**YJS releases its annual report and documents 104 violations against press freedom in Yemen during 2021**

**Freedoms Committee of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS)**

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The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate releases its annual report on media freedoms in Yemen during 2021, documenting a number of serious violations of freedom of opinion and expression.

The report shows the continuing dangers against the press and journalists, and the poor, unsafe and hostile media environment towards journalistic work across Yemen.

The Syndicate documented 104 cases of violations against media outlets, journalists, photographers and their properties from January 1 to December 31, 2021.

The types of violations committed include the following:

30 cases of detention (28.8%) of the total number of violations

19 cases of banning journalists and confiscation of their equipment (18.3%)

12 cases of threats (11.5%)

12 cases of prosecution of journalists (11.5%)

11 cases of assaults (10.6%)

6 cases of denying detained journalists from the right to medical treatment and care (5.9%)

5 cases of torture (4.8%)

5 cases of suspension of media outlets and journalists’ dues (4.8%)

4 cases of murder (3.8%).

**The perpetrators**

The Houthi group committed 46 violations, making 44% of the total violations, while the legitimate government committed 26 cases of violations (25%). The Southern Transitional Council (STC) committed 18 cases (17%), and unknown individuals committed 11 cases (11%). The Saudi authorities committed two violations against journalists inside Saudi Arabia ( 2%), and a media service bureau committed one case (1%).

The cases of freedom detention were as follows:

14 cases of arrest (46.7%)

6 cases of suspension (20.0%)

5 cases of chasing (16.7%)

3 cases of kidnapping (10%)

two cases of detention (6.6%).

The Southern Transitional Council committed 11 violations (37%), while the legitimate government committed 11 violations (37%). The Houthis committed 7 violations (23%), and the Saudi authorities committed one violation (3%).

14 journalists are still detained by various parties, including 12 journalists under Houthi custody (Wahid al-Sufi "forcibly hidden", Abdul Khaliq Amran, Tawfiq al-Mansoori, Akram Al-Waleedi, Harith Hamid, Nabil al-Sadawi, Muhammad Abdo Al-Salahi, Walid Al-Matari, Muhammad Ali Al-Junaid, Younis Abdulsalam, Majed Yassin, and Kamel Al-Maamari).

Media activist Hala Badawi is still detained by the legitimate government in Hadhramaut, while journalist Muhammad Qaid Al-Muqri has been forcibly disappeared by Al-Qaeda in Hadhramaut since 2015.

Journalists Abdel-Khaleq Amran, Tawfiq Al-Mansoori, Akram Al-Walidy, and Harith Hamid have been unjustly sentenced to death based on a politically-motivated ruling which the Syndicate rejects and demands its repeal.

The Syndicate recorded 6 cases of incitement against journalists (50%), 4 cases of threats of beating and harm (33%), and two cases of threats of murder (17%).

The Houthis committed 5 of those cases, while unknown persons committed 5 cases. The government committed two cases.

The Syndicate documented 11 cases of attacks on media outlets, journalists and their property, including 4 cases of attacks on media outlets (36.3%), 3 cases of attempted murder of journalists (27.3%), and two cases of attacks on journalists (18.2%), and two cases of attacks on journalists’ homes (18.2%).

The legitimate government committed 3 cases, and the Houthis committed 3 cases. Also, the Southern Transitional Council was responsible for 3 cases, while unknown persons committed 2 cases.

With regard to banning and confiscation, the Syndicate recorded 19 cases, including 10 cases of banning press coverage (52.6%), 4 cases of preventing of visits to kidnapped journalists (21.1%), 3 cases of confiscation of photographers’ cameras (15.8%), and two cases of confiscation of journalists’ cars (10.5%).

The Houthis committed 10 cases, while the legitimate government committed 7 cases, and the Transitional Council committed two cases.

The Syndicate documented 12 cases of trials of journalists and media outlets, including 8 trial (66.6%), and two cases of judicial rulings (16.7%), of which a Saudi court ruling sentenced Yemeni journalist Ali Mohsen Abu Lahoum to 15 years in prison, and a ruling with regard to shutting down a search engine. The ruling was issued by the Capital Municipality Appeals Court Sana'a. Moreover, two cases of summons and investigation (16.7%) were reported.

The Houthis committed 8 cases, and two cases were committed by the Yemeni government. One case was committed by Saudi authorities.

**Types of trials**

The Syndicate documented 6 cases of depriving the abductees from the right to health care and medicine in Houthi prisons, and 5 cases of torture of abductees.

The Syndicate documented 5 suspensions of media outlets and journalists’ salaries, including suspension of 3 media outlets, as happened to (Bandar Aden and Adania FM), and search engine (Sahafatak), as well as two cases of suspending employees’ salaries.

The Southern Transitional Council committed two cases, and the Houthi group committed one case. The government was responsible for one case and a media services company committed one case.

The issue of the legitimate government's refusal to pay the salaries of state media workers in Houthi-controlled areas has been unresolved for six years, affecting more than a thousand employees.

**48 deaths in ten years**

The Syndicate recorded 4 killings of journalists in Aden, in two horrific terrorist incidents which murdered Journalists Ahmed Saleh Bu Salih, a member of the Syndicate and press secretary of the Governor of Aden, photographer Tariq Mustafa, journalist Rasha Abdullah Al-Harazi and journalist Ahmed Bo Rass. The perpetrators of these crimes are still unknown.

The number of journalists killed in Yemen has risen to 48 since 2011 until December 2021, including 5 journalists killed in 2011, 1 journalist in 2014, 10 journalists in 2015, 10 others in 2016, 3 journalists in 2017, and 10 in 2018, two journalists in 2019, 3 journalists in 2020 and 4 journalists in 2021.

**1400 violations in seven years**

In brief, the Syndicate documented 1400 violations committed against press freedoms in Yemen from 2015 until the end of 2021. The Houthis committed 867 violations (61.9%), while the legitimate government, with its various authorities and formations, committed 281 violations (20.1%). Unknown parties committed 129 violations (9.2%) and the Arab coalition committed 40 violations (2.9%). The Southern Transitional Council committed 48 cases (3.4%) and extremist groups committed 13 violations (0.9%). Political, tribal and media bodies committed 22 cases (1.6%).

**• Report indicators:**

The violations presented in this report reveal some important indicators related to the journalistic work environment at the legislative, security, professional and economic levels. The most important of which are the following:

**A. Legislative Obstacles:**

1- Journalists are tried under the laws of crimes, penalties and combating terrorism, not under the Press and Publications Law, and in specialized courts concerned with issues of terrorism and national security, as is the case with journalists detained in Sana’a, as well as journalists who are sued in Hadramout. These laws may order the death penalty for a journalist in connection with a publishing case, as happened with the journalists, Yahya Al-Jubeihi, Abdul-Khaleq Amran, Tawfiq Al-Mansoori, Akram Al-Walidy, and Harith Hamid.

2- Many journalists and foreign media correspondents complain about the restrictions imposed by the Houthi group on journalistic work through illegal internal regulations that impose restrictions, control and sums of money on media work.

3 -Detained journalists live in harsh, arbitrary, and illegal detention conditions, and they are denied health care and subjected to torture without legal protection.

**B. Security obstacles**

1- The warring parties’ repressive and violent treatment of journalists, classifying them as the enemy, and tightening the iron grip on journalistic work, as the various authorities do not believe in the right to journalistic work and freedom of expression, treat journalists with hostility and incitement, and insist on engaging them in political conflicts on the basis that ‘if you are not with me you are against me’.

2 -The presence of censorship on the work of journalists, monitoring of what they write on social media, summoning some journalists because of what they write for the media outlets they work for, and arresting them for working with foreign media, not to mention the exposure of many colleagues to threats and incitement on the grounds of their journalistic activity.

3- The absence of media pluralism as the parties that control particular territories prevent any journalistic activity or independent or opposition media. This matter led to the suspension of nearly 80 newspapers, magazines and radio stations since the beginning of the war, not to mention the blocking of more than 200 local and external news websites in Yemen .

**C. Economic obstacles**

1-The legitimate government refuses to pay the salaries of journalists and workers in the state media in areas outside its control in violation of its legal and moral responsibility towards the employees.

2-Many journalists work without job contracts, and for a low financial reward, and many local and foreign media refuse to sign contracts with them. The foreign media also do not provide health insurance and work risk insurance, and ignore occupational safety and training procedures in this aspect.

3- Weak economic capabilities of the media, and the absence of a fair distribution of advertisements.

**D. Professional obstacles**

1- The absence of independent press, the warring parties’ control of state media, and launching media outlets affiliated with the parties to the conflict contributed to the spread of hate speech and incitement and the absence of professional journalism in many publications.

2- The absence of honor codes and codes of conduct in the media.

**• Recommendations:**

- The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate calls on the parties to the conflict to stop the systematic policies aimed at targeting the press and journalists, respect freedom of opinion and expression and the right to obtain information enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen and the Press and Publications Law No. 25 of 1990, and allow and protect the diversity of media outlets.

The Syndicate calls on the Houthi group to release all journalists it has kidnapped, abolish the unjust death sentences, and end repressive practices against journalists and illegal regulations restricting media freedom.

The Syndicate calls on the legitimate government to investigate all violations committed by government agencies and bodies and hold those involved accountable and stop targeting journalists.

- The Syndicate calls on the Southern Transitional Council to stop harassment of journalists and the media, and to hand over the state press institutions.

-The Syndicate calls on all organizations concerned with freedom of opinion and expression, and the Office of the UN Envoy to Yemen to support journalists, adopt their issues and pressure all parties to respect the freedom of expression.