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<http://www.rsf.org/maghreb-et-moyen-orient-foreign-media-obstructed-in-libya-09-03-2011,39735.html>

Middle East & North Africa - Middle East & North Africa

Doublespeak

Foreign media obstructed in Libya, threats in Yemen and Kurdistan

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Foreign media face obstacles in Libya

Since the start of the uprising on 16 February, Muammar Gaddafi's regime has been working overtime to control information on the fighting and abuses carried out on a daily basis against the civilian population. The Internet has been disconnected, the signal of several satellite channels has been jammed and national state television has been used as a propaganda platform by the regime. These are just some of the methods used.

In recent days the regime has been manipulating foreign media present in the country. The treatment of correspondents by the authorities varies radically depending on whether they have arrived in the country illegally or have been officially invited in.

Journalists working in Libya without an authorisation (most entered the country via the Libyan border with Egypt), and who are located for the most part in areas controlled by the rebels (http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/infographie/2011/03/08/carte-de-situation-en-lybie_1490269_3212.html#ens_id=1481986), are considered by the Gaddafi regime as Al-Qaeda accomplices.

About 100 foreign journalists have been invited into the country by the authorities over the past few weeks. Some have said that officials have put in place an arsenal of measures in an effort to stop them operating freely. The authorities nonetheless insist that this is not the case.

Measures include verbal and physical abuse, a ban on any reporting outside the "organized tours", violence and arrest. All non-authorized movement is strictly forbidden. Several journalists were questioned yesterday as they were trying to travel to Zawiyah (west of the capital Tripoli) where forces loyal to Gaddafi were engaged in a fierce counter-offensive. A team from the *BBC* was reportedly detained overnight and a reporter from Britain's *Guardian* newspaper was kept at a checkpoint for three hours. The only footage they could take in the end was that of pro-regime support groups.

Libyans who dare talk to these foreign media also take a risk.

Gaddafi's regime uses doublespeak with regard to these journalists. He has invited them because he needs them to spread his propaganda, but his attitude to them is hateful and contemptible. He accuses them of spreading false information on what is happening in Libya and has no qualms about referring to them as "stray dogs" (see Gaddafi's speech on 21 February <http://en.rsf.org/journalists-confined-to-their-04-03-2011,39681.html>).

Many journalists are now beginning to ask what their role is in this media masquerade (see article by **Peter Beaumont**: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/08/libya-regime-ill-treats->

[foreign-journalists/print](#)).

Yemen - Journalists threatened

In an interview with [Sihwa Net](#), the president of the Union of Journalists has talked of a worrying rise in threats and abuses against Yemeni journalists, in particular those working for foreign media. He is calling on the interior ministry to open an enquiry into the various cases identified by the union.

At Dar Saad checkpoint outside Aden today, security forces seized 4,600 copies of number 58 of the newspaper *Al-Oula Al-Yaoumiya*, which was to be distributed in Aden and Abyan. The daily had published a report on the failure of the presidential commission, presided over by minister Abdul Qader Hilal. The head of security in Aden, Abdel Qader Qiran, asked the newspaper to correct figures published in a previous edition concerning the number of people killed and wounded during last week's peaceful demonstrations in Aden.

The correspondent in Yemen for the Arab satellite channel *Al-Jazeera*, **Ahmed Shalafi**, received a threatening telephone call yesterday evening (from telephone number 734 133 836) aimed at him and his family. The message was: "Do you want us to free the prisoners so can they can threaten you?" It made an explicit reference to a story the journalist had covered the previous day involving incidents that had taken place in Sanaa central jail in which two people had died. The victims were alleged to be two prisoners apparently killed by guards, who used guns and tear gas to try to put down a rebellion in the prison.

The journalist had already been threatened by the security forces for his coverage of demonstrations by protestors calling for regime change and the departure of President Ali Abdallah Saleh.

While he was covering a sit-in by the capital's street cleaners on the morning of 7 March, **Jamal Nu'man**, news chief for the satellite news channel *Al-Arabiya* in Sanaa, was assaulted by a police officer who attempted to confiscate his camera.

Iraqi Kurdistan - Radio station threatened

Employees at *Yekgirtu*, a radio station in Kalar that is operated by the Kurdistan Islamic Union, have reported receiving threats, which they blame on the authorities. The threats were preceded by an armed forces raid on the Kalar-based radio station Dang on 6 March (<http://en.rsf.org/maghreb-et-moyen-orient-overview-of-media-freedom-08-03-2011,39693.html>), an attack on Naliya Radio and Television, a satellite TV station in Sulaymaniyah, on 20 February and a fire at the offices of the radio and TV station KNN at Erbil on 17 February (<http://en.rsf.org/iraq-death-threats-and-targeted-28-02-2011,39637.html>).
