



# Media Reality.. **A Hazardous Scene!**



Annual report  
Violations Against Freedoms of  
Opinion and Expression  
PRESS 2023

**Media Reality..  
A Hazardous Scene!**

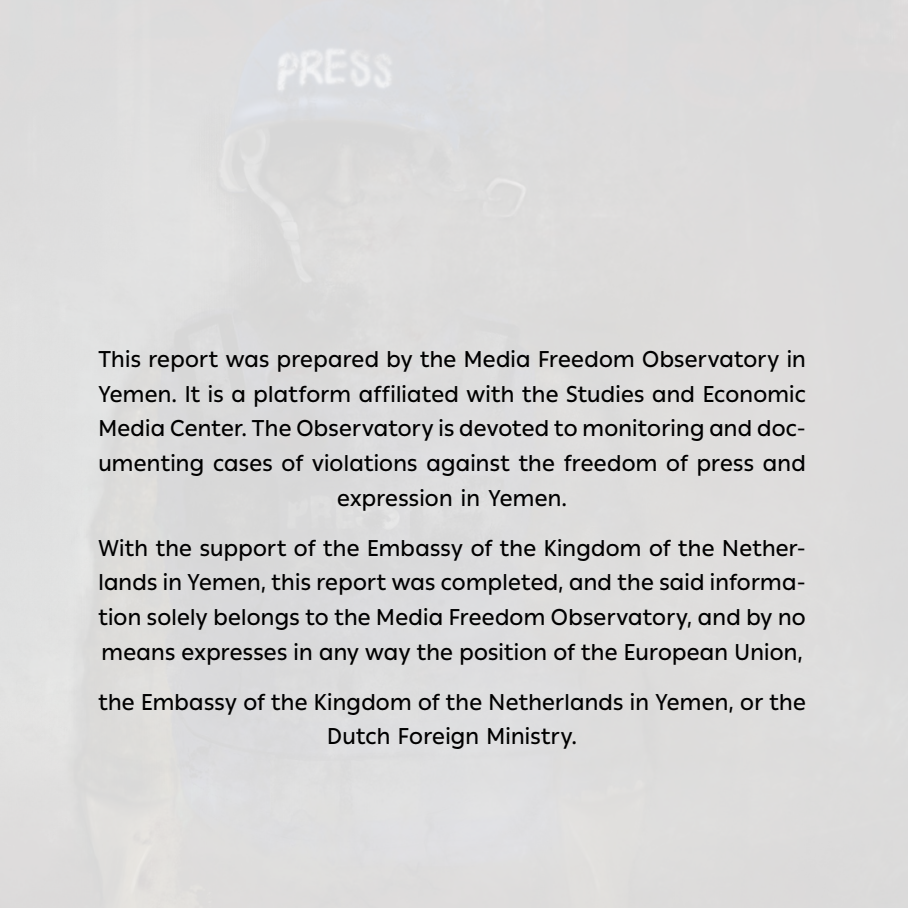
Media Freedoms Observatory - Yemen



MARSADAK

مرصدك

مرصد الحريات الإعلامية - اليمن  
Media Freedom Observatory - Yemen



This report was prepared by the Media Freedom Observatory in Yemen. It is a platform affiliated with the Studies and Economic Media Center. The Observatory is devoted to monitoring and documenting cases of violations against the freedom of press and expression in Yemen.

With the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Yemen, this report was completed, and the said information solely belongs to the Media Freedom Observatory, and by no means expresses in any way the position of the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Yemen, or the Dutch Foreign Ministry.

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# Introduction

## Introduction

Over the last nine years, the Media Freedoms Observatory in Yemen, affiliated with the Studies and Economic Media Center, has meticulously documented thousands of instances of violations against journalists, media activists, and institutions, along with their staff. This tally has surged past a staggering 2515 violations, encompassing 54 tragic instances of journalist fatalities, including two female journalists. Regrettably, accountability and retribution have remained elusive in every single case, as the perpetrators continue to evade justice.

These transgressions have significantly narrowed the scope of media freedoms, a stark revelation evident in the monitoring outcomes. The once vibrant landscape of media diversity and freedoms that characterized Yemen before the current conflict has eroded. In regions under the sway of the "Ansar Allah" Houthi group, the print press has virtually vanished, save for a handful of newspapers affiliated with or orbiting around it. Media freedoms have been stifled, compelling media professionals to confront daunting choices: align with group-affiliated outlets, relocate from their native areas, or forsake their media vocations altogether. Similarly, regions under the jurisdiction of the internationally recognized government lack the presence of an independent press showcasing diverse opinions and orientations, with only scant exceptions. The predominant media narrative is one of war mobilization, leaving media professionals with the stark ultimatum of either embracing it or facing unemployment, societal ostracism, and potential persecution if they choose to pursue an independent course.

Numerous journalists in Yemen find themselves impeded from freely navigating and disseminating facts, ensnared



**Mustafa Nasr**  
**Head of the  
Center**

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by the specters of influence, polarization, and the looming fear of oppression. The conflict has also given rise to news channels, newspapers, and websites bankrolled by various parties, both internal and external to Yemen. This influx of partisan funding has spawned a proliferation of rumors and misleading news, further intensifying the conflict and exacerbating societal divisions.

Upon scrutinizing and assessing the state of media freedoms in Yemen, a disconcerting reality becomes glaringly apparent: all parties involved in the conflict, through their actions, converge on a shared goal of suppressing the press and curtailing the free practice of journalism. This concerted effort has direly impacted the economic standing of many journalists, compelling some to abandon their journalistic pursuits and seek employment outside their chosen profession. In light of these challenges, we fervently urge journalists to swiftly unite, setting aside political affiliations and disengaging from the divisive factions embroiled in the conflict, in order to collectively defend their rights.

Yemeni female journalists, despite their limited numbers, found themselves vulnerable to systematic targeting through a range of ruthless methods. These included brutal killings, arrests, and both verbal and physical assaults. Additionally, they faced the perils of blackmail, bullying, and the tarnishing of their honor and reputation across diverse electronic and media platforms. This multifaceted aggression has placed many female journalists in an arduous psychological and humanitarian predicament. As a consequence, the ability of these journalists to practice their profession freely has been significantly impeded. This has resulted in numerous female journalists either halting their work or choosing to remain silent. Regrettably, the persistence of these transgressions and abuses against female journalists persists unabated, with the perpetrators exhibiting a blatant disregard for the potential consequences of their actions.

In this annual report for 2023, we endeavor to provide you



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with a comprehensive overview of the media landscape in Yemen. Our objective is to assess the current state of media freedom and meticulously document the violations perpetrated against journalists and media workers. Through this endeavor, we aspire to play a role in putting an end to cases of impunity.

It is imperative that the international community does not remain passive in the face of ongoing violations against journalists. There is a pressing need to escalate efforts both locally and internationally to alleviate the plight of journalists and to confront those responsible for these violations. It is crucial that wrongdoers do not evade justice, and a resolute message must be conveyed to perpetrators across all parties involved. They must understand that they will be held accountable for their actions, as these crimes, along with other severe violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, are subject to no statute of limitations.

Undoubtedly, the influence of the international community is pivotal and can contribute to the recurrence of positive scenes, such as the heartening images witnessed during the release of several journalists as part of a prisoner exchange deal under the auspices of the United Nations.

As we present this annual report, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to our esteemed partners at the Dutch Embassy in Yemen and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their unwavering support for Yemeni journalists and collaborative efforts in championing press freedoms in Yemen have been invaluable.

I cannot overstate my gratitude to the dedicated team at the Media Freedoms Observatory in Yemen, as well as all our partners in Yemeni provinces, journalists, and social media activists both within and beyond Yemen.

Sincerely,



**Media Reality..  
A Hazardous Scene!**

All parties to the conflict in Yemen have committed gross human rights violations, including murder, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, and unfair trials.

With each passing year, these practices have grown increasingly brutal, resulting in a drastic erosion of press freedom. According to the Reporters Without Borders report 2023, Yemen

**Two thousand five hundred and fifteen violations from 2015 until now, including 54 killings against journalists**

plummeted to the lowest global ranks, securing the 168th position out of 180 countries. These persistent violations and practices have not only impeded the free flow of accurate information but have also restricted opportunities for Yemeni society to access genuine insights into reality. Proliferation of misinformation manipulated narratives by conflicting parties, and the gradual division of the country into spheres of influence have exacerbated these challenges. In such delineated areas, journalists find themselves constrained from criticizing au-

thorities, leading to a significant curtailment of press freedom. The fear of reprisals from these parties has further complicated the journalists' ability to convey the truth and disseminate vital information.

Such a hostile environment significantly undermines the pillars of media freedoms, portraying the current media landscape at its most distressing. Journalists find it increasingly challenging to carry out their work free from the relentless pressures imposed by conflicting parties. The aggregate number of violations against journalists and media institutions has surged to a staggering 2515 violations from 2015 until the present. This grim tally encompasses 54 tragic cases of journalist murders, 484 instances of arrests, and 157 violations perpetrated against media organizations.

In tandem with the oppressive measures endured by the press

throughout the war years, leading to the cessation of 165 out of 365 media outlets, the economic crisis has exacerbated the challenges faced by many media organizations. The economic downturn has rendered numerous outlets incapable of sustaining their operations or relocating their headquarters to safer regions. This insight is drawn from a study by the Studies and Economic Media Center titled "An Evaluative Study of Radio Stations: Their Reality and Impact on Society."

The Houthi group has been responsible for brutal and systematic violations against journalists and media professionals within the territories under its control. These actions have transformed the media landscape in these areas into a monolithic entity, marked by a singular narrative. Independent and partisan media outlets are notably absent, their journalists finding themselves behind bars. Some, like journalist Waheed Al-Sufi, remain forcibly concealed with no information available to this day. Others have experienced arrests, torture, and subsequent release in precarious health conditions, persisting to suffer from these consequences. Additionally, politicized trials lacking the most fundamental standards of a fair trial have been a distressing aspect of this landscape.

The oppressive actions of repression, arrests, and torture have significantly impacted the media production of numerous professionals operating within Houthi-controlled regions. Journalists have begun to experience a pervasive sense of censorship and surveillance, prompting many to cease writing out of fear for their safety and the potential for abuse.

Similarly, the Yemeni government has been implicated in several violations against journalists and media outlets within its jurisdiction, rendering media work a perilous endeavor. Press freedoms have been curtailed by partisan entities and influential figures within security and military authorities. These restrictions have made it challenging for opposition journalists to navigate government-controlled areas. Moreover, the looming threats of campaigns involving accusations of treason and defamation have been wielded to silence dissenting and critical

**Despite the horrific documents and testimonies collected during the recent period, the perpetrators of these violations have escaped punishment.**

voices against official authorities.

The escalating influence of various conflicting parties in Yemen has led each faction to enact regulations and legislation aligning with its policies, thereby imposing conditions and instructions on Yemeni journalists and correspondents for Arab channels. Securing these permits has become a challenging task, with financial fees imposed in some areas, at times reaching as high as 100 US dollars.

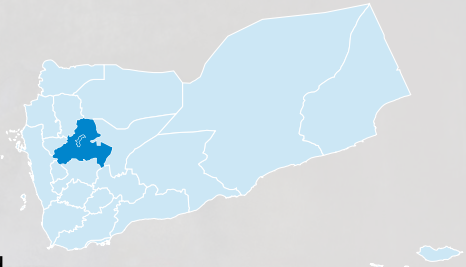
Yet, it is in the Houthi-controlled regions where journalists face the gravest dangers. The group's organized and explicit practices against them mark any opinion contrary to their own as a form of soft

war against the Yemeni people, their morality, and their religion. The accusations levied are of significant magnitude, often transformed into fatwas that extremists might employ against journalists.

## | Sana'a PRESS

In Sana'a, it is evident that Houthi-controlled areas have become devoid of any independent, private, or partisan media outlets. However, their repressive policies persist, prompting some journalists to abandon their careers and seek employment outside their profession. Others live in constant fear under an oppressive regime that is intolerant of any form of criticism.

Since forcibly seizing power and gaining control of several Yemeni provinces in late 2014, the Houthi group has relentlessly persecuted journalists. They have raided



and looted independent, private, and partisan media institutions while restructuring government media outlets to align with their objectives. This has resulted in the disappearance of the media diversity that Yemen once proudly boasted in these regions.

Among the recorded violations over the past nine years, the Houthi group stands out as the primary violator of press freedom, accounting for 1,849 instances. The majority of these violations occurred between the end of 2014 and 2019. Notably, over 200 news websites were blocked, preventing followers within Yemen from accessing them. This stringent control has left the areas under Houthi control entirely bereft of any form of media, be it private, independent, or partisan.

Yet, the challenge doesn't end there, as the Houthi group enforces covert and stringent censorship. Dozens of journalists have been summoned, some detained, and others sternly warned against engaging in criticism or affiliating with media institutions opposing the group's orientations. Many operate under the shadow of clandestine censorship, coupled with

surveillance and censorship of their social media posts. Their movements are tracked using specialized means and intelligence service programs. Journalists are also prohibited from filming for any local or foreign media within Houthi-controlled areas without obtaining official permission. Obtaining these permits is often a challenging endeavor, prompting dozens to leave these areas, relocating to government-controlled regions or even outside Yemen in pursuit of freedom and a dignified living.

**Dozens of Yemeni journalists decided to leave the areas controlled by the Houthi group after reaching a dead end in an attempt to avoid the group's oppression.**

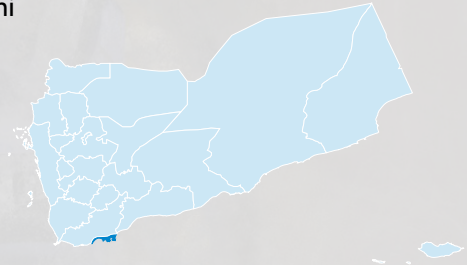
The Houthi group has further attacked several local radio stations, the latest being the Voice of Yemen Radio and Eram FM Radio, halting their broadcasts and plundering them, despite these stations adhering to programs aligned with the political orientations of the Houthi group. This situation paints a vivid picture of the ongoing desertification of independent media,

media professionals, and dissenting voices in favor of a directed and politicized media that the Houthis wield as a tool in the ongoing conflict in Yemen.

## Aden

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In Aden, the National Southern Media Authority (NSMA), functioning as a non-competent body performing the roles of the Ministry of Information, continues to exert oversight on journalists, imposing numerous requirements and restrictions on journalistic activities. During the recent period, the authority issued several circulars, one of which prohibited the organization of events, conferences, or seminars without obtaining its prior approval. It provided foreign broadcasting offices collaborating with Arab and international media channels with a list of names of Yemeni individuals, including journalists, who are prohibited from hosting or appearing on these channels. These offices were obligated to submit the name of any person intended to appear on these channels well in advance, and the authority would then decide whether to approve or reject it. Additionally, the NSMA barred the preparation of press coverage and the creation of reports on political, economic, and humanitarian aspects without obtaining prior permission from the authority.



In the recent period, restrictions on independent media or those not aligned with the Transitional Council in Aden have intensified, culminating in the gradual dominance of a singular narrative among media outlets operating in the city. The Southern Media Authority (SMA) has imposed stringent regulations, limiting journalists who have not obtained a license from working or taking photographs anywhere in the city. Importantly, press cards, a prerequisite for journalistic activities, are exclusively issued by the SMA. However, it does not grant membership to all journalists, particularly those who dissent with its views. Furthermore, the SMA employs a regional approach in dealing with journalists, especially those hailing from outside the southern regions. The press cards for non-Southerners differ from those



issued to journalists within the southern regions, exacerbating the risks faced by journalists in the context of political differences and the southern region's demands for secession.

Even journalists in the southern regions, resorting to writing under pseudonyms, live in a state of anxiety and fear while collecting information and communicating with sources "before publication." This fear continues even after publication, manifesting in concerns about the potential discovery of the author of a report or journalistic material.

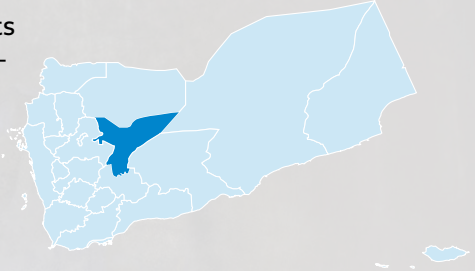
These practices escalated to the extent that the building of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) in Al-Tawahi Province was stormed for the second time in less than five months. During this incident, the sign of the union's headquarters was removed and replaced with another sign, and an armed cordon was imposed on the building. The independent "Aden" channel, affiliated with the STC, reported that Aidroos Bahashwan, the head of the so-called "Southern Journalists and Media Syndicate," (SJMS) issued a statement claiming that their union had reclaimed its main headquarters, which had belonged to it during the era of the state of the South.

## Marib

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Marib Province, akin to other provinces under the control of the Yemeni government, lacks an effective mechanism regulating journalistic activities. This absence has led to a surge in violations and increased restrictions imposed by security authorities.

Journalists and correspondents from satellite channels encounter numerous restrictions and obstacles, mandated to secure prior permits before engaging in any journalistic work or filming. However, obtaining these permits proves challenging for journalists and involves a protracted process, significantly hindering their work.



Addressing this issue necessitates a shift in the security authorities' perception of journalists as potential security threats. The Information Office in the province must promptly devise a mechanism that organizes and facilitates journalistic work, replacing the existing constraints. Marib is among the largest provinces with a substantial journalist presence, making this restructuring crucial for enabling the free and efficient practice of journalism.

The observatory has received numerous reports and complaints from a group of journalists and media workers, detailing instances where they were subjected to arrest and assault by security authorities due to the restrictions imposed by the province. In the past year alone, 11 cases of violations against journalists were documented, encompassing a range of offenses such as arrest, assault, threats, interrogations, and trials.

## Legal breaches

Legal breaches and judicial imbalances, marked by unfair trials, have marred the legal proceedings involving numerous journalists and media workers across various regions in Yemen. An examination of these violations reveals a deliberate strategy by conflicting parties in Yemen to intimidate journalists and activists working in the realm of freedom of opinion, expression, and human rights. They subject them to interrogations, investigations, and trials conducted in courts that lack jurisdiction. These courts, specifically the criminal courts specialized in "state security and terrorism," are not competent to handle such cases. According to Yemeni Law No. (25) of 1990 concerning the press and publications, these cases should be referred to the press and publishing courts, highlighting a clear deviation from established legal procedures.

The prolonged and forced disappearance of journalists, lasting for months and, in some cases, years before being brought before competent courts and judicial bodies for trial, constitutes a blatant violation of international treaties and conventions. This includes a breach of Clause 2 of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a covenant ratified by Yemen. The relevant article stipulates: "Any person who is arrested must be promptly informed of the reasons for his arrest and any charge against him."

Clause 3 of the same Article is equally significant, stating: "Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or an employee legally authorized to exercise judicial functions, and shall have the right to be tried within a reasonable period or to be released. While detaining individuals awaiting trial is not the usual practice, their release might be contingent on assurances. These assurances are meant to guarantee their presence during the trial or at any point in the legal process and to ensure compliance with the sentence when required".

These standards align with the law in force in Yemen, as out-

lined in Article (73) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which asserts: "Everyone who is arrested shall be informed immediately of the reasons for this arrest, and he has the right to review the arrest order and contact whomever he sees fit to inform him of what happened and seek the assistance of a lawyer. He must be informed promptly on the charge brought against him."

Journalist Ahmed Maher has been detained for more than a year. He was subjected to forced disappearance and torture. After more than four months, the Specialized Criminal Court in Aden Province announced the holding of the first trial session, but it was not held and was postponed. Of the 17 sessions that were supposed to be held to try him, Ahmed Maher only had two of these sessions, and the rest of the sessions were postponed under flimsy and illogical justifications.

The course of Ahmed's trial was accompanied by many violations and clear violations of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which is based on the Yemeni Constitution and stipulates the powers of judicial officers, the Public Prosecution, and the courts at all levels. Article (129/1) of this law stipulates that: "The investigation procedures must be completed within two months at most. The date of opening the file, and the investigation procedures must be expedited in which a pre-trial detention order was issued for the accused."

**Parties involved in the conflict often went beyond both local and international legal boundaries, making the summoning and trial of journalists a widespread occurrence. Between 2015 and the end of 2023, a total of 124 violations were documented. These ranged from interrogations and coercive orders to actual trials of journalists. In some instances, severe penalties, including death sentences, were imposed.**

Journalist Nabil Al-Sadawi experienced severe violations that flagrantly breached international laws and treaties, as well as contradicting the existing laws in the Yemeni constitution. These issues were extensively covered in a detailed human rights report by the Observatory, titled "In Detention Despite the End of His Sentence," which documented eight years of continuous violations. Former detainees who spent extended periods alongside Al-Sadawi narrated the legal transgressions against him, along with the harsh and tragic conditions he faced in prison. These violations included physical abuse such as beatings, hanging on iron poles, electrocution, spraying with cold water, and other forms of cruel torture.

## Interrogations!

In the past few months, it has become commonplace for journalists to be summoned for questioning periodically by security and intelligence agencies. This is a form of systematic intimidation and a message that conveys, "We are watching you." Additionally, these agencies have restricted the movement of some journalists within their controlled areas and have imposed travel bans abroad unless they obtain security clearance. Typically, these clearances are granted based on information provided by informants affiliated with the Houthi group."

The Media Freedoms Observatory (MARSADAK) has received numerous reports highlighting the unwavering defiance and alarming acts of terror displayed by the security apparatus. In a concerning development, certain journalists have found themselves caught in a cycle of relentless interrogations. Shockingly, some journalists may endure these interrogations every two weeks, only to be granted temporary reprieve with the understanding that they can be summoned back at any given moment. Multiple individuals have been summoned and subsequently incarcerated, their pleas for release falling on deaf ears. Journalist Fahd Al-Arhabi, the director of the Al-Thawra government newspaper's office in Amran Governorate, has

found himself at the centre of attention. In the face of arbitrary actions by the Houthi group, he was compelled to step down from his position. In a series of relentless acts, the Houthi group has continued to harass and apprehend him on numerous occasions, resulting in his ongoing detention at the time of this report.

Journalist Samir, a pseudonym, has come forward with his harrowing experiences of being repeatedly summoned and interrogated by the relentless security and intelligence apparatus. In a span of just eight months, he has been summoned a staggering four times. In a surprising turn of events, he faced an intense interrogation during the initial summons, even though his journalistic works were largely unrelated to politics. He found himself confined to the isolation cells of the intelligence agency for an entire week. After providing a written commitment to appear when summoned, he was eventually released. During the subsequent summonses, he endured rigorous questioning sessions lasting over two hours each. The questioning revolved around the latest developments in his work and the journalists affiliated with the Yemeni government, commonly referred to as the traitor government. These questions are designed to ensure that they are kept well-informed about the activities of journalists.

In a series of systematic practices, the Houthi group has been accused of engaging in harassment and intimidation tactics. One such measure involves imposing restrictions on journalists, preventing them from appearing on foreign or Arabic media platforms without prior approval. In a stunning move, the group has imposed strict regulations on journalists, prohibiting them from capturing news reports or television segments on camera, and even restricting their ability to take personal photos without prior permission from the Ministry of Information under the control of the group.

## Hiding behind pseudonyms

Using pseudonyms becomes a necessity for Yemeni journalists as a means of self-protection, primarily to avoid potential threats to their lives. However, over time, this practice undermines the journalist's credibility with readers and audiences, almost leading to a moral death. Despite these drawbacks, journalists often choose pseudonyms due to the constant fear of exposure, risking harm or losing connections if their true identity is revealed. Trust and prior knowledge are crucial for someone to know the real name behind the pseudonym.

While hiding behind pseudonyms may limit a journalist's rights and recognition, it remains the only viable option in unsafe areas, serving as a protective shield against the pressures imposed by conflicting parties on both the journalist and their family.

However, there are serious risks if they choose to face the consequences, express their opinions, and adhere to professional standards. They might end up in detention centers facing a death sentence or being subjected to torture. Alternatively, they could become prisoners of war, facing harsh treatment like journalist Ahmed Maher. Another possibility is being arrested, tortured, and placed on lists for prisoner exchanges, merely for being a journalist doing one's job, as seen with colleagues Abdul Khaleq Omran, Akram Al-Walidi, Harith Hamed, and Tawfiq Al-Mansouri.

## The Erosion of Media Pluralism

Media pluralism has vanished across all regions of Yemen. In Houthi-controlled areas, the print press has disappeared, except for those aligned with the group. This has resulted in the loss of opportunities for traditional journalistic work. Similarly, in areas under the internationally recognized government, independent press is nonexistent, overshadowed by controlled media. Journalists are left with limited choices: either join military efforts or face unemployment, social exclusion, and potential persecution if they opt to pursue independent work.

Since 2012, Yemen has experienced a notable surge in audio-visual media outlets, with the number of satellite channels reaching 16 in addition to 13 radio stations operating within the country. Further, more than 300 websites were launched. However, this increase was observed after the 2011 revolution and did not persist. It began to decline after the Houthi takeover of Sana'a and several Yemeni provinces. The ensuing conflicts and the emergence of other forces led to the discontinuation of 14 channels, some of which relocated outside Yemen. Furthermore, 10 local radio stations ceased operations, and many independent and partisan websites were blocked.

Channels affiliated with the Yemeni government, such as Al-Yemen Channel, Aden Channel, and Al-Shariya Channel, along with the private Suhail Channel, broadcast from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Al-Sahat Channel

**Controlled media is eroding the national identity of Yemenis through intentional, organized, and deliberate collective actions. Meanwhile, individual efforts are constrained and diminishing with each passing day, contributing to the isolation of Yemenis from the global community.**



and Al-Masirah Channel operate from Lebanon, while Yemen Shabab, Al-Mahriyah, and Balqis channels broadcast from Turkey. The Yemeni Government Channel, "Yemen Today," broadcasts from Cairo, and recently closed Al-Ghad Al-Mushriq.

The remaining newspapers in Sana'a are often overseen by individuals lacking professional journalism backgrounds, closely associated with security services and the group's propaganda apparatus. This unified approach dictates media policy with strict control. Those deviating from this line face summons by the intelligence service or personal visits, sending a clear message. This extends to social media, where even a Facebook post can provoke repercussions. Journalists' and writers' Facebook pages are monitored, leading to organized smear campaigns. The group occasionally blocks social networking sites, as witnessed on the anniversary of the September 26 revolution when Zoom and other video calling apps were prohibited.

Similarly, areas under the control of the Yemeni government, such as Aden, Taiz, and Marib provinces, face challenges in achieving media pluralism. Aden is predominantly influenced by the NSMA, imposing numerous restrictions on newspapers and limiting alternative voices. Akhbar Al-Youm newspaper, upon resuming its operations in Aden, has faced various harassment, including a recent incident where it was stormed and burned by an armed group. While there are exceptions, with some newspapers and private radio outlets present in the temporary capital, Aden, media pluralism remains a significant challenge.

## Government Media... Suffering in Salaries and Migration

Yemeni journalists in government-affiliated media outlets are facing tough economic circumstances as they endure a prolonged wait for their salaries, commonly known as the “monthly allowance,” stretching beyond six months.

In the early years of the war, the government resorted to managing its official media institutions, including the Yemeni news agency “Saba”, the Yemeni satellite channel, the Aden channel, and Sana’a Radio, from the then provisional headquarters in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Eventually, the government relocated to Aden in the subsequent years.

The official media institutions and their staff continued to operate from Saudi territory, and the journalists working in these institutions received what is called the “monthly allowance,” which is a sum paid to journalists working in those institutions in Saudi Riyals.

Journalists’ suffering has been further intensified as the disbursement of their financial allowances, specifically allocated for them, faces significant delays. This pressing matter has now emerged as a prominent human rights concern. Employees of these institutions have taken to calling on the government, urging them to fulfil their obligations, find a solution to their predicament, and commit to regular payment of their salaries.

Afaf Thabet, a presenter at the Yemen Satellite Channel, based in Riyadh, opens up about the challenges she faces in her daily life. “We are residing in a foreign land, one known for its exorbitant cost of living in terms of rent and utilities. We can’t even meet the educational and living needs of our children. Despite our very low salaries compared to the cost of living, only one month’s salary was disbursed during the first half of this year. The extent of their suffering is unimaginable.”

Journalists residing in Saudi Arabia continue to face a series

of unfulfilled promises, leaving them in a state of uncertainty. The challenges faced by journalists and media professionals in government media institutions have been further intensified, leading them to initiate a social media campaign in a bid to elicit a response from the relevant authorities. In a recent statement, Afaf Thabet expressed their concerns saying, " We tried to highlight our situation but that was risky. Strikes were deliberated upon as a potential course of action, yet executing them poses considerable challenges."

Bushra Al-Amiri, a journalist working in government media institutions from Riyadh, states: "We've exhausted ourselves while demanding our rights and salaries. Everyone gives non-convincing excuses. According to the Ministry of Information, the matter has been brought to the attention of the Prime Minister's office, but their efforts have reportedly yielded no results. It has been claimed that the Prime Minister's office has issued a di-

rective to the Ministry of Finance, instructing them to disburse and regularize salaries. The Ministry of Finance has officially stated that there is a lack of financial liquidity. This is the information that we hear from our managers and from those whom we can reach within the offices of the two ministries and the Prime Minister's office.

**In a challenging turn of events, numerous journalists working in official media institutions have found themselves compelled to explore alternative career paths to sustain their livelihoods and support their families. Amidst salary cuts, many individuals valiantly persevere in their work, driven by the limited alternatives available to them. The arduous task of returning to Yemen further compounds their predicament, leaving them with few viable choices.**

Yemeni journalists continue to face persistent struggles from multiple angles. Those who have not experienced the grave perils of assassination or imprisonment, coupled with the arduous trials and relentless harassment, are still susceptible to economic hardships and the unfortunate loss of income and employment prospects.

Yemeni journalists find themselves caught in the crosshairs of a multifaceted crisis. From the ever-looming threat to their personal safety and security to the relentless economic hardships they endure, these media professionals navigate a treacherous landscape fraught with complexities.

## Forcibly disappeared journalists

Journalists have faced forced disappearances during the years of war in Yemen, perpetrated by different parties to the conflict in blatant violation of international conventions and treaties. The intent behind these disappearances is to instill fear among journalists and media workers.

Regrettably, three journalists remain forcibly disappeared, and their status, whether they are alive or have been harmed, is unknown. The Houthi group has not disclosed any information about journalist Waheed Al-Sufi, arrested on April 6, 2015, or journalist Muhammad Al-Muqri, who was kidnapped by gunmen in Hadhramaut on October 12, 2025. Additionally, journalist Naseh Shaker has been forcibly disappeared since November 19, 2023, in Aden.

**Most arrested journalists experience a period of forced disappearance, the duration varying from one individual to another. During this time, they endure torture, solitary confinement, prolonged interrogations, electric shocks, and various other forms of abuse before revealing their place of detention.**

The lack of accountability in these cases is alarming for press freedom and deeply distressing for the families of the journalists involved. This situation calls for the international community to exert pressure on the conflicting parties to promptly release the journalists and ensure their adequate protection, enabling them to carry out their media work without fear.

## Evading Accountability for Crimes Against Journalists

The impunity enjoyed by criminals who commit offenses against journalists is a major obstacle to upholding freedom of expression and ensuring access to information for all citizens. This issue has become particularly critical as violations have significantly increased during the years of war, with a majority going unpunished.

In recent years, press freedoms have been marred by assassinations, direct killings, targeting, arrests, imprisonment, forced disappearances, torture, and various forms of assault. Multiple parties, including the internationally recognized Yemeni government, the Houthi group, and other armed factions, have been involved in these actions to varying extents.

Disturbingly, those responsible for violence against journalists go unpunished in at least nine out of ten cases in Yemen. With over 2500 documented violations, including 54 murders, it is imperative to earnestly address the culture of impunity. Efforts should focus on delivering justice to the victims of these criminals and creating an environment where journalists can carry out their work freely and professionally.



**EMERGENCY  
SUPPORT**

to submit  
a request  
for legal  
support.  
**Click here**



## legal support

The Media Freedom Observatory provides support to journalists and workers in media institutions who face psychological pressure while practicing their profession.

The support includes psychological counseling as well as direct psychological support sessions through psychologists.

To access  
psychological  
support  
**Click here**



## psychological support

Through a group of lawyers who are ready to defend journalists, MARSADAK provides all kinds of legal support to journalists and media personnel who are subjected to violations and harassment in connection with their journalistic work.

Legal support includes providing legal advice related to carrying out the press duties and in case journalists face legal issues in addition to allocating a lawyer in cases pending against journalists before the courts.

## Summary

The annual report on violations against freedom of opinion and expression in Yemen documented 54 cases of infringements targeting journalists and media institutions. These violations blatantly contravened both national and international laws and conventions. The offenses ranged from arrests, forced disappearances, to detaining journalists for hours based on their media engagement. Additionally, the report highlighted instances of systematic incitement against journalists, thereby putting their lives at risk.

A particularly concerning incident highlighted by the monitoring team involved journalist Naseh Shaker, who experienced forced disappearance upon arriving in the city of Aden in the south of the country on November 19, 2023. As of the report's writing, no information about his whereabouts or well-being has come to light.

The annual report identified the Yemeni government, inclusive of factions in areas under its control, as the primary perpetrator of violations against journalists in Yemen throughout 2023. Following closely were the Houthi group, with the remaining violations attributed to unidentified individuals with significant influence. It's crucial to note that the apparent decrease in reported violations in Houthi-controlled areas doesn't necessarily signify an improved media environment. Instead, it reflects a systematic suppression of opposition voices and the elimination of media outlets that dissent from the group's perspectives.

The report meticulously examined cases monitored over the past year, shedding light on the constraints imposed by all involved parties on the activities of journalists and both local and foreign media institutions. These restrictions were observed in areas under government control as well as those controlled by the Houthi group.



Throughout 2023, the report documented dozens of violations, with a concentration in the Sana'a Province, followed by Marib and Aden. Subsequently, Hadramaut, Taiz, Hodeidah, Shabwa, Amran, and Lahj also reported instances of violations.

**It is crucial to underscore that the data and information presented in this report do not imply exhaustive coverage of all violations. Rather, it acknowledges the existence of unreported cases, as victims may refrain from coming forward due to heightened concerns about potential reprisals from the perpetrators.**

## Report Methodology

The data and information in this report were collected by a professional team of observers, who are positioned in various Yemeni regions.

In collecting data, the observers relied on different methods, including direct contact with the victims, testimonies of their relatives, media or the reports submitted by the victims or their relatives to MARSADAK. The MARSADAK team reviewed and verified all the observed data and information through a verification mechanism that included at least 3 different sources.

The data and information contained in this report do not mean that all violations against journalists and social media activists in Yemen have been recorded. There are cases of violations that victims or their families were hesitant to report to avoid serious risks and consequences that may be instigated by the violators.

We would also like to point out that for the sake of brevity, we will not cite all the stories of violations, as the report will only present the most prominent stories of violations suffered by journalists in Yemen.

## Types of Violations

In 2023, the report documented a total of 54 violations, with 51 instances targeting individuals (journalists and social media activists), constituting 95% of the recorded violations. Additionally, three violations, comprising 5% of the total, were directed at media organizations.. The breakdown of individual violations included 5 cases of arrest, 1 case of forced disappearance, 6 cases of detention, 8 cases of assault, 10 cases of interrogation and trial of journalists, 8 cases of threats, 6 cases of incitement, 5 cases of deprivation of rights, and 2 cases of preventing journalists from photographing. Furthermore, the Observatory highlighted 3 cases of violations against media institutions. These involved incidents such as storming, looting, and confiscating the "No" newspaper in Sana'a.

## Geographical Distribution of Violation Areas

In 2023, the report documented dozens of violations across various regions in Yemen, revealing a disparate geographical distribution. Notable findings include 15 cases in the city of Sana'a, 11 in Marib, 9 in Aden, 7 in Hadhramaut, 6 in Taiz, and 2 in Ibb. Additionally, Hodeidah, Shabwa, Amran, and Lahj each reported one recorded violation

## Liability for Violations

The accountability for these violations is as follows: the Yemeni government, inclusive of parties controlling areas under its jurisdiction, emerged as the primary perpetrator, accounting for 28 violations out of the total cases documented during the year. The Houthi group committed 18 violations, while 7 violations were attributed to unknown individuals. Furthermore, one violation was recorded against an influential person in Sana'a.

# Violations Cases Against Media in Yemen

During 2023

Violations  
Against  
Media

54

3

Against media  
outlets



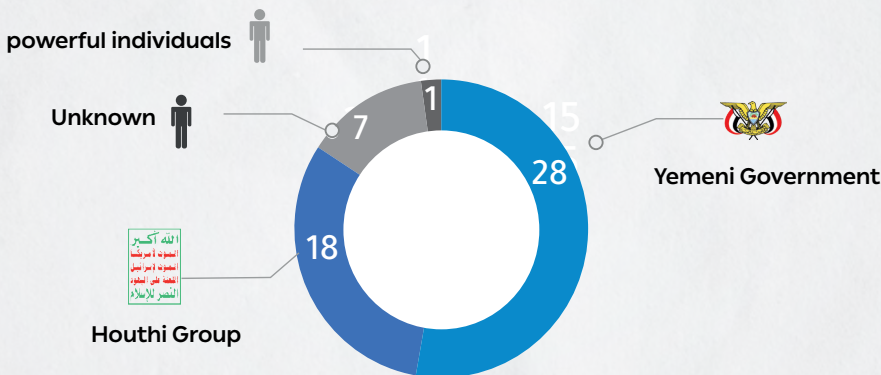
2 broken into  
1 Newspapers  
confiscation

51

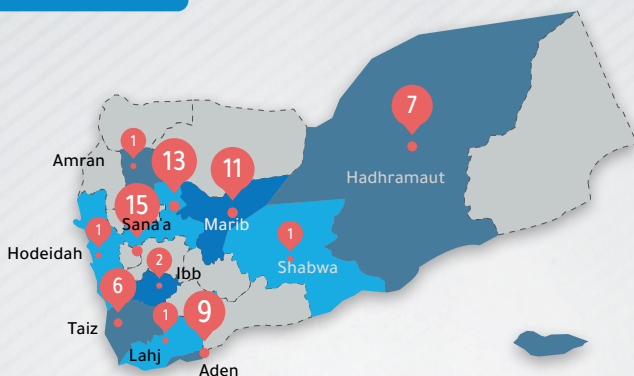
Against  
journalists



## Parties Committed Violations



## Violations Areas



## Forced Disappearance



No	Journalist	Type of violation	Date of violation	Province
1	Naseh Shaker	Forced disappearance	19/11/2023	Aden



### Nasih Shaker

- **Type of violation:** forced disappearance.
- **Place of detention:** Aden
- **Date of the incident:** November 19, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Yemeni government

On the morning of November 19, 2023, Naseh contacted his mother to share news of his arrival at a hotel in the Dar Saad district in Aden. This marked the end of a lengthy journey from Sana'a, undertaken with the intention of traveling outside Yemen to partake in the Samir Kassir Award. Subsequently, all communication with Naseh ceased. Initially, his family believed he had departed for Lebanon, but after three days, the organizers of the award in Lebanon reached out, expressing concern about his absence from the event and the severed communication.

Despite attempts by Nasih's brother to contact him, all efforts proved futile. Following extensive search and investigation by his relatives, it was confirmed that he had not left the city of Aden. The situation continues to unfold without a clear resolution in sight.

## Detention



No	Journalist's name	Type of violation	Date of violation	Province
1	Adel Shaiban	Detention	07/01/2023	Sana'a
2	Fahd Al-Arhabi	Detention	19/06/2023	Amran
3	Jamil Al Samet	Detention	03/08/2023	Taiz
4	Mujahid Alqab	Detention	01/09/2023	Hodeidah
5	Mujahid Al-Hayqi	Detention	04/10/2023	Hadhramaut



### Fahd Al-Arhabi

- **Type of violation:** arrest
- **Place of detention:** Amran
- **Date of incident:** June 5, 2023
- **Release date:** August 20, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Houthi (Ansar Allah) group

The Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) of the Houthi group in Amran Province detained journalist Fahd Al-Arhabi on June 5, 2023, following a summons via phone call for investigation related to a publication. He was apprehended immediately and subsequently released after a period of over two months.

Information obtained by the Observatory team from a reliable source, who opted not to disclose their name for safety reasons, indicated that Al-Arhabi's arrest followed his dissemination of a message in several WhatsApp groups. In the message, he accused Houthi leaders of unlawfully seizing lands, estimating the value at more than 7,000 bricks from the Amran Cement Factory. This led to verbal confrontations between Al-Arhabi, and individuals affiliated with the Houthi group. Shortly thereafter, he received a call from the SIS, resulting in his immediate arrest

upon arrival. Al-Arhabi was released after enduring more than two and a half months of detention.

Journalist Al-Arhabi's recent arrest is not an isolated incident, as he has faced prior instances of detention. On July 12, 2021, he was arrested based on his writings and criticisms. His residence was searched, and his family was subjected to intimidation without any legal justification. The detention endured for twenty-five days, during which he underwent interrogation and intimidation. Both his home and personal phone were searched, and his communications were monitored. Despite efforts to find incriminating evidence in old records on his phone, no convictions were established.



### Jamil Al Samit

- **Type of violation:** arrest
- **Place of detention:** Taiz
- **Date of incident:** August 6, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Yemeni government

Journalist Jamil Al-Samit was detained on August 6 by the security services in Taiz Province, based on his opinion writings critical of the performance of the security services. According to his son, the Legal Affairs Department of the Taiz Police arrested Al-Samit for two days before transferring him to the criminal investigation prison in the province due to his journalistic writings on social media platforms.

Al-Samit had penned an article titled "The Battle of Dhat Al-Dara' in Sharjab," highlighting what he referred to as legal deviations accompanying the security committee in the city of Al-Turbah. This article followed the tragic killing of World Food Program coordinator Moayad Hamidi.

The journalist's son mentioned that his father declined the Taiz police's request to issue an apology on his Facebook page. The police considered the content of his article as an insult.



### Mujahid Alqab

- **Type of violation:** arrest
- **Place of detention:** Al-Hudaydah
- **Date of incident:** September 1, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Yemeni government

On September 1, journalist Mujahid Alqab experienced a harrowing incident as he was physically assaulted by military gunmen affiliated with the Ninth Giants Brigade, a unit within the joint forces on the West Coast. Subsequently, he was confined in a prison in Al-Khawkhah District and later released in poor health.

Narrating the ordeal, journalist Alqab stated, "While I was en route to transport my mother for medical treatment from Al-Khawkhah District, south of the city of Hodeida, to the city of Aden, I was intercepted by a military team from the Ninth Giants Brigade, consisting of four armed men. Another team joined, leading to my forced detainment in al Majallat area. They subjected me to physical assault, beating me before placing me in a cramped solitary cell at the Khawkhah Police Department prison for nearly ten hours." During his confinement, Alqab's health deteriorated significantly due to the torture he endured. He suffers from heart disease and high blood pressure, having undergone open-heart surgery previously. Concerns about his well-being prompted his transfer to a hospital in the same area, accompanied by an armed group, before ultimately being released.

It's noteworthy that journalist Alqab had previously faced threats at the end of 2021 from leaders within the Ninth Giants Brigade in response to his media activities.



## Detention



No	Journalist's name	Type of violation	Date of violation	Province
1	Tariq Basloun	detention	29/01/2023	Hadhramaut
2	Khalil Al-Taweel	detention	11/02/2023	Marib
3	Abdullah Ali Abdullah Bamnif	detention	23/05/2023	Hadhramaut
4	He preferred not to mention his name	detention	15/07/2023	Sana'a
5	Majed Al-Shuaibi	detention	18/09/2023	Aden
6	He preferred not to mention his name	detention	09/11/2023	Taiz



### Tareq Omar Baslloom

- **Type of violation:** detention
- **Place of violation:** Hadramout
- **Date of violation:** 29 January 2023
- **Perpetrator:** Yemeni government

Journalist Tareq Omar Baslloom was detained in the security prison in Al-Mukalla, the capital of Hadramout Governorate, after being summoned by the Public Funds Prosecution following a complaint filed against him by the Public Works and Roads Office in the Hadramout Coast due to his writings and criticisms of the office's work and projects. Baslloom was shocked to find himself detained along with a group of young people upon his arrival at the prosecution's office. The prosecutor's deputy refused to release him despite being previously released on bail in the same case. After more than five hours of detention and the intervention of the prosecutor's chief, he was allowed to go freely. The Public Works Office had lodged a case against Baslloom in the Public Funds Prosecution on December 11, 2022, and

he was investigated by the prosecution for the same case and released on commercial bail. The security authorities in Hadramout must take responsibility for what journalists are subjected to and work to create a suitable environment for press freedom in the governorate.



### Abdullah Ali Bamanif

- **Eastern Dau'an FM Radio Station- Marib and Hadramout**
- **Violation Type:** Detention
- **Date:** 23/05/2023
- **Perpetrator:** Yemeni Government

The security department of the Du'an District in Hadramout Governorate summoned journalist Abdullah Bamanif on 21 May, 2023, based on a complaint filed against him by the director of Sadiq School due to an opinion post on his Facebook page.

Upon reviewing the content of the post, it did not directly target the director or the school itself, but rather discussed the state of education in general. When Bamanif arrived at the security department, he was interrogated, arrested, and held in custody for five hours before being released.

Abdullah Bamanif is the director of Ishraq Du'an Community Radio in the district, a former journalist and presenter on Hadramout TV channel and Nama Radio, and worked in other media outlets in Hadramout.



## Majed Al-Shuaibi

- **Type of violation:** detention
- **Place of detention:** Aden
- **Date of incident:** September 18, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Yemeni government

On September 18, 2023, the Security Belt forces in the city of Aden detained journalist Majid Al-Shuaibi, who serves as the editor-in-chief of the Fourth Dimension website. Following his detention, Al-Shuaibi posted on his Facebook page, revealing that a security force arrested him based on directives from the Security Belt commander in Aden, Jalal Al-Rubaie. He was taken to one of the camps for interrogation regarding a video he had published 12 days prior, which included a complaint made by a water seller. The video was promptly deleted from his page after his release.

## Assault



NO	Journalist's name	Type of violation	Date of violation	Province
1	Khalil Al-Taweel	assault	02/01/2023	Marib
2	Omar Al-Saruri	assault	02/01/2023	Marib
3	Tawfiq Al Mansouri	assault	19/02/2023	Sana'a
4	Sally Al-Mekhlafi	assault	14/03/2023	Taiz
5	Nawaf Al-Humairi	assault	29/04/2023	Taiz
6	Walid Hisham Al-Sada	assault	05/06/2023	Ibb
7	Magali Al-Samadi	assault	28/08/2023	Sana'a
8	Zabin Attia	assault	10/11/2023	Shabwa



## Saly Al Mekhlafi

- **Yemen Shabab Satellite Channel-Taiz**
- **Type of violation:** attack on the property
- **Date of violation:** 14 March 2023
- **Perpetrator:** unidentified individuals

Unknown individuals set fire to the car of journalist Saly Al-Mekhlafi's husband. She provides various reports on the lives and rights of rural people on the Yemen Shabab TV channel.

Al-Mekhlafi confirmed that unknown individuals burned her husband's car after midnight and fled the scene. Despite filing a complaint with the security authority, the perpetrators are still at large.

She also stated that she had been threatened after moving with her husband to the Habashi Mount area to work and cover the lives and rights of rural people. Her work is broadcast in

reports on the morning program "Sabahkom Ajmal" on Yemen Shabab TV.

The techniques employed by criminals against journalists, their families, and property are horrifying. The security authorities are responsible for protecting journalists, apprehending the offenders, and bringing them to justice. If successful, the security authorities will be able to deter such attacks and protect the lives of journalists and their families.



### Khalil Al-Tawil

- **Belqees Satellite Channel - Marib**
- **Type of violation:** assault
- **Date of violation:** 12 January 2023
- **Perpetrator:** the Yemeni government



### Omar Al-Sururi

- **Belqees Satellite Channel - Marib**
- **Type of violation:** assault
- **Date of violation:** 12 January 2023
- **Perpetrator:** the Yemeni government

The Belqees TV crew in Marib, Khalil Al-Tawil and Omar Al-Sururi, were attacked and beaten with rifle butts, and live bullets were fired into the air by Central Bank soldiers in Marib. They were taken to the bank gate to be detained and their camera as well as their mobile phones was confiscated. They were searched and their privacy was violated.

Belqees TV issued a statement condemning the assault on its correspondents in Marib, requesting the local security forces to apprehend the perpetrators, safeguard them from harm, and provide a secure atmosphere for them. Sadly, this is not the first time that Belqees TV reporters in Marib have been attacked and bothered while carrying out their professional duties.



### Zabin Attia

- **Journalist - Shabwa**
- **Type of violation:** assault
- **Date of the incident:** November 10, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Yemeni government

The Media Freedoms Observatory received a distressing report from journalist Zabin Attia, correspondent of the Yemen Al-Youm satellite channel in Shabwa Province, detailing an assault and threats he endured. The incident involved the destruction of one of his cameras and the channel's logo, coupled with the use of obscene language by military personnel under the command of Ali Mujawar, the Commander of Joint Operations in Ataq.

In response to the incident, the channel issued a statement condemning the assault on its correspondent as he carried out his journalistic duties and covered events in the province.

Regrettably, this is not the first time that journalist Attia has faced such arbitrary practices. In March 2021, he was subjected to threats, and his phone, car, and camera were confiscated. Furthermore, his 13-year-old son was arrested during that incident, which occurred while Attia was on a field trip to photograph and conduct interviews in the Wadi Ataq area.

Several journalists have raised concerns about recent measures

implemented by the Information Office in Shabwa Province. According to these measures, reporters, photographers, and coordinators working for non-governmental satellite channels in the province are now required to coordinate in advance with the local authorities. They must provide detailed information about the channel, including its management, by filling out a special form. Journalists have expressed dissatisfaction with these measures, viewing them as restrictive and obstructive to their work.

## Trial of journalist



NO	Journalist's name	Province
1	Ali Al-Awbathani	Hadramout
2	Khaled Mohsen Al Kathiri	Hadramout
3	Ahmed Maher	Aden
4	Ali Al-Faqih	Marib
5	Mohammed Mosed Al-Salehi	Marib
6	Ahmed Yahya Ayadh	Marib
7	Yemen Shebab Channel	Marib
8	Al-Mahriah TV	Marib
9	Fathi bin Lazraq	Aden
10	Obaid Waked	Hadhramaut
11	Voice of Yemen Radio	Sana'a

Journalists and media institutions in Yemen face illegal persecutions, summonses, and trials from all sides involved in the conflict. Some journalists are issued rulings against, and those who remain unarrested are labeled as fugitives from justice, all stemming from their media activities.

Notably, courts dealing with terrorism and state security, despite lacking jurisdiction, actively prosecute journalists, creating an atmosphere of intimidation. The case of journalist Ahmed Maher, currently detained since August 6, 2022, by the Specialized Criminal Court in Aden Province, is emblematic of these issues. Despite the court's lack of jurisdiction in publishing cases, numerous



**Ahmed Maher**



legal imbalances marred Maher's trial. Of the 17 scheduled sessions to try journalist Ahmed Maher, he only attended two. The remaining sessions were repeatedly postponed under flimsy and illogical justifications, raising concerns about the fairness and transparency of the legal proceedings.

Journalist Ahmed Maher's father revealed that his son was finally permitted to attend the courtroom during the first session after a prolonged absence of 13 sessions. He emphasized that Ahmed had been previously denied access to the court. During the attended session, Ahmed spoke directly to the court judge, recounting the "injustice and torture" he endured since his arrest on August 6, 2022. He detailed alleged torture operations and acts of terrorism perpetrated against him, his brother, and their family, purportedly orchestrated by Musleh Al-Dharhani, the leader of the Southern Transitional Council. In light of these circumstances, Ahmed appealed to the judge for his rightful legal exoneration from the charges against him.

Illegal actions, in direct violation of Yemeni laws and international human rights principles, marked the period of journalist Ahmed Maher's detention, disappearance, and torture. Maher, under duress, appeared in a video confessing to acts he condemned while being coerced to make statements against himself for activities deemed hostile to the state's security. Subsequently, his case was transferred to the Specialized Criminal Court.

These actions strongly suggest a deliberate effort by security and judicial authorities to persist in the unwarranted detention of journalist Ahmed Maher. The interrogation methods employed appear to be intimidating and aimed at instilling fear, accompanied by the levying of serious charges, such as destabilizing security and stability in the province. These actions blatantly contravene the principles of freedom of opinion and expression, as well as fundamental human rights. Moreover, they stand in clear violation of international standards for a fair trial.



## Ali Al Al-Awbathani

- **Violation type:** interrogation and trial
- **Place of trial:** Hadramout
- **Date of trial:** 9 January 2023
- **Perpetrator:** the Yemeni government

The Public Funds Prosecution in Hadramout Governorate held the second trial session for journalist Ali Salem Al-Awbathani on January 9 of last year, on charges related to posting on his personal Facebook page. The case was lodged against him by the Presidency of Hadramout University, regarding publications that addressed the university's violations. The case was adjourned.

The prosecution had summoned journalist Al-Awbathani on December 19, 2022, and the first investigation was conducted with him on 22 of the same month. He was released on commercial bail before the Public Funds Prosecution. Hadramout University charged him with "defaming a scientific institution."

Journalists and media activists in Hadramout Governorate have been frequently targeted on charges related to publication, despite the fact that the Public Funds Prosecution, Criminal Investigation, and Public Prosecution are not competent to summon journalists in publishing cases. Through these practices, the security and judicial authorities in the governorate seek to intimidate and silence journalists from continuing their work freely and professionally.



### Khaled Mohsen Al Kathiri

- **Violation type:** interrogation and trial
- **Place of incident:** Hadramout
- **Perpetrator:** the Yemeni government

The Public Prosecution in Sayoun, Hadramout Governorate, summoned journalist Khaled Mohsen Al-Kathiri on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, to investigate the complaint filed against him by the Youth and Sports Office in Wadi Hadramout and the Desert over journalistic publications that addressed the facilities of the Sayoun Sports Club and the compensation that the club deserves for the facilities that were deducted for the establishment of the Sayoun Olympic Stadium, which ends with reconciliation between Youth and Sports Office and Alkatheri.

Al-Kathiri stated that he attended the Sayoun Primary Prosecution Office on Sunday, February 5, 2023, to view the complaint filed against him by the Director-General of the Youth and Sports Office in a journalistic publication, despite the fact that the prosecution had previously started the investigation and was waiting for the decision according to the law, but the prosecutor did not decide on the case.



Several officials and media heads in Marib Governorate received orders for compulsory arrest issued by the Marib Primary Prosecution on the basis of publication cases, which were considered as escaping from justice.

Journalists Ali Al-Faqih, deputy editor of Al-Masdar Online, Ahmed Ayed, editor-in-chief of Marib Press newspaper, and Ahmed Yahya Ayed, editor-in-chief of Marib Press website, Yemen Shabab TV channel, and Al-Mahriah satellite channel, were among those who received the orders. They are accused of fabricating and defaming a public servant. A person called Ali Al-Awash, a former prosecutor, was accused of corruption and nepotism. He employed a number of his relatives illegally.

The Observatory rejected these arbitrary practices against journalists and defenders of rights and freedoms. These actions are considered a flagrant violation of the freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed by the constitution and international conventions.

It confirmed that these methods aim to silence voices and suffocate media and journalistic freedoms, and to persecute journalists and those with opposite opinions.

The Observatory also confirmed its support for journalists in all legal ways and its readiness to appoint a lawyer to defend them before the judicial authorities until the truth prevails.

## Threat



NO	Journalist's name	Type of violation	Date of violation	Province
1	Ebrahim Al Hussaini	Threat	9/3/2023	Taiz
2	Khaled Dallaq	Threat	6/5/2023	Sana'a
3	Fathi bin Lazraq	Threat	21/05/2023	Aden
4	Ali Uwaidha	Threat	21/05/2023	Marib
5	Muhammad Al-Qadiri	threat	12/09/2023	Ibb
6	He preferred not to uncover his name	threat	30/09/2023	Sana'a
7	He preferred not to uncover his name	threat	30/09/2023	Sana'a
8	He preferred not to uncover his name	threat	22/12/2023	Sana'a



## Ebrahim Al Hussaini

- **Journalist-** Taiz
- **Type of violation:** threat
- **Date of violation:** 9 March 2023
- **Perpetrator:** unidentified individuals

Journalist Abdullah Al Hussaini received a death threat from an unknown person via a fixed phone number on March 9 of last year, demanding him to stop his journalistic activity and accusing him of defaming authority commanders in the Shemaitin District, south of Taiz. Al Hussaini was said to report that these commanders were in the habit of taking over the property of a citizen.

Al Hussaini reported that he had been threatened by unknown persons via a fixed phone number, and that he would be returned to prison if he continued his journalistic activity, espe-

cially after accusing the head of the security authority in the region of supporting an armed robbery of land belonging to Ali Abdullah Shamsan in "Ash'ar" area in the Shemaitin District, and continuing his campaign condemning the corruption of local, security, and military commanders in the southern countryside of Taiz.

Sadly, this is not the first time that Al Hussaini has been subjected to arbitrary practices, as he was previously arrested and forcibly disappeared in one of the prisons of the Fourth Brigade in the "Al-Aufa" area on the pretext of his journalistic writings criticizing the security situation in the Shemaitin District. In order to silence him, he was also pursued, his salary was suspended, and he was incited against.



### Khaled Dallaq

- **Journalist- Sana'a**
- **Violation Type:** Threat
- **Date:** 06/05/2023

A person named Hussein Abdullah threatened to target the house and family of journalist Khaled Dallaq, a member of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, due to his media activity in exposing corruption in the judiciary and violations against citizens.

Dallaq confirmed that he received a message from Abdullah threatening to kill him and his family with a missile if he continued to write about corruption in the judiciary in the southeastern areas of the capital, Sana'a.

This is not the first time that Dallaq has been threatened and attacked. He has been subjected to arbitrary practices, including arrest in the military area of Al-Hafa, breaking into his house and intimidating his family by Houthi security forces. Fur-

thermore, threats from a military prosecutor accusing him of working for a foreign country were made.

The Houthi group is responsible for protecting Dallaq and his family from these illegal practices, and it is necessary to put an end to all these violations by some military personnel, members of the prosecution, and police departments who fabricate false charges against journalists to stop them from criticizing the living conditions and corruption in security, judicial, and legislative institutions.



### Fathi bin Lazraq

- **"Aden Al-Ghad" Newspaper - Aden**
- **Type of Violation:** Threat
- **Date of Incident:** May 21, 2023
- **Perpetrators:** Unknown

Fathi bin Lazraq, the Editor-in-Chief of "Aden Al-Ghad" daily, is currently experiencing persistent arbitrary measures as a result of his engagement in media endeavours and his critique of the socio-economic and security circumstances in Yemen, particularly in the southern areas.

On the 21st of May in the previous year, journalist bin Lazraq encountered threats from unidentified individuals as a result of his journalistic work.



## Ali Uwaidha

- **Journalist-** Marib
- **Violation Type:** Threat
- **Date:** 21/05/2023
- **Perpetrator:** Unknown individual

Journalist Ali Uwaidha, who works for the Source Media Foundation, received a new death threat from one of the smugglers in Marib Governorate, as part of a series of previous threats he has received due to his journalistic writings and his talk about corruption in the oil and gas sector.

The Source Online website reported in a statement that journalist Ali Uwaidha received death threat by one of the influential people in Marib. The security authorities were provided with the phone number from which the threat was made.

The statement called on the security authorities in the governorate to arrest those involved in the threat. The security authorities are held responsible for protecting Uwaidha and maintaining his safety so that these people do not continue to harass journalists.

This threat is not the first, for Uwaidha has previously received similar threats from oil smugglers who benefit from leaking quantities of gas for sale in the black market.





Before arrest



After arrest

## Muhammad Al-Qadiri

- **Journalist**
- **Type of violation:** Threat
- **Date of incident:** September 13, 2023
- **The party committing the violation:** the Houthi group

Muhammad Abdullah Al-Qadiri, a journalist, has faced numerous arbitrary practices, arrests, and torture in prison, culminating in his release in poor health. His most recent ordeal involved threats by a Houthi leader named Rashad Al-Shabibi in Ibb Province. Al-Shabibi went to the extent of arresting the journalist's wife and their 7-year-old child to exert pressure on Al-Qadiri to return from Aden to areas controlled by the group.

Al-Qadiri was initially arrested from his home on May 13, 2021. He endured a year in detention, during which he faced solitary confinement and torture in the Security and Intelligence prison in the city of Ibb. On the second day of his arrest, a military team went to Al-Qadiri's house, detaining his brother and refusing to release him until he surrendered his personal phone. The brutal practices in prison took a toll on Al-Qadiri's health, evident in a comparison of his pictures before and after his arrest.

Journalist Al-Qadiri, upon his release from prison, found himself without any support for him and his family. Faced with a lack of options, he was compelled to flee from Ibb Province at the end of July 2023, seeking refuge in Al-Dhalea Province. His departure was a difficult journey, navigating challenging and rough roads, leaving his wife and child behind, all driven by the fear of being discovered by the Houthi group. It's worth noting that one of the conditions for his release included signing a commitment not to leave Houthi-controlled areas without prior approval, as well as refraining from returning to his journalistic work. Al-Qadiri managed to reach the city of Al-Dhalea, which is under the control of the Yemeni government. However, this transition left

him in a state of fatigue and poor health, compounded by the challenges of unemployment and financial strain. He stayed there for a period before eventually relocating to the city of Aden.

## Inciting Campaigns



The Media Freedoms Observatory in Yemen received a press report from a number of journalists about a campaign of incitement against them through media reports published by foreign media outlets and circulated by local media outlets affiliated with the Houthi group, accusing them of spying for foreign countries.

The report claimed that it had obtained secret and leaked information, without clarifying any of that information that would prove the credibility of the report, that a group of journalists, including Mansour, and the television producer Ziyad Hussein, the journalist Waleed Abdel-Mutalib Mohammed Al-Rajhi, the media figure Abdullah Amr Ramadan Masoud, the journalist Rania, and the journalist Haib Dhiban, were working for the British intelligence service with the aim of undermining the political process in Yemen.

The media campaign launched by foreign media outlets and circulated by local media outlets affiliated with the Houthi group aims to cause physical harm, damage reputations of journalists, and it is necessary for human rights organizations active in the field of freedom of opinion and expression to intensify efforts to protect journalists to work professionally.

It is also confirmed that we stand with the journalists in suing these parties by all legal means, locally, regionally, and internationally, as these accusations are direct incitement and a threat to murder.



# Media Institutions

The Observatory team documented three cases of violations against media institutions in the year 2023. One of these instances involved the confiscation of issues of the civil newspaper "La" for Sunday and Monday, November 19 and 20, 2023 by the Ministry of Information, under the control of the Houthi group. This confiscation occurred without any legal justification.

A post observed by the Observatory on journalist Salah Al-Dakkak's page, who is the editor-in-chief of the "La" newspaper, accused the Ministry of Information, under the control of the Houthi group, of confiscating the journalist for Sunday and Monday, refusing to release it without providing any legal justification. Al-Dakkak further mentioned that the Ministry had been delaying the renewal of the newspaper's license for over a year. Moreover, he highlighted that the Director General of Press has been unresponsive to the calls of their representative responsible for following up on the license renewal process.

Systematic practices targeting several media outlets, such as Eram FM Radio, have been repeated, involving storming, and looting under similar justifications. Prior to this, Voice of Yemen Radio experienced a raid, with its equipment looted, citing the lack of a license as justification.

Through the complaints received and tracked by the Observatory, it becomes evident that the Ministry of Information in Houthi-controlled areas deliberately obstructs procedures. This obstruction appears to be aimed at restricting the operations of radio stations, despite their adherence to the Houthi group's policies. The ministry's actions seem to involve these media outlets in the group's media battles, compelling them to broadcast unified weekly programs against what the Houthi group terms as aggression.

Radio stations in these areas face harassment as they are compelled to broadcast Houthi songs, which are specifically designed for mobilization and often contain lyrics that incite conflict, violence, and hatred. This forced broadcasting not only infringes upon the autonomy of these radio stations but also

contributes to the dissemination of messages that may escalate tensions and promote hostility.

In the city of Aden, the YJS faced a second intrusion within less than five months, where gunmen stormed the building in Al-Ta-wahi District. During this incident, the sign of the union's headquarters was taken down and replaced with another sign. Furthermore, an armed cordon was imposed on the building.

The YJS issued a statement characterizing the raid on its headquarters as a "dangerous" step, emphasizing that such actions pose a threat to the union's existence in the country. The statement highlighted concerns about potential repercussions on union activities and stressed that the responsibility for protecting the union and its headquarters lies with the authorities. The union urged for a safeguarding approach that preserves rights, enhances the status of civil society institutions.

In parallel, the independent "Aden" channel, associated with the STC, reported a statement from the head of the so-called "Southern Journalists and Media Syndicate," Aidaroos Bahashwan. In his statement, Bahashwan claimed that their union had regained control of its main headquarters, which had been in its possession during the era of the State of the South.

## Voice of Yemen Radio



Two years after the storming, confiscation, and cessation of broadcasting by Voice of Yemen Radio in Sana'a, the Houthi group solidified its stance through a ruling issued by the Capital Municipality Court of Appeal, under their control. This ruling ordered the closure of the radio and annulled the previous decision of the court of first instance, which had ruled in favor of reopening the radio and compensating its owner. Jurists have criticized this ruling as unjust. The Appeals Division's decision favored the Ministry of Information and the forces that had looted the radio. The initial court ruling, consisting of seven clauses, mandated the Ministry of Information to return the confiscated items and provide compensation due to the radio's closure.

In January 2022, Houthi militants initiated the first storming of the radio, abruptly halting its broadcast without any legal justification. Subsequently, in July of the same year, the radio was stormed for the second time, with its transmitters being looted. Despite a ruling issued by the Press and Publications Court in December 2022, which mandated the resumption of the radio broadcast and prohibited any government entity from obstructing it, the Ministry of Information refused to comply with the court's decision. Moreover, the court ruling aimed to annul the negative administrative decision represented by the Ministry of Information's refusal to issue a license for the radio, owned by journalist Al-Samadi. However, the Ministry of Information demonstrated a lack of consideration for the court's decision.

The Observatory team observed posts on the Facebook page of the radio's owner, Majli Al-Samadi, indicating that the Court of Appeal judge had issued a ruling to completely and in detail cancel the decision of the court of first instance in favor of Voice of Yemen Radio. This initial court decision comprised six clauses. The judge, identified as "Al-Mansour," allegedly addressed Al-Samadi with contempt and racism publicly inside the hall, stating, "You have no right to be a journalist and own a radio."

The director and proprietor of the radio, Majali Al-Samadi, faced another assault and physical assault by unidentified assailants. This marks the third occasion he has been attacked since the radio station was stormed and plundered.

These assaults on journalist Al-Samadi stem from his media activities and persistent calls to the Houthi group since the beginning of 2022, urging them to return the radio equipment owned by Al-Samadi and to be held accountable for the prior storming, destruction of equipment, and looting incidents. The Media Freedoms Observatory has obtained video clips documenting the illegal entry of armed individuals into the radio headquarters. Subsequently, the attackers, believed to be affiliated with the Houthi group, sprayed paint on surveillance cameras, deliberately hindering documentation of their actions. It's noteworthy that the radio has consistently adhered to broadcasting programs aligning with the political orientations of the Houthi group.





## Journalists and media foundations have been prosecuted



No	Name	Entity's name	lawsuit against him	Governorate	Trial started date
1	Obaid Waked	Public Funds Court	Insult Public Facility	Hadramawt	June 8 2021
2	Sabri Salmeen Ibn Mkhashen	Specialized Criminal Prosecution	Incitement and disturbs the public peace	Hadramawt	April 6 2019
3	Awadh Kashmem	Hadramawt Court of appeal	Incitement and disturbs the public peace	Hadramawt	May 14 2019
4	Ali Salmin Al-Awithani	Public Funds Prosecutor's office	Defamation of a scientific statement	Hadramawt	Decem 19 2022
5	Tareq Omar Baslom	Public Funds Prosecutor's office	Defamation of a scientific statement	Hadramawt	Decem 11 2022
6	Ahmed Maher	Specialized Criminal Court	fabricating and defaming a public servant	Aden	August 6 2022
7	Ali Al-Faqih	Marib Primary Prosecution	fabricating and defaming a public servant	Marib	June 7 2023
8	Mohammed Mosed Al-Salehi	Marib Primary Prosecution	fabricating and defaming a public servant	Marib	June 7 2023
9	Ahmed Yahya Ayadh	Marib Primary Prosecution	fabricating and defaming a public servant	Marib	June 7 2023
10	Yemen Shebab Channel	Marib Primary Prosecution	fabricating and defaming a public servant	Marib	June 7 2023
11	Al-Mahriah TV	Marib Primary Prosecution	fabricating and defaming a public servant	Marib	June 7 2023

## Journalists behind the bars 1

Six journalists are still languishing in the prisons of the Houthi group, the Yemeni government, and Al-Qaeda. Some of them have been imprisoned for more than eight years. The Houthi group refuses to release 3 journalists, including journalist Nabil Al-Sadawi, whose detention period has ended. The Yemeni government also refuses to release journalist Ahmed Maher and journalist Naseh Shaker. As for journalist Muhammad al-Muqri, he was kidnapped by Al-Qaeda militants during their control of the city of Mukalla in 2015, and nothing is known about him to this day.

NO	Name	Detention Place	Perpetrators	Detention days 2
1	Wahid Al-Sofi	Sana'a	Houthi group	2,984
2	Nabil Al-Saudi	Sana'a	Houthi group	2,840
3	Mohammed Al-Hotami	Al Hodeidah	Houthi group	1,731
4	Mohammed Al-Moqri	Hadramout	Al Qaeda group	2,819
5	Ahmed Maher	Aden	Yemeni government	330
6	Naseh Shaker	Aden	Yemeni government	26

1 - Until 31 December 2023

2 - Since the day of arrest till 31 December 2023

## Abstract

- The situation of journalists in Yemen has become very scary because of the brutality of arbitrary practices against freedom of opinion and expression.
- Impunity of perpetrators have exacerbated illegal practices against journalists and had them jailed without trial.
- Violations against journalists and women journalists have increased in the past nine years to more than 2,000, including 54 killings, two of which, at least, were against women journalists.
- Another tragic year, as the Yemeni Media Freedom Observatory has been, during 2023, documenting 54 cases of violation ranging from arrest, enforced disappearance, interrogation and prosecution of journalists, and the intrusion and looting of media organizations.
- 6 journalists remain in the prisons of the Houthi group, the Yemeni government and Al-Qaeda, some of whom have been in prisons for eight years, due to their media activity.
- The decline in media freedoms continues as Yemen topped the list of countries most in violation of press freedom and in recent years has been blacklisted. Before the current war, Yemen has a reasonable margin of press freedoms.
- Yemen ranked 168th most violated out of 180 countries according to the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Report for 2023.
- Many journalists in Yemen can no longer move around easily, relaying facts away from influence, polarization, and fear of brutality. The emergence of internal and external funded news channels, newspapers and websites has led to widespread rumors and fabricated news exacerbating conflict and deepening societal divide.
- Attacks and arbitrary practices against the press and journalists in Yemen continue to escalate every year; This is because there is no deterrent against the perpetrators, giving them the space to commit more of these crimes without fear of punishment.

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- There is a clear and unjustified delay in the proceedings of journalist Ahmed Maher's trial, to keep him jailed.
- Continuing to bring lawsuits against journalists in non-specialized publishing courts aimed at trying to silence journalists and intimidate them from criticizing the situation and opposing the existing authorities.
- The authorities in Aden continue to hide journalist Nasif Shakir and deny his fate, although all evidence indicates that the last place, he was in is the city of Aden.
- The Houthi group refuses to release three journalists arrested in its prisons, including journalist Nabil Al-Sadawi, despite the expiration of his prison term.
- Each party continues to restrict press freedoms and try to silence all opposition voices to restrict press freedoms and civil act work.
- After the Houthi movement stormed a number of Yemeni cities, including the capital Sana'a, the risks to journalists, human rights defenders and monitors increased. The anxiety rised, and the areas under its control were completely free of independent and partisan media, and Yemen's media diversity in many of its cities was no more.
- The Yemeni government has also carried out a number of violations against journalists and media in its areas and media work has become precarious; As media freedoms were curtailed by partisan parties and powerful individuals of the security and military authorities, which led to the narrowing of opposition journalists, and made it difficult for them to move around the city's framework, not to mention the fraudulent and defamatory campaigns they might be subjected to aimed at silencing dissenting voices against official civil, security and military authorities.

## Recommendations

- Conducting immediate and serious investigation to create practical and effective mechanisms that decisively end impunity for crimes against journalists in Yemen.
- Establishment of an independent international and local joint commission to investigate crimes against journalists by all parties.
- Pressure for the release of journalist Ahmed Maher and journalist Nasif Shakir in Aden and the release of the remaining detainees of journalists Wahid al-Sufi, Nabil al-Sadawi and Mohammed al-Hatami in Sana'a, and to search the fate of Muhammad al-Muqri in Hadramawt.
- Pressure the STC to cease all illegal practices to restrict the movement of journalists and to return the press institutions it controlled, especially since the Yemeni Ministry of Information is the legal authority authorized to take all various media procedures. And as the STC has become part of Yemen's internationally recognized government.
- Pressure on official authorities in Marib to remove restrictions on freedom of press activity and civil work in the governorate.
- Pressuring for any cases against journalists to be referred only to press and publications courts.
- Ensure that all journalists and media outlets are able to operate freely and independently.



**Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC) is one of the Civil society organizations that works on economic field, awareness and promote the economic issues transparency, good governance and participated citizens in decision-making. Also, It works to find a professional media**

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**Yemen Media Freedoms Observatory (MARSADAK) is a monitoring and information platform aimed at disseminating all matters relating to freedoms of opinion and expression in various Yemeni regions in a professional and independent manner, as well as, analyzing and advocating for journalists' issues at the local and international levels.**

<https://marsadak.org/>

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