

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iraq-isis-major-threat-to-media-freedom-30-12-2013,45680.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Syria

New predator

ISIS – major threat to media freedom in both Iraq and Syria

30 December 2013

Reporters Without Borders condemns the attacks that the Jihadi group known as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) has carried out against news media and journalists in the past few days in both Iraq and the so-called “liberated” areas of Syria.

“We are worried and appalled by the growing number of ISIS attacks on journalists in Iraq and Syria,” Reporters Without Borders said.

“This Jihadi group uses all means possible to further its goal of controlling news and information, systematically targeting journalists and media that do not share its ideology. Intimidation, abduction, torture and murder – ISIS rules nothing out in order to impose a reign of terror.

“The local media play a crucial role in Syria, where news gathering and dissemination is becoming increasingly dangerous. Nowadays they are virtually the only media reporting what is happening in Syria, so attacks on them are real crimes against freedom of information. We firmly condemn this armed group’s actions.”

In a [communiqué](#) posted on Jihadi sites on 23 December, ISIS claimed responsibility for the [suicide attack](#) earlier that day on the headquarters of *Salaheddin TV* in Tikrit (180 km north of Baghdad), in which five of the TV station’s employees were killed.

The communiqué said the TV station was targeted because it put out lies and gave a distorted image of Iraq’s Sunni community. The statement also described how the attack was carried out.

ISIS carries out equally violent actions against journalists in the regions it controls in neighbouring Syria and has become one of the main threats to freedom of information in that country, as Reporters Without Borders noted in a report published on 6 November, entitled [“Journalism in Syria, impossible job?”](#)

It also bans the circulation of publications it regards as “ungodly.” On 24 December, for example, it prohibited the distribution of the magazines *Tlena Al-Huriya* and *Al-Ghirbal* in the northern province of Raqqah and burned copies of them.

ISIS has [ransacked media offices and kidnapped many Syrian and foreign journalists](#). This practice has intensified in the past few days, with attacks on at least five Syrian news outlets.

ISIS members attacked [Shada Al-Huriya TV](#), an Aleppo-based pro-opposition TV station, on 26 December and kidnapped five of its employees – **Amin Abu Mohamad, Maher Hasroumi, Abu Younes, Taim Shami** and **Sultan Al-Shami**.

The attack came just days after the station broadcast [an interview](#) in which Adnan Al-Araour, a famous salafi cleric, accused ISIS of treachery and murder.

On the night of 27 December, ISIS fighters stormed the premises used jointly by [Shahba Press](#) and *Hanano News Network* in the Aleppo district of Hanano, ransacking the offices, removing all the equipment, and kidnapping **Milad Al-Shibahi**, a reporter who has worked for both news outlets for more than a year.

Although the offices are located just a few meters from the revolutionary police headquarters, the revolutionary police did not intervene.

On 28 December, ISIS attacked *Fresh FM radio* and the *Kafranbel administration press office*,

looting almost all of their equipment and abducting six citizen-journalists – **Salah Abduladir Jaar, Ahmad Hamdo Al-Bayoush, Hamoud Jnaid, Abdullah Al-Salloum, Ahmad Muhammad Al-Jannack and Abdullah Mouafaq Al-Hamadi** – who were released yesterday.

ISIS is about to be added to the list of “Predators of freedom of information” which Reporters Without Borders updates every year and which already includes Jabhat Al-Nosra, another Jihadi group operating in Syria.

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (PNG - 243.1 kb)
-