Last Fire
Photos

About the killing of five photo journalists by Houthi fire in Taiz City, central Yemen while covering events

Contents:

Free Media Center
for Investigative Journalism

Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism is an organization that seeks to strengthen the methodology of investigative work in order to create a new future for the Yemeni press.
Free Media focuses its efforts on digging into journalistic stories at high level in terms of impact, and giving priority to the quality of the materials published on its pages rather than focusing on their quantity or speed of completion. Our focus is on issues that affect our society; in all sectors, health, education, development, security, justice, human rights, women's issues, the environment, climate change and corruption.

Our method is based on careful journalism based on interviews, field work and research based on verified sources. Our stories seek to go far in digging up phenomena in order to answer two central questions: how and why. They are edited according to the highest journalistic standards both ethically and professionaly. They represent the essence of the efforts of the employees of Free Media Center, including journalists, human rights defenders and technicians.
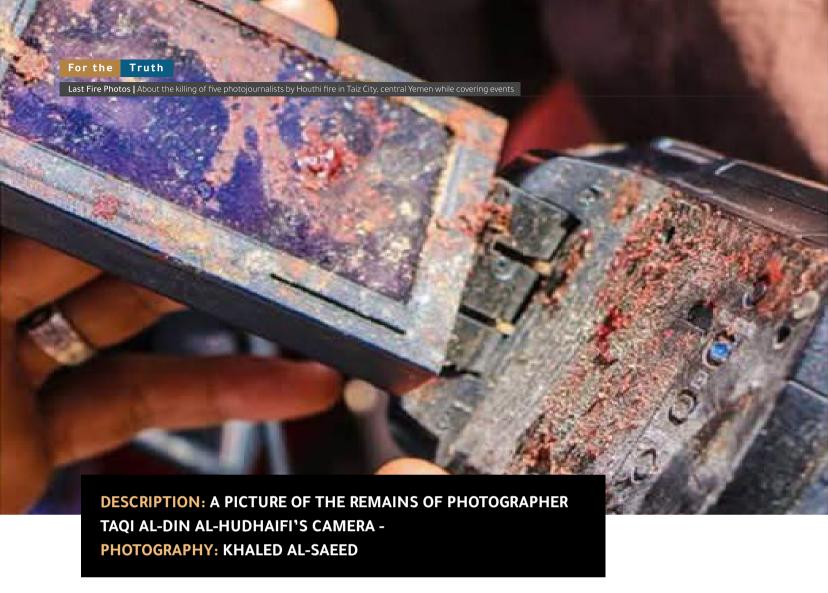
They are not gatherings of information from other sites. Free Media focuses on clarifying the relationships and patterns of Yemen-related phenomena and events regardless of where they occur around the world, while ensuring that adherence to the journalistic principles which guide our work is not compromised: balance, objectivity, accuracy, and serving the public interest.

«For the Truth»
Project

For the Truth" works to seek justice for crimes committed against journalists. The project consists of a series of investigations into cases where a journalist was killed for doing his job. These investigations aim to bring new facts and information about the killings to light, paving the way for justice and accountability."

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DESCRIPTION: A PICTURE OF THE REMAINS OF PHOTOGRAPHER TAQI AL-DIN AL-HUDHAIFI'S CAMERA -
PHOTOGRAPHY: KHALED AL-SAEED

While trying to flee to a safe place away from the danger of clashes, photojournalist Ahmed Al-Shaibani was hit by two sniper bullets. His colleague, photographer Abdulaziz Al-Thubhani, captured the scene on February **16**, **2016**, in Taiz City, southern Yemen.

Unfortunately for the media in Yemen this incident was not the only incident that affected photojournalists in the city, which witnessed an outbreak of violence on various fronts of the war that reached Taiz in 2015.

On **26** May **2017**, six photographers were attacked, three were killed, and three were injured, east of Taiz City. They had gone to cover the clashes and document the destruction effects caused by the war near the frontlines between the conflicted parties formed by the war: Houthi militants supported by the military factions of former

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President Ali Abdullah Saleh on one hand, and the army of the recognized government, supported by armed civilians organized under the name of popular resistance, on the other.

Seven months later, specifically on January **22**, **2018**, photographer Mohammed Al-Qadasi was killed by a missile strike on Al-Khayami area in southern Taiz City.This occurred as Al-Qadasi was covering a security event belonging to recognized government agencies, and as the result of missile shelling on residential areas near the site of the event.

In fact, the official procedures in the targeting cases that led to the death of the five photographers did not go beyond the procedures of the Criminal Investigation, which is limited to preparing a report consisting of several photographs showing the location, shape, and size of the victim's injury. And some details such as "the victim's name, the date he was targeted, and the place where he fell.

The Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism worked to investigate the killings of five media photographers in Taiz City. In the first stage, we collected information and then documented witness testimonies by interviewing the photographers' colleagues who were with them during the targeting. These colleagues miraculously escaped death, although some were injured and had their limbs amputated. In addition to interviewing the victim's relatives to find out the procedures they made, we also conducted an in-depth technical analysis of the visual content of the killing of two photographers.

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Our investigation concluded with the following results:

First: The five photographers:

The investigation team found that Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, Wael Al-Absi, Saad Al-Nadhari, and Mohammed Al-Qadasi, were killed while performing journalistic work. These brave photographers held responsibility for carrying out the task of providing the local and external community with information conveying the image of events related to the war in Taiz City and documenting their effects and repercussions.

Second: Working in a dangerous environment

The citizen journalists, or the five photographers, who were killed, had engaged to work with local and foreign media outlets, except for one photographer, Saad Al-Nadhari, who worked as a notary for a military faction.

Al-Shaibani was a contractor with the Yemeni satellite channel affiliated with the recognized government. Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi was a collaborator with Al-Arabiya, Al-Hadath and Al-Jazeera Mubasher channels. Wael Al-Absi wais a photographer for the Yemeni satellite channel. Mohammed Al-Qadasi was a collaborator with Belqees Channel and a provider of some local and foreign media. Although they did not have experience in journalistic coverage in complex situations, four of them went to field coverage on dangerous fronts: They are Al-Shaibani, Al-Huthaifi, Al-Nadhari, and Al-Absi. Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi was wearing a journalist bulletproof vest on the day he was targeted, yet he did not survive the murder.

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Photographer Mohammed Al-Qadasi was far from the lines of fire on the day he was targeted. He was not wearing press protection supplies, a rocket struck from a distance and killed him instantly.

Third: Official Procedures:

Often, victims who fall in connection with the conflict in Yemen do not have any judicial files in law enforcement institutions. Moreover, the official institutions authorized to conduct investigations and collect evidence do not carry out their tasks to achieve justice in such cases, which allows the continuation of violations against media workers, of all categories, including citizen journalists.

Fourth: The Responsible

The evidence we reached in this investigation, points to the Houthi group "Ansar Allah" as a party responsible for the killing of the five photographers in Taiz. A sniper of the Western Front in Taiz, is responsible for the killing of Ahmed Al-Shaibani on February **2016** ,**16**. The Artillery of the Eastern Front, affiliated with Ansar Allah / Houthi group, is responsible for the killing of Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, Wael Al-Absi, and Asaad Al-Nadhari, and the injury of three others on May **2017** ,**26** Tthe Houthi missile force is responsible for the killing of photojournalist Mohammed Al-Qadasi, on January 2018 ,22, according to evidence found by the Free Media team.

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According to these results, the most important recommendation made by the Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism in its recommendations is the following:

- Open an immediate investigation into the crimes committed against journalists by all warring parties in Yemen since **2015**. The international community must push to achieve this, and the official bodies affiliated with the government must play their role in addressing crimes and violations against journalists. This investigation should be directed at the roles played by all those involved in the killing of journalists, not only limited to the perpetrators.

All investigations should pay special attention to the chain of command, and concerning what is stated in this report, pressure must be put on Houthi group to bring the perpetrators to the investigations, who fired snipers, artillery and rockets, killing five photographers, and injuring a number of them as well.

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Background:
War and the Press

The entry of Yemen into the spiral of war ten years ago had a negative impact on the situation of Yemenis of all categories, including Yemeni journalists in general. "In addition to losing their jobs, strict restrictions were imposed on the profession of journalism, and journalists were considered more dangerous than fighters in the ranks of the enemies, according to a statement by the leader of the Houthi group, Ansar. "God" in one of his speeches.

With the seizure of national institutions in the capital, Sana'a, and expansion in other cities, the Houthi group and elements loyal to former President Ali Saleh raided Taiz City in 2015, and encountered resistance by civilian gunmen, who joined under the name of popular resistance to support the army forces that refused to surrender to the Houthis.

Taiz was chosen as Yemen's cultural capital in 2013 and is considered the most populous city. Since 2015 "the Houthis have besieged government-controlled areas from their positions around the city and they face charges of indiscriminately bombing residential areas and hospitals, as well as restricting the entry of humanitarian aid. [1]"

The Houthis closed the main roads leading to the areas controlled by the recognized government in Taiz City. Human rights and humanitarian organizations accused the Houthi group of preventing "humanitarian relief convoys from reaching the people and those affected by the war". The people of Taiz also accused the Houthis of depriving "the people of their right to get medicine, food and freedom of movement. [2]"

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[1] THE CONFLICT IN YEMEN: THE HORROR OF LIFE UNDER THE SIEGE IN TAIZ. BBC REPORT, PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 1, 2016

[2] YEMENIS PROTEST THE ONGOING 'CRIME OF THE CENTURY' IN TAIZ SINCE 2015, AL JAZEERA NET REPORT, PUBLISHED ON: JULY 16, 2023

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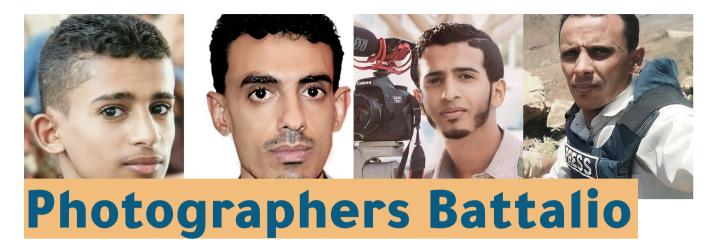
Yemen's entry into the cycle of war ten years ago effected the situation of Yemenis of all categories, including Yemeni journalists in general "[I]n addition to losing their jobs, strict restrictions were imposed on the profession of journalism. Journalists are considered more dangerous than fighters in the enemy ranks, according to the statement of the leader of the Houthi group, Ansar Allah, in one of his speeches. [3]"

Between 2015 and 2022, international and local organizations monitored "about 3,000 violations against journalists, including 49 killings. The rest of the violations were distributed between arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, and prosecutions, in addition to the closure of media institutions and the blocking of websites. [4]"

Media and press workers in Taiz City have received a large share of these violations. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism monitored the killing of 12 journalists in the city as a result of the war. After the acceleration of events and the intensification of the siege on a high density of the population, citizen journalists have emerged to play their important and crucial role in providing information to the local and foreign public, including the five murdered photographers, whose deaths were investigated by the Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism and documented in this report.

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6 | JOURNALISTIC BLEEDING… A REPORT ISSUED BY FREE MEDIA CENTER IN **2022**, MODIFIED LATER.

7 | PREVIOUS SOURCE

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Photographers Battalio

With the outbreak of the war in Yemen, the citizen journalist emerged. They took it upon themselves to provide the world with documented information in audio and video. After that, some local and foreign channels hired photographers to provide them with the necessary visual materials.

A large group of photographers was formed in Taiz City particularly. The group called itself the 'Zoom Battalion', in reference to the fact that the photography and documentation they carry out is no less important than the work of the military battalions.

The photographers moved with caution and courage whenever they heard shelling or clashes. They want to make the voice of Taiz City heard to the world. The exacerbation of the humanitarian tragedy requires that. There were shelling and clashes, in addition to a suffocating siege implemented after the Houthi militants were stationed on the main roads.

Among those photographers, the five who will be killed during their work, they are:

-1 Ahmed Abdullatif Al-Shaibani, 30, contracted with Yemen's satellite channel, affiliated with the recognized government.
-2 Taqi Al-Din Al-Hothaifi, 26, was cooperating with the Arabia, Hadath and Al -Jazeera Mubasher channels.
-3 Wael Al-Absi, 23, was working for the recognized government of Yemen, affiliated with the recognized government.
-4 Saad Al-Nadhari, who was documenting for one of the military authorities.
-5 Mohammed Ghaleb Al-Qadasi, 30, cooperating with a number of foreign and local media, the last of which is the Belqees channel.

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Targeting

The locations and times of targeting the five photographers differed, but the result was the same: killing, although the forms of violence varied according to the date of their occurrence: sniping, artillery shelling, and rocket shelling.

Sniping: West Taiz

The scene was harsh, the sounds of clashes did not stop, and the smoke of the fire caused by the bombing on one of the factories iaffected the video clip documenting the killing of cameraman Ahmed Al-Shaibani. The photographer appears running in the middle of the street heading to his colleagues to avoid the danger of raging clashes between the army of the recognized government, supported by civilian gunmen under the name of the popular resistance, and the Houthi group, backed by former President Ali Saleh's military supporters, who named "army and committees".

The battle was west of Taiz City. Al-Shaibani went to cover the massive fire that broke out at Hazza Taha plastic factory, in Al-Haseb area west of the city. The video clip documents Ahmed Al-Shaibani setting off from the vicinity of a building, in the middle of the street, west of Taiz city, but falls dead before reaching the safety area [5].

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[5] | ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION OBTAINED BY THE FREE MEDIA TEAM FROM AL-SHAIBANI'S COLLEAGUES, IN ADDITION TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE VIDEO CLIP THAT DOCUMENTED THE KILLING OF THE CAMERAMAN

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Artillery shelling: East Taiz

After about a year and four months, the battles between the same parties were raging east of Taiz. On the morning of Friday, May **26**, **2017**, Saad Al-Nadhari went to cover the battles. He worked as a notary for one of the military battalions. Shrapnel from a shell settled in his body. He was bleeding, but the ambulance was unable to get to Al-Nadhari's place so he died. Soon after, five other photographers came, to cover what was going on in addition to documenting the state of destruction left by the war in the area. The sounds of mortars and tanks were hysterical, the five photographers went there. They were working with local and foreign media, and after they filmed some footage a mortar shell fell on them. Taqi Al-Din al-Huthaifi, who worked as a cameraman collaborating with Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath, was killed. Wael Al-Absi, who worked as a cameraman for the official Yemen channel affiliated with the recognized government, was also killed. While Osaid Al-Odaini, who was filming for Suhail TV was injured, Salah Al-Wahbani, whose hand would later be amputated was injured, too, and Walid Al-Qadasi, whose foot was amputated at the same moment [6].

Rocket strike

The photographers weren't able to document the targeting, they experienced, with audio and video, as in the incident of targeting photographer Ahmed Al-Shaibani. In a third case of targeting that took place on January **22**, **2018**. Belqees TV cameraman Mohammed Al-Qadasi to document the remains of civilian victims of a rocket shelling in the southern countryside of Taiz. The victims were far from the sites of clashes between the army and the resistance on one hand, and the Houthis and Saleh's military supporters on the other. On the same day, there was a security event belonging to the military authorities affiliated with the recognized government. After the end of the event that Mohammed came to cover, a missile fell on the Technical Institute that hosted the military event, hitting photographer Mohammed Al-Qadasi, and turning him into charred pieces [7].

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6 | ACCORDING TO SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES, DOCUMENTED BY THE FREE MEDIA CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM.

7 | BASED ON EYEWITNESSES

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No Procedures

In his interview with the Center team, journalist Mohammed Al-Huthaifi, father of photographer Taqi Al-Din, shared his belief that the official authorities, represented by the Criminal Investigation and Forensic Medicine, documented the case, in addition to the National Committee to Investigate Human Rights Violations.

In fact, the Public Prosecution did not play its role in investigating the killing of Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi , Wael Al-Absi, Saad Al-Nadhari, and Mohammed Al-Qadasi, nor all the crimes and violations suffered by journalists in Yemen in connection with the conflict. According to interviews and investigations we conducted to find out the procedures of the government agencies authorized to investigate the killing of the five photographers, we found out the only thing these agencies did was a forensic technical photographic report, prepared by a recent employee in the Criminal Evidence Department of the Criminal Investigation Department in Taiz, who used to work as a motorcyclist. This -11page report contains **12** photographs showing the place, shape, and size of the victim's injury, as well as some details of the killing.

According to the legal description, what the five photographers, Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, Wael Al-Absi, Saad Al-Nadhari, Mohammed Al-Qadasi, were subjected to, is considered a serious crime in the Yemeni law. In accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure, judicial officers must, according to the provisions of Articles **(91),** investigate crimes, track down their perpetrators, examine reports and complaints, collect evidence and information related to them, prove them in their reports and send them to the Public Prosecution. However, nothing of this has happened.

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Survivors' testimonies in the killing of five photographers

The Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism team was able to interview the survivors of the three incidents that led to the deaths of the five photographers. The team matched the information, verified it, documented the testimonies, and then presented it to experts for a systematic analysis, that will contribute to achieving justice for the victims.

-1 Al- Shaibani

In February **2016**, Ahmed Al-Shaibani went with a group of journalists to cover the ongoing battles between the government-affiliated army forces, supported by the popular resistance gunmen, and the Houthi Ansar Allah militants, backed by military factions affiliated with former President Ali Saleh, in Al-Haseb area, west of Taiz city.
The Houthis controlled a hill called **"Al-Araneb"**, overlooking Al-Haseb Street west of the city, in addition to stationing snipers on high buildings overlooking Muroor Street, specifically the place from which the passersby cross the street to the safe area.

After covering the clashes and the fire that broke out in one of Hazza Taha's factories in the same area, journalist Afaq Al-Haj says: "We had to cross the street to the other side and leave the area safely."

Journalists Ahmed Al-Bokari and Abdulaziz Al-Thubhani first crossed the place to the opposite side, while Ahmed Al-Shaibani, along with journalists Afaq Al-Haj and Na'aem Khaled, were getting ready to cross the road quickly
Al-Thubhani said: "I thought of documenting the presence of female journalists, a great scene and a powerful picture of the reality of the Yemeni media and the struggle of Yemeni women journalists at this time."

As they crossed, Afaq says: "I heard a colleague shouting Ahmed!! ... Ahmed!! .. I didn't know what happened?" she adds: "After crossing to the other side, I turned and saw him - she means Ahmed Al-Shaibani- lying on the ground with blood coming from his head." **Al-Bokari said:** "The sound of the sniper's bullet penetrating the head of colleague Ahmed Al-Shaibani is still repeating in my ears until today."

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-2 Al-Nadhari, Al-Huthaifi, Al-Absi

That day, six photographers fell...

Three were killed and three were injured, east of Taiz city. Friday, May **2017** ,**26**, was a bloody day for the Yemeni press. The battles were fierce between the army of the recognized government and the Houthi group, near Al-Tashrifat camp, east of Taiz city. Five collaborators with local and foreign media outlets went to cover the clashes between the army of the internationally recognized government and the Houthi group. Their colleague, Saad Al-Nadhari, who preceded them, was killed. Shortly after, Taqi al-Din Al-Huthaifi and Wael al-Absi will be killed. Walid Al-Qadasi, Salah al-Wahbani, and Osaid Al-Odaini will bewere injured.

Saad Al-Nadhari, working as a photographer with battalions affiliated with the Salafists, had been injured shortly before them, he kept bleeding, and the ambulance was unable to enter the place, so he died. Because he worked with Salafists, Al-Nadhari was buried immediately, and even the routine procedures of the Criminal Investigation Video Report were not done: those who took him to the hospital and burial were hardliners who hated filming. "We only got a death sheet [8]"

The five photographers moved away from the eyes of the militants who hate photography, they advanced to the lines of fire, and one of the military commanders directed them to go back fearing for their lives, so they went back. They entered one of the buildings, thinking they were safe until a mortar shell fell near them, two were killed, and three were injured, two of them had their limbs amputated.

Photographer Walid Al-Qadasi escaped death, but his foot was amputated. In his testimony, the cameraman, who was working with the government-affiliated Aden satellite channel, confirmed: "We had a camera that documented the incident itself, filmed the shell falling. I filmed while they were taking them to the ambulance, this footage was circulated in most channels," adding: "The nature of our work is filming and documenting what is happening in Taiz City, whether on the frontlines, or humanitarian stories in the camps for the displaced."

That day, the shelling was hysterical, confirms Salah Al-Wahbani, the photographer whose hand nerves were torn in the targeting. The five photographers advanced to front clash sites. According to Al-Wahbani, "We were exposed, and obeying the orders of the front commander to withdraw back so that we would be safe, we went back."

[8] | INTERVIEW WITH HIS FAMILY

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The photographers returned to a nearby building behind the lines of fire. They began to take some footage of the effects of the destruction left by the clashes. Then, says, the third injured person Osaid Al-Odaini, who was filming for his father, a reporter for Suhail TV "A mortar shell fell near us." He continued, "A stone flew to me, I had bruises. I thought, like me, the others weren't seriously injured, I filmed the smoke of the blow, I was surprised by Walid Al-Qadasi's voice shouting, "My feet!!, my feet!"

Osaid Al-Odaini carried his colleague Walid Al-Qadasi to transfer him into the building. In the meantime, they saw their colleague Wael Al-Absi, who was working as a collaborator with the Yemeni satellite channel, injured on the ground, Osaid asked Wael to follow him inside fearing of another shell falling,

But Wael nodded left and right, meaning he couldn't get up. Osaid put his colleague Al- Qadasi in the building. Al- Qadasi says: "I saw the bone of my feet had been taken off " "The skin that left of my feet was cut, Salah Al-Wahbani was shouting: My hand!! my hand!!"

Osaid returned to Wael, unfortunately, Wael was "dying. When I carried him, I touched his guts. The situation was difficult, indescribable, and words can't describe it. I took him inside, it's only moments and he's dead."

Osaid went out, again to search for Salah Al-Din Al-Wahbani, and Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, who was a collaborator with Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath channels in addition to Al-Jazeera channel. Osaid said, "I was surprised that Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, died, he was severely injured because the shell fell near him" although Al-Huthaifi wasis the only one who wore a journalist bulletproof vest.

-3 Mohammed Al-Qadasi

Photographer Mohammed Al-Qadasi did not need a journalist bulletproof vest in his mission in January **2018**, because it was far from the fire lines. Even if he was wearing a bulletproof vest, he wouldn't have survived, a missile fell on the -**30**year-old photographer.

Al-Qadasi provides foreign and local media workers with the material he photographs here and there. On January **2018** ,**22**, the cameraman was accompanied by a reporter for Belqees TV to cover the graduation event of a new batch of security forces, in Al-Khayami area, Al-Ma'afer district, south of Taiz City.

The sounds of strong explosions ended the event, dispersing the celebrants at the Technical Institute. Officials from recognized government institutions left the area. The channel reporter,

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Fawaz Al-Hammadi, confirmed: "When we left the Institute, we heard cries and calls for help from citizens in the village near the Technical Institute. People were talking about rockets falling on the village, killing and injuring a number of civilians." After that, photographers Mohammed Al-Qadasi and Fawaz Al-Hammadi set out to document the massacre of many innocent civilians who were sitting in front of their houses in the village. "We found the remains of victims who were already dead." Al-Hammadi said, "The rocket fell directly on them. The scene was very shocking."

Journalist Mohammed Maresh, who was on his way from Aden to the area, learned the news of the massacre from Bashir Aqlan, a former reporter for Russia Today channel. Maresh contacted Mohammed Al-Qadasi to get materials to be provided to Reuters. According to his testimony, which we documented at the Free Media Center, Al-Qadasi informed him that he dead." Al-Hammadi said, "The rocket fell directly on them. The scene was very shocking."

Journalist Mohammed Maresh, who was on his way from Aden to the area, learned the news of the massacre from Bashir Aqlan, a former reporter for Russia Today channel.

Maresh contacted Mohammed Al-Qadasi to get materials to be provided to Reuters. According to his testimony, which we documented at the Free Media Center, Al-Qadasi informed him that he left the memory disk at one of the gate guards of the Technical Institute. He asked him to wait there near the institute.

Mohammed Al-Qadasi came and headed to fetch the memory card from the gate. Maresh says: "In the meantime, we heard a whistling sound and a big explosion, the car flew up and came back, the place was filled with dust and smoke, I did not know what happened, I tried to get off [out of] the car but the door did not open, a concrete pillar entered through the car window" Afterward, Maresh adds: "We saw Bashir with blood coming out of his ears. It was a disaster."

Back then, Maresh had no idea about Mohammed Al-Qadasi's condition, so he took Bashir Al-Safwa Hospital downtown Taiz in a citizen's car. When Fawaz arrived at the hospital, they told him that his colleague Al-Qadasi was in the morgue. He went there, he recalls: "His body was charred, his face has changed" "It was a very painful moment of shock that I can never forget."

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Responsible for violations:

A video clip showed photographer Ahmed Al-Shaibani running from behind a building, to cross the street in the northern western side, to the southern east, where his colleagues had already arrived. The part of the street that the photographer Al-Shaibani tried to cross, was clear to the sight of the Houthi and Saleh gunmen. At that time, Al-Shaibani fell in the middle of the street. Our technical team's analysis of the source of the gunfire, the way it settled in Al-Shaibani's head, and examination of the location and distances, clearly indicated the responsibility of the Houthi and Saleh militants at the time in targeting the photojournalist.

The testimonies we documented, from four journalists, confirm this: "The Houthis shot him with two direct bullets in the head, as a result of which he fell, a martyr," said Al-Thubhani, who captured the scene of sniping Al-Shaibani and, the continued sniping while Ahmed Al-Shaibani lying on the ground. "A group of resistance gunmen tried to pull Ahmed out of the middle of the sidewalk, it was a dangerous risk, but they managed to drag him to a military vehicle and took him to Al-Rawda Hospital, but he was dead."

In the targeting that killed photographers Saad Al-Nadhari, Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, and Wael Al-Absi, we documented the testimony of the injured who miraculously escaped death. People living in eastern Taiz confirmed to them that the Houthi mortar was located on a hill overlooking the place where the five photographers were, the photographers did not know that the Houthis could clearly see them through binoculars, they confirmed: "Our targeting by the Houthis was deliberate."

In this report, the Free Media team faced a difficult task in determining the party responsible for the killing of photographer Mohammed Al-Qadasi. Witnesses cannot determine the locations from where they were targeted as in the killing of photographer Ahmed Al-Shaibani by a sniper, or the incident of targeting the six photographers, leading to the death of three of them and the injury of the other three by nearby artillery shelling in the crossfire area that day.

In Al-Qadasi incident, the area is far from the lines of clashes, with no snipers, and no crossfire front where the warring parties use mortars from nearby positions. Mohammed Al-Qadasi was killed by rocket fire.

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How did we find out that the Houthis fired the missile that killed photographer Al-Qadasi?

Free Media Center collected the visual material of the shelling that affected Al-Khayami area and led to the death of the photographer. All the visual materials and information we obtained were subject to an in-depth technical analysis to reach the truth. We relied on various sources to get a comprehensive picture of the event, including news and photos published by Houthi media outlets related to the bombing that took place that day.

The effects of the bombing were published by satellite channels, including the local channels, Belqees and Yemen Shabab, and Al-Jazeera Mubasher, as well as content posted by activists on social media that we verified, matched.

By analyzing a sample of visual content, the Free Media team was able to determine the exact geographical location of the shelling, Al-Khayami area, south of Taiz, near the main road at the coordinates: **43.957300 ,13.339485**, which previously was an industrial technical institute. After comparing published visual evidence with satellite images.

The visual content inside the village also showed a mosque with two minarets as a distinctive feature near the site of the missile in the area to the right of the Industrial Technical Institute. By comparing it with satellite images, we were able to identify the village that was struck at the coordinates of **43.95546**5 **,13.333623** approximately **700** meters from the institute.

In a live interview with the Free Media team, journalist Fawaz Al-Hammadi, a reporter for Belqees satellite channel, who was with Al-Qadasi that day, recounts that at the beginning the shelling hit the village, and there were reports of civilian casualties, prompting them to go to the site to document the incident.

Another video for Belqees satellite channel shows the shadow of a person near the body of one of the civilian victims inside the village, and it is noted that the shadow is shorter than the person's height at a distance less than the soldier's shadow in the previous

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picture and with the same inclination. Analyzing this data through the previous method indicates that the approximate time to take the video was at **11:18** a.m.'

Shadow analysis by the previous method denotes that the missile likely fell on the Industrial Technical Institute at **12:23**. According to what was mentioned above, the approximate time range of the shelling operation, from the first explosion in the village to the last at the institute where the graduation ceremony of a security batch was held, can be determined between **11:00** and **12:25** on January **2018**, **22**.

On the same day, Houthi-affiliated media published news that a ballistic missile had been fired at Al-Khayami camp. Al-Masirah satellite channel, which is affiliated with the Houthi group, also published a video showing the launch of Qaher **M2** ballistic missile on the place on the same date, confirming the Houthis' responsibility for bombing the area that day.

A video published by Al Jazeera Mubasher and another video published by Yemen Shabab satellite channel also showed the remnants of the second type of ammunition used in the shelling of the village. The remaining metal structure in the shelling area is likely to be a Katyusha rocket type **"Grad BM 21",** which is abundant in Yemen, according to our findings.

Through the detailed information above, the Free Media Center team for investigative journalism concluded that a multiple bombardment with Qaher **M2** ballistic missile and Grad BM **21** Katyusha rocket was fired by Ansar Allah group (Houthis) on January **2018**, **22**, between **11:00** and **12:25**. They hit the villages of Al-Khayami area and the Industrial Technical Institute - used by the Yemeni government forces as a camp - in the southern countryside of Taiz city, killing 5 civilians, including photojournalist Mohammed Al-Qadasi.

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Final results:

First,

it is certain that photographers Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, Wael Al-Absi, Saad Al-Nadhari, and Mohammed Al-Qadasi have been killed while covering armed confrontations between the internationally recognized government, backed by Saudi Arabia, and the Iran-backed Houthi group, **and that the killing was carried out by various Houthi weapons, according to the following data:**

-1 Photographer Ahmed Al-Shaibani, targeted by a Houthi sniper whose position overlooked Al-Haseb area, Al-Muroor Street, west of Taiz city, Date: **16** February **2016**.

-2 Photographers Saad Al-Nadhari, Taqi Al-Din Al-Huthaifi, and Wael Al-Absi were targeted by Houthi artillery stationed on Al-Karfa hill, overlooking Al-Tashrifat area, east of Taiz city, where the targeted building was. on May **2017**, **26**.

-3 Photographer Mohammed Al-Qadasi, was killed by a missile shelling on the Technical Institute in Al-Khayami area, south of Taiz, and the Houthis confirmed that they fired rockets at the area that day on January **2018**, **22**. Qadasi matched the specifications of the missile announced by the Houthis.

Second,

attacks against journalists are rarely investigated or achieved justice for the victims. It is known that more than nine years have passed since the attack on Taqi Al-Din and his colleagues, and no formal investigation has yet been conducted. Meanwhile, crucial evidence has been lost or destroyed, or some war sites have been altered. As a result, the chance for justice has been significantly diminished..

Third,

the absence of the role of country authorities such as the Criminal Investigation Department and the Public Prosecution. So far these murder cases are inactive and no criminal investigation has been conducted by law enforcement institutions, the Criminal Investigation Department, and the Public Prosecution.

Fourth,

there are significant shortcomings in the capacities and readiness of the international community to protect (local) journalists and to prevent and investigate crimes committed against them in conflict-ridden countries that have limited capacity and resources to do so themselves.

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Recommendations:

1 The Yemeni Attorney General should be required to immediately open an investigation into crimes committed against journalists by all warring parties in Yemen since 2015. This investigation should be directed at the roles played by all those involved in the killing of journalists and not just the perpetrators, and all investigations should pay special attention to the chain of command.

2 The Yemeni government should be required to end impunity for crimes against journalists and to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law.

3 Support a call for an independent international team to investigate journalist killings. The independent international team can provide a key entry point for justice in contexts where corruption, weak institutions, or lack of resources obstacle investigations by national authorities. The team should be composed of investigatory, forensic and law experts who will be deployed to the crime scene or provide other forms of support to national investigators. Ideally, the United Nations should establish such an instrument.