



Press Freedom Report in Yemen- 2023

The Freedom Committee of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS)

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YJS Documents 82 Violations Committed Against Press Freedom in Yemen in 2023

The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) releases its annual report on the status of press freedoms in Yemen in 2023, documenting a series of violations against the press and journalists in the country. The Syndicate monitored 82 cases of violations from January to December 31, 2023, committed against journalists, photographers, media outlets, media headquarters, and journalists' property.

Types of violations	Number	Percentage
Deprivation of freedom	17	20.7%
Trials and summons	12	14.6%
Threats and incitement	12	14.6%
Banning media coverage and closing media outlet	10	12.2%
Cruel and illegal treatment of detainees	10	12.2%
Journalist dismissal	6	7.3%
Attack and raid	6	7.3%



Confiscating properties	5	6.3%
Rejecting to implement judicial rulings	2	2.4%
Hacking websites	2	2.4%
Total	82	

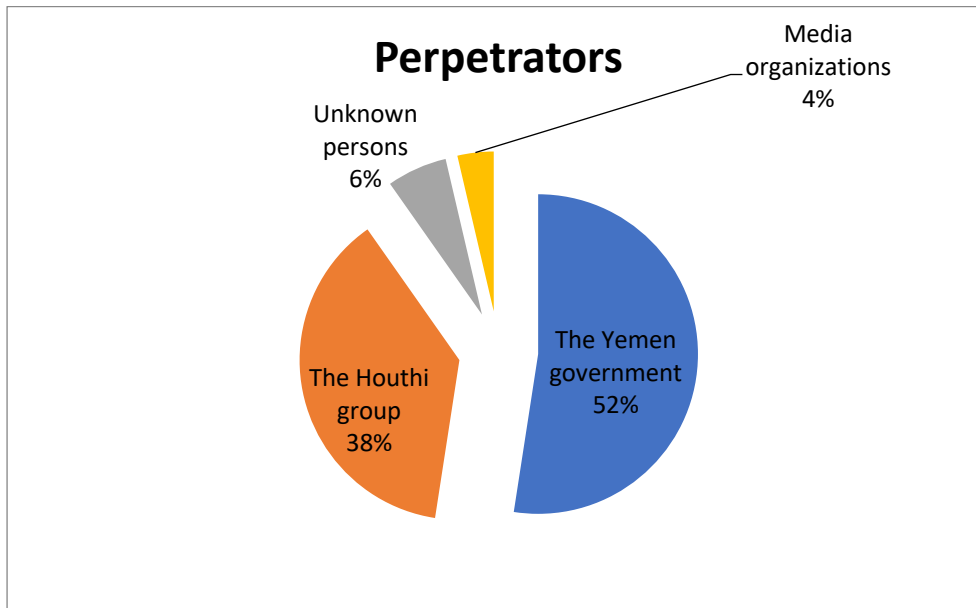
Table 1: The types of violations against press and journalists

The report documented 17 cases of deprivation of freedom, representing 20.7% of the total violations, 12 cases of trials and summonses of journalists, 14.6% of the violations, and 12 cases of threats and incitement, 14.6%.

Moreover, the report recorded 10 cases of preventing journalists from practicing their work and closing media outlets, 12.2%, and 10 cases of harsh treatment of detainees in 10 cases, 12.2%. Six cases of halting journalists' financial benefits and dismissal were reported in 6 cases, besides 6 cases of raids and attacks. The report also documented 5 cases of confiscation and looting of the property of journalists and media outlets, two cases rejecting the enforcement of judicial rulings, and two cases of hacking media websites.

With all its authorities, the Yemeni government committed 43 violations, making up 52% of the total number. Of these, 20 cases were committed by forces affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council (STC).

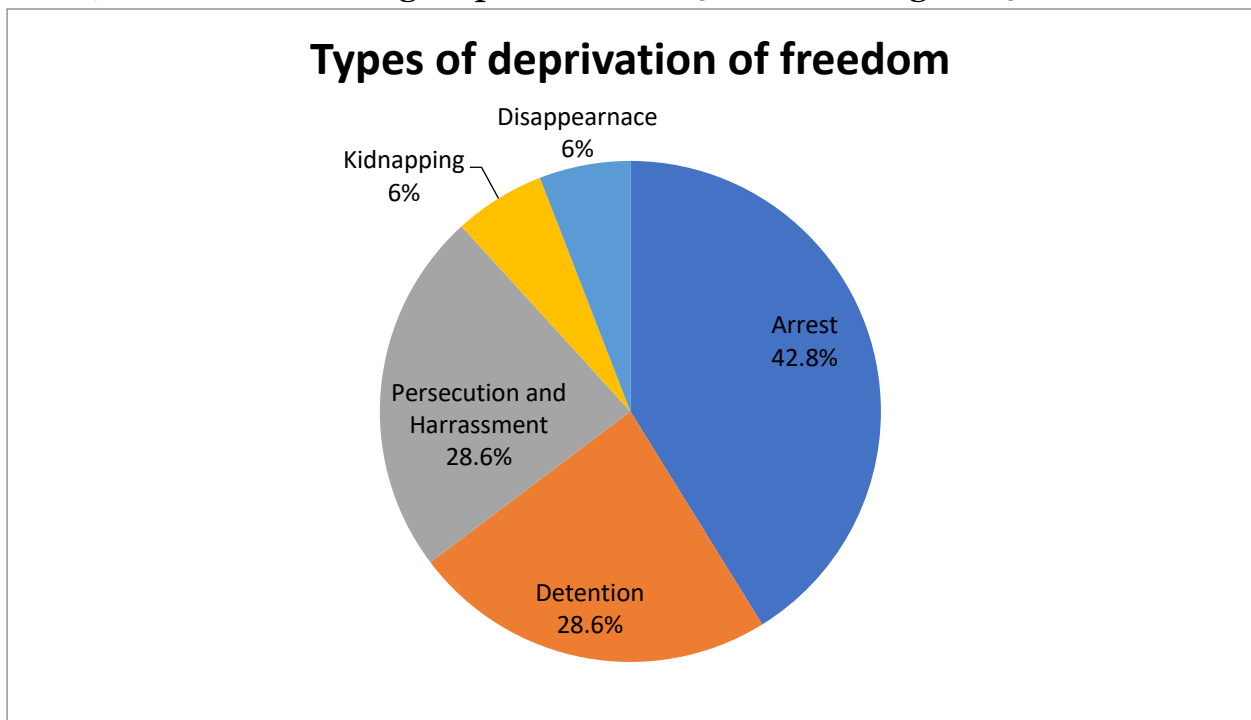
The Houthi group committed 31 violations, 38%, and unknown persons committed 5 cases, 6%. The media institutions committed 3 cases, representing 4% of the total violations.



Perpetrators of violations against press and journalists

The 17 cases of deprivation of freedom included kidnapping, detention, persecution, and harassment. There were distributed as follows: 7 cases of arrest (41%), 4 cases of detention (24%), 4 cases of persecution and harassment (24%), one case of kidnapping (6%), and one case of forced disappearance (6%).

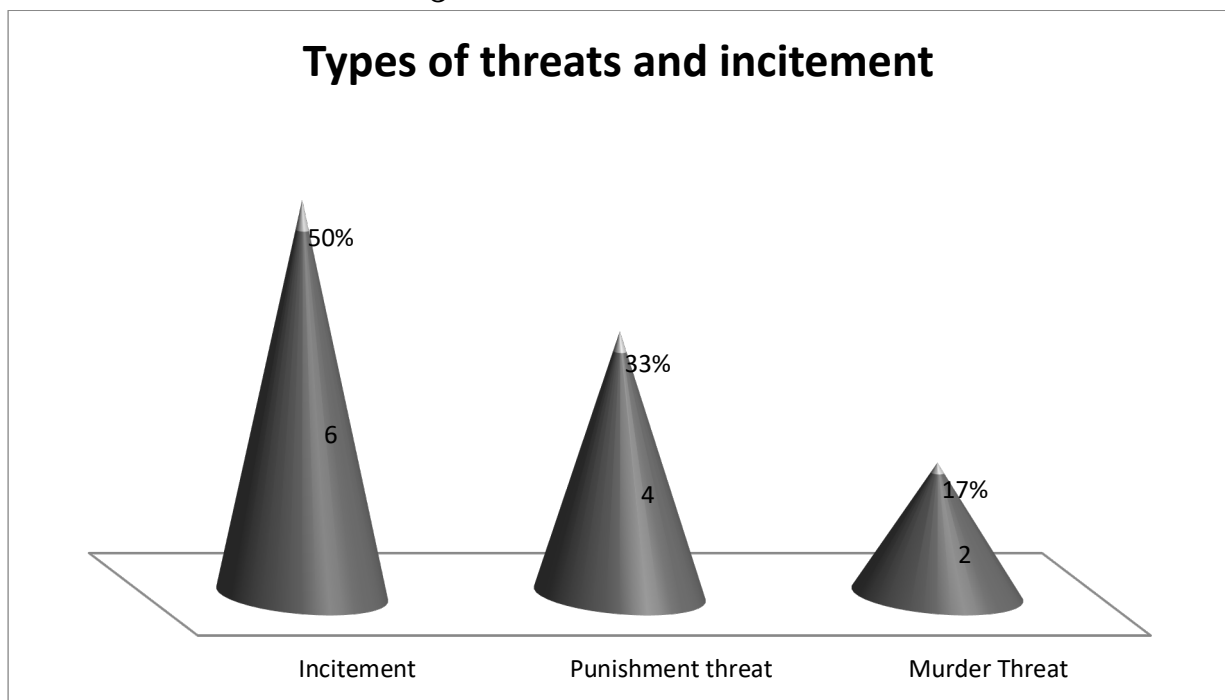
Of the 17 cases of deprivation of freedom, the legitimate government committed 14 cases, while the Houthi group committed 3 cases during 2023.





There are still five journalists detained, including two journalists with the Houthis: Waheed Al-Sufi, who has disappeared since April 2015, and Nabil Al-Sadawi, an employee at the Saba Agency.

Two other journalists, Ahmed Maher and Naseh Shaker, are detained by the STC. Maher has been detained since August 2022, and Shaker since November 2023. Journalist Muhammad Qaid Al-Maqri has been disappeared by Al-Qaeda in Hadramout since October 2015.



Number and percentage of threats and incitement

The YJS monitored 12 cases of threats and incitement against journalists, including 6 cases of incitement against male and female journalists, 4 cases of threats to harm journalists, and 2 cases of death threats. The Houthis committed 6 of the 12 violations, while the government committed 3 cases. Three cases were committed by unknown persons.

The YJS documented 12 cases of trials and summonses of journalists, including 5 coercive arrest orders against journalists, 5 cases of summonses and investigations, one case of trial, and a case of issuing an arbitrary judicial ruling. The government committed 9 cases, while the Houthis committed 3 cases.



The YJS recorded 10 cases of journalists being prevented from media coverage and media offices being closed. The ten violations included 6 cases of preventing journalists from covering, two cases of preventing photojournalists from photographing, and two cases of closing media offices, as happened to the Yemen Digital office in Aden and Eram FM radio in Sana'a. The government committed 7 cases, while the Houthis committed 3 cases.

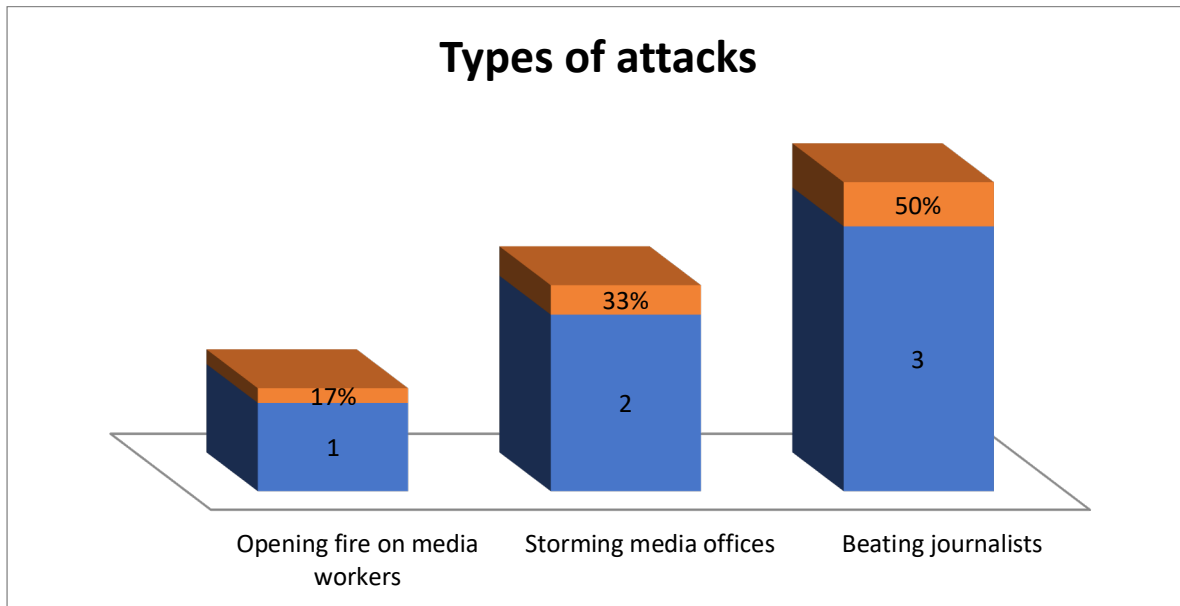
Thus, the number of media outlets that have been closed since the breakout of the war in 2015 has risen to 163, including 4 TV channels, seven radio stations, 119 newspapers and magazines, and 33 Yemeni websites.

The union monitored 10 cases of harsh treatment of detainees in prisons, of which the Houthis committed 7 cases, while the STC committed 3 cases.

The YJS documented 5 cases of suspension of journalists' financial dues and one case of dismissal. These violations have added to the suffering of hundreds of journalists working in the state-run media without being paid since 2016.

The report investigated 6 cases of attacks on journalists and media headquarters, notably the STC armed forces' attack on the headquarters of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate in Aden in March. They have been in control of it until now, and they are encouraged by the military and political influence of the STC.

The YJS documented 3 cases of beating journalists, 1 case of assault on a journalist with a firearm, and 2 cases of assault on media headquarters. The government committed 4 cases, while the Houthis committed 2 cases.



Number and percentage of attacks

The YJS also documented 5 cases of confiscation of the property and possessions of journalists and media outlets, including 4 cases of confiscation of journalists' possessions and one case of confiscation of the property of a media outlet. The Houthis committed 4 cases, while the government committed one case.

□ Report Indicators

The report presents important indicators that shed light on the journalistic work environment at the legislative, security, professional, and economic levels. These indicators are as follows:

A. Legislative and regulatory obstacles:

- The report monitored 12 cases of trial, summonses, and coercive arrest orders against journalists. Thus, it became clear that the judicial procedures breached the Press and Publications Law and the Right to Access to Information Law as some journalists were summoned by non-competent authorities.
- The so-called Southern Media Committee exercises an abusive regulatory role towards journalists in Aden. It is an entity that performs the tasks of the Ministry of Information and imposes many restrictions on journalistic work.



- If a court ruling is issued in favor of a journalist, the authorities do not commit to implementing it, while some authorities obstruct the trials of journalists and detain them for months without bringing them to trial.

B. Security Obstacles

- The multiple authorities exercise censorship, monitor journalists for what they write, and harm them because of their positions. The authorities accuse them of treason and conspiracy because of their opinions, stances, and the media outlets for which they work.
- All security checkpoint points between cities treat the journalist's identity as an accusation, subjecting journalists to arrest and investigation, and may lead to their disappearance.
- The absence of media pluralism and the banning of independent journalistic activity led to the suspension of approximately 163 newspapers, magazines, and radio stations since the beginning of the war, and more than 200 local and foreign news websites were blocked from followers in Yemen.
- Detained journalists live in harsh, arbitrary, and illegal detention conditions, are denied health care, and are subjected to torture without legal protection.

C- Economic obstacles

- The legitimate government refuses to pay the salaries of journalists and employees of state-run media outlets in areas not subject to its rule. This is a violation of its legal and moral responsibility towards employees.
- Many journalists work without employment contracts for little money, and many local and foreign media outlets refuse to sign contracts. Journalists are not provided health insurance, and media institutions ignore occupational safety procedures and training in this aspect.
- 1- The weak economic capabilities of the media and the absence of equitable distribution of advertisements.

D. Professional obstacles

- The absence of independent journalism, the warring parties' control over the state media, and the launch of media outlets affiliated with the rivals contributed to the spread of hate speech and incitement and the decline of professional journalism.



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

□ **Recommendations:**

- The YJS calls on all the multiple authorities in Yemen to release the detained journalists and reduce the restrictions imposed on journalistic work in Sanaa, Aden, Marib, Hadramout, Taiz and other provinces.
- The YJS calls on the internationally recognized legitimate government to work to restore the Syndicate's headquarters in Aden, which is controlled by the Southern Transitional Council, and end the restrictions imposed on journalistic work in Aden.
- The YJS demands the Yemeni government pay employees' salaries in the state-run media in the areas outside its control as part of its ethical and legal commitment and to end the obstacles for journalists and the displaced media.
- YJS calls on the Yemeni government to investigate all the violations committed by its bodies and work to provide a safe work environment in areas under its control.
- The YJS calls on the Houthi and the STC to release all the kidnapped journalists and end the hostile behavior towards the press and the journalists.
- YJS invites 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 freedom of opinion and expression.
- The YJS calls on the International Committee of the Red Cross to work to provide a healthy and safe environment for detainees and to investigate the violations that journalists are exposed to in detention centers.