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<http://www.rsf.org/yemen-houthi-rebels-continue-to-target-11-03-2015,47673.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Yemen

Persecution

Houthi rebels continue to target media

11 March 2015

Yemen's Shiite Houthi rebels are still persecuting journalists, media outlets and media support institutions eight months after seizing control of the capital, Sanaa, and a large swathe of the country. Their methods include death threats, abduction and looting.

The Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate (YJS) has registered no fewer than 67 cases of such methods being used to prevent journalists from doing their work.

In one of the latest cases reported by the YJS, Houthi rebel militiamen kidnapped two journalists working for the daily *Akhbar Al Yaoum* – **Abdelwahed Nejjar** and layout editor **Fouad Zoubayri** – from the Ashoumwaa printing and publishing house on 5 March.

Printing equipment, tables and chairs were also looted and taken away in trucks that had been parked outside for 18 days or more. The YJS and other local NGOs have urged the Houthis to release the two journalists.

People who were staging a sit-in inside a camp to demand that the Houthi rebels withdraw from the Ashoumwaa centre were threatened at gunpoint and forcibly dispersed by rebels on 26 February.

Reporters Without Borders deplores the harassment of Yemen's media by the Houthi rebels, which increased in August and again since their arrival in the capital in September.

"We condemn these deliberate attacks on media and journalists, which pose a real danger for freedom of information and the political transition under way in Yemen," Reporters Without Borders deputy programme director Virginie Dangles said.

The Houthi rebels have established themselves as Yemen's new masters in a matter of months. After moving into the capital in September, they seized control of the main government buildings in January.

In another instance of Houthi harassment of the media, more than ten press photographers were badly beaten members of an armed group linked to the main Houthi rebel militia while covering a peaceful demonstration on 28 January.

Most of the victims worked for foreign media, including Reuters, *Al-Aalam* TV and *France 24*. Unidentified gunmen also threatened *Al-Jazeera's* Sanaa bureau chief.

The Houthi advance on the centre and south of the country has led to an increase in clashes with Al-Islah, a Sunni party linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and run by the Al-Ahmar clan, as well as with Sunni tribesmen and with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).
