

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/yemen-leading-journalist-murdered-in-18-03-2015,47694.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Yemen

Gunned down

Leading journalist murdered in Sanaa

18 March 2015

Reporters Without Borders is deeply shocked by today's murder of leading Yemeni journalist and human rights defender Abdul Karim Mohammed al-Khaiwani. Witnesses said gunmen on a motorcycle shot him several times near his home in a residential district of Sanaa.

A former editor of *Al-Shoura* (a pro-democracy newspaper closed in 2005) and winner of Amnesty International UK's *Special Award for Human Rights Journalism under Threat* in 2008, he had received many death threats in recent years.

"We are deeply saddened by the news of this great journalist and human rights defender's murder," said Reporters Without Borders deputy programme director Virginie Dangles. *"We urge the authorities to carry out an independent investigation and to take whatever measures are necessary to protect journalists in Yemen."*

A supporter of the Houthi rebels, Al-Khaiwani was a visceral critic of the former Yemeni regime. Arrested in late 2004, he was convicted of insulting former President Ali Abdullah Saleh before receiving a presidential pardon.

Arrested again in June 2007, he was accused of links with the Shiite rebels in the north of the country and was placed in pre-trial detention on a charge of *"disseminating and publishing information liable to undermine army moral."*

Released on health grounds after a month, he continued to work with independent and opposition media outlets. After writing an article about prison conditions, he was briefly [abducted and beaten](#) in August 2007 by gunmen widely suspected of being members of the state security services.

Al-Khaiwani is the second journalist to be murdered in Yemen since the start of 2015. **Khaled Al-Washaly**, a reporter for the Houthi TV station *Al-Masira* in Dhamar province, was killed on 4 January 2015.

Yemen is ranked 168th out of 180 countries in the 2015 [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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