

Reporters Without Borders

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Middle East & North Africa - Yemen

Escalating violence

Bloodbath in Yemen, violence throughout the region

27 September 2011

YEMEN – Third journalist killed since start of protests

Reporters Without Borders has learned that that *Al-Hurra* TV cameraman **Hassan Al-Wadhaf** died a few days after being hospitalized in a critical condition on 18 September as a result of a serious injury to the left eye.

He received the injury while covering attacks by security forces and *baltajiyas* (militiamen) on demonstrators in Sanaa, in which 26 people were killed. Journalists who were with Wadhaf on 18 September said men in civilian dress deliberately fired rocket-propelled grenades at the crowd.

Wadhaf is the third journalist to be killed since the start of the protests in Yemen. The first two were **Jamal Al-Sharabi** of *Al-Masdar* and **Mohamed Yahia Al-Malayia** of *Al-Salam*, who were killed on 18 March.



Reporters Without Borders, which offers its sincere condolences to Wadhaf's family, friend colleagues, urges the United Nations Human Rights Council to appoint a special rapporteur to investigate all the violations against the civilian population, including journalists, since the start of the protests.

Reporters Without Borders is very concerned about the surge in violence against journalists in Yemen since President Ali Abdallah Saleh's return from Saudi Arabia on 23 September. The atrocities against the civilian population are on the

increase.

Security forces fired on the Sanaa homes of two journalists on 23 September – **Rashida Al-Qiyali**, who is also a writer, and **Mujib Al-Hamidi**, who works for the newspaper *Al-Sahwa*. As **Abdul Salam Mohamed**, a journalist with the Saba news agency, left his home on 23 September, he was fired on by a sniper who fortunately missed his target.



The headquarters of the Union of Journalists came under fire on the evening of 23 September as government forces and pro-government militiamen (baltajiyas) tried to take control of Change Square. TV journalist **Abdel Majid Al-Samawi** was injured by sniper fire on the afternoon of the same day as he was leaving 60th Street, where government opponents had gathered. He was admitted to a hospital where doctors said his injury was not life-threatening.

Access to the independent news website *Yemen Nation* was blocked on 25 September for the second time since the start of the protests.

SYRIA – Another journalist arrested

Malak Al-Shanawany, a 25-year-old woman journalist and activist, was arrested on a Damascus street on 22 September. It was her third arrest since the start of the protests. The first time she was arrested, on 11 April, she was released four days later without any charges being brought against her. Officials also searched her home at the time, confiscating computers.

The second time was on 9 May, when she was arrested on Arnous Street in Damascus after taking part in a demonstration. She was freed on bail and her name was added to a list of people getting a presidential pardon.

Qais Abathili, an active netizen, was reportedly arrested on 25 September, while **Nizar Al-Baba**, another Internet activist, has been held since 21 September. This is the fifth time he has been detained since the start of the uprising.

The following are still held:

- **Jehad Jamal**, a blogger better known by the pen-name of "Milan," who has been detained since 21 September
- **Nizar Adleh**, a journalist working for many websites, who has been held since 6 September
- **Miraal Brouda**, a writer and poet who contributes to many websites
- **Ahmed Bilal**, a producer for *Falesteen TV*, who was arrested in the Damascus suburb of Mo'adamieh on 13 September
- **Amer Matar**, a journalist with the daily *Al-Hayat*, who was arrested on 4 September
- **Omar Abdel Salam**

- **Sami Al-Halabi**
- **Hanadi Zahlout**
- The bloggers **Rudy Othman** and **Asim Hamsho**
- Several cyber-citizens including **Abd Qabani** and **Ammar Sa'ib**
- **Manaf Zeitoun**
- **Mohamed Tahan**
- **Abd Al-Majid Tamer** and **Mahmoud Asem Al-Mohamed**

EGYPT

The trial of policemen Mahmoud Salah Amin and Awad Ismail Souleiman for the June 2010 murder of the blogger **Khaled Said** resumed on 24 September. According to the forensic report accepted by the court, Said was beaten unconscious and was then suffocated. After beating him, the policemen allegedly stuffed a bag of drugs into his mouth, preventing him from breathing. The policemen had until now insisted that Said died of an overdose of drugs that he took at the time of his arrest. After presentation of the forensic report, the defence lawyers obtained an adjournment until 22 October so that they can review the line of defence.

Reporters Without Borders hails the progress that has been made in the investigation and the trial but regrets that the media were barred from the courtroom during the 24 September hearing. A large demonstration in support of Said was held outside the courthouse. The 28-year-old Said's murder outside an Alexandria Internet café on 6 June 2010 triggered an outcry in the Egyptian blogosphere.

The authorities ordered the seizure of the latest issue of the weekly *Sawt Al-Umma* on 24 September on the grounds that it ignored reporting restrictions on former President Hosni Mubarak's trial. Restrictions began being imposed on 15 August, when Judge Ahmed Rifaat banned TV cameras from filming the proceedings in order to protect the "general interest," although they had been allowed to broadcast the first hearing.

On 7 September, the judge banished all journalists from the courtroom, imposing a complete news blackout on the content of the trial. This was one day before Hossein Tantawi, the head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, was due to testify. On 11 September, Judge Mustafa Hassan Abdullah banned the media and public from the court that is trying former senior officials for ordering men on camels to charge protesters last February. The press will not be allowed back until the verdict is announced, he ruled.

Reporters Without Borders submitted a request to the attorney-general yesterday to be allowed to visit the blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad in Cairo's Al-Marg prison

ISRAEL / Occupied Territories – Journalist freed, photographer injured

Reporters Without Borders hails yesterday evening's decision by an Israeli military court to release *Al-Jazeera* Kabul bureau chief **Samer Allawi**, who was arrested at Allenby Bridge on 9 August, as he was about to reenter Jordan from the West Bank after visiting members of his family in Sabastia, near Nablus.

Interrogated at the Jalameh interrogation centre the day after his arrest, Allawi was accused of links with the armed wing of Hamas and endangering Israel's security. The military court in Ofer had until now kept on extending his detention at weekly hearings. Reporters Without Borders wrote to the Israeli military authorities on 7 September demanding his release.

Chris Huby, a French photographer working for the agency Le Desk, was injured by a tear-gas round while covering a Friday demonstration in Nabi Saleh, a village near the West Bank city of Ramallah, on 23 September ([photos](#))

Speaking from Ramallah general hospital, Huby told Reporters Without Borders: "*The soldiers did not fire the tear-gas round in the air, they fired it level with the ground. It ricocheted twice before hitting my right leg.*" He is due to be flown back to France soon.

MOROCCO – Blogger convicted

The blogger **Mohamed Dawas** was sentenced to 19 months in prison and a fine of 20,000

dirhams by a court in the northern city of Tétouan on 22 September. During his arrest on 5 September on a trumped-up drug trafficking charge, Dawas was beaten and forced to sign a confession. When his trial began on 8 September, his lawyer, Abd Essadek Elbichtawui, told Reporters Without Borders his arrest was “purely political.”

BAHRAIN – Al-Wasat banned from covering parliamentary elections

Reporters Without Borders has learned that journalists working for the opposition newspaper *Al-Wasat* were prevented from covering the elections for just under half the seats in parliament that were held on 24 September. The relevant agency did not issue them with accreditation. In addition, the journalist **Reem Khalifa** was, for example, not allowed into a voting station in Sanabis, a district just to the northwest of Manama.
