

Monthly Report Executive Summary

Press and Cultural Freedom Violations

LEBANON, SYRIA, JORDAN, PALESTINE

September 2013

Sixteen citizen journalists were killed in Syria, including six in Damascus and three in Raqqa in September 2013. Arrests and abductions continued: Marc Marginedas, a reporter for the Spanish newspaper *El Periódico* was kidnapped near Hama by an extremist group affiliated with the Syrian opposition.

In the West Bank and the 1948 Territories, number of Palestinian journalists were injured after Israeli soldiers attacked them with teargas and stun grenades. Also, the Hamas movement summoned several journalists for questioning in Gaza. In Lebanon, Hezbollah established checkpoints at the entrance of Beirut's southern suburbs and interrogated journalists. In Jordan, two journalists were transferred to the State Security Court.

Below is a detailed summary of the violations compiled by the SKeyes Center in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine.

In **Lebanon**, journalist Hussein Shamas was insulted after being detained at a Hezbollah checkpoint in Mar Mikhael, in Beirut's southern suburb, and his car was confiscated (09/13). Also, *Al-Jadeed* (New TV) photographer, Abbas Hayek, was questioned at the same checkpoint for one hour (09/20). The anti-cybercrime office summoned journalist Rasha Al-Amine (09/11), following her posting on Facebook of an article published on the *Al-Muhasaba* website and accusing Lebanese Forces' leader, Samir Geagea, of war crimes. Also, Geagea filed a complaint against *Sawt Al-Mada's Chou 'am bi sir* (What is going on?) team and guests for libel and defamation after the May 8, 2013 talk show.

In **Syria**, sixteen citizen journalists were killed in September 2013: Kinan Al-Balkhi in Rif Dimashq in an ambush set by the regime forces (09/02), Mohammad Darwish in city shelling (09/03), Abdul-Karim Al-Bakr while covering the clashes between the opposition and the Syrian army (09/05), Nouredin Al-Hafiri succumbing to his injuries (09/29), Abdul-Aziz Hassun by shrapnel (09/05), Fadi Abu Ajaj during the bombardment on Damascus (09/08), Mohammad Bitar while covering the battles in Idlib (le 08/09), Nasr Abu Al-Uyun in Hama (09/19) and Morhaf Al-Modhi by shrapnel in Deir Ez-Zor (09/29). Hassan Al-Rafih died after receiving a toxic injection in a hospital controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) (09/08), citizen journalist Imane Al-Halabi was killed by the bullets of unknown gunmen (09/08), Mohammad Al-Nashef in the shelling (09/15), Yaman Khatib (09/12) and Mohammad Khasharfeh, while covering the battles in Daraa (09/13), Omar Diab by a sniper affiliated to ISIS inside the town of Azaz, in the Aleppo governorate (09/18) and Tarek Ali by a sniper's bullets in Aleppo (09/22). Photographer Abu Bakr Al-Haj was injured by shrapnel (09/03),



citizen journalist Omar Al-Balkhi while covering the battles in Daraa (09/19), Abdul-Nasser Abu Jamal by shrapnel in Daraa (09/30), Mohammad Amin Hallak in Aleppo (09/07) and *Aleppo News* network correspondents, better known as Abu El-Kheir and Abu-Taym, by shrapnel (09/02).

Arrests and abductions continued: Marc Marginedas, a Spanish reporter for *El Periódico* was kidnapped near Hama, by an extremist group affiliated with the Syrian opposition (09/04), armed gunmen abducted citizen journalist Hazem Dakel in Idlib (09/15) and the opposition forces arrested and tortured number of citizen journalists in Aleppo (09/27). Also, a case of detention was carried out beyond the Syrian borders: the Syrian embassy in Kuwait held Syrian journalist Yasser Iyada for several hours (09/25).

In **Jordan**, journalists Amjad Maala and Nidal Faraaneh were transferred to the State Security Court (09/18), accused of releasing a video that, according to the authorities, jeopardizes the Jordanian-Qatari relations. Jordanian authorities banned Palestinian journalist Hosni Shilo from entering the country (09/03). Also, the director of the Press and Publications Department threatened to sue news outlets that change their domain name to circumvent the decision to block access to their (09/18). The High Court of Justice dismissed the appeal filed by the news website as to the press and publications law's constitutionality (09/28) and several unemployed Jordanian journalists staged a sit-in inside the National Center for Human Rights, to ask for the creation of job opportunities (09/03).

In the **Gaza Strip**, the Hamas security services summoned journalists for questioning, under the pretext that they belong to the *Tamarrod* movement, namely: Nasr Abu Al-Ful (09/02), Mohammad Abu Fayad (09/09), Fathi Tabil (09/09), Ra'fat Tauman, Yahya Al-Madhun, Hussein Abdul-Jawad Karsuh (09/10) and Alaa Ahmad (09/12), and held them for several hours. Also, unknown people threatened to kill journalists Majed Abu Salameh (09/06), Ayman Al-Alul (09/18) and Mohammad Al-Madhun (09/22). Filmmaker Mohammad Al-Majdalawi was arrested while shooting a documentary on Gaza women (09/18). The *Maan* news agency dismissed twelve journalists and employees two months after the Hamas authorities decided to shut down its Gaza office (09/29).

In the **West Bank**, Israeli soldiers attacked number of Palestinian journalists and photographers, who were covering the clashes between young Palestinians and the Israeli forces in Kfar Kadum and Hebron with teargas and stun grenades; Jaafar Ashtieh (09/13), Mohammad Abu Ghanieh, Nasser Al-Shuyukhi, Imad Saïd, Hazem Bader, Abdul-Hafiz Al-Hashlamun, Tarek Kayal and Amer Abdine were slightly injured (09/27). Photographer Hadhifa Srur was also attacked in the same way, after he refused to comply with the decision of prohibiting the coverage of a peaceful protest in Naaline (09/27). Israeli authorities banned journalist Omar Abu Arkub from traveling without any justification (09/01) and confiscated two cameras belonging to journalist Nidal Ashtieh, before giving them back, broken, 18 days later (09/12).





Internally, the security services arrested journalist Zaher Al-Shemali for “defamation against important figures” in his articles (09/14). Also, journalist Mustafa Al-Khawaja was summoned and questioned about his work with the *Al-Aqsa* satellite channel (09/30) and the police hampered the work of *Al-Aqsa* journalists in Hebron (09/23).

In the **1948 Territories**, Israeli soldiers attacked journalists and photographers with rubber-coated bullets, teargas and stun grenades, and beat them with truncheons. Several persons were injured, especially during the clashes next to the Remission Gate (*Bab Hatta*), the protest organized by Israeli settlers in the old town and the sit-in next to the Damascus Gate (*Bab Al-Amud*) in Jerusalem: Ammar Awad (09/04), Sleiman Khodor (09/06 and 09/27), Ahmad Gharableh (09/11 and 09/27), Mahfuz Abu Turk, Mahmud Alyan, Ons Ghanayem (09/11), Ahmad Jalajel, Majd Ghaith, Isaac Al-Kasbeh and Ahmad Al-Badiri (09/24).

The Israeli police arrested journalist Mahmud Abu Ata and banned him from entering the Al-Aqsa mosque for two weeks (09/24). Also, the Palestinian Prisoner Club director in Jerusalem, Nasser Qaws, was questioned (09/01) and *Hona Al-Quds* channel correspondent, Shaza Hammad, was arrested for taking pictures of settlers in Jerusalem (09/27).

The detailed monthly report for [September 2013](#) (in Arabic) is available on the website of the **SKeyes** Center for Media and Cultural Freedom.

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