

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/yemen-threats-and-arson-attacks-on-media-16-03-2012,42132.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Yemen

Impunity

Threats and arson attacks on media in southern Yemen

16 March 2012

Reporters Without Borders is very concerned about the intimidatory practices of Yemen's security services, particularly in the south of the country.

"Threats, harassment and abduction of journalists, and blockades and torching of premises and newspaper consignments have become standard fare for Yemen's independent media," Reporters Without Borders said. "The security services responsible for these abuses must cease to enjoy total impunity."

Police and anti-terrorism personnel led by Sanad Abdallah Bader Al-Maisari, a local official, threatened *Agence France-Presse* stringer **Fawaz Mansour Al-Haidari** in Mansoura, in the southern governorate of Aden on 10 March.

Three gunmen burst into his home at around 9:30 p.m., insulted him and aimed their guns at him. He has been hounded by the security forces for nearly three months and has received threatening messages on his mobile phone. Al-Maisari reportedly told him: "No one will be able to protect you. I will kill you. You can no longer live in Aden. And if you tell anyone about this, I will kill you. I give you three days."

Before leaving his home, the security agents methodically erased all the threatening messages that had been left on his mobile phone. After the intrusion, Al-Haidari filed a complaint about it with the police, who said they would investigate.

The Aden region has few independent journalists. Al-Haidari is one of the brave reporters covering the south of the country although it exposes them to the risk of reprisals by the intelligence services.

A bus carrying 19,000 copies of the newspaper *Al-Akhbar Al-Yom* and the English-language newspaper *Yemen Fox* that were to have been distributed in the southern cities of Taiz, Lahij, Ibb and Dhalie was intercepted in Al-Houta on 11 March and its contents were torched. Two men threatened the driver at gunpoint and forced motorcyclists to remove the fuels from their tanks and use it to burn the newspapers. Reprisals would be taken against the distributors if they continued to sell these two newspapers, the gunmen warned.

Yemen Fox reported that the premises of *Al-Akhbar Al-Yom* in Dhalie governorate were the target of an arson attempt on 8 March. Gunmen also closed the newspaper for two weeks and set fire to newsstands that sold it.

The latest in a long series of media freedom violations, these shocking attacks and threats are

being carried out or orchestrated by the security services with the aim of reining in independent media that distinguished themselves by their coverage of last year's mass uprising.

Reporters Without Borders already reported [blockades of the newspapers](#) *Al-Thawra* and *Al-Jomhuryah* in early February.

The national security authorities are meanwhile continuing to restrict the movements of *Al-Jazeera* correspondent **Ahmed Al-Shalafi**. His passport, confiscated by former interior minister Rashed Al-Masri when he tried to renew it a year ago, is still being held by the authorities. This prevents him from travelling around Yemen and doing his job as a reporter.

An *Al-Yemen Al-Yom* TV crew consisting of reporter **Ahmed Ghilan Al-Mathi'r**, cameraman **Razmi Al-Harazi** and driver **Faysal Al-Shami** was detained for several hours by members of the first armoured division while doing a report on illegal arrests in Sanaa on 13 March. The soldiers confiscated their equipment and mobile phones.

You can download those documents on our website :

- Threats and arson attacks on media in southern Yemen - arabic version, (PDF - 39.2 kb)
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