

## **On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists: The Ongoing Oppression Against Yemeni Journalists has no signs to fade away**

November 2, 2024

Today, as the world marks the "International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists," Yemeni journalists face a dire situation, enduring violence, intimidation, and killings due to their expressions and opinions. The impunity enjoyed by perpetrators further exacerbates these violations. We, the undersigned organizations, call on the international community to focus on the escalating violations against journalists in Yemen and to take concrete actions to protect them.

Over the past decade, journalism in Yemen has endured its darkest period, with continuous violations against journalists. The impunity of offenders has led to Yemen being ranked the third most dangerous country for journalists worldwide, according to [the 2021 report](#) by Reporters Without Borders. Yemen also [ranked](#) 154th out of 180 countries in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index.

Yemeni journalists have faced increasing levels of violence and danger from several sources, including the internationally recognized government, the Houthis (Ansar Allah), the Southern Transitional Council, other armed groups, and extremist groups. The control over media by various factions has severely limited the availability of independent media and information.

The undersigned organizations assert that, over the past decade, journalists in Yemen have been victims of various crimes and violations, including killings, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and restrictions on freedom of expression. In all cases, the perpetrators escape accountability and punishment. Instead, the victims are subjected to unfair trials in specialized criminal courts, competent for terrorism and state security cases, which issue harsh sentences that lack the minimum standards of fair and impartial justice. Additionally, these courts are not competent to address cases related to journalism and publishing. Such violations undermine the role of media in building a democratic society and limit citizens' access to the information they need.

Organizations affiliated with the ["Justice 4 Yemen pact"](#) coalition and the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate have documented over 3,000 violations against journalists, media institutions, and media activists over the past decade. The 2023 report from [the Media Freedoms Observatory in Yemen](#) recorded more than 2,515 violations in just nine years. According to the Syndicate, 1,700 cases of violations and assaults against journalists have occurred since the onset of the war, [with 45 journalists killed](#), including two female journalists. In addition, 165 media outlets have been shut down, and around 200 local, Arab, and international websites have been blocked. As evidence of the rampant culture of impunity. In the report [Assassination of Truth](#), the SADA documented more than 60 cases of killings of journalists and media, 44 of these killings remain unpunished, depriving the victims of justice.

Through in-depth investigations into the killings of 12 journalists, the [Free Media Organization for Investigative Journalism](#) has uncovered troubling findings and clear deficiencies in the actions of authorities expected to deliver justice. For instance, the prosecutor's office in Sana'a halted the investigation into the assassination of investigative journalist Mohammad Abdo Al-Absi and did not interrogate the influential individuals mentioned in the statements of collecting evidence. Similarly, the criminal investigations in Aden stopped their inquiry into the assassination of female journalist

Rasha Al-Harazi, who was killed in a targeted explosion that also injured her husband, journalist Mahmoud Al-Atmi. In Taiz, the court acquitted the accused in the murder of journalist Fawaz Al-Wafi; however, this was due to the actual perpetrators not being brought to trial, and local authorities intervened when the criminal investigations attempted to question certain individuals involved.

While we call for justice and accountability for those involved in crimes against journalists and media activists, but, instead of providing protections to male and female journalists that enable them to work for the truth, we are witnessing an ongoing unprecedented brutality against journalists. The Ansar Allah group (Houthis) detained [journalist Mohammed Al-Mayahi](#) on September 20, 2024, and [refused to disclose his whereabouts](#). We are deeply concerned by the [death sentence](#) issued by the Specialized Criminal Court in Sana'a against Taha Al-Maamari, owner of Yemen Digital Media, along with the confiscation of his assets, and the [re-trial of four journalists](#) previously released as part of an UN-brokered prisoner exchange deal between the Yemeni government and the Houthis. Alkarama for Human Rights followed their case [and filed complaints](#) about them with the UN special procedures, including the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on Torture, and others.

These arbitrary actions reveal the Houthis' oppressive and brutal approach toward journalists, which has led to the near eradication of independent and partisan press in their areas of control. In Yemeni government-controlled areas, arrests and harassment of journalists and activists continue, the latest being the detention of journalist Adel Al-Nazeeli by the National Resistance Forces on the western coast of Taiz on October 19, 2024. According to the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, efforts to secure his release [have gone into vain](#). On October 20, 2024, the [government's Public Funds Investigation](#) in Taiz summoned journalist Wajdi Al-Salmi over publications concerning the Free Media Organization for Investigative Journalism, where he serves as executive director. In Aden, [seven journalists and activists are facing prosecution](#) on severe charges, being tried before the Specialized Criminal Court as fugitives in the case of Brigadier General Adnan Al-Hammadi's assassination. This reflects the considerable risks that obstruct their freedom to work.

On this day, we would like to pay special tribute to those journalists whose families still await justice and accountability for their murderers. We must remember that impunity not only represents a failure to hold aggressors accountable but also encourages the continuation of such practices. Therefore, all parties in the conflict must commit to ensuring that judicial and law enforcement institutions are impartial and free from influence. The international community should intensify its efforts through international mechanisms that protect press freedom, hold violators accountable, and strengthen the role of human rights defenders in ending impunity.

#### **-To the Warring Parties:**

- We call on all parties to uphold human rights, respect freedoms, protect journalists, and create a safe environment for journalism. They must work to end impunity for crimes against journalists.
- Shield journalism from conflicts as part of achieving justice and reconciliation, and work toward creating a safe environment that allows journalists to perform their duties without fear.
- Work toward holding those involved in crimes against journalists accountable and taking effective measures to end impunity for these crimes.

- Allow access for the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression to examine the escalating violence levels and propose solutions to end impunity once and for all.

**- To the International Community:**

- We urge you to protect the rights of journalists in Yemen by establishing effective mechanisms to decisively end impunity for crimes against them and to pressure all parties in the conflict to halt abuses and enhance protections for journalists.

**- To Journalists:**

- We stand in solidarity with you in your courageous fight to reveal the truth, and we urge you to continue your work. Your voice is a powerful tool for delivering the truth and achieving justice.

- Remember that your voice is powerful and expressive, and continuing to report the reality is a fundamental step toward building a better future.

**The Undersigned Organizations:**

1. Abductees' Mothers Association (AMA)
2. Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation (AWSF)
3. Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children (CSWC)
4. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
5. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development (MDF)
6. Musaala Organization
7. SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties
8. Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)
9. Watch for Human Rights
10. Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations (YCMHRV)
11. Media Freedoms Observatory in Yemen
12. The National Organization of Yemeni Reporters SADA
13. Rights Radar for Human Rights
14. American Center for Justice (ACJ)
15. Yemen Future for Culture and Media Development
16. Arab European Center for Human Rights and International Law
17. The Electronic Foundation for Humanitarian Media-EOHM
18. Media Sac for Media and Development
19. Media village for development and Information
20. Yeni Yemen Medya center
21. Humanitarian Journalism Foundation
22. Musawah Organization For Rights and Freedoms
23. Monitoring Journalist Network

24. Dameer Foundation For Human Rights
25. Defense Foundation for Rights and Freedom
26. Rescue foundaton for development
27. Musaala Organization for Human Rights
28. League of Women for Peace
29. Alkarama- Geneva
30. Sent from myMail for Android
31. National Organizations for Development Society
32. Hemaiah Center for Human Rights
33. Peace Paths Foundation PPF
34. Yemeni Journalists Association – Istanbul
35. Future Partners Foundation for Development & Human Rights
36. Aden Promising Youth Foundation
37. Youth Diplomacy Forum
38. Bahth Foundation for Development and Human Rights
39. Yemeni Legal Center
40. For You Foundation
41. Yemen Media Guide for Development Center -YMGD
42. Human Development Foundation HDF
43. Alakhar Center for Peace and Development
44. Land of Peace Foundation for Media and Human Development and Rights
45. Al Shorouk Foundation for Women and Child Development