

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/middle-east-north-africa-journalists-targeted-by-23-03-2011,39852.html>

Middle East & North Africa - Middle East & North Africa

Violences

## Journalists targeted by governments desperate to control news

23 March 2011

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### LIBYA

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Fatma Ben Dhaou**, a Tunisian journalist who had gone to Libya for the newspaper *Le Quotidien*, is missing. Her newspaper has not heard from her since 18 March, when she was heading to Tobruk with another Tunisian woman journalist.



The four *Al-Jazeera* journalists – two correspondents and two cameramen – who were arrested at Zenten, near the Tunisian border, are still being held by the pro-Gaddafi forces in Tripoli.

The three journalists who were arrested near Adjabiya on 19 March – **Dave Clark** and **Roberto Schmidt** of *AFP* and **Joe Raedle** of *Getty Images* – were released in Tripoli last night and arrived in Tunisia at midday today.

Current tally  
2 dead  
1 missing  
4 arrested

### YEMEN

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Mohamed Yahia Al-Malayia**, the correspondent of the newspaper *Al-Salam*, has died from the gunshot wound he received when he was hit by a sniper during the deadly attack by government forces on demonstrators in Sanaa's Change Square on 18 March. The toll from the shooting was at least 52 dead and 126 wounded. Malayia's death brings the number of Yemeni journalists killed since the start of the unrest in Yemen to two. The other fatality was *Al-Masdar* photographer **Jamal Al-Sharabi**, who was also a victim of the shooting in Change Square on 18 March.

Malayia was the son of the spokesman of the Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Al-Islah) in the northern province of Amran, of which Al-Salam is the mouthpiece.

Reporters Without Borders offers its condolences to the families of these two journalists, who paid with their lives for their determination to report the news. Such atrocities are unacceptable.

*Al-Jazeera's* Sanaa bureau was attacked at dawn yesterday by a score of gunmen who seized equipment. The Doha-based TV station said it did not know who carried out the raid, but pointed out that uniformed police stationed nearby did not intervene when gunmen with their faces covered by scarves remained on the roof of an adjoining building until midday.

The raid follows the expulsion of two *Al-Jazeera* correspondents, **Ahmed Zidan** and **Abdulhaq**

**Saddah**, on 19 March on the grounds that they were “working illegally in Yemen” and “inciting violence.” The authorities had confiscated transmission equipment from *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* on 11 March on the grounds that their coverage of protests in the south of the country was biased (read the release: <http://en.rsf.org/middle-east-north...>).

Current tally  
2 dead  
8 deported

## SYRIA

Since mid-March, the authorities have been cracking down hard on journalists and media covering the anti-government demonstrations taking in various cities, especial the southern city of Deraa, which is located near the Jordanian border.

The Syrian Human Rights Monitoring Centre said journalist, writer and activist **Louay Hussein** was arrested yesterday after a raid on his home in the Damascus district of Sahnaya. A political prisoner from 1984 to 1991, Hussein had issued a call on the Internet for solidarity with the demonstrators in Deraa who were the victims of a heavy-handed crackdown last weekend.

Employees of *Orient TV*, a privately-owned satellite TV station that broadcasts from the United Arab Emirates, have been threatened by senior Syrian security officials because of its coverage of the anti-government demonstrations in Deraa and other cities. The station also interviewed opposition figures. Reporters Without Borders has been told that three employees resigned after getting threatening phone calls. As a result of the harassment, the station's management announced that it would no longer cover events in Syria.

## GAZA STRIP

Reporters Without Borders condemns the use of violence by the Hamas government's security forces on 19 March against journalists who were covering a demonstration in Gaza City by young people to call for reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. *Associated Press* cameraman **Khaled Mohammed Al-Ashqar** and his driver were beaten and briefly detained. Members of the security forces then ransacked the Reuters bureau in order to seize video footage showing the attack on Ashqar. Equipment was vandalized and employees were threatened and attacked. One employee was threatened with being thrown out of a window. Another had his hand broken.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported in a press release on 20 March that give plain-clothes security officials had raided the offices of *France Télévision* and radio *Al-Manar* on the 11th floor of the Bank of Palestine building in the west Gaza City district of Rimal on 19 March. Four individuals also stormed into the bureau of the Japanese TV station *NHK* on the same floor. Similar raids were carried out on the *CNN* bureau and *Mayadeen Media*.

Freelance journalist **Manal Hassan Al-Nawajha** was also attacked by a police officer while covering the use of force to disperse the demonstrators from the Square of the Unknown Soldier on 19 March. Her camera was seized and she was held by the police for more than two hours.

The Hamas government issued an apology but such behaviour is unacceptable. Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities controlling the Gaza Strip to carry out an investigation and to punish those responsible. Clear and precise instructions should be given to the security forces to avoid any recurrence of such violence and to ensure that journalists are free to work.

**Ahmed Al-Baghdadi**, a journalist who works for the Palestinian Authority television station, was arrested on 20 March in Gaza City and was kept blindfolded for 48 hours until his release last night.

Baghdadi said: “I was among a group of friends who had gathered at the home of the journalist

Alaa Al-Tahrawi, when internal security agents raided the house and took me, Tahrawi and three other people off to their headquarters at Deir Al-Balah. They took our ID cards, mobile phones and other personal documents. Then they interrogated us, accusing us of meeting in order to organize marches. When I said I was a journalist, they made fun of me, saying they did not recognize us as journalists. They asked if I took part in the 15 March demonstration. I said I had, adding that many Hamas journalists had also participated. I asked them if they had arrested and questioned those journalists as well. They kept me blindfolded for 48 hours, insulting me and hitting me.”

## BAHRAIN

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced yesterday that it has withdrawn the licences of 2 Connect, a local telecommunications company and Internet service provider run by Ibrahim Sharif, the head of the opposition party Waad, who was arrested last week. The TRA gave no reason for the decision, which will take effect on 27 March. It just warned 2 Connect clients that they have until then to switch to another ISP.

A message posted on the blog of the journalist **Lamees Dhaif** says there has been no news of her since 15 March ([http://www.lamees.org/articles1/p2\\_articleid/374](http://www.lamees.org/articles1/p2_articleid/374)).

## KUWAIT

Information minister Rudhan Al-Rudhan has brought a legal action against the Shiite newspaper *Al-Dar* for describing the deployment of Saudi troops in Bahrain as an “invasion,” *Al-Dar* editor Abdel Hossein Al-Sultan said. The newspaper used the headline “Saudi invasion” for an article criticizing the arrival of Saudi soldiers in Manama on 14 March at the request of the Bahraini authorities to help quell unrest. Sultan said he was told not to publish anything that could harm relations between Gulf nations.

## EGYPT

Soldiers arrested an *Al-Jazeera* journalist yesterday in Cairo while he was covering a demonstration outside the national TV station to demand the overhaul of its programming following President Hosni Mubarak’s departure.

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