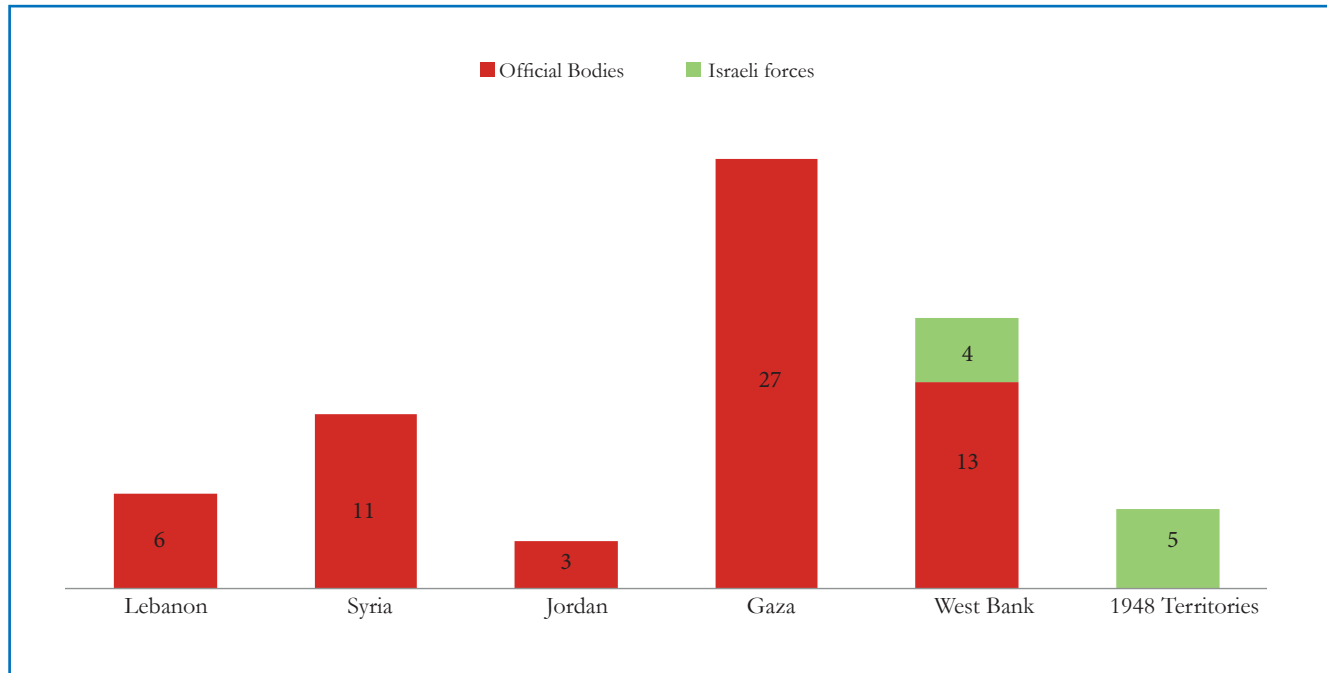
Fifteen journalists were arrested by the Israeli forces and eight by the Palestinian Authority services.

4- Attacks on journalists, intellectuals and activists

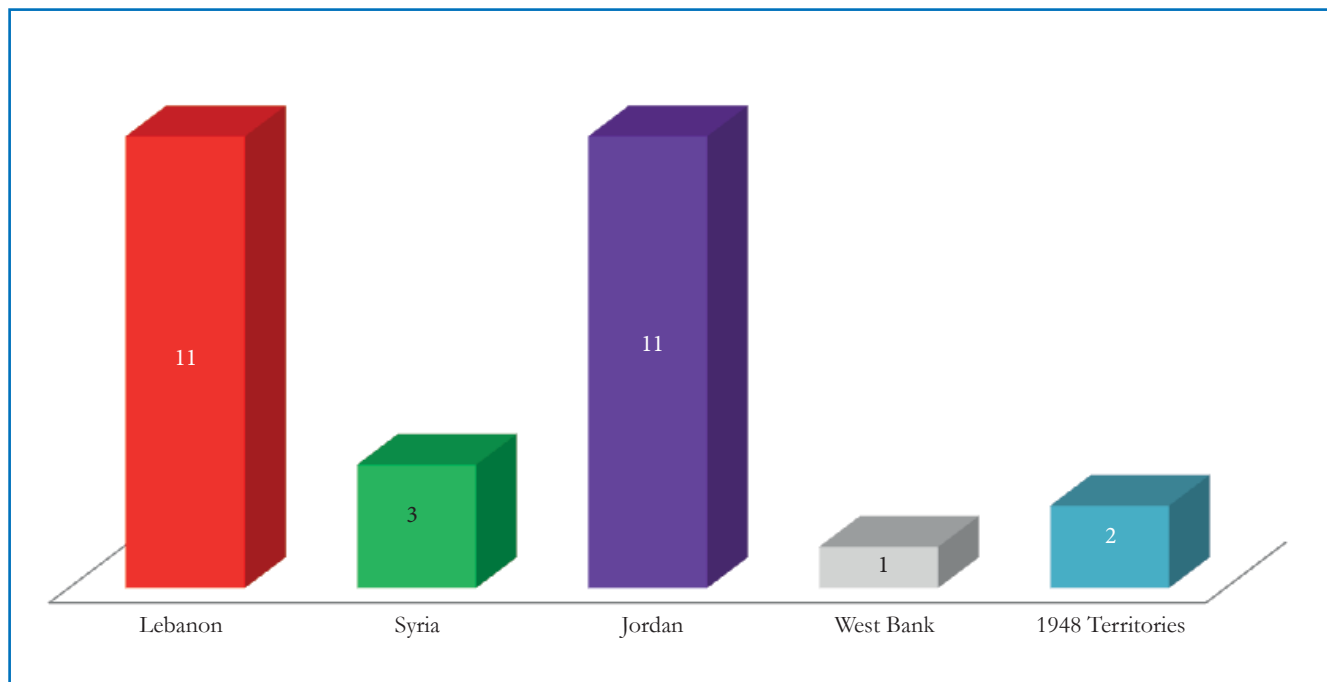


The relatively low number of journalists, activists and intellectuals attacked in Syria should not be misinterpreted as a positive sign, because these attacks, when carried out, were particularly brutal, as demonstrated in the cases of the cartoonist Ferzat Jerban, the parents of piano player Malek Jandali, and the artist Jalal Al-Tawil.

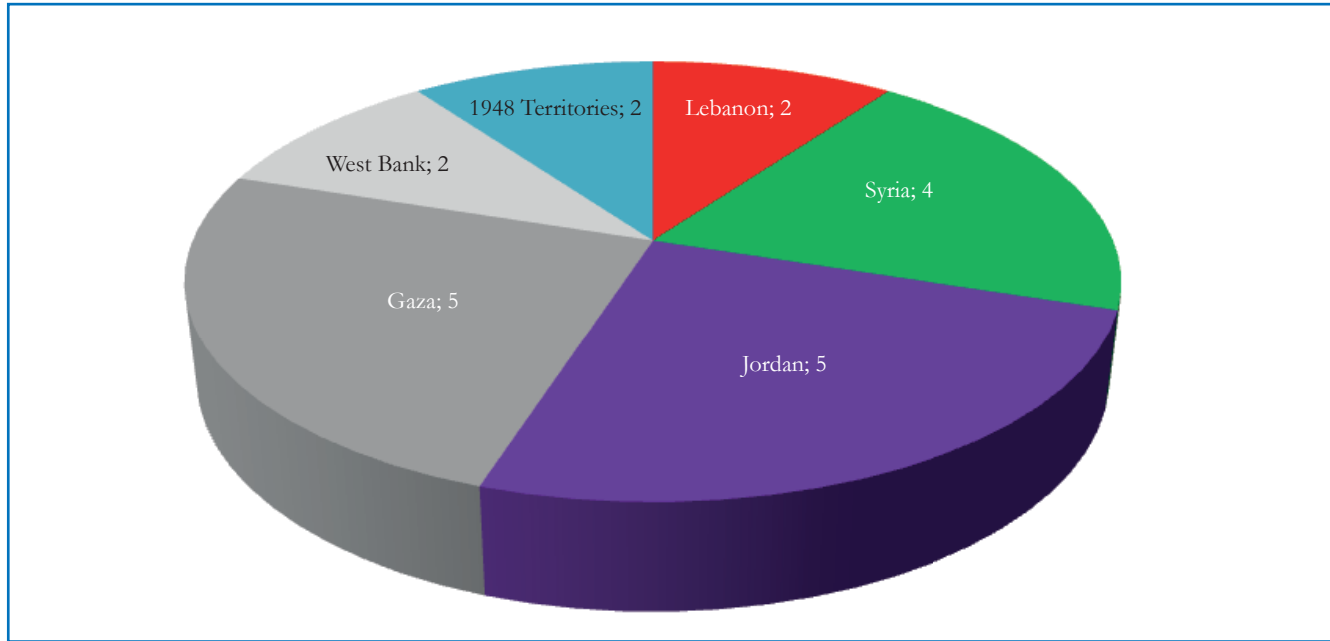
5- Journalists, intellectuals and activists summoned for questioning



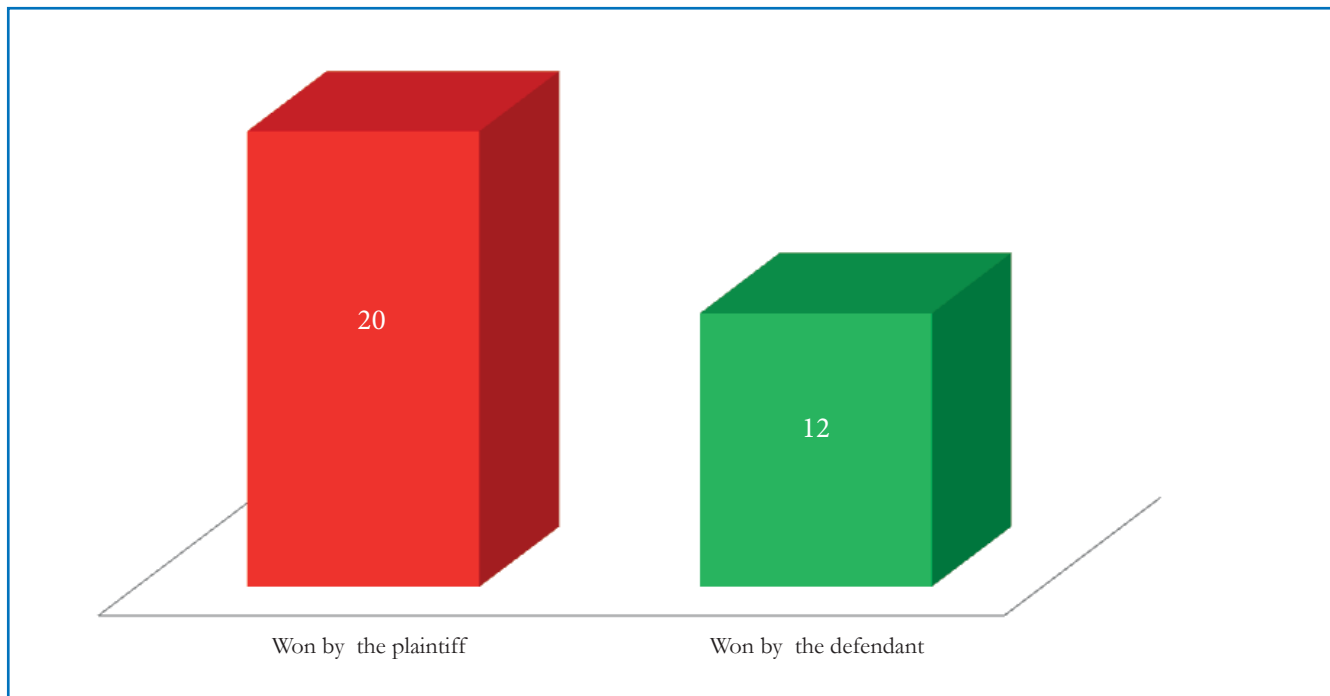
6- Threats against journalists, intellectuals and activists



7- Media outlets and art venues raided

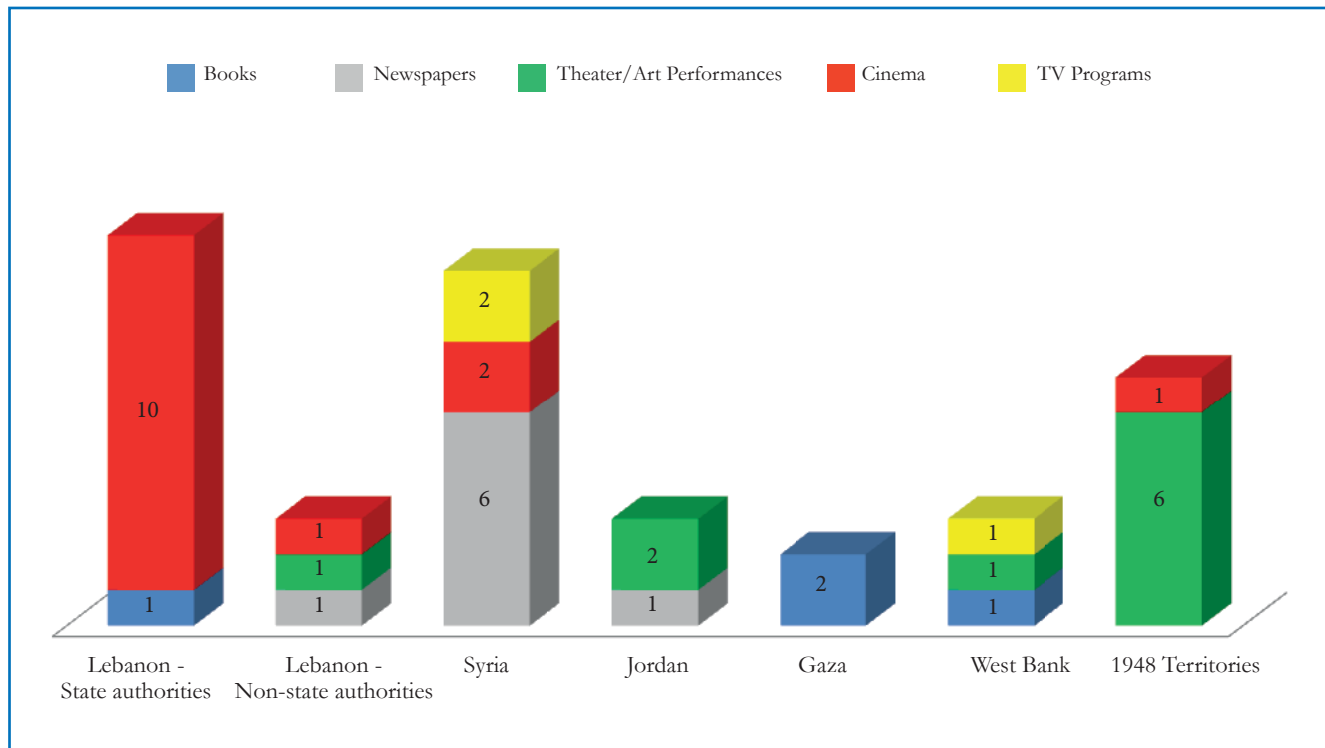


8- Lebanese court rulings in cases involving journalists and media outlets



In 2011, the Publications' Court in Lebanon ruled 20 times in favor of those who filed complaints against journalists and media outlets, and 12 times in favor of the prosecuted journalists or media outlets.

9- Censorship on media and cultural works



This graph shows the number of art and cultural media works as well as media outlets totally or partly censored by official censorship bodies. It also shows a specific trait to Lebanon, i.e. censorship imposed by non-state actors, as in the cases of the Middle East Airlines banning the distribution of Al-Akhbar newspaper aboard its aircrafts, the threats against LMFAO leading to the cancellation of their concert in Beirut, and the decision to hide Steven Spielberg's name on the banners of the movie "Tintin".

This graph, however, cannot be used to compare the state of censorship in the region, as the movies, book and TV series banned in one country were allowed elsewhere. A good comparison tool would look at how censorship authorities dealt with the same art work across the region.

10- Cases of website hacking

