



Nobody moves

About the two crimes of
assassinating activist **Amjad
Abdurrahman** and journalist
Nabil Al-Qaiti in Aden



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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 professionally. 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.”





Summary

The 23-year-old activist, Amjad Mohammed Abdurrahman, led a civil cultural movement in Aden, southern Yemen, at a time when the economic capital was suffering difficult conditions, less than two years after violent battles witnessed in one of the oldest cities on the Arabian Peninsula. These confrontations were taking place between the army affiliated with the internationally recognized government, supported by armed factions such as the Southern Resistance and the Southern Movement separatist formations, on the one hand, and Houthi militants and military elements affiliated with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on the other.

Combat formations affiliated with Yemen's internationally recognized government, also known as the legitimate government,

were able to expel Houthi militants in July 2010, with the support of the Saudi-led Arab coalition, with a crucial role of the United Arab Emirates. However, after that extremist groups emerged in the country's economic capital, Aden.

Amjad Abdurrahman founded Al Nassia Cultural Club and began to attract a number of civil influencers who adopted cultural initiatives that moved stagnant life in the city.

On Sunday, May **2017**, **14**, at **11** pm, gunmen broke into the café where Amjad works in Sheikh Othman area, Kuwait Street. One of the masked men threatened the customers of the café, saying: **"no one moves," and then fired four shots from his gun at Amjad and left the place on a motorcycle.**

From his residence in the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi directed, at the time, to investigate the assassination of Amjad Abdurrahman. From his side, the prominent leader of the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council, and member of the Presidency Council in the internationally recognized Yemeni government, Aidarous Al-Zubaidi, promised to take strict steps to achieve justice and hold those involved in the assassination accountable. In a [post](#) on the social networking site "Facebook", he pledged to hold the perpetrators of the crime accountable and punish them, but nothing happened, despite the fact that seven years have passed since the assassination.

The Southern Transitional Council (STC), and its components and factions, have a strong influence on government institutions in the temporary capital, Aden, and effective control over them in recent years. It can already contribute to justice procedures and bring those responsible for violations to account, in the two crimes of assassinating Amjad Abdurrahman, as well as photojournalist Nabil Al-Quaiti.

The joint factor between Amjad Abdurrahman and Nabil Al-Quaiti is their courage to engage in activities of resistance at critical times that Aden went through, in the pre-war years, or the war years itself.

In **2007**, the activities of the Southern Movement had erupted against the policy of the regime of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the young Nabil Al-Quaiti became involved in the events that erupted in the south of the country. He began to cover the protests for local and foreign newspapers, and won the Rory Beck International Journalist Award in **2016**, an award that is internationally recognized and honors every year to the best freelance videographers.

Al-Quaiti continued on his way, adopting the call of the Southern Movement and covering its activities. When the war broke out in Aden by the attack of Houthis, the photographer did not hesitate for a moment to stand with the party opposed to the Houthi group until they were expelled from the governorate, and then when the Southern Transitional Council was announced, the thirtieth photographer did not hide his complete bias towards the policy of the Southern Transitional Council. After his return from covering events and

clashes between factions of the army affiliated with the recognized government and the militants of the Southern Transitional Council, in the southern province of Abian, on June ,**2020**, unknown gunmen assassinated him in Dar Saad area.

After the crime, a member of the Presidential Council that runs Yemen, Aidarous Al-Zubaidi, promised to uncover those who were involved and bring them to justice to receive their deterrent punishment. Official promises and others who are capable of directing government institutions to speed up the investigation process into the assassination of Amjad in **2017** and the assassination of Nabil Al-Quaiti in **2020**, which did not have any actual impact on the case of the assassination of the journalists.

In the investigation we conducted at the Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism, we found evidence confirming the direct involvement of one of the armed factions affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council in one of the assassination crimes, according to the testimonies verified by the Center and the testimonies we documented, in addition to the new information monitored by **the team, which concluded the following results:**

First:

It is certain that activist Amjad Abdurrahman and photojournalist Nabil Al-Quaiti were killed in Aden, southern Yemen, in two separate assassinations: The first assassination was on May **2017 ,14**, in which Amjad Abdurrahman was killed, and the Southern Transitional Council holds responsibility for the assassination.

According to the inferences we have reached, Camp 20, which was led by Imam Al-Nubi, has carried out acts that confirm his support for the assassination, including: threatening Amjad and arresting him days before the assassination, and trying to take his body from the hospital after the assassination. Camp 20 also deployed its gunmen along the road leading to the victim's house, and when Amjad's friends went to console the family and leave the house, a number of them, including journalists, were arrested. The gunmen of Imam Al-Nubi's camp also launched an incitement campaign against Amjad after his assassination, calling him an infidel and atheist, and preventing the burial of his body in Crater cemetery.

While the second assassination we investigated, on June 2020 ,2, in which Nabil Al-Qaiti was killed. It is difficult to determine the party responsible for this crime against the prominent photographer, but we have reached information indicating that the photographer informed his colleagues that the security services in Aden caught a person he was tracing and it turned out that the person belonged to the Houthi group. We also found other information that the photojournalist sold video materials documenting the movement of UAE-backed forces with their vehicles toward the Belhaf oil facility in Shabwa governorate, which provoked the indignation of factions affiliated with the Transitional Council. After that he was killed, and in all cases, the responsibility lies on the control and investigation agencies of the recognized government in Aden to announce their findings, unconditionally.

Second:

Attacks on journalists are rarely investigated. For more than seven years since the assassination of Amjad Mohammed Abdulrahman, the recognized government agencies have not taken effective measures to achieve justice due to the influence of the suspects and their relationships with figures representing parties that have real and political weight in Aden. Even the witnesses we interviewed confirmed that the security and judicial agencies did not document their testimonies. The case of the assassination of Nabil Al-Qaiti is not much different, as the family reported through Nabil's brother, Fathi Al-Qaiti, saying: "We, the family of Nabil Al-Qaiti, confirm that the news of the arrest of the killers is not true. No accused or suspect has been arrested, and the case file with the competent authorities is registered against an unknown person. The case file has been closed in the prosecution office until further notice."

Third:

There are significant shortcomings in the procedures of the institutions responsible for investigating crimes and violations committed against journalists in Yemen. The reasons for these shortcomings vary from case to case, either because of limited resources, neglect of violations due to the ongoing conflict, or partly because of the politicization of crimes and suspicion that influential figures affiliated with the authorities controlling the institutions in the areas under their control are behind the perpetrators of the crime.

Background and Context

The book “Amjad is a Living Case,” published by Amjad’s colleagues, Mohammed Abdel Rahman, confirms that Amjad’s assassination “is linked to his role in political and cultural activism and his calls for secularism, which provoked the ire of the local extremist groups behind the killing.”

Aden Governorate is considered the economic capital of Yemen, as it is located at a strategic geographical point linking the Red Sea and the Arab Sea. It approaches international navigation routes, and overlooks Bab Al -Mandab strait that connects the continents of Asia and Africa, making it a vital waterway of global trade in ancient and modern times. In addition, Aden contains the largest oil refinery in Yemen.

The historical geographical and economic position of Aden made it a home for the coexistence of different cultures, and a destination for work from different nationalities in the past and from Yemeni governorates at the present time.

In late 2014, after the Houthi militants, supported by factions affiliated with former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, controlled the administrative capital of Yemen, Sana'a. Their control soon expanded to other Yemeni provinces, and in 2015, "Aden was a focus of fighting since the Houthis, alliances with Iran, besieged it for the first time in March. " ¹

In July 2015, a military operation was launched to liberate Aden "from the control of the Houthi militants and the forces of the Republican Guard loyal to Ali Abdullah Saleh" ².

The liberation operation, called the "Golden Arrow", was shared with the Arab coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the army of the recognized government, in addition to armed factions of the southern resistance and other formations.

After the Houthis and their allies were expelled, Aden lived a hot conflict between the components and armed factions that managed to expel the Houthi militants with the support of the Arab coalition. During this period, the polarization policy led to strengthening factions over others, and extremists found a foothold in Aden.

1 | THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THE LIBERATION OF ADEN AND THE HOUTHIS EXPELLED, REUTERS JULY 17, 2015

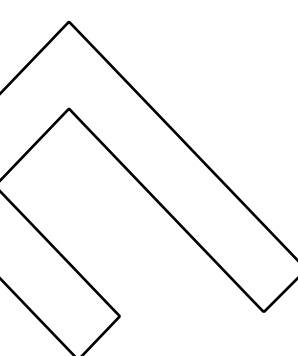
2 | WAR IN YEMEN: LARGE-SCALE MILITARY OPERATION BEGINS TO LIBERATE ADEN FROM HOUTHIS CONTROL, BBC, JULY 14, 2015

“Amjad is a living case”, a book issued by Amjad Abdurrahman’s colleagues, confirmed that the assassination of Amjad “is linked to his role in political and cultural activity and his calls for secularism, which raised the ire of local extremist groups behind the killing.”³

The dispute developed between the components and factions that expelled the Houthis from Aden, and rounds of inter-conflicts erupted. Perhaps the most remarkable of which were confrontations between forces from the army affiliated with the Ministry of Defense and security forces affiliated with the Ministry of Interior, and formations affiliated with the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council, after it declared self-administration of the governorates under its control.

Photojournalist Nabil Al-Quaiti documented the battles that took place in Aden between the forces and factions supported by the Arab coalition and the Houthis in **2015**. In addition to the battles between the army forces and the STC factions in **2020**. He also documented sensitive details and events.

The conflicts and confrontations that Aden has experienced have reflected on human rights in general and freedom of opinion and expression in particular. Over the past seven years, all conflicted parties have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.





Outstanding Braves

Months before his death, Amjad Abdurrahman and his colleagues organized a stand rejecting the demolition of an ancient mosque in Aden. After his death, the killers prevented mosque imams from praying for him on the claim that he was a secularist seeking to spread atheism and immorality. They were disturbed by the strong showing and influence that Amjad had, as he led a cultural movement in a critical and complex period in Aden in **2017**.

Nabil Al-Qaiti walked the path of hard struggle as a media photographer who did not complete his university education. He was fascinated by photography, so the son of a hard-working family became involved in the activities of the Southern Movement early on, and began covering them, and providing newspapers with pictures for free. Al-Qaiti won a journalistic award from the international **“Rory Peck”** Foundation.

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Amjad was a civil activist. He participated in what was called the February 11 Revolution in **2011**, as well as in the activities of the Southern Peaceful Movement and various civil society organizations in **2012**. In **2013**, he joined the Yemeni Socialist Party, and in 2014, he founded a student organization called the Civil Students League. By the end of 2015, he established Al-Nassia Cultural Club with a group of his colleagues.

At that time, the young man was just **25** years old. He was not married, but in love with a girl and was preparing to marry her. The last thing he wrote to her was: "I love you to the extent that in my moments of weakness, I can support you, even if I fall. ⁴"

On May **2017 ,14**, while Amjad was sitting at his computer at the café he ran, armed men broke into the place, threatened the customers, and shot Amjad four times, killing him then left.

As for Nabil Al-Quaiti , **38** years old, he walked the difficult path of struggle as a media photographer without completing his university education. He was passionate about photography, so the son of the hardworking family became involved early on in the activities of the Southern Movement, covering these activities and providing newspapers with photos for free. Al-Quaiti received the Rory Peck International Award for journalism.

Nabil took on the responsibility of his family early after his father passed away. He supported his four siblings and his mother. He later got married and became a father to three children, with his wife pregnant with their fourth child, who was born after her father's shocking death.

On June **2020 ,2**, while Nabil was returning home in Dar Saad area north of Aden, unknown gunmen shot him to death.

⁴ | AMJAD'S LAST POST TO HIS FIANCÉE ON THE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE 'FACEBOOK'

Outcomes:

Slowness and Collusion

Amjad Abdurrahman's family sent a letter to Aden Governorate Police, calling on the official authorities to investigate and follow up the assassination of Amjad, reveal the truth to the public, and arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of the crime.

According to the details we received, the family confirmed that they do not accuse any particular party or person of Amjad's assassination. Till today, the results of the procedures taken by the police and prosecutors are unknown. We have received information indicating that the security services worked to inspect the crime site, prepare a criminal report and report and submit it to the Public Prosecution in Aden Governorate. After that, the procedures did not move forward, as the defendants, according to our findings in this report, belong to an armed group affiliated with Camp 20, which is affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council, that controls Aden. This camp is led by Imam Al-Nubi, who is classified by some as a member of the Transitional Council, while classified by the Transitional Council as a member affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and who was pushed into the ranks of the Transitional Council ⁵.

In the assassination of Nabil Al-Quaiti, security leaders announced the arrest of a number of defendants. On the third anniversary of Nabil's death, his family confirmed in a statement that "until today no single defendant has been presented in the case of the deceased, although for years we have received assurances of the arrest of a number of those involved,". The family said in its statement on June **2023** ,**2**, "It saddens us that all leaders of all forms and types ignored the case." ⁶

Al-Quaiti had been working for Agence France-Press (AFP) since **2015**. A report by the agency mentioned that the killers fled the crime scene right after the assassination ⁷.

⁵ | INTERVIEWS WITH THREE **STC** SOURCES IN JULY **2024**

⁶ | STATEMENT BY THE FAMILY OF NABIL AL-QUAITI ON ADEN AL-GHAD WEBSITE

⁷ | JOURNALISM BLEEDING: A REPORT BY THE CENTER FOR FREE MEDIA, **2022**

Our Report

Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism relied on various sources closely related to the events that preceded his death, including one of his friends who was chased. Whereas we followed the events that occurred after the assassination of Amjad from one of the journalists who was arrested at the condolence gathering. We also were able to reach an eyewitness of the killing of Amjad.

Threats

Beside the details of the assassination of Al-Quaiti, Free Media obtained more detailed information about the assassination of Amjad Abdurrahman. By analyzing the recent actions of Amjad and Nabil, and knowing the first indicators they faced: harassment, threats, or any kind of abuse, to which the victims were subjected before the assassination, we **found the following:**

Amjad's Arrest

Amjad continued to adopt civil and cultural activities in the temporary capital of Aden. In one of the initiatives, he collected books from people and made them read, organized mini-book fairs and arranged intellectual and political seminars: **«We got little support from the Red Crescent, we worked in partnership with the Aden Reads initiative, we used to hold seminars like those of Mohammed Luqman "disagreeing with the other" and about the Adeni woman »**, according to one of the team members who worked with Amjad.

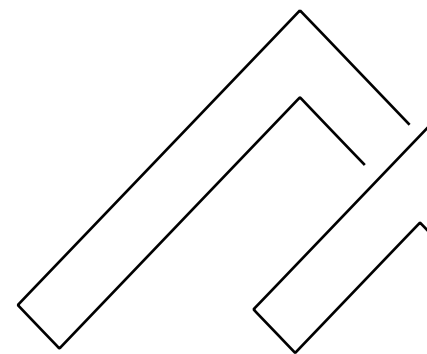
The last seminar was inside the headquarters of the Yemeni Socialist Party. The hall was filled with attendees, Amjad had a great impact, and was able to mobilize people in difficult circumstances. This seminar resonated and disturbed the extremist and armed voices

controlling Aden: **"Who is this who grows his head on us?** We knelt down all the people, no voice rises and he came to worry us.. I believe that it was this seminar that precipitated the decision to assassinate Amjad because of the large number of young people," said Hani Al-Junaid, a socialist journalist who was one of the organizers of the seminar.

Amjad and his collaborators of activists were threatened to close book fairs. At Al-Nassia cultural club Hamza Al-Moqaddam, Amjad's friend, was threatened in front of his colleagues. Six months ago, a member of Al-Nassia cultural club was threatened of death next to his house »because he wrote about lawlessness in Aden», **one of the journalists who worked with Amjad confirmed:** «We were expelled from the restaurants and places where we were sitting»

Amjad Abdurrahman confronted the Security Belt Forces of the Southern Transitional Council in Aden after the commander of the armed faction in Crater directed the demolition of Al-Hamd Mosque, which has an archaeological character in order to build shops in its place. Amjad and his colleagues organized a stand rejecting the demolition. At that time, Imam Al-Nubi was in charge of supervising the demolition process and stopping the protesting youth. He was the leader of Camp **20**. Al-Nubi indeed sent his threats to Amjad, and then Amjad was arrested by the armed faction led by Imam Al-Nubi affiliated to Camp **20** in Aden: "We wanted to write but his family prevented us because they threatened him with death if he returned to work." They sent threats to his colleagues ⁸.

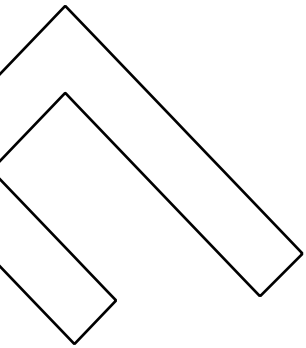
⁸ | INTERVIEWS SOURCES SPOKE EXCLUSIVELY TO THE FIELD TEAM
PRODUCING THIS REPORT



Nabil Surveillance

In addition to his work as a photojournalist, Nabil Al-Quaiti was working in the humanitarian field, he was able to build a wide network of relationships with others. He used these relationships to help the needy and adopt projects that benefit people, with the Corona pandemic that the world witnessed in **2020**. The epidemic spread in Aden city, and the government declared it a disaster city. A number of Nabil Al-Quaiti's neighbors died of the epidemic, the photographer Nabil wrote on his Facebook page, which is followed by more than a hundred thousand, about his neighbors mourning them. Later his family left the house to avoid infection with the Corona virus "Covid 19". As for Nabil, he took his camera and set out to document the hot battles that erupted between the forces of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), where the photographer stands, and the forces of the Ministry of Defense of the internationally recognized Yemeni government controlled by the Islah Party, which was represented by former President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his deputy Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, in May **2020**.

At that time, photographer Nabil Al-Quaiti had an archive of video clips of the STC's movements and the equipment they receive, by virtue of his proximity to them. According to sources, one of the Arab channels opposed to Emirati policy, bought visual materials from Nabil and after it showed in a documentary work, Nabil was eliminated.





Assassination

Amjad Abdurrahman works in Mix Internet café located on Kuwait Street in Sheikh Othman. Two gunmen broke into the café, the customers present were working on the computers, FREEZE, the gunmen threatened. There is no doubt that some of those present were able to take a peek into the crime to be an eyewitness.

The crime scene and the presence of customers, helped the Free Media Center team for investigative journalism to reach eyewitnesses to the crime that happened in **2017**, unlike the assassination of photographer Nabil Al-Quaiti, which took place at night in front of his house in **2020**.

Amjad was in the Internet café on Wednesday, May **2017**, **14**. After **11:30** pm, a motorcycle stopped in front of the café, and moments later the attendees heard the first shot, when they turned they saw the killer, he was wearing civilian clothes, approximately jeans and a T-shirt with

a mask on his face. Accompanied by another person dressed in traditional clothes: Mawaz, and a shirt with a military jacket. The killer fired the second shot towards Amjad, and then the third in serious areas of his body, head, chest, and neck. He repointed his gun at the customers: "Nobody moves, anyone who moves will be shot." He then whispered unclear words directed at Amjad and coldly fired a final shot, then went out and left the scene on a motorcycle.

The Adani Street is full of life, despite the compelling circumstances that the capital was going through at the time, but that night the street was empty because of security establishments in the area. "It seemed as if there was a plan to empty the street in order to kill Amjad and arrange to escape after committing the crime", one witness said. Although the police station was informed immediately after the crime, they arrived two hours later. Although they did not need more than five minutes to get to the scene.

The official traces the victim

The Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism monitored suspicious acts following the assassination of Amjad Abdurrahman. The most suspicious is the presence of the gunmen of Camp 20, led by Imam Al-Nubi, in all those acts that harassed the victim until the cemetery, and these actions are:

First: Attempting to take the body:

As soon as the news of Amjad's death reached his friends, they went to Al-Gomhuria Hospital after Amjad was transferred there. In the hospital they were surprised by a military team belonging to Camp 20 led by Imam Al-Nubi, wanting to take Amjad's body, they said: Honoring the dead is burying him, according to what journalist Hani Al-Junaid confirmed in his testimony to Free Media Center. Meanwhile, many young people were coming to the hospital: **"The killers saw that the situation was complicated and they could not take the body."**

Second: The deployment of armed men along the road leading to the victim's family home

The next day, a group of activists and journalists went to Amjad's family home. One of the group says that armed men and civilians were also "calling us the affiliated with organizations," hinting that Amjad and his companions were receiving support from outside organizations to spread atheism and immorality, a charge spread by Amjad's killers, and at home "we didn't find any of their neighbors because they were saying he is an atheist." On that road leading to Amjad's family home. The gunmen who were affiliated to Imam Al-Nubi, the commander of Camp 20, "spread out completely around the neighborhood and its allays. ⁹"

9 | INTERVIEWS WITH SOURCES WHO SPOKE EXCLUSIVELY TO THE FIELD
TEAM PRODUCING THIS REPORT

Third: The arrest of Amjad's colleagues

After four of Amjad's journalist friends left the family home, they were surprised by the establishment of an armed point near Amjad's house for members of the Nubi camp. The journalists are Hani Al-Junaid, Majed Al-Shuaibi, Hosam Radman, and Kanan Al-Kurihi.

According to the testimony of Hani the gunmen: « pointed weapons at us». **He added:** "Seconds later we saw a military crew with a weapon **12-7** aimed at us," then "they took us out of the car and we were shocked with electrical and strange torture tools,". Then they took the four, boasting, "They shot along the road until we reached Camp 20."

At the camp, Imam Al-Nubi personally came, looking for Hani Al-Junaid, and beat him. One of his members also came and beat Hani with a baton on the head until he bled. One of his members who wanted to take Amjad's body from the hospital, was present. He recognized them, pointed towards Hossam: **"This is the one who refused to allow us to take the body and said that you cannot take the body until after conducting an investigation and knowing the killers and those behind them"**, At that time they took Hossam out and continued the torture Al-Junaid confirmed that during his torture he heard someone say, "Don't kill him here, take him up and kill him," and they deluded him to be killed three times.

Fourth: Prosecuting the group associated with the victim

In Camp 20, Imam Al-Nubi came and told Hani Al-Junaid: We will reach your friends one by one, mentioning them by name. The investigators of Camp 20 and the rest of Al-Nubi members wanted to know the addresses of a group of activists who organized some events and activities with Amjad. They were repeating charges such as being funded by outside organizations, spreading atheism, and Amjad's cultural club Al-Nassia. Amjad and his colleagues denied the charges completely. Amjad and his colleagues organized some events that began to become popular, including encouraging people to read. All these data confirm that the civil, political and cultural activist Amjad Abdurrahman was killed because of his enlightenment activism.

Hani Al-Junaid confirms that during the torture they showed him a list of names «Free Media keeps the names mentioned by Al-Junaid» Hani did know them, but he did not know their addresses. Imam Al-Nubi came again, and threatened Al-Junaid: "We will reach your friends one by one, mentioning them by name."

We checked some names obtained from Hani Al-Junaid, who has left the country and is living as a refugee in South Korea. He confirmed that two of them received serious threats of elimination. One of them stated that members working in the police confirmed to him that he could not return to Aden, as he had moved to another governorate. Others left the country on a difficult journey that began with secretly leaving Aden out of fear for their lives, heading towards Hadramaut and Sayoun, and then outside the country, according to the testimonies they gave to us.

Fifth: Preventing the Burial

Three sources close to Amjad's family confirmed in their statements to the team preparing this report that military vehicles belonging to Camp 20 of the Transitional Council prevented Amjad's body from reaching the Crater Cemetery for burial on the afternoon of Wednesday, May **2017, 14**. Armed men had launched a widespread campaign of incitement against Amjad through mosques and social media, accusing him of disbelief and atheism, and prevented people from praying over him. The mourners were forced to search for another cemetery and managed, with great difficulty, to bury him in the Abu Harba Cemetery in Al-Shab City area of Aden Governorate.

The witness, Amjad's colleague and companion in recent activities, journalist Hani Al-Junaid, received a similar threat during his detention: "We will kill you just as we killed your friend Amjad, and we will not allow him to be buried in the cemeteries of Aden.. We have prevented all cemeteries from receiving Amjad. We will tie weights to his feet so that the fish will eat him. Your fate will be the same."

REPORTS OF COLLECTING EVIDENCE



The team preparing this report at the Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism obtained a copy of the investigation records related to the assassination of activist Amjad Abdurrahman. It was clear that the Sheikh Othman police station in Aden had started a sham investigation with individuals alleged to be friends of the victim. Through analyzing the investigation records, **we found:**

Interrogation Questions were not objective: In one of the investigation records, the investigating officer asked one of Amjad's friends: "Does Amjad belong to any particular group or party?" In another question, he stated: "According to our knowledge, the victim Amjad Mohammed belongs to a group that calls for freedom of opinion and expression, which is a group that apostated from religion. What do you say about that?" He also asked: "Are you aware of other individuals who share the same ideology as the victim Amjad?"

Bias in the Investigation: Through the questions posed, it is clear that the police department was trying, by any means, to validate what the killers were promoting that Amjad was an atheist and infidel. It appears that the investigating officer was biased and he focused on proving that Amjad was an atheist and an infidel, rather than concentrating on identifying the victim's killers. **These details show that the investigations may be biased and not objective**, reflecting an unhealthy environment for addressing human rights issues. A transparent and effective investigation is required to uncover the true facts surrounding the assassination of Amjad Abdurrahman and to hold the perpetrators accountable. All investigations should be designed to achieve justice, rather than to promote narratives that serve specific interests ¹⁰.

10 | REPORTS OF COLLECTING EVIDENCE WRITTEN BY SHEIKH OTHMAN
POLICE IN ADEN

Final results

First:

It is certain that activist Amjad Abdurrahman and photojournalist Nabil Al-Qaiti were killed in separate assassination operations in Aden, southern Yemen. The first assassination occurred on May **2017**, **14**, in which Amjad Abdurrahman was killed, and the Southern Transitional Council holds responsibility for his assassination. According to the evidence we have gathered, camp 20, led by Imam Al-Nubi, had committed actions that confirm its involvement in the assassination, including threatening and detaining Amjad days before his assassination, and attempting to seize his body from the hospital after the assassination. Additionally, camp 20 deployed its gunmen along the road leading to the victim's house, and when Amjad's friends went to console the family as they left the house, several of them, including journalists, were arrested. Furthermore, Imam Al-Nubi's gunmen launched a campaign of incitement against Amjad after his assassination, calling him an infidel and an atheist, and preventing his burial in the Crater Cemetery.

The second assassination we investigated was on June **2020**, **2**, in which Nabil Al-Qaiti was killed. It is difficult to determine the responsible party for this crime against the prominent photographer, however, we obtained information indicating that the photographer informed his colleagues that security forces in Aden caught a person he was tracing who turned out to be affiliated with the Houthis. Meanwhile, sources close to Al-Qaiti's family accused UAE-backed factions of eliminating their son. Other sources suggested that the Transitional Council factions found out that Nabil had sold footage showcasing their military equipment on Al-Mokha coast and at Belhaf facility, which may be the reason for his elimination and blurring the case procedures. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the law enforcement and investigative agencies under the internationally recognized government in Aden to announce the results of their findings unconditionally.

Second:

Attacks against journalists are rarely investigated. For over seven years since the assassination of Amjad Abdurrahman, the recognized government agencies have not taken effective procedures to achieve justice because of the influence of the suspects and their connections with figures representing powerful political entities in Aden. Even the witnesses we interviewed confirmed that security and judicial agencies did not document their testimonies. The situation is not much different in the case of the assassination of Nabil Al-Quaiti, no one knows, including his family, where the government agencies' procedures have reached.

Third:

There are significant shortcomings in the procedures of the institutions responsible for investigating crimes and violations committed against journalists in Yemen. The reasons for these shortcomings vary from case to case, either because of limited resources, neglect of violations because of the ongoing conflict, or partly because of the politicization of crimes and the suspicion that influential figures affiliated with the authorities controlling institutions in the areas under their control are behind the perpetrators of the crime.

Recommendations:

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

2 The internationally recognized Yemeni government must include in its investigations the relationship between Amjad's murder and his cultural and civil work published and continued in the period preceded his death. Particularly, the investigation should examine the connection between his murder and the campaign of incitement and raids carried out by the leader of the Camp 20, Imam Al-Nubi, and his gunmen before and after the assassination. The government should find out any possible collusion between the perpetrators of the murder and the Sheikh Othman police station investigators.

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

4 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 impede investigations by national authorities. The team should be composed of investigatory, forensic and legal 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.

