



Women  
Journalists  
Without  
Chains

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Annual Report:

## Death and Imprisonment

Tracking Violations Against  
Journalists in MENA - 2022

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 19 (1948)

"1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”

Clauses 1 and 2 of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966

“1. Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered civilians.

.2. They shall be protected as such under the Conventions and this Protocol, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians.

Clauses 1 and 2 of Article 79 of Annex I Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, 1977

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Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Kingdom of Bahrain

State of Qatar

State of Kuwait

Sultanate of Oman

Republic of Yemen

Turkey

## **Introduction**

Considering the proliferation of crises in the Middle East and North Africa region, journalists are increasingly targeted and repressed by totalitarian governments and other actors in the region. Defending journalists while exercising their work reflects the progress of peoples, societies, and international politics. To this end, the United Nations' principles stress on respecting the freedom of press and expression, including Resolutions 1738 and 2222 adopted by the United Nations Security Council on December 23, 2006, and May 27, 2015, respectively, regarding the protection of journalists during armed conflicts.<sup>1</sup>

Journalists in the Middle East and North Africa are exposed to violations, censorship, and harassment, and they are subjected to killing, which is considered the most extreme form of censorship of the media. They are also subjected to abduction, torture, political trials, physical assaults, intimidation, and all kinds of harassment, whether in fieldwork or the digital field. Considering impunity for crimes committed against journalists, every party is undermining the basic principles of protecting journalists, mainly the security services and governments in the Middle East and North Africa.

Working in an environment of repression and denial of freedom of opinion, expression, and press work, render journalists to work in an atmosphere of fear that impedes the free circulation of information, opinions, and ideas for all citizens. Female journalists are particularly affected by the violations, threats, and assaults, which in 2022 have exceeded the numbers in previous years. Threats in the digital

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution No. 1738 states that "journalists, media personnel and associated personnel working on risky professional missions in areas of armed conflict should be considered civilians who should be respected and protected as such."

While Resolution No. 2222 called on states and regional and local organizations to benefit from best practices, experiences and lessons learned related to the protection of journalists, and condemned all forms of violations, breaches and attacks against journalists during the period of armed conflicts, and called on all parties during armed conflicts to respect professional independence and the rights of journalists, and also condemned the continued impunity of attackers of journalists from punishment, and called for them to be brought to justice.

sphere for female journalists are much greater than in the physical world. According to the UNESCO, research discussion paper "The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence Against Women Journalists", 73% of women journalists surveyed said they had experienced online threats, intimidation, and humiliation about their work.<sup>2</sup>

This paper documents press violation in the Middle East and North Africa in (21 countries): Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, Yemen, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and the occupied territories, Lebanon, Mauritania, Turkey.

## **Methodology**

Women Journalists Without Chains defines journalists as individuals who practice journalism or comment on political and public affairs in any country or international media, including written, visual, audio, and electronic media, and defines a violation as violations and assaults that cause harm to the journalist because of his work or limit the free exercise of his professional work, or limit his freedom.

The report focuses on violations mainly committed by government authorities, and other local actors.

The Monitoring Unit relies on obtaining information from:

- Open Source: news websites, newspapers, official government bulletins, television, and official pages for journalists; reports and statements of country's unions and organizations in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Websites of international organizations concerned with documenting and monitoring press freedom violations in the world.
- Personal communication of the Monitoring Unit with journalists or their families.

In the report, the term "journalists" is used to refer to both male and female journalists.

## **Executive Summary**

The Middle East and North African countries are losing the freedom of the press gained since the Arab Spring uprisings. The wave of repression and violation of freedom of opinion and expression has returned, paving the way for the return of

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<sup>2</sup> The Chilling: global trends in online violence against women journalists; research discussion paper, UNESCO, UNESCO, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377223>

authoritarian regimes that limit the work of journalists and impose laws that violate the right to freedom of opinion and expression stipulated in international laws and covenants.

Women Journalists Without Chains monitored and documented violations committed by government security services and the de facto authorities in the Middle East and North Africa in 17 countries against 1140 male and female journalists, including 219 female journalists. There were 12 killings, 6 in Syria, three in occupied Palestine, 2 in Yemen, and one in Turkey.

We stress that the information provided in this report, for 20 countries, cannot be considered exhaustive, but it allows us to present a representative picture of the gross violations in the Middle East and North Africa, and the denial of the right of hundreds of millions of people in this region to access information and facts.

The largest crimes of killings and arrests against journalists were recorded in Syria, occupied Palestine, and Iran.

Country	All Journalists	Female Journalists
Egypt	112	20
Iran	96	34
Algeria	9	---
Tunisia	132	37
Morocco	21	2
Iraq	127	
Syria	69	---
Sudan	52	20
Jordan	12	5
Morocco	21	2
Tunisia	132	37
Libya	11	2
Algeria	11	---

Mauritania	4	---
Palestine	195	36
Lebanon	48	14
Yemen	88	---
Turkey	50	10
Table (1) the of Male and Female journalists, who were Subjected to Violations During 2022		

### The killings

Country	Number of cases
Syria	6
Palestine	3
Yemen	2
Turkey	1
Table (2) Number of the killed Journalists according to Country	

Many countries in the Middle East and North Africa are among the dangerous environments for press work in the world, as dozens of male and female journalists have been killed since the nineties of last century. The year 2022 was also bloody for male and female journalists, as two female journalists and nine male journalists were killed, and some of them were killed under torture.

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Al-Jazeera reporter Sherine Abu Aqleh, 51, was shot dead by Israeli forces on May 11, 2022, who targeted her and fellow producer Ali Smoudi with live bullets, which led to her death after she was hit in the head and Smoudi was wounded by a bullet in his back. The martyr "Abu Aqleh" and "Samoudi" were covering the Israeli soldiers' raid on the Jenin camp in the northern West Bank.

On June 1, 2022, journalist Ghufraan Haroun Hamed Al-Warasneh, 31, was killed by Israeli army bullets at the entrance to Al-Arroub camp, north of Hebron. She worked

on Radio Al-Rabaa and was an intern at Palestine TV, and also worked on some local radio stations such as (ONP), Siraj, and Orouba.

In Syria, in August 2022, Ahmed Tayseer Al-Issa Al-Khatib (27), a Syrian journalist and media activist from Daraa, was killed. According to sources close to the family, "the family obtained information from Sednaya Military Prison about Ahmed's death as a result of torture and medical negligence." The family received news of his death from the Syrian regime on August 16, even though the authorities have concealed his arrest since he was abducted at a regime military checkpoint at the end of 2018 while trying to move from Damascus to his hometown of Giza in Daraa.

Weeks after Al-Khatib was killed, in November 2022, the media activist Ahmed Odeh Al-Ma'bar was killed under torture in Sednaya Military Prison, according to a source in the family, who said that "the family received a statement from the government civil registry, confirming his death." Al-Maabar was arrested in 2018, although he was subject to a settlement. Before that date, he was documenting the violations committed by the Syrian regime against civilians and was a reporter for electronic newspapers.

In Yemen, two cases of murder were recorded. Photojournalist Fawaz Al-Wafi was found dead in his car with stab wounds. the journalist Saber Al-Haidari, who was killed in a terrorist bombing that targeted his car in Al-Mansoura district in Aden governorate; which is under the control of the internationally recognized government and the Southern Transitional Council, respectively.

In Turkey, journalist Güngür Arslan, owner, editor-in-chief, and columnist of Ses Kocaeli daily newspaper was killed in February in an attack in front of the newspaper's office after reports of corruption and nepotism in the country were published by the newspaper. The suspect was arrested.

## **Arrests**

In 2022, the regimes in countries such as Tunisia, Algeria, Iran, and Morocco resorted to arrest, imprisonment, and military and political courts targeting journalists. In addition to most countries in the region and the world, the imprisonment of journalists is just one identical measure taken by authoritarian leaders seeking to curb press freedom.

Journalists' suffering begins with arrests, following threats, storming their homes, and abducting their families and relatives. During detention, the detained journalists suffered from humiliation, assault, and torture. They repeatedly complained of severe Assaults in prison, medical negligence, and denial of medical care. Most of them did not receive an indictment and were not allowed to meet with their lawyers, at least in the first weeks, only after days and weeks of their arrest.

In Egypt, for example, imprisonment terms have been extended for journalists who have been in pretrial detention for years during 2022. The same is true in the Emirates, where some writers and journalists completed their prison term of ten years several months ago, but the Abu Dhabi authorities continue to detain them. In Yemen, four journalists are still facing the death penalty in the areas controlled by the Ansar Allah group - the Houthis, beside other detained journalists for years without trial. On the other side, male and female journalists have been exposed to humiliation, prosecution and imprisonment in the areas of the internationally recognized government.

In Turkey, the security services, on the orders of the Public Prosecutor, arrested 20 journalists in June, and later released four of them, and kept 16 others, including four Kurdish female journalists, in Diyarbakir. They work on Kurdish websites and media outlets. The authorities detained them in pretrial detention on charges of "suspicion of belonging to a terrorist organization." In October, nine Kurdish journalists were arrested from several different regions on the same charges. These 27 journalists remain in prison at the end of the year.

## **Laws and Courts**

In 2022, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, governments along with most of the countries in the region, have announced or amended particularly tailored laws, allegedly to combat cybercrime and “Fake news” and manipulates the pretext of criminal defamation and vaguely worded legislation to criminalize press work, while ignoring the rule of law, abuses the judicial system, and exploits technology to spy on journalists and their family members.

In Iran, and conjunction with the protests and repression of journalists, since December 2022, a plan is being prepared in Parliament entitled "A Plan for Legal and Judicial Litigation to False News in Cyberspace", and a bill in the government

entitled "The Comprehensive Press Law". The provisions of the plan or the law were not known, but according to leaks from the press close to the government, it contains loose articles that prohibit filming demonstrations or accidents that lead to death or physical injuries.

Like Iran, in Jordan, some parliamentarians adopt draft laws and decisions that restrict the work of the press and prohibit the circulation of facts on important issues. This contradicts the practice of journalism and its mission to serve society and publish news and articles of public interest.

The GCC states have a set of broad laws around "public security" or "national security" that are used to punish freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the press, no matter how simple this practice is. In recent years, the Gulf states have added new repressive laws under the pretext of anti-terrorism or cybercrime laws, which contain broad terminology used in confronting freedom of opinion and expression and targeting any simple margin of freedom of the press. And update them accordingly, as the UAE did in 2022 by intensifying penalties in the Cybercrime Law and the Penal Code.

In Lebanon, the law prohibits the trial of journalists in a court other than the Publications Court. Nevertheless, security summons continues by the Information Crimes Bureau, and at other times by the Army Intelligence outside the jurisdiction of the court. Journalists and media workers in Lebanon are struggling to protect the freedom of journalists and restricting their trial under the applicable laws related to the Publications Law, while the authorities are trying, through people or militias, to push the journalists to places of criminals or terrorists.

It is noticed that during 2022, the security and judicial services in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa act quickly on reports against journalists while behaving reluctantly and slowing down the judicial procedures when any journalist reports on a threat or assault that he or she might have been subjected to.

The state of decline in freedom of opinion and expression during 2022 is a continuation of the state of escalation of repression, following the atmosphere of freedom, sensed after the Arab Spring revolutions. This is attributed to the domination of political, financial, and economic influence, and the fears of tyrannical regimes regarding information, facts, and the reaction of public opinion, in addition to the existence of totalitarian political regimes, especially in the Arab Gulf region, Egypt, Sudan, and Yemen, that practice censorship, and punish journalists with imprisonment, and expose them to physical and moral harm.

Tunisia joins these repressive political regimes that fight for freedom of opinion, expression, press, and media, which are considered the most prominent gains of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia (2011). However, this gain is on the brink of collapse, in light of the emerging totalitarian authority of the current President, Qais Saeed. In 2022, journalists sounded the alarm, due to the arrests, harassment, and violation of their freedom of press work. Where he issued a decree directly limiting the work of journalists, and military courts opened their doors to convict journalists. Intimidation of journalists has become common practice in Tunisia, where journalists and media professionals are subjected to acts of violence at the hands of the security forces and are often denied covering the trials.

### **Reporting on an Issue is a Crime!**

In many instances, in 2022 in countries like Lebanon, Syria, Iran, the Emirates, and Bahrain, the authorities persecute journalists and imprison them or dismiss them from their jobs, not because of inaccurate information or facts, but rather because they reported on many issues, as the UAE dismissed dozens of employees from a semi-governmental newspaper because of a report discusses the high cost of oil derivatives, and in Lebanon, a journalist was prosecuted for shedding light on the issue of child smuggling to Syria.

Dozens of female journalists were arrested in Iran, for reporting on the demonstrations and the brutal killing of a young woman by the morality police. More than 72 male and female journalists were detained in 2022 for reporting on the demonstrations, among the estimated 14,000 Iranians arrested during the suppression of demonstrations that broke out following the death of Mahsa Amini.

Freedom of the press in Algeria faces many red lines, as journalists are threatened with arrest and liquidation if they raise issues such as corruption, suppression of demonstrations, and opposition.

In Egypt, journalists were optimistic about the Egyptian President's announcement of the "national dialogue", but since then the campaign of repression and targeting of journalists has intensified, including detention, arbitrary dismissal from the public media, banning any news or information on the "Civil Democratic Movement" and its meetings to discuss the National Dialogue agenda. In October, five journalists were included in the terrorist lists!

## **The poor condition of the press institutions**

Independent press institutions face serious risks of closure or being banned from publishing, and in 2022 journalists faced several challenges, where their salaries have eroded due to the economic downturn following the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, and could hardly make ends meet. Many cases of arbitrary dismissal were seen in the public press and independent media outlets due to differences in opinion, in Sudan, the UAE, Lebanon, Iran, and Egypt, for example.

In Libya, for example, leaders of armed factions, believe that there are no independent journalists, but rather journalists affiliated with parties, which increases the risk of journalists, becoming victims of polarization to obtain protection and be able to work, as most of the existing media outlets are affiliated with parties to the conflict.

The economic conditions force journalists in Lebanon to practice self-censorship as a result of the lack of job security and the fear of arbitrary dismissal, which affects the freedom of the press, and their ability to express their opinions freely. Scores of journalists have been dismissed from two satellite channels during the year 2022.

The press in Mauritania continues to be fragile, weak, and declining, in light of the reliance of these institutions on a reform path led by the government to revive it, but it is feared that this will be at the expense of the freedom of press work, as the Journalists Syndicate complains of ignoring its representation in some committees.

Amidst this miserable situation, the year 2022 witnessed the return of the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate to work after 33 years of being banned by the Omar Al-Bashir regime. And journalists aspire to work in complete freedom, with the syndicate that defends their rights and freedoms. By convening the General Assembly, approving the press code of honor and the draft statute, and forming an election committee responsible for electing the dean of journalists and members of the Syndicate council.

## **The Islamic Republic of Iran**

The worst record since the establishment of the Republic

Press in Iran is banned, and practicing independent journalism is a crime punishable by the regime with politicized rulings of up to life sentence and sometimes the death

penalty. The authorities launched a relentless crackdown in the last four months of 2022, arresting scores of journalists.

Since September, security forces have continued to target anti-government protesters, killing hundreds and injuring thousands. Lack of transparency on the part of the Iranian authorities has made it difficult to obtain accurate numbers of casualties, which requires an urgent and independent international investigation, especially with the inability of journalists to cover the expanding demonstrations against the totalitarian regime in Iran.

The monitoring unit of the "Women Journalists Without Chain" organization was able to monitor violations against 96 male and female journalists and the detention of 71 male and female journalists in Iran, including 36 journalists who are still in detention until the beginning of 2023, including 20 female journalists. And 35 male and female journalists were arrested and most of them were released, pending their trial, including 12 female journalists.

Among these women journalists who are still in prison: Niloufar Hamidi, Elaha Mohammadi, Vida Rabbani, and Fahima Nazari, who has reported on the events and demonstrations since the murder of Mahsa Amini, by the morality police.

The detained journalists suffered humiliation, assault, and torture during arrest and imprisonment. They repeatedly complained of severe Assaults in prison, medical negligence, and denial of medical care. Most of them did not receive an indictment, only days after detention, and were denied legal assistance. On 8 January Bektash Aptin (also known as Mehdi Kazemi) died in the notorious Evin Prison. Aptin is a poet, writer, and human rights advocate. On May 15, 2019, Aptin was charged with "illegal assembly and collusion against national security" and "spreading propaganda against the state." He was sentenced to six years in prison. Bektash Aptin entered Evin Prison in Tehran on September 26, 2020. At the end of 2022, Aptin fell into a coma as a result of complications from his infection with Covid-19, and he died of it at the age of 48.

Since the outbreak of the nationwide protests in Iran, following the death of Mahsa Amini, pressure on the press and journalists has escalated. The authorities have suspended newspapers and threatened agencies, the Press Censorship Authority in Iran has imposed new conditions for publication, and the Persian-language media abroad have been subjected to the greatest threat and pressure. This pressure and threat on journalists and their families is abhorrent and designed to instill fear and is having a chilling effect on freedom of expression in Iran. Also, since December

2022, a plan has been being prepared in Parliament entitled "The Legal and Judicial Follow-up Plan for Fake News in Cyberspace", and a bill by the government on "The Comprehensive Press Law". The details of the plan and the bill is not known yet, but the leaks indicate serious restrictions on the "citizen journalist" and on publishing news on social networks.

In 2022, Iran imposed strict and targeted restrictions on the use of the Internet in an attempt to hinder the gathering of demonstrators and prevent images of suppressing demonstrations from reaching the outside world. Netblocks, the internet accession monitoring website, described the internet restriction as "the most stringent internet restriction" in Iran since the crackdown on the November 2019 protests, when the country experienced an unprecedented near-total internet outage.

### Suppression Plan and Comprehensive Press Bill

In conjunction with the protests and suppression of journalists in Iran, a plan is under preparation since December 2022, in the Parliament entitled "A Plan for Legal and Judicial Follow-up to False News in Cyberspace", and a bill by the government entitled "The Comprehensive Press Law".

The provisions of this plan or the bill have not been published, and keeping them secret from journalists and media raises concerns about new legislation to escalate repression.

Some local media referred to some provisions of the plan that criminalize publishing on social media networks or so-called citizen journalism: any depiction of “scenes of crimes that lead to loss of life or life imprisonment, crimes that lead to amputation of limbs, or premeditated crimes against physical integrity, or accidents that lead to death or physical injury, or terrorist acts, except cases stipulated by the law, including Article 131 of the Code of Criminal Procedure” is considered a crime and the perpetrator is sentenced to imprisonment of the fifth degree.!

### **First: Trials, Arrests, and Detention of Journalists**

Iranian authorities arrested, during the past year, mainly after the protests, more than 71 journalists, most of whom were later released and more than 31 male and female journalists remained in prison, in addition to five female journalists who were arrested in January 2023, as shown in Table (1) below.

## Imprisoned journalists:

No.	Name	Date of arrest	Details
1.	Morteza Hajibian	19 May	Freelance journalist, he was sentenced to two years and six months in prison.
2.	Alya Matalib Zada	12 April	Freelance journalist, she was sentenced to three years in prison.
3.	Amirbas Azarmazand	Unknown	Journalist in Samt, Shargh, and Jahan e Sanaat newspapers, he was sentenced to three years and seven months in prison in 2022
4.	Payam Khodabandeh Lo	21 September	Freelance journalist, he was arrested from his home in Hamedan.
5.	Niloufar Hamidi	22 September	<p>Journalist and reporter at Sharq newspaper, she was arrested from her home. She was the first journalist to report on the death of Mahsa Amini, by the morality police.</p> <p>In early November, she was charged with assembly and collusion with the intent to act against national security and propaganda activities against the regime. (Iranian official statement)</p> <p>In December, she was transferred to a new prison.</p>
6.	Elaha Mohammadi	23 September	<p>Journalist and reporter for "Him Mihan" newspaper. Reported on the funeral of Mahsa Amini, from Saqqez city. She was arrested from her home.</p> <p>In early November, she was charged with assembly and collusion with the intent to act against national security and propaganda activities against the regime. (Iranian official statement)</p> <p>In December, she was transferred to a new prison.</p>

7.	Masoud Kordpour	22 September	Editor-in-Chief of Makrian News Agency, arrested from Boukan City Street.
8.	Alireza Jubari Darastani	25 September	A journalist at Mehr News Agency was arrested from the street in Tehran.
9.	Eman Beh Basand	22 September	A freelance journalist, she was arrested from her home in Tehran.
10.	Hashem Moezenzadeh	23 September	Freelance journalist, arrested from his home in Tehran.
11.	Rouh Allah Nakhi'e	23 September	Freelance journalist, arrested from the streets of Tehran.  He was released on bail on January 16.
12.	Veda Rabbani	24 September	Freelance journalist, Sharq newspaper, arrested from her home in Tehran
13.	Arya Jafari	25 September	Photojournalist at ISNA news agency in Isfahan.  In December he was sentenced to seven years in prison and 74 lashes in a criminal court and a two-year ban from leaving the country.
14.	Mehnoush Tufayan	28 September	A freelance local journalist, in Abadan city, was arrested in the city of Ahwaz.  She was released on January 12, 2023.
15.	Nisreen Hosni	30 September	A journalist at "Ittefaq" magazine, was arrested in the city of Bojnurd.
16.	Omid Tahan Bidhindi	4 October	Freelance journalist, and former correspondent of Mehr News Agency, arrested in Tehran.  He was released on January 11, 2023.
17.	Farkhonda Ashouri	17 October	Freelance journalist, and the former correspondent for Fars News Agency in Shiraz.

18.	Farzana Yahya Ebadi	19 October	A local freelance journalist, in the city of Abadan, was arrested from her workplace
19.	Mandana Sadeghi	19 October	Freelance local journalist, in Khuzestan. She was arrested with her husband (Reza Mohammadi) from her house in Abadan. Their whereabouts are unknown until the end of December,
20.	Maliha Drake	26 October	A freelance photojournalist, in the city of Shiraz. She was arrested while covering a protest in the city of Abadan.
21.	Ihsan Berbernach	27 October	Freelance sports journalist and columnist, arrested in Tehran. Former editor-in-chief of the news website "Sports Bank" and is known for his satirical social writings in recent years.  He was sentenced on January 10, 2023, to 18 years in prison, of which 10 years are enforceable. On charges of "inciting people to war and bloodshed by forming gangs and groups", "insulting sanctities", "computer crimes" and propaganda against the regime.
22.	Nazila Mrovian	30 October	A journalist for Iran's Dedaban website and Rowedad 24 website, she was arrested in Tehran.  Released on January 9, 2023.
23.	Maral Daravrin	1 November	A local journalist in Gilan Province.
24.	Omid Hormozi	5 November	Freelance sports journalist, arrested in Tehran, from his workplace after confiscating all his electronic devices.
25.	Kamyar Fakour	6 November	An environmental journalist and a labor activist. The security services arrested him from home with his wife, "Sarunaz Ahmadi," and took them to an unknown location.

26.	Ismail Khosri	12 November	A local journalist in the Kurdistan region, who was arrested in the city of Urmia.
27.	Fahima Nazari	13 November	A journalist at Intekhab news site was arrested at her workplace in Tehran. Works at some sites in the field of history.
28.	Milad Bidari	13 November	A local journalist in Gilan Province
29.	Sajjad Rahmani	29 November	Reporter and member of the Press House in Gilan Province. He was arrested in Maysan city.
30.	Ziba Omidvar	8 December	Freelance journalist, at WordPress.
31.	Maryam Qannad	11 December	Journalist at IRNA news agency. Released on January 11, 2023
32.	Mehdi Ghadami	1 January	Freelance journalist
33.	Nassim Sultan Beyji	12 January	Freelance journalist, working for Bidar and Paisht, the monthly newspaper, arrested at Tehran airport.
34.	Malika Hashmi	21 January	Freelance journalist, arrested after being summoned to court in Tehran.
35.	Mehrnoush Zare	22 January	Freelance journalist, arrested from her home in Tehran.
36.	Saeeda Shafie	22 January	Freelance journalist, arrested from her home in Tehran.
Table () Journalists detained in the prisons of the Iranian regime between January 01, 2022 and January 22, 2023			

The Iranian authorities arrested more than 35 journalists and released them in subsequent periods, some of whom were detained for several months.

	Name	Date of arrest	Details	Date of release
1.	Khosrow Kordpur	20 September	Journalist at Makrian News Agency	After a week of the arrest
2.	Yalda Mairi	21 September	Freelance news photographer, award-winning photographer.	20 December

3.	Batool Bilali	22 September	A local reporter in Sirjan, Kerman Province. And a journalist at Kermanfarda news website	Released on bail, on 1 October
4.	Fatima Rajab	22 September	Subh and Boursan newspaper correspondent	She was released after weeks, on bail.
5.	Samira Alinejad,	22 September	A journalist at the Kerman-e-No news website. She was arrested in Sirjan.	She was released after weeks, on bail.
6.	Mujtaba Rahimi	23 September	Freelance journalist	November 23, he was released on bail.
7.	Alireza Khoshbakht	23 September	Freelance journalist, arrested from the streets of Tehran.  Khoshbakht was charged with conspiracy and collusion with the intent to commit a crime against the security of the country.	December 25. He was released on bail.
8.	Navid Jamshidi	24 September	The editor-in-chief of the Asia News website was arrested in the middle of the night from his home.	After one month, he was released on bail
9.	Ahmed Rahlaby Saz	25 September	Freelance news photographer.	He was released after a few days, and in November he was sentenced to five years imprisonment. and banned from leaving the country.
10.	Saman Ghazali	25 September	freelance environment journalist, arrested in the city of Mahabad.	On November 24, he was released on bail  In December he was sentenced to a year in prison.
11.	Jabbar Dastbaz	25 September	Roudav website correspondent	After weeks  He was released on bail.
12.	Farshid Ghorbanpur	25 September	Journalist in Sobh newspaper, arrested in Tehran.	
13.	Bahar Aslani	26 September	Freelance photojournalist.	She was released after a few weeks

14.	Vahid Shamsuddin Nejad	28 September	Journalist at the French news channel Arte	November 22, he was released on bail.
15.	Sivash Soleimani	1 October	A journalist in Urmia city	Released one month after his arrest, on bail
16.	Mariam Mazrouei	5 October	Freelance photojournalist	After weeks
17.	Fardeen Kamanjar	6 October	A prominent journalist in the city of Sanandaj.	Released after days, on a bail
18.	Shahram Azmodeh	1 October	Editor-in-Chief of "Talash Hum" magazine. He was arrested at his home in Hashtabar, Gilan Province.	He was released on bail, on 3 October
19.	Safia Qarabaghi	1 October	Freelance journalist, in Zanjan city	She was released on bail, on October 8
20.	Ali Salem	3 October	A journalist at Sharq newspaper, he was summoned by the security services.	He was released on bail, on October 21
21.	Alborz Nizami	2 October	Journalist of Donyai Eqtesad newspaper, arrested from the newspaper's office in Tehran	9 October
22.	Soumaya Masrouf	8 October	ILNA news agency reporter, was arrested in Isfahan.	She was released on bail, on 11 October
23.	Adel Karimi	12 October	Photojournalist at Hajj Kurdistan news website.	4 December
24.	Muhammad Ramadani	12 October	photographer at ISNA news agency in Khuff city	Released on bail, on 23 October
25.	Hussein Ismaili	12 October	Freelance photojournalist, in Spzevar.	12 December
26.	Saeeda Fathi	16 October	Freelance sports journalist, she was arrested from her home in Tehran.	9 December
27.	Waheed Shadman	27 October	Freelance news photographer.	Released on bail, on 30 October
28.	Marzieh Amiri	31 October	Journalist at Sharq newspaper	17 December

29.	Yaghma Fakhshami	2 November	Freelance journalist, arrested after being summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence.	10 December
30.	Kianush Sanjari	13 November	Former Voice of America journalist, accused of propaganda against the regime.	Released on bail, on 16 November
31.	Reza Asadabadi	23 November	Journalist at ILNA news agency	27 December
32.	Pegman Rahbar	24 November	Editor-in-chief of Varzesh3 sports website	On the same day
33.	Nestern Farkha	27 November	A journalist at Sharq newspaper. She was arrested from her home.	Released on bail, on 5 December
34.	Mehdi Amirpour	27 November	A sports journalist, he was arrested from his home by the intelligence services.	6 December
35.	Mariam Vahedian	27 November	A journalist at ILNA News Agency, she was arrested at her home while celebrating her birthday.	Released after few days

Table () Iranian journalists who were arrested and released during 2022.

## Second: Threats, Assaults and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

### 1- Harassing Local Media and Revoking Licenses

Since nationwide protests erupted in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini, the pressure on the press community and journalists has escalated. Major incidents included:

August 10: "Jahan Sanat" newspaper was suspended after the Press Censorship Authority trumped up the charges of "violating the approvals of the Supreme National Security Council and the limits of journalism." The case was referred to the judicial authority, which issued the verdict without the newspaper's knowledge. The newspaper was reopened in December.

November: Directors of non-governmental newspapers expressed concern about the increased pressure on the media outlets. In a statement, they referred to the "discrediting of the local media" by the authorities, and considered what the authorities are doing to control the press as a punishment imposed on the media.

November 29: A local court sentenced Mostafa Jafari, the correspondent of ILNA News Agency in Qazvin, to a “ban on news work” by order of the third branch of the Qazvin Public Prosecutor's Office. In addition, he was banned from leaving the country for six months. The secretary of the sports service of ILNA was also banned from leaving the country.

November 29: Iran's Press Censorship Authority issued a directive requiring local Iranian media to refrain from displaying images and content it described as "contrary to social norms and in the field of hijab".

December 26: The Press Censorship Authority warned three newspapers and one news agency against covering news of the currency depreciation.

November 30: Keyvan Samimi, 76, journalist and editor-in-chief of Iran Farda magazine, is denied free calls even though the ban on phone calls has expired and the two-month disciplinary penalty imposed on him for an article on his page has expired. “Keyvan Samimi” has been imprisoned since December 2021 to serve his two-year sentence.

December: Reports spoke of the suspension, confiscation and revocation of the license of the fortnightly legal magazine "Maf" by the Kurdistan Region Guidance Department.

November 23: Hassan Abbasi, a journalist, and correspondent for local media in Kerman, was acquitted of all charges against him. A lawsuit was filed against him because of an economic report in which Abbasi was accused of lying and slander.

November 02: Nadera Valizadeh, environmental reporter of IRNA news agency, announces her dismissal from the agency "for signing a statement of support for imprisoned journalists." She also indicated that she had received direct and telephone threats from the security services.

## 2- Farsi-speaking channels and media abroad

Since the outbreak of the protests over the killing of Mahsa Amini, Iranian authorities have been threatening Persian-language channels abroad, just hours after the British National Union of Journalists said in November that journalists from Iran International, a Persian-language TV, were threatened by the security authorities of the Republic of Iran, the Iranian Minister of Intelligence declared the TV a terrorist

organization and threatened that Britain "will pay for its actions for making Iran the great country insecure".

The Iranian minister of intelligence pointed out, in November that "Iran International" is considered a "terrorist organization" by Iran's security apparatus, and he said, "The agents of that network are wanted by the Ministry of Intelligence, and any relationship with this terrorist organization (Iran International Channel) will be considered an entry into the field of terrorism and a threat to Iran's national security."

"Our journalists are harassed 24 hours a day on social networks, but these threats to the lives of British-Iranian journalists working in the UK are a significant and dangerous escalation of the regime's campaign to intimidate Iranian journalists working abroad," Iran International said in a statement.

The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence described the staff of Iran International, the Persian news channel based in west London, as "enemies of the state." In December, Sadiq Saba, news editor and former director of BBC Persian News, said the Iranian regime was "trying desperately to silence" the channel, targeting at least 12 of its journalists. "They are afraid. But we will not give up. We have a job to do." Reports said that some journalists had their funds frozen in Iran, that the authorities withheld their family's passports, and that their relatives inside Iran received more than 300 harassing phone calls in less than 10 days, often during the night.

In November, the British Daily Telegraph newspaper revealed an "Iranian assassination squad", and wrote in its report that this team threatened the lives of two journalists working for "Iran International" in London.

According to the Daily Telegraph, after a "hostile Iranian surveillance team" was spotted outside the home and office of these two journalists, the threat level rose and these two journalists now have 24-hour protection.

### 3- Continuous Violations

In addition to the detainees, Iranian security agencies have summoned and threatened dozens of male and female journalists.

December: Siddhadi Kasai Mahabadi, journalist and former editor of the weekly Mehrtaban magazine, is indicted for "computer dissemination with intent to harm others" and "disturbing the peace of public opinion". By the Ray County Public Prosecutor's and Revolutionary Office, where 6 charges and complaints were filed

against him by the municipality, the governor, the police force, and other plaintiffs. He was previously arrested in 2021.

November 2: Journalist Vida Rabbani told her family in a phone call from prison that she intends to file a complaint against the Evin prison authorities, for Assaults and ill-treatment. After she was transferred from Evin to Qarchak Prison. Vida was beaten, denied medical attention after her leg swelled, and denied access to basic medicines.

October 26: According to published reports, the body of journalist and Radio Farda correspondent Reza Haqiqat-e-Nejad was kidnapped by security forces in Iran from Shiraz airport. Reza Nejad, journalist and political analyst, who lived outside Iran for many years due to his anti-government positions, died after his illness in Berlin. According to his will and family request, the body of the Iranian journalist was returned to Iran for burial. Five days after the kidnapping of Reza's body, Iranian Revolutionary Guard officers secretly buried his body far from his hometown, without the permission of his family.

August 5: The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) informed its contracted journalists in Kurdistan of their expulsion. They were informed by sending a message on WhatsApp. According to reports, most of the dismissed journalists had several years of cooperation with the Iranian news agency (IRNA). And that the agency's managers in Sanandaj were not involved in this decision.

July 13: Yasser Norouzi, a journalist specialized in books, received threatening calls after publishing a report on some abuses in the book publishing market.

November 24: Security forces detained Pejman Rahbar, a sports journalist and editor-in-chief of the "Sa Asr" sports website, for a brief period.

## The Republic of Iraq

### War parties accomplices against the press

The Republic of Iraq remains one of the most dangerous countries for press work, where impunity encourages officials and warring factions to commit violations against journalists, which they consider their direct enemy. Although Iraq did not record any killing of journalists in 2022, the abuse and assault on journalists has escalated over the past years.

Armed factions and officials are not subject to Iraqi law, which makes impunity possible in Iraq. While the judicial and security authorities act quickly to address claims of political officials against journalists, for publishing a report on corruption or coverage, they are reluctant to respond if the wronged party is a journalist.

During 2022, Women Journalists Without Chains documented that the Iraqi authorities and the warring factions committed violations against (127) male and female journalists. Among them are more than 21 journalists who were directly attacked and sustained moderate to severe injuries during the exercise of their work and were taken to the hospital, or faced a life-threatening attack that targeted their properties or homes. In addition to the dozens of journalists who were beaten and assaulted during their press coverage, some of them were attacked more during the year. Media headquarters were also subjected to direct armed attacks, including missile strikes. "Women Journalists Women Chain" documented the closure and breaking in of four media outlets, including the closure of a media outlet on the first day of its work.

During 2022, the "Women Journalists Without Chain" organization documented the suspension of political programs by official letters from the Iraqi Media and Communications Authority. Journalists and media professionals were also dismissed, due to discussing issues of public concern, including corruption, illegal profiteering, and violations committed by officials or the Iraqi authorities.

### Informatics Crimes Bill

The Iraqi Council of Representatives re-discussed the Information Crimes Law in November 2022, after the widespread popular rejection it faced during the past years, and ended with a decision to freeze it in 2021. The law contains vague articles that can be used to limit press work and freedom of opinion and expression.

Women Journalists Without Chains reviewed a copy of the bill. Where Article (6) of the bill provided for an “imprisonment sentence of up to life and a fine of up to fifty million Iraqi dinars for whoever uses the computer and the Internet with the intent to “incite armed disobedience, threaten or promote it, or incite religious or sectarian strife, discord, disturb security and public order, or harming the reputation of the country.”

Article (21) indicates that whoever violates any of the religious, moral, family or social principles or values, or the sanctity of private life through the information

network or computers, by any form, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of no less than one year and a fine of up to five million dinars."

They are ambiguous articles that can be tailored to journalists and bloggers to limit the circulation and transmission of information and the expression of opinion.

The law gives the government free hand to prosecuting bloggers on creating accounts with pseudonyms - according to Article (18) - and restricting access and dissemination information, especially with regard to corruption cases.

The bill allows the security services to search "electronic devices and download their contents" without a warrant; It also ignores the right of access to information.

#### First: Violating the Right to Life and Physical Integrity

October 1: Reuters photographer Haider Kazem was slightly injured in his hand, while reporting on the protests near the Republican Bridge, in central Baghdad.

September 28: The correspondent of Kurdistan 24 channel in Kirkuk was seriously injured in the Iranian bombing that targeted "Altun Bridge" area.

July 30: Al-Mayadeen satellite channel crew, consisting of journalists Abdullah Badran, Abdullah Sa'ad, and Zaid Khaled Jumaa, sustained various bruises that required their transfer to the hospital for treatment, following an attack by the security forces with several stun grenades while they were reporting on the protests in the Green Zone.

July 30: The presenter of the "Studio Nine" program on Al-Baghdadiya channel, Ali Al-Dhabhawi, was "assaulted on the public street and in front of his children in the honorable city of Najaf by the personal secretary of Adnan Al-Zarfi, and an officer in the Popular Mobilization Forces security, because of his programs criticizing corruption and the influence of militias in Iraq. He was arrested on May 24, 2022 and released hours later.

August 29: Mustafa Latif, the reporter of the Dijla channel, was wounded in his neck, by stray mortar shrapnel, and his colleague in the channel, cameraman Kamal Raad, was injured in his leg, while reporting on the incidents near the Green Zone. They were subsequently taken to the hospital for treatment.

On the same day and in the same area, “Hadi Mazban,” a reporter for the Associated Press (AP), was beaten by the forces guarding the area while covering the protests, and they confiscated all his equipment to prevent him from filming.

On the same day, the crew of "Al-Rushd TV", reporter "Ammar Ghassan" and cameraman "Mohammed Al-Shammari", were arrested by security agents and released, after they were severely beaten, and the channel's equipment was confiscated.

The cameraman of the “Fallujah” channel, “Saif Ali,” was severely beaten with batons by the security forces near the Green Zone while reporting on the protests, injuring his leg, and he was hospitalized. Security forces also assaulted the correspondent of the same channel, “Hassan Muhammad Amuri,” and confiscated his equipment and prevented him from covering the protests. Muzaffar Hameed, the reporter of "Kurdistan 24" channel, was injured by shrapnel in his hand, and the channel's cameraman, Ammar Abdul Jalil, suffered bruises as a result of being beaten by the security force. The U.TV channel crew, Haidar Al-Badri, reporter, and cameraman Abdul-Malik Faisal, were attacked by a security officer near the government palace during the live broadcast, and the broadcast was resumed later after being protected by the protesters.

July 30: "Abdullah Badran" and "Zaid Khaled," a reporter and cameraman for Al-Mayadeen TV, were injured during a live broadcast by stun grenade fired by the security forces at the demonstrators. "Badran" was injured by shrapnel in his back, and "Khaled" in his leg, and they were both hospitalized.

May 30: Unidentified persons set fire to the car of journalist Majid al-Sudani, in Najaf province, and his home CCTV documented that an unknown gunman, wearing a full-face mask, burned his vehicle, for unknown reasons.

May 11: Two gunmen riding a motorcycle attacked the house of journalist "Kazem Al-Hawi," Al-Ayyam TV correspondent in Basra, and shot him dead. Al-Hawi was in his house when gunmen opened Kalashnikov rifles fire on the house, causing panic among his family members.

Journalist Nabil Al-Jubouri

In 2022, journalist Nabil Al-Jubouri, correspondent for the Zagros satellite channel and Akad News Agency, in the city of Diwaniyah, the center of Al-Qadisiyah province, was subjected to successive attacks while doing his work.

On August 30, 2022, gunmen riding a four-wheel drive vehicle threw a dynamite bomb at his house, causing only material damage. The security forces were late in responding, and failed to identify the perpetrator. Weeks later, on September 21, the CCTV cameras of his home detected an attempt by a person to place a sticky bomb under his personal car, but he did not succeed due to the movement of pedestrians, and he left.

### Attacks on the Media

August 29: Gunmen attacked Al-Ahed Radio building in Al-Balidiyat district of Baghdad with mortar shells, which resulted in material damage only.

May 24: The transmitter station of the local Dohuk Radio and TV in Zakho was hit by a missile by unknown party.

July 29: Demonstrators affiliated with the Sadrist movement closed the office of Al-Furat satellite channel in Basra, which is owned by Ammar al-Hakim, leader of the al-Hikma Movement, in response to a speech he made on the same day in which he criticized the Sadrist movement's demonstrations.

August 6: A security force in Dohuk raided the office of 'rast media' institution in Dohuk, closed it, removed the workers from the office, on the first working day of the site.

### Second: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

The case of the five journalists and activists: Kurdistan region authorities continued to imprison journalists 'Shirwan Sherwani' and 'Gohdar Zebari', and the journalist and civil society activist Ayaz Karam Burji, who were sentenced to six years in prison, along with other political and human rights activists (Shavan Saeed, Ayaz Karam, Heriwan Issa) in 2021. The authorities rejected all petitions submitted by the two journalists' families several times during 2022 and submitted several petitions to the Erbil Court to consider the possibility of conditional release after they spent two years in prison.

The two journalists faced charges of endangering Kurdish national security because of their conversations on social media and a discussion group they set up on Facebook, in which they criticized the local government.

Their lawyers said that they were subjected to threats and psychological and physical torture during their detention and were forced to sign false confessions. Their trial lacked the minimum international standards for a fair trial, and was subjected to clear political pressures.

Rikani case: The authorities in the Kurdistan region continue to imprison the photojournalist, "Qahraman Shukri Rikani," who was sentenced in September 2021 to seven years in prison on charges of opposing the politics of the Kurdistan Region. During 2022, the authorities rejected local and international appeals and demands for his immediate release. His mother wrote to the president of the regional government on September 18, demanding the release of her son, without a response.

November 27: A security force in Sulaymaniyah stormed the home of journalist Rawa Hussein and took him to an unknown destination for unknown reasons. Hussein works for the Kurdish-language "Zaman Press" agency, which has limited distribution in the Kurdistan region.

October 30: The security services in Sulaymaniyah released the correspondent of the "Washa" media institution, Hoshyar Ali, after detaining him for two days for unknown reasons.

October 12: Members of the National Security Apparatus in Mosul arrested the director of "Hala" FM radio, Sattar al-Mahal, and released him on bail after about two days of his detention.

October 09: The Anti-Terrorism Apparatus in Sulaymaniyah arrested the editor-in-chief of the "Bawar Media" institution, Wessi Qashqai, and its news director, "Ibrahim Ali," while they were returning from Sulaymaniyah to Erbil.

September 29: The Sulaymaniyah Investigation Court judge issued a sentence to imprison the "Diplomatic Media" reporter, "Bashdar Abu Bakr Baziani," for ten days pending investigation, following two lawsuits filed against him by the mayor of Sulaymaniyah and one of the investors, for addressing corruption file related to the sale of Public lands in Sulaymaniyah.

September 18: Police officers in Sulaymaniyah arrested Roj News correspondents Barwa Asaad and Botan Garmiani, as well as the cameraman of the media company

'Jeter' Muhammad Aziz, after covering the first anniversary of the assassination of a member of the PKK. They were released after two days.

August 5 and 6: The security forces arrested 12 correspondents: the director of the NRT channel in Kurdistan, Taif Goran, the reporter, Briar Neroi, from the channel's office. The next day, the channel's correspondents, Sabah Sofi, Diyar Muhammad and Soran Muhammad, were arrested while covering the Chamchamal demonstrations in Erbil. And photojournalist Mohamed Idris, the former photographer for VOA, and now a freelance photographer, was also arrested in front of his house.

KNN correspondent Ayoub Ali Warti was also arrested from his home. For the second time, as he was arrested for several days in July. The security forces also arrested four journalists from the Westga News Foundation, Sirwan Gharib, Arkan Jabbar, Zanyar Marawan, and Hivarhiwa, while covering the demonstrations. The director of the Kardash News website, Abdullah Ahmed, was also arrested. They were released at separate times over the next three days.

May 28, the security authorities in Baghdad demanded the Kurdistan Regional Government to hand over the journalist, Muhammad Jabbar, the presenter of the "Biwodouh" program, which is shown on the Zagros channel, for the arrest warrant issued against him a year ago (November 2021) without informing him, on charges of insulting a government official, which is a charge penalized by up to seven years imprisonment.

The Media and Communications Authority suspended a program last year in which one of the guests presented his opinion on the country's president and the head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Faiq Zaidan, and some considered it an insult to the country's presidents.

May 28: The head of the Al-Fateh Bloc, Hadi Al-Amiri, filed a lawsuit against the journalist, "Mustafa Al-Rubaie," the presenter of Al-Nas and Al-Watan program, on Al-Iraqiya TV, because of the statement of an Iraqi citizen about an incident he witnessed in 2021. It is the second lawsuit he receives, after being summoned by Karrada Investigation Court to appear before the court, after showing the episode in which a Iraqi citizen complained about Hadi Al-Amiri.

May 25: A security force in Kirkuk arrested journalist "Hello Jabari," the correspondent of Kurdistan TV, while he was reporting on the fire of crops in the province. He was released later.

May 24: A security force in Baghdad arrested journalist Ali Al-Dhabhawi, presenter of programs on Al-Baghdadiya TV, and took him to the intelligence headquarters for interrogation. He was released later. The (masked) interrogators demanded that he stop criticizing the political authority.

April 7: The Iraqi judiciary issued two arrest and investigation warrants against program presenter Ahmed Al-Mulla Talal and the other against his guest, artist Iyad Al-Taie, on the background of broadcasting program on the corruption of military institution, and the Ministry of Defense considered it an insult to military leaders. Two days after an order by the Communications and Media Authority to stop the program “With Mulla Talal” presented by Ahmed Mulla, on the background of a dialogue he presented with Al-Taie on “files of corruption” inside the military institution.

March 16: Security forces detained and beat Goran, a reporter and cameraman for NRT channel in Dohuk (Taif Goran, Ahmed Rukzi), while they were reporting on a hotel fire in Dohuk.

### Third: Assaults and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

December: Security forces in Basra detained Al-Rabaa TV crew, reporter Ehab Al-Maliki, and cameraman Ali Al-Massi, brutally Assaults them with batons, and smashing their equipment, to prevent them from covering the demonstration of the Southern Fertilizer Company. The security took the two journalists to a military vehicle and detained them for more than an hour, and severely beat and insulted them, confiscated their equipment and mobile phones, and destroyed the TV camera.

November 20: Maysan police officers destroyed the equipment of Al-Marbad TV cameraman, Jassem Al-Ansari, while he was covering a demonstration of educational graduates in front of the governorate education building.

November 12: Zagros TV correspondent Mustafa Salman was beaten by a security officer of the "Asayish" - the Kurdish internal security force - while covering a fire that broke out in the courtyard of a restaurant near the Crystal Hotel in Erbil.

October 3: Members of the army forces in Sinjar arrested the reporter and cameraman of “Chiratv” channel, along with their driver, the reporter and cameraman Jajar Shalaqi and Gilan Hababi, and the driver Fares Jassim in the center of Sinjar town. Arrested them for unknown reasons, and detained them for two hours.

June 6: The reporter and cameraman of “One News” channel in Karbala, Ali Khaled, and Hatem Karim, were beaten while covering a demonstration and electrocuted by riot police.

#### Fourth: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage:

December 27: The “Kurdistan 24” channel crew, consisting of the reporter “Hoshmand Sadiq and the cameraman Haval Muhammad”, were beaten and insulted by the guards of the “Lanaz” oil refineries, while they were documenting the refinery fire incident on the Erbil-Kwer road. Security stormed the live broadcast site, stopped the filming, and confiscated the staff’s equipment and threatened the crew with arrest if they filmed the fire.

December 27: Members of the army in Basra prevented two UTV crew, reporter Saad Qusay and cameraman Fakher al-Sharaf, and Time Square Radio” from entering Al-Mina Olympic Stadium in Basra, to cover the opening ceremony, despite obtaining the necessary permits before the opening.

December 15: The Baghdad Operations Command banned all media from broadcasting directly from the TV screens set up by the Municipality of Baghdad in Tahrir Square in the center of the capital, to broadcast the matches of France and Morocco in the World Cup semi-finals.

November 27: The Director General of Maysan Education Office, Riyadh Mijbil Al-Saadi, banned all media outlets from accessing school buildings to perform their press work.

November 26: Elements of the riot forces in the Kadhimiya district of the capital, Baghdad, prevented media outlets from reporting on a demonstration, and beat with batons the cameraman of "Iraq Fox" Ali Kazem al-Karimawi.

November 13: Armed elements in plainclothes prevented many satellite channels from covering a student demonstration, which started in Sulaymaniyah near the political office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and seized their equipment. They arrested the cameraman of “Westika News” channel, Zaniar Mariwan, for more than half an hour, inside one of the vehicles, and seized the channel equipment.

November 12: Dijla TV received threats of storming, burning, or closing due to what was presented by Alaa Al-Jubouri and Khamael Khalifa, presenters of the “Ala Al-Mkshoof” program, after they showed a video clip showing the ceremony of raising

the Iraqi flag in a school in Al-Rusafa, Baghdad, but the school administration broadcast a sectarian political anthem, instead of the Iraqi national anthem.

November 12: The mayor of Al-Gharraf district in Dhi Qar, Hassan Al-Khafaji, detained the correspondents of “Al-Taghyeer” channels, Salama Al-Sarheed and “Al-Fallujah” Saad Al-Rikabi, for more than half an hour at the police station. to prevent them from photographing the flooded areas, as a result of the heavy rains in the country.

November 7: the Federal Police in Kirkuk seized the equipment of NRT channel and the “Zoom Media” institution, while they were returning from their coverage of the security situation in Daquq district of Kirkuk governorate. The police demanded the journalists, who are the correspondent of the “NRT” channel and its cameraman, Diyar Muhammad, Nabz Miqdad, and the reporter and photographer of “Zoom Media” Rukan Mahmoud, Karzan Muhammad, to leave immediately, and not to return and cover in Daquq district.

November 7: Security forces affiliated with the army in Kirkuk prevented the staff of the “Sepideh” channel from reporting on the crowded lines of cars in front of a fuel filling station. They are the reporter, “Alan Nashaat,” and the photographer, “Muhammad Ayoub.”

October 25: Security forces in Tahrir Square prevented many media outlets from entering Tahrir Square to cover a gathering called for by the October protesters to commemorate the protests that broke out in 2019.

October 7: Security forces in Erbil prevented three press teams from reporting on the car bomb explosion in the Serbsti neighborhood of Erbil, destroyed their equipment, and beat others. Westke correspondent, Nabz Rashad, stated that he arrived at the scene minutes after the explosion on Bakhtiari Street, and was surprised upon his arrival that he was prevented from covering the incident by the security forces who surrounded the scene of the accident, as they seized his equipment, after breaking his microphone and his camera stand, pointing out other members of the force assaulted the cameraman of “Rudaw” Ahmed Yunis, who was with his colleague, the reporter “Farhad Dolamari” to cover the incident, but the security prevented them along with the reporter of “Kordsat” Rang Rahman, and the journalists were forced to leave the place immediately.

October 4: Followers of the Sadrist movement broke into Rabaa satellite channel and destroyed part of its equipment and furniture, against the backdrop of what the

Sadrism movement considered an accusation to the Mahdi Army of negotiating with the US army and handing over its weapons to them in previous years.

October, 1: The police of the Soran district of Erbil province prevented the correspondent of “Sabidah” channel, Younis Hamed, from reporting on a student demonstration for a school in the district.

September 29: The security forces in Kirkuk prevented the “Kirkuk and Kordsat News” channels from covering the destruction that occurred in “Altun Bridge” area as a result of the successive Iranian strikes, and the security forces withdrew the equipment of (Karwan Muhammad, Issa Nouredine, Youssef Murad, Darwan Ali).

September 27: The Dijla TV crew; photographers (Taher Al-Assaf, Zaid Al-Salami), was beaten by employees of a contracting company, while the photographers were documenting the stages of implementing bridges in Najaf Governorate.

September 24: The security forces in Erbil detained two reporters and a media website photographer, and denied them access to report on a demonstration that took place in Erbil, in support of the Iranian people's protests against the background of the killing of the Iranian Kurdish girl, Mahsa Amini. They are Westke News correspondent Nabz Rashad, Rebin Sardar Abdul Qadir, and Sebir Abdullah Ahmed.

September 19: A police force prevented press from reporting on a fire that broke out in shops in the “Down Town” market in Erbil, Kurdistan, including the correspondent of “Westika News” media institution, “Nabz Rashad”, correspondent of “Poltech Press” Briar Muhammad, and “Esta News” Diyar Hussein. A video clip spread on social media showed security forces scrambling with journalists to prevent them from covering the incident.

August 01: A video clip showed that one of the protestors supporting the Coordination Framework prevented the official Al-Iraqiya TV crew, consisting of journalists Ahmed Aram and Ahmed Majed, from covering the protests, for “the channel's links with the authority.”

September 11: Security forces of Najaf SWAT forces detained Ali al-Sharifi, the correspondent of Al-Mustaqal newspaper, while he was reporting the traffic jams and suffering facing visitors to reach Najaf province. A video clip spread on social media showed the moment the security forces stormed the filming site and assaulted the reporter.

September 9: Adnan al-Tunji, a news anchor on TERT channel, was exposed to the risk of politicized judiciary, after the Directorate of Education of Kirkuk filed a complaint with the Kirkuk Investigation Court and the Directorate of National Security, against him for publishing files of corruption of officials there. After he published a post on his Facebook page, about a report revealing that officials had tampered with the appointment file of lecturers, and suspending their financial dues, despite their continued work.

September 7: The security forces, at the request of the administrative assistant in the Turkish Hospital in Dhi Qar, detained four correspondents, namely, the correspondent of Zagros channel 'Ali Saleh', the correspondent of the Dijla channel 'Rasim Karim', the correspondent of the Al-Masra channel 'Nour al-Saeedi', and the correspondent of the Afaq channel 'Azhar Al-Azraqi' inside a room in the hospital, to prevent them from reporting on hospitalized injured on the attack of a pack of wolves on a village in Dhi Qar. Journalists held were required to erase the binder from their cameras, in order to be released; They were released after they did so.

September 5: Security agents from Asayish in Erbil arrested Karim Kaifi, a reporter for NRT channel, while he was covering a drone strike. He was released the next day.

August 29: Al-Jazeera correspondent “Samer Youssef” and the cameraman “Mohammed Mulla” were arrested inside the government palace in Baghdad by a security force to prevent them from filming. They were released after more than an hour of the detention.

August 10: The local government in Mosul banned private media from covering the visit of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi to the governorate, and limited coverage to official channels only.

August 08: Members of Saraya al-Salam in Najaf prevented TV channels from covering a fire that broke out in one of its headquarters, and detained the cameraman of Al-Taghyeer Channel, Mustafa Walaa, for documenting the fire. The correspondents who were expelled from the headquarters of the forces are channels and agencies: “Al-Taghyeer”, One News, Dijla, Al-Iraqiya, Zagros, Al-Fallujah, Reuters, and the Iraqi News Agency. Mustafa was detained at the headquarters, his camera was confiscated, and the recorder was deleted from the video tapes, before it was returned to him and release him.

June 3: Security forces in Kirkuk prevented the correspondent and cameraman of Rudaw TV, "Hurdi Muhammad" and "Muhammad Shakur", from covering a demonstration in the city.

June: The Iraqi Media Network suspended "Al-Muhaid" program, due to political objections to the opinion of one of the program's guests, due to his criticism of the judiciary.

May 29: The director of Azadi Hospital (public) in Kirkuk prevented journalist Ahmed Abdullah, correspondent of the "Bass News" news site, from entering the hospital building to prepare a press report. Despite obtaining a license from the Kirkuk Health Directorate.

August 01: An Asayish force in Sulaymaniyah arrested NRT correspondent 'Karzan Tariq' and cameraman 'Jeans Ahmed' while preparing a report on Sulaymaniyah mosque. They were released later.

July 5: Members of the law enforcement forces in Basra detained Karrar Al-Muhammadawi, the cameraman of "Watan" channel, and seized his equipment to prevent him from covering a demonstration. He was released hours later.

June 26: Karbala police prevented press from covering a fire that broke out in a restaurant in the city, and the police chief in Karbala verbally abused and insulted the correspondent of Al-Baghdadiya channel, Fadel Al-Ghuzzi. The following media outlets were prevented from reporting (The Journal, Al-Nida Newspaper, Al-Muhafaza Radio, Al-Baghdadiya)

June 18: The commander of the federal police in Karbala insulted and slandered the director of the Journalists Syndicate branch in Karbala, Hussein Al-Shammari.

June 13: Security forces in Kirkuk prevented the correspondent of the Iraqi News Agency, "Mahdi al-Rabhawi," from reporting on the worsening fuel crisis while he was at one of the gas stations.

June 09: Security forces in Erbil prevented (KNN, Esta Agency, GK TV, Rudaw, Kurdistan TV, Kurdistan 24, NRT) from reporting on the explosive drone that exploded in the city and confiscated the equipment of the press crews, and later released them and forced them to leave immediately.

May 22: The Media and Communications Authority issued a circular to all media outlets banning the appearance of the controversial political analyst, Najah

Muhammad Ali, on the grounds of his statements, which the authority described as inciting violence and hatred.

April 26: A security force prevented the press from covering a demonstration in Erbil against the Turkish bombing of areas in Erbil.

April 13: The Media and Communications Commission issued a warning to UTV based on the Shiite endowment's statement regarding the content of broadcasting an episode of a drama series. The authority asked the channel to sign a pledge not to repeat these violations.

April 8: The Iraqi Media Network terminated the services of the program presenter, Saleh Al-Hamdani, because of a publication that political parties considered offensive to a religious figure in the country.

March 15: A video clip published by the office of the Iraqi Media Network in Lebanon showed that the Iraqi ambassador in Beirut prevented the network's correspondent, "Rima Hamdan," from reporting on the visit of an Iraqi delegation concerned with energy.

February 5: A security force detained the reporter and cameraman of Spida channel, "Barzan Hassan" and "Mushir Ahmed" while covering the opening of a religious center in Zakho, and later released them.

January 27: A security (intelligence) officer in civilian clothes in Basra detained the staff of Al-Mirbad Radio, reporter "Nour Al-Tamimi," and the photographers, "Ali Taibna and Azhar Al-Abdani," on the background of covering Al-Kazemi's visit to the province, and beat and verbally abused the correspondent and photographers. He confiscated their equipment and deleted videos from the cameras, under the pretext that the officer appeared in the video recordings.

January 1: Security forces in Kirkuk assaulted NRT correspondent Diyar Muhammad while he was covering New Year's celebrations, and broke the reporter's phone.

## Republic of Syria

### Blood Facing the Pen

Freedom of the press in Syria was not better in 2022, as the country has been under complete blockade since 2011 under two opposing authorities, the first under the

dictator Bashar al-Assad, and the second under the Syrian opposition factions. Blood, detention and torture continue to face journalists while reporting or criticizing any of the authorities. The repression and abuse of journalists is intensified, and the freedom of journalists does not exist in the areas controlled by "Al-Assad".

Journalists and media activists in Syria are the most vulnerable group in the conflict, as they live in imminent danger as they are attacked by all sides, and death under torture or assassination is one of the most prominent violations that they face since 2011. Local monitoring organizations indicate that number of killed Syrian journalists and media activists reached more than 300 victims.

In 2022, the "Women Journalists Without Chain" organization documented dozens of violations committed in Syria, including violations against (69 journalists and media activists), including six journalists and media activists who were killed or assassinated, including two media activists who were killed under torture in the military prison of the Syrian regime.

### Killing of Journalists Under Torture

In August 2022, Ahmed Tayseer Al-Issa Al-Khatib (27), a Syrian journalist and media activist from Daraa, was killed. According to sources close to the family, "the family obtained information from Sednaya Military Prison about Ahmed's death as a result of torture and medical negligence." The family received news of his death from the Syrian regime on August 16, and the authorities denied his arrest since his abduction at a regime military checkpoint at the end of 2018, while traveling from Damascus to his home town of Giza in Daraa.

Throughout his detention, Al-Khatib's was not allowed to see his lawyer, and his family was denied visitation. Al-Khatib worked in the media before the Syrian regime regained control of Daraa governorate in July 2018, and he remained there after he was subjected to was known as the settlement with the regime, which is the reconciliation agreement, between the opposition and the regime in Daraa, and accordingly he remained inside Syria.

Weeks after Al-Khatib was killed, in November 2022, the media activist Ahmed Odeh Al-Maabar was killed under torture in Sednaya Military Prison, according to a source in the family, who said that "the family received a statement from the government civil registry, confirming his death." Al-Maabar was arrested in 2018, although he was subject to the settlement. Before that, he was documenting the

violations committed by the Syrian regime against civilians, and was reporting to electronic newspapers.

### Informatics Crimes Act

On April 18, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad issued Law No. 20 in which he amended Legislative Decree No. 17 of 2012, known as the "Informatics Crimes Law", as it tightened the penalty for "undermining the prestige of the state" and raised the financial penalties. Insulting national symbols, public administrations, the judiciary, or an employee exercising public authority is also considered a crime punishable by law, and the judicial police deal with it with the knowledge of the attorney general in the province.

"Women Journalists Without Chains" reviewed the issued law, which contains loose articles specifically designed to convict bloggers and journalists and ban the circulation and dissemination of information. Furthermore, it bans Syrians from speaking about the general situation on the Internet. The law intensifies the penalties and jeopardizes the freedom of individuals. The financial fines have become more severe than those stipulated in the General Penal Code, as the prison sentence ranges from one month to 15 years, while the financial fines range from two hundred thousand to 15 million Syrian liras.

Some articles, impose up to five years in prison and a fine of up to ten million liras on "anyone who uses information technology to publish false news on the network that undermines the prestige of the state or harms national unity", Article 28.

The law also punishes, anyone who establishes or manages a website or electronic page or publishes digital content on the network with the intention of provoking actions aimed at or calls for changing the constitution through illegal means, or moving part of the Syrian territory from the state sovereignty, or provoking armed rebellion against the authorities established under the constitution, or preventing them from exercising their functions derived from the constitution, or overthrowing or changing the system of government in the state, shall be punished with imprisonment for up to 15 years and a fine of 15 million Syrian liras. Article 27.

Also, anyone who establishes or manages a website or electronic page or publishes digital content on the network with the intent of causing deterioration, instability, or destabilizing confidence in national banknotes or their exchange rates specified in

official bulletins shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of up to 15 years and a fine of up to ten million liras. Article 29.

The law punishes with imprisonment for a term of up to three years and a fine of four million Syrian liras: whoever threatens to publish or publishes on the network still or animated pictures, conversations or audio recordings that are indecent, belonging to a person, even if he obtained them with his/her consent. Article 26/b.

The law punishes with imprisonment for a term of up to three years and a fine of up to six million liras: whoever establishes or manages a website or electronic page or publishes digital content on the network with the intent of insulting a religion, a sanctity or religious rituals, or incitement to hatred or violence. Article 30.

The law includes vague articles that prohibit criticism of government officials, and doubles the penalties for those who criticize them, or who “insult, slander, or defame them.” The law punishes with imprisonment from days to months and fines of up to one million Syrian liras, anyone who commits this offensive, even if within a private group on social networks and not publicly. Articles 24 and 25.

The law also considers re-publishing on the Internet, is also criminalized and punishable - according to Article 35 - which means that sharing any post on social networks is incriminated according to the law.

#### First: Crimes of Violating the Right to Life and Physical Integrity

February 26: Unidentified persons killed the Syrian media activist, Mahmoud Bakour, with a gunshot on his head inside his house in Talbiseh, in the countryside of Homs.

August 16: Media activist Ahmed Al-Khatib was killed under torture in Sednaya military prison of the Syrian regime.

October 7: Unidentified gunmen assassinated the Syrian media activist, Muhammad Abdul Latif Abu Ghanoum, and his pregnant wife in Al-Bab city, east of Aleppo.

November 5: Media activist Atef al-Sai'di was shot and killed by the Islamic State in Daraa.

November: The media activist Ahmed Odeh al-Maabar, from Daraa province, southern Syria, was killed under torture in the Sednaya military prison of the Syrian

regime, after being detained for more than 4 years, despite that he was under the settlement arrangements.

November 20: The correspondent of the Kurdish "Hawar" agency, Essam Abdullah, was killed by the Turkish army's bombing of Qamishli.

January 21: In Al-Hasakah, North Press correspondent Jindar Abdul Qadir, Hawar agency correspondent Basil Rashid, and Fayez Al-Amleh, director of the Media Center of the Syriac Military Council, were injured while they were reporting on the clashes between the "Islamic State", and Syrian Democratic Forces" in the vicinity of Al-Hasakah Central Prison.

November 20: The correspondent of the "Sterk TV" channel, Muhammad Jarada, was injured in the bombing of the Turkish army in the countryside of Aleppo.

## Second: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

January 10: Syrian security suspended journalist Kinan Waqaf from working in government and private media.

February 5: Militants of the Kurdish "Democratic Union" party arrested Bauer Mulla Ahmed, correspondent of "Yakiti Media" website, from Qamishli, and correspondent of ARK channel, Sabri Fakhri, also from Qamishli.

February 19: Militants of the Kurdish "Democratic Union" party arrested Ahmed Sofi from the countryside of Al-Malikiyah and Dara Abdo from Al-Hasakah city.

February 5: Syrian regime forces (Assad regime) raided journalist Kinan Waqaf's house, in Tartous, to arrest him, but he was not at home.

February 8: Syrian regime forces raided the home of journalist Mahmoud Ibrahim in Tartous, to arrest, but he was not at home.

May 15: The military police of the Syrian opposition forces detained media activist Mahmoud al-Dimashqi for six days in Afrin.

May 16: The Syrian Democratic Forces arrested media activist Wissam al-Ahmad in Raqqa.

July 30: "Syrian Democratic Forces" security patrols arrested 16 media activists and journalists, after raiding their places in Raqqa city, northeastern Syria.

August 5: The military police detained the member of the Syrian Media Union, activist Louay Al-Younes, in Jenderes city, in Afrin region, north of Aleppo, for three days.

August 2: The Syrian Democratic Forces (Qasad) arrested the Rudaw Network correspondent, Barzan Farman, in Qamishli.

August 23: The Syrian Democratic Forces (Qasad) arrested media activist Ali Al-Karim in Deir Ezzor.

December 12: The military judiciary of the Assad regime arrested journalist Rida al-Basha, in Aleppo city, for publishing an article on the "fuel mafia".

December 5: Syrian opposition police arrested media activist Muhammad Zain al-Abidin in the Aleppo countryside for publications critical of Turkish politics.

## Second: Assaults and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

January 18: Members of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party abducted media activist Jindar Barakat for hours and beat him.

May 1: The guards of the Syrian Minister of Trade, Amr Salem, assaulted retired journalist Bassam Ghabra in Damascus.

June 1: Members of the opposition "Failaq al-Sham" beat media figures Muhammad al-Daher, Izz al-Din al-Qasim and Abdulaziz Qaytaz in the Idlib countryside.

August 1: Elements of the Civil Police (Syrian Armed Opposition Forces) assaulted media activists Badr Talib, Malik al-Khobbi, Muhammad al-Sibai, Hammam Abu al-Zein, Nizar Abu Ayman, Imad al-Busairi, Malik Abu Obaida, in al-Bab city, east of the Aleppo countryside.

September 12: Security forces affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham beat media figures Ahmed Falaha, Muhammad al-Daher, Abdulaziz Qaytaz and Hadi al-Abdullah in Idlib.

September 28: Members of the "Revolutionary Youth" affiliated with the Kurdish "Democratic Union" party beat journalist Evan Hasib in Qamishli.

November 29: The guards of the head of the local council in the city of Ras al-Ain in Hasakah countryside, beat the correspondent of "Qasioun" agency, Abdul Basit al-Ahmad.

July 18: The correspondent of the "Syrian News" channel, Muhammad al-Saghir, declared a hunger strike in Ghweran prison, run by the "Syrian Democratic Forces" in al-Hasakah, where he has been detained for nearly three years.

### Third: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage

January 20: The Turkish authorities detained media activist Ammar al-Dulaimi for hours and prevented him from filming in Afrin, in the Aleppo countryside.

January 28: The Asayish forces prevented members of the Rudaw Kurdish media network from reporting on the incidents in Ghweran prison and expelled them from the city of Hasakah, permanently.

February 5: The Kurdish Autonomous Administration stopped the operation of Rudaw media network in all cities under its control.

July 17: The Syrian Public Security detained Nawal Nasr, a journalist for the Lebanese newspaper "Nidaa al-Watan", at Qamishli airport and denied her access to cover the tenth anniversary of the launch of the July 19 revolution. She was transferred to al-Sham airport by air and returned by land to her country after two days.

September 29: The state-run Al-Thawra newspaper banned publication of journalist Lina Dayoub's weekly column because of a tweet.

October 3: A member of the National Army affiliated with the Syrian armed opposition threatened media activists Muhammad al-Sibai, Siraj al-Shami, and Qassem Habbar, to prevent them from news covering and to destroy their equipment if they continued their coverage of the teachers' protests in al-Bab city, east of Aleppo.

October 30: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham banned media activist Adnan al-Imam from working in its areas for 15 days, for filming a report for Orient TV, which it has prevented from working in areas under its control at the beginning of the month.

December 6: The governor of Latakia, affiliated with the Syrian regime, banned official authorities in the province from giving the media any information.

April 14: The Syrian state television administration suspended the sports journalist, Muhammad al-Khatib, from appearing again in the "Captain" program broadcast by the "Syria Drama" channel.

## Arabic Republic of Egypt

### Manufacturing Fear

Egypt appears to be one-of-its-kind when it comes to repression. The authorities tried to improve its image by releasing journalists from prisons with presidential pardons, even though they did not commit a crime. However, they soon arrested other journalists. "Women Journalists Without Chains" documented 135 violations of freedom of the press.

Economic hardships and widespread repression against Egyptians in 2022 caused some journalists to talk about their conditions according to their conscience, as they live in the worst phase of rights and freedoms since the revolution of January 25, 2011. Instead of the authorities improving the living conditions and respecting freedoms in the country, they insist on silencing any criticism, including criticism of junior officials, where journalist Sherine Shawky was arrested because she spoke about a police officer's abuse and extortion, instead of holding the officer accountable by the Ministry of Interior and the concerned authorities. Donia Samir Fathi and her three children were detained - and then released - because she published a video of her being harassed by a governor, and she reported the incident to the police.

Many journalists were arrested for criticizing authorities' handling of the Renaissance Dam file, or discussing the economic situation with the devaluation of the currency. The authorities have decided to take revenge on journalists and media professionals, no matter how small this criticism is.

Authorities detained seven journalists, in anticipation of demonstrations that were scheduled for November to 2022, demanding Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to improve the living conditions. Police forces have deployed and raided homes to pursue those who express their opinions throughout the year. Women Journalists Without Chains Organization documented the renewal of the detention of more than 47 journalists during the year.

Journalists were optimistic about the Egyptian President's announcement of the "national dialogue", but since then the campaign of repression and assaulting of

journalists has intensified, including arrests, and arbitrary dismissal from state-owned media, banning publication news on the "civil democratic movement" and its meetings and discussion on the national dialogue agenda. In October, the concerned authorities included five journalists in the terrorism list.

As is the case with other repressive regimes in the Middle East, the charges against journalists detained in Egyptian prisons are mainly on: spreading false news, joining a terrorist group, and misusing social media.

In 2022, more than 112 male and female journalists were subjected to violations, including 20 female journalists, including arrest, assault, torture, dismissal from work and other forms of ill-treatment.

### Alaa Abdel-Fattah

On November 6, journalist and blogger Alaa Abdel-Fattah announced his complete hunger and drink strike, after 7 months of partial strike, to demand an interview with a delegation from the British Embassy in Cairo in preparation for his release. The Egyptian regime rejected Abdel Fattah's demands, his family and the British embassy until his health deteriorated while in prison, and he ended his comprehensive strike after several days. His family said he may have been force-fed in detention. In November, the Wadi al-Natrun prison administration prevented lawyer Khaled Ali from visiting his client, Alaa Abdel Fattah, for the third time during the month, despite obtaining a visit permit from the Public Prosecutor.

Not only did the authorities deprive Alaa Abdel-Fattah of his freedom and commit violations against him, but they also prohibit journalists from solidarity with him. On November 9, Ahmed Fayez, a journalist for the Parliament newspaper, was arrested for publishing a post on his Facebook page about forcing Alaa to end the hunger strike, in prison and has been charged with: spreading false news, joining a terrorist group, and misusing social media.

### Egypt Climate Summit COP 27

Egypt hosted the 27th Climate Summit, despite criticism from human rights organizations, and an atmosphere of repression hung over the conference, and Egyptian journalists who covered the summit were threatened not to portray a bad

image of Egypt, as the government shows no signs of backing down from the systematic persecution it practices even during hosting international events.

Members of Parliament and pro-authority activists stormed a symposium organized in support of Alaa Abdel-Fattah's case, and tried to disrupt it. Sanaa Seif, sister of imprisoned British-Egyptian hunger striker Alaa Abdel-Fattah, was a central focus of this security operation when she arrived at COP27 to demand her brother's release. Her movements were tracked by plainclothes police. Journalists also complained of being under surveillance by the police.

#### First: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

April 26: The State Security Prosecution in Egypt ordered detention of journalist, Hala Fahmy, for 15 days, pending investigation, on the same charge against her colleague, Safaa Al-Korbiji, against whom the Public Prosecution ordered to imprison for 15 days, which is “joining a terrorist group and publishing false news.”

November 5: The Egyptian authorities arrested journalist "Mohamed Mostafa Moussa" and detained him in an unknown location.

October 31: Egyptian authorities arrested journalist Manal Ajrama, deputy editor-in-chief of the weekly Radio and Television magazine, from her home for publications opposing the president's policies. On November 3, "Ajrama" (60) appeared before the Public Prosecution Office after her disappearance. The Public Prosecution charged her with belonging to a terrorist group. The Public Prosecution decided to detain her for 15 days pending investigations. It was extended for another 15 days, on December 28.

November 20: Journalist Mahmoud Kamel submitted to the investigation before the Office of the Public Prosecutor, regarding the communication submitted by Alaa Thabet, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ahram, about what he had previously written about the death of his late colleague Imad El-Feki. Kamel submitted to the dean and the Council of the Syndicate an official request to form an independent Union investigation committee, regarding suspicions related to El-Feki incident, and his request was rejected.

July 27: The Egyptian authorities extended the detention of Al-Jazeera journalist Mubasher Rabi'e Al-Sheikh, in the provisional arrest, for a period of 45 days. He has been detained without trial or charges since August 1, 2021.

December 1: The court extended the detention of journalists, Ahmed Saad and Osama Saad Emara, for 45 days pending investigations.

December 4: The court extended the detention of journalist “Ahmed Fayeze” for 15 days pending investigations, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, it was extended for 15 days again.

December 8: The court extended the detention of journalists “Hussein Karim”, “Hamdi Al-Zaim” and “Mohamed Saeed” for 45 days pending investigations.

December 12: The Public Prosecution office extended the detention of journalist “Mohamed Mustafa” for 15 days, pending investigations.

December 3: A local court fined journalist Hossam Al-Swaify 20,000 Egyptian pounds as temporary civil compensation for publishing an article critical of the management of the Middle East News Agency, with a list of penalties that violate the National Press Law.

November 1: Security forces arrested Yahya al-Sayed Othman, deputy director of the information technology department at Al-Akhbar newspaper, for publishing a video in which he talks about high prices.

November 9: Security forces arrested "Ahmed Fayeze Abdel-Maged," a journalist in the Parliament newspaper, for posting an article on his Facebook page about forced ending of the hunger strike that activist Alaa Abdel-Fattah was subjected to in prison.

October 9: Security forces arrested the member of the Journalists Syndicate, Amr Shanan, and his older brother. The forces raided their house in Nahya village, Kerdasa Center, Giza province. Eyewitnesses stated that the security forces tampered with the apartment furniture, intimidated their families, and stole some electronic devices, phones, and sums of money before taking the two brothers to an unknown destination, and they were not presented to any of the investigation authorities. He was released in December 2022.

September 7: The editor-in-chief of the independent news website Mada Masr, Lina Atallah, and three journalists from the organization, Rana Mamdouh, Sarah Seif El-Din, and Bissan Kassab, were summoned for interrogation after members of the pro-government Future of the Nation party accused them of publishing false news and defaming members of the party in an investigative report about financial corruption. After being released on bail, the female journalists facing charges of publishing “false news” in addition to “operating the website without a license.”

July 7: Journalist Raouf Abbas Obeid, editor of “Rose Al-Youssef” and “Al-Watani Al-Youm” newspapers, was arrested and taken to an unknown place. He remained incommunicado for 12 days until he appeared before the State Security Prosecution on July 18, which ordered his imprisonment for 15 days, pending investigation, on charges of joining a terrorist group.

June 25: A security force arrested journalist Magdi Attia al-Jundi, director of the office of al-Masa’a newspaper in Ismailia, and a journalist for the “Al-Jumhuriya” website. He was interrogated by the State Security Prosecution on July 4. Al-Jundi was accused of joining a terrorist group, publishing false news and statements, and misusing social media after he published a post on Facebook about a patient who was drugged in a taxi and transported to the hospital based on the statement of a paramedic and a nurse at the reception, which was later denied by the official page of the Ministry of Interior. Attia was released in September based on a pardon from the Presidential Pardons Committee.

July 21: Security forces arrested "Hani Abdel Rahman," the bureau chief of Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper in Ismailia, and "Mohammed Gomaa," a reporter for Al-Wafd newspaper, for publishing a video on Facebook exposing drug trafficking, accusing the concerned authorities of complicity, and calling on the President of the Republic to intervene. A few days later, they appeared before the State Security Prosecution, and they were charged with joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing media. The two journalists appeared in a video on the Ministry of Interior's page saying they "fabricated the video." They were released on August 3.

May 26: Security forces arrested Sherine Shawky, a journalist for Al-Rafidain TV, and charged her with publishing false news, after she posted a video clip on her Facebook page accusing an officer of the Ministry of Interior of harassing and blackmailing her.

May 29: A 15-year prison sentence was issued for Al-Jazeera broadcaster Ahmed Taha. The case is based on an interview that Taha conducted with the former presidential candidate and head of the Strong Egypt Party Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, who received a similar penalty because of this interview.

May 14: Security forces arrested the journalist, "Muhammad Fawzi Musaad Mustafa," and forcibly disappeared him in a State Security headquarters until he appeared before the State Security Prosecution on May 29. The Prosecution charged him with joining a terrorist group, publishing false news, and misusing social media.

The lawyer revealed that he was arrested because of the last post he wrote, in which he was criticizing "the Iftar of the National Dialogue and the members of the opposition."

April 21: Security forces arrested journalist Safaa Al-Korbiji, the managing editor of the Radio and Television magazine, raided her house in Mokattam and took her to an unknown place, although she suffers 85% mobility disability in one of her feet and a knee injury. The prosecution charged her with joining a group unlawfully established and spreading false news, for publishing several videos criticizing the control of the intelligence services over the radio and television building and the dismissal of dozens of employees.

April 22: Security forces arrested "Hala Fahmy," a broadcaster on Egyptian television, after breaking into her house, where she was not present. The State Security Prosecution charged her with joining a terrorist group and spreading false news.

April 17: Security forces detained Ahmed El-Bahi, journalist and reporter for Masrawy website, after reporting on the murder case of a young man in Sadat City, Menoufia. He was imprisoned for 4 days pending investigations on charges of incitement to violence. The Sadat Court released him on bail of five thousand pounds.

April 24: The security forces detained journalist, "Mohamed Fawzy," inside the police station. He was interrogated without identifying the charges against him. He was released after 24 hours of detention.

April 17: The Mansoura Economic Court sentenced Ghada Abdel Hafez, a journalist at Al-Masry Al-Youm, to two years in prison, a fine of 100,000 pounds, and a bail of 10,000 pounds, due to a post on Facebook that included a complaint by some employees about the governor of Dakahlia appointing an employee in a position that is not commensurate with her academic qualification.

March 31: The Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Dr. Ayman Mansour Nada, on charges of insulting and slandering journalists, to one year in prison, suspended sentence, and a fine of 20,000 pounds.

January 4: The Public Prosecutor interrogated the editor-in-chief of Darb website, "Khaled Al-Balchi", for 4 hours, regarding 9 reports submitted against him by unknown persons accusing him of publishing false news and misusing social media.

November 1, press sources revealed that Mahmoud Saad Diab, a journalist at Al-Ahram Foundation and a member of the Journalists Syndicate, had been detained for about 60 days in a military prison. Diab was arrested at Cairo International Airport on (September 1, 2021), while traveling to the Beijing, to work there, and he was accused of "communicating with foreign organizations outside the country."

Journalists whose detention was extended several times during 2022:

	Name	Charges	Details
1.	Rabie Al-Sheikh	Joining a terrorist group and spreading false news and statements.	A journalist in Al-Jazeera Mubasher who was arrested upon his return to Cairo on August 3, 2021
2.	Mustafa al-Khatib	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news.	Associated Press journalist, security forces arrested him from his home on October 13, 2019.
3.	Hisham Abdel Aziz	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news.	A journalist in Al-Jazeera Mubasher
4.	Khalid Ghunaim	Disseminating false news and misusing social media.	He was arrested in April 2020, extended in January, and released with a presidential pardon in May 2022.
5.	Ahmed Mohamed Abu Khalil	Disseminating false news, joining a terrorist group, and misusing social media.	Former Editor-in-Chief of Idhaat; He was arrested on June 3, 2020, and his detention was extended in January and February. He was released in April 2022.
6.	Ahmed Allam	Joining a terrorist group, disseminating false news, and misusing social media	He was arrested from his family's home in Giza province, on April 21, 2020.
7.	Ahmed Subaie	Broadcasting, publishing and dissemination of false news, misusing a social media platform (Facebook), and participation in a terrorist group with the knowledge and promotion of its purposes.	The former director of the Al-Aqsa TV office in Cairo, he was arrested in April 2020.
8.	Hesham Fuad	Joining a terrorist group, disseminating false news, and misusing social media	Journalist and member of the Journalists Syndicate, arrested on June 25, 2019. He was released in July with a presidential pardon.

9.	Badr Muhammed Badr	Disseminating, publishing and broadcasting false news and statements, misusing social media “Facebook”, and participating in a terrorist group with the knowledge of its purposes.	He was arrested on March 30, 2017, and the court released him at the end of 2019, before he was transferred to a new prison and charged with new charges in February 2020.
10.	Mohamed Ibrahim Radwan (Mohamed Oxygen)	Joining a terrorist group, and disseminating false news	An Egyptian blogger and activist, owner of the "Oxygen Egypt" blog, was arrested in September 2019. He was denied family and lawyer visitation since February 2020.
11.	Ahmed Hamdy Abu Zaid	Disseminating false news	He was arrested on December 21, 2017, and sentenced in a military court to ten years in prison in February 2021.
12.	Amer Abdel Moneim	Joining a terrorist group, disseminating false news, and using an account on a social site to commit a crime	Editor-in-Chief of Al-Shaab newspaper, and has been detained since December 19, 2020 Reports indicated that he was released in April 2022.
13.	Muhammed Salah	Joining a "terrorist group" and disseminating false news	He was arrested on November 26, 2019
14.	Abdullah Shusha	joining a "terrorist group" and disseminating false news	Journalist and reporter for Amjad TV channel, detained since September 2013.
15.	Syed Abdul-Lah	Accomplice with a terrorist group in carrying out its objectives and disseminating false news	A freelance journalist, detained since September 2019, released on November 3, 2020 and his detention extended pending case No. 1106 of 2020 on November 29, 2020. He is still in pretrial detention.
16.	Yahya Khalaf Allah	Joining a group unlawfully established	Union journalist and founder of Yaqeen Network, arrested on December 23, 2019.
17.	Salah Al-Imam Ahmed	Disseminating false news	He worked for years in Al-Mawqif Al-Arabi magazine in the seventies, then Al-Arabi newspaper, and several Arab newspapers. He has been detained since September 2021. Information indicates that he was arrested after a dispute arose between him and the journalist, Mustafa

			Bakri, who is close to the security services, who filed a report against him.
18.	Muhammed Saeed	Joining a group unlawfully established, disseminating false news	Member of the Journalists Syndicate, Al-Hurriya and Al-Adala newspaper, arrested on May 31, 2018.
19.	Hamdi Mukhtar (al-Zaeem)	Joining a terrorist group, with knowledge of its purposes and disseminating false news	Photojournalist. Security forces raided his house and arrested him on January 4, 2021.
20.	Kareem Ibrahim Syed	Broadcasting, publishing, and disseminating false news and statements, misusing a social media platform (Facebook), and participating in a terrorist group with the knowledge and promotion of its purposes.	A journalist at Al-Bawaba News website. Security forces arrested him on April 14, 2020.
21.	Bahaeddin Ibrahim	Publishing and broadcasting false news and statements.	A journalist for Al-Jazeera Mubasher, he was arrested in February 2020 at Burj Al-Arab Airport in Alexandria while leaving for Doha.
22.	Abdel Nasser Salama	Inciting to overthrow of the regime in Egypt	The former editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram, was arrested on July 18, 2021, following an article he published on his Facebook account, in which he called on Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to step down due to the failure to manage the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam issue. He was released by presidential pardon in July 2022
23.	Mohamed Attia al-Shae'r	Disseminating false news and joining a terrorist group.	Arrested in February 2018.
24.	Midhat Ramadan	Disseminating false news and joining a terrorist group.	A journalist at Shababeek website, he was arrested in May 2020.
25.	Abdu Faid	Disseminating false news and joining a terrorist group.	A journalist at Al-Manassa website, he was arrested in March 2020
26.	Tawfeq Ghanem	Broadcasting and disseminating false news and statements, misusing social media and joining a terrorist group with knowledge of its purposes.	A journalist with extensive professional experience, regionally and internationally, for more than 30 years, he was arrested in May 2021.

27.	Muhammad Hani Greisha	Accomplice with a terrorist group in achieving its objectives, misuse of social media and dissemination of false news and statements,	Sports journalist, editor-in-chief of "Super Koura" website of Al-Yum Al-Sab'e; Arrested in September 2020 and he was released in April 2022.
28.	Ahmed Saad Emara	Joining a terrorist group	He and his brother Osama and their father were arrested on July 29, 2020 Son of Dr. Saad Emara, Member of Parliament, 2012
29.	Osama Saad Emara	Joining a terrorist group	He and his brother Ahmed and their father were arrested on July 29, 2020 Son of Dr. Saad Emara, Member of Parliament, 2012
30.	Esam Abdeen	Accomplice with a terrorist group in achieving its objectives, misuse of social media, and dissemination of false news and statements,	Director of the "Falso" website of the Al-Yum Al-Sab'e, arrested in September 2020 He was released in April 2022.
31.	Hussein Ali Ahmed Karim	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	Worked for Al-Hurriya and Al-Adala newspaper, arrested in November 2020
32.	Abdel Rahman Abdel Moneim Farag	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	A journalist at Anadolu Agency, he was arrested on November 25, 2018, and was under enforced disappearance and torture for 67 days, before appearing before the Prosecution.
33.	Mohamed Fawzi Musid	Joining a terrorist group, disseminating false news, and misusing social media.	Journalist for Al Diyar newspaper, arrested on May 16, 2022
34.	Mohamed Sabry Desouki	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	Media professional, He was released on October 24, with a guarantee of his place of residence.
35.	Adel Al-Habrouni	Disseminating false news	Media professional, He was released on October 20.
36.	Bahaeddin Ibrahim	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	He was arrested in February 2020 by the security services at Burj Al Arab Airport in Alexandria. Ibrahim worked as a journalist and translator for many Egyptian and international media outlets, most notably the state-owned Nile News Channel, the Associated Press, and Al Jazeera Mubasher.

37.	Ahmed Sami	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	A journalist at al-Watan newspaper
38.	Salah Ramadan	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	Youtuber
39.	Musab Abdelhamed	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	Director of photography
40.	Dunia Sameer Fathi	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news	She was arrested on May 27, 2022, after she posted a video on social media (Facebook) about being harassed by the governor of South Sinai.
41.	Muhammad Abu Al-Maati Khalil	Disseminating false news and statements.	A former correspondent for a Japanese channel from Cairo, and the Al-Badeel website, was arrested on April 30, 2021, at the age of 67. He suffers from a poor health condition, which worsened with his continued imprisonment, as his son says that the prison authorities refused to provide him with food and treatment when he visited him.
42.	Salim Safieddine	Disseminating false news and statements.	Journalist at News 180, arrested in August 2021 He was released in July 2022 with a presidential pardon.
43.	Moataz Abdel Wahab		Director, the Prosecution approved his release in June 2022, after completing two years in prison.
44.	Hala Fahmi	Accomplice with a terrorist group in achieving its objectives, incitement to commit terrorist crimes, and dissemination of false news, rumors, and statements inside and outside the country,	A female journalist, she was arrested in April 2022, due to publications about the Renaissance Dam and Emirati funding for the Egyptian regime.
45.	Raouf Obaid	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news and statements.	Arrested in July 2022, in connection with Facebook posts.
46.	Sherine Shawky	Publishing false news	A journalist for Al-Rafidain channel, she was arrested on May 26, published a video in which she was complaining of a police officer who harassed and

			threatened her. She was arrested after she filed a complaint against him. She was released in September.
47.	Safaa Al-Korbiji	Joining a prohibited group, promoting its ideas, and disseminating false news and statements	A journalist who has been working as managing editor in the Radio and Television magazine for years. She suffers 85% mobility disability in one of her feet and a knee injury. She is a member of the Journalists Syndicate. She was arrested on April 20 from her mother's home in Mokattam and dismissed from her job.
48.	Yahya Alsyed Othman	Affiliation with a terrorist group with knowledge of its purposes and the financing of that group.	He was arrested on November 1, Deputy Director of the Information Technology Department at Al-Akhbar newspaper, and on November 14, the Prosecution detained him for 15 days, pending investigations in Case No. 1893 of 2022, Supreme State Security.
49.	Ahmed Fayez Abdel Majeed	Joining a terrorist group and disseminating false news and statements.	He was arrested on November 9, a journalist at the Parliament newspaper, for publishing a post on his Facebook account about forced ending of the hunger strike of fellow journalist Alaa Abdel-Fattah in prison.
50.	Muhammad Mustafa Muhammad Musa	Publishing false news	Member of the Journalists Syndicate from (Al-Yum Al-Sab'e newspaper) was arrested in November 2022 because of his criticism of the Egyptian regime on Facebook, within the campaign of arrests.
51.	Mahmoud Saad Diab	Charged with "intelligence with foreign organizations and entities outside the country".	Diab was arrested from Cairo International Airport on (September 1, 2021), while traveling to Beijing, to work there.
52.	Manal Ajrama	Member of a terrorist group	Deputy editor-in-chief of the weekly "Radio and Television" magazine, she was arrested from her home because of publications opposing the policies of the head of state.

53.	Mostafa Mohamed Saad Youssef	Publishing false news	A TV cameraman said in a message that he was arrested from Cairo airport on November 8, 2019 while returning from Doha. His arrest was known in November to 2022.
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Second: Assaults and other Forms of Violence, Degrading Treatment, Punishment, and Denial of News Coverage

December 5: One of the transportation officers assaulted the journalist and researcher “Ismail Al-Iskandarani” while he was being transferred to Al-Montazah Police Station to release him.

June: The presenter, Amani Sabah, was insulted, beaten, and threatened with arrest by the director of the Central Delta Radio, Hani Muhammad Amasha, on the grounds of her criticism of the policies of the National Media Authority, and her demand for her material and moral rights.

April 24: Some journalists were assaulted in Alexandria while reporting on the funeral of the artist's mother, Sumaya al-Khashab, in al-Manara cemetery. They were insulted and slandered, and physically assaulted and expelled from the cemetery, despite showing their identity and being members of the Journalists Syndicate.

November 14: A police officer in the subway prevented photojournalist Mahmoud Fekry, member of the Journalists Syndicate, from taking his camera with him inside the subway.

August: The authorities prevented journalist Eman Ouf, correspondent of “Raseef 22” website, from covering the police raid on Al-Warraaq Island.

August 2: Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly issued a decree regarding the rules for filming in public streets. The decree banned filming police stations, courts, prosecutors, ministries, and government agencies, as well as filming and publishing what he described as “scenes that are offensive to the country”.

July: The Security of the Journalists Syndicate prevented the journalist, Abdul Rahman Abbas, from filming inside the Syndicate building, claiming that it the instructions of the Syndicate Director, according to Abbas's statement.

July: The Cairo Court of Appeal banned publication about the murder case of journalist, "Shaima Gamal", and investigations had revealed that the prime suspect

is her husband, a prominent government official who works as an agent of the State Council.

May: The United Media Services Company - affiliated with the Intelligence Service - which owns the majority of news channels and websites, ordered content managers in the group's newspaper editors and program managers of the group's channels, to prohibit the appearance or handling of any news and any information about the "Civil Democratic Movement" and its meetings concerning discussing the national dialogue agenda.

February: The dean of Journalists Syndicate, Tariq Si'da, issued two decisions, on suspending journalist Hani Hathout, presenter of the "Match" program on Sada Al-Balad channel, from working in any media outlet inside the Republic of Egypt for two weeks between February and March. The second decision suspended journalist Hossam Haddad from presenting his program "Good Morning, Egypt," which he presents on Channel One.

May: Laila Soueif, the mother of imprisoned journalist Alaa Abdel-Fattah, revealed that Alaa is subjected to several violations committed by the prison administration during her visit to him on May 12, where Alaa told her that the prison warden and some officers and soldiers had assaulted him, and the prison administration also prevented delivery of Alaa's clothes and books, and that Alaa's health had deteriorated because of his hunger strike.

March: The health condition of Ahmed Al-Najdi (67), a journalist for Al-Jazeera channel, deteriorated, due to the lack of medical care and the necessary diagnosis.

February: Abeer Muhammad, the wife of journalist Amer Abdel Moneim, revealed the intransigence of the prison administration in allowing delivery of medicines, insulin and food to her husband, who suffers from several diseases. Abeer said that negligence caused Amer's blood sugar level to rise to 600 for 4 days.

January: Journalist Abdel Nasser Salama suffered severe health problems, a high temperature of 40 degrees, inflammation of the intestines and colon, and stiffness in the joints. Resulted in numbness in the extremities and asthma due to the cold weather in the prison, and Abdel Nasser's health condition deteriorated greatly due to the conditions of his detention. He was released in July 2022.

October 16: The Official Gazette reported that 5 journalists had been included in the terrorist lists. They are journalist Qutb al-Arabi, head of the Arab Observatory for Media Freedom, presenter Osama Gawish on Mekameleen TV, Jalal Abdel Samie

Jibril, Badr Muhammad Badr, former editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Arab Horizons", and Yasser Abdel Halim Ahmed.

### Continuous Violations

November 25: Al-Dustour newspaper dismissed journalist Iman Adel, two days after the National Security visited her family's home, and she received indirect messages about the risks of returning home. "Iman" had published articles on the Daraj website which is blocked in Egypt.

June: Wadi Al-Natrun prison administration prevented lawyer Khaled Ali from visiting his client, journalist Alaa Abdel-Fattah, to check on his condition after declaring his hunger strike.

May: The "Akhbar Al-Youm" dismissed 9 journalists to avoid appointing them, and include them on the lists of candidates for the Journalists Syndicate, despite some of them having spent more than 9 years working within the institution, including the journalist "Haroun Amin Abdel Hafez."

January 26: Although the court obligated Al-Mojiz newspaper to pay 4 months' salary to journalist Sherine Gamal, after the newspaper dismissed her arbitrarily and suspended her salary, the court decided to accept the lawsuit filed by the newspaper against the journalist on dismissing her, in which the editor-in-chief claimed that she was absent from the work.

June 7: Journalist Samia Farouk, editor in Al-Wafd newspaper, confirmed that the head of the party, Abd al-Sanad Yamama, and the editor-in-chief stopped her from reporting on the file she specialized in covering (the armed forces), and arbitrarily dismissed her daughter from the newspaper.

November: Al-Dustour newspaper dismissed four journalists. Journalist Iman Adel said that the newspaper's management informed her by telephone of her dismissal because of publishing articles on the Daraj website, two days after security personnel who identified themselves as belonging to the National Security Agency visited her family in Beni Suef governorate. And asking them about her address in Cairo. Daraj website is blocked in Egypt.

December: Abd al-Latif al-Minawi, the editor-in-chief of Al-Masry Al-Youm, dismissed 9 journalists. The decisions come on the background of their opposition to the editor-in-chief's decision to include non-journalist in the Journalists

Syndicate's registration table at the expense of journalists who have been working in the institution for several years, and waiting to join the Syndicate.

the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

A Hostile Environment for Media

Over the past decade, the Jordanian authorities have tightened its grip on press freedoms in the country. This has impacted the level of freedoms in Jordan. And raised self-censorship among journalists, as they fear going to prison, as a result of the loose and ambiguous provisions and articles of the relevant laws.

The Jordanian authorities, including the parliament, treat the media as an enemy. Where Parliament imposed new amendments in 2022 to the laws related to publishing and blogging on the Internet, toughening the penalties and targeting any criticism, no matter how simple.

The amendments to the laws indicate a government approach to legalize repression and target freedoms. The Press and Publication Law was amended several times to block several news websites after each amendment, on the pretext that the websites did not obtain a license from the Department of Press and Publication. The "Cyber Crimes Law" is used as a legal tool to arrest and imprison journalists and increase licensing fees for websites, in addition to imposing a license on the "Live" broadcasting via social media.

The Jordanian Attorney General's decision - which he issued in April 2021 - continued in 2022 to prohibit the publication of any information on all media and social media related to the disputes between King Abdullah and his half-brother, Prince Hamzah bin Al-Hussein. However, the ban was not limited to the investigation records, but rather included whole issue, when the Jordanian authorities put pressure on the local media, to refrain from reporting on the issue.

Jordanian authorities have used banning orders in the past to stifle discussion of issues of concern to Jordanians. Not only did the orders ban publishing the investigation records, but they included reporting on news stories such as the leaked Pandora Papers that exposed King Abdullah II's expensive real estate deals. The government's "Media Authority" also circulated to the media to censor citizens' comments at a time when demonstrations increased in Jordan.

"Women Journalists Without Chains" monitored violations committed by the Jordanian authorities against 12 male and female journalists, including five female journalists. It also closed several electronic media outlets, and prevented journalists and the media outlets from reporting on several events, including at the parliament.

### Tightened Penalties by Law

On April 25, 2022, the House of Representatives approved the Jordanian government's bill to replace the penalty of a fine (5-25 dinars) with imprisonment of up to three months for anyone who violates Article 225 of the Penal Code related to the prohibited news from being published.

Before the amendment, Article 225 of the Jordanian Penal Code stipulated a fine of \$17 for violating gag orders, but the MPs have voted to add a three-month prison sentence.

The Penal Code provided for, in Article (225), the confidentiality of investigation procedures and made the rule is to prohibit publishing them, and the exception is the permit their publishing, at Public Prosecution approval.

The prohibition includes the publication of news related to the investigation, including, the publication of the investigation records themselves, statements of witnesses, the record of the interrogation of the defendant, the transfer and inspection records, expert reports, and other investigation procedures. However, comments and general news are not prohibited as long as these comments do not deal with the facts of the investigation.

This prohibition contradicts the freedom of press and its mission in serving public interest.

These new provisions are similar to Jordan's controversial Cybercrime Prevention Law (Article 11), which criminalizes defamation with a three-month prison term. This law targeted hundreds of political activists, journalists, and citizens for expressing their political opinions through their personal accounts on social media. Similarly, the new amendment to Article 225 criminalizes reporting on demonstrations by the Jordanian Teachers Syndicate and any union work in the country.

## First: Trial, Arrest and Detention of Journalists

March 6: Queen Alia Airport security detained the journalist, Taghreed Al-Rishq, on the grounds of publication cases, before releasing her.

March 8: Security at Queen Alia Airport detained journalist Daoud Kattab, on grounds of publication cases, before releasing him.

March 24: Jordanian police arrested journalist Ahmed Al-Zoubi on his way to the airport, on the grounds of calling for demonstrations.

June 9: The Amman Magistrate Court convicted in absentia the Jordanian journalist, Heba Abu Taha, who currently lives in the Qatari capital, Doha, and sentenced with three months imprisonment on charges of "defaming an official body."

July 26: The Public Prosecutor of North Amman ordered to detain activist Somaya Abu Nabaa for two weeks for a publication she published. She declared a hunger strike immediately after her detention in Marka prison.

August 15: The Jordanian security services detained writer Adnan Al-Rousan for a week because of articles critical of the king's policy, and the judge refused to release him on bail.

October 11: Shorouq Al-Bo, a journalist for Al-Ghad newspaper, appeared before the Public Prosecutor at the Palace of Justice in Amman after she was summoned following a complaint of "cybercrime" filed by a Jordanian citizen against her, who was one of the first cases of coronavirus in Jordan. Because she mentioned his first name in a press report she published in March 2022, knowing that his story was widely circulated in the Jordanian media.

December 15: Police detained journalist Ahkam Dajani while she was filming a protest march in Amman, and released her after an hour without knowing the reasons.

December 18: The security services arrested journalist Khaled Al-Majali on charges of incitement, defamation, and slander. He was released the next day.

## Second: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage

January 9: the Cabinet Security prevented three journalists from attending a prime minister's conference because they owed money related to loans and university scholarships.

May 15: The Jordanian Media Commission blocked "Al-Majd" newspaper website, in the country, under the pretext of not completing the licensing procedures, and without notifying the concerned parties, while the editor-in-chief of the "Al-Majd" website, Fahd Al-Rimawi, confirmed that no official party had requested Re-licensing the newspaper's website.

June 23: The Amman Public Prosecutor banned audio-visual media and social media from publishing any information related to the murder case of student Iman Irsheed.

July 27: The Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament, Abd al-Karim al-Daghmi, prevented media representatives from attending and reporting on the informal session that brought together the House of Representatives and the Council of Ministers.

August 15: The Media Commission blocked the "Melh al-Ardh" website and refused to license it.

September 5: The Speaker of Parliament threatened measures against journalists if the correspondence of the MPs was filmed.

December 16: The Jordanian authorities, through the Cybercrime Unit, blocked the "Tik Tok" platform, under the pretext of misuse.

December 20: The Jordanian Media Commission circulated to the media outlets, called for imposing censorship on citizens' comments, in conjunction with the protests in several governorate.

December 24: The Public Prosecutor of Irbid banned publication of the murder case of a girl and 3 members of her family.

## Republic of Sudan

### Journalists at Gunpoint

Press freedom in Sudan deteriorated from bad to worse during 2022, due to the restrictions imposed by the ruling military authorities, as dozens of journalists were assaulted, and Sudanese women journalists received many threats.

After October 25, 2021, the military authority targeted journalists through the army, security forces, and its paramilitary forces, to weaken and block media coverage of the popular protests that continued during 2022, and this coverage provided a clear picture of the security services' violations against peaceful demonstrators.

In 2022, the press and media sector suffered from strict security control, restrictions were imposed on freedom of opinion and expression, and internet services were cut off several times, in addition to imposing punitive measures against media outlets that covered the security-led crackdown on demonstrators.

Sudan loses the press freedoms it obtained after the collapse of the dictatorial regime of Omar al-Bashir after widespread demonstrations in 2018. In 2022, the violations were more extensive, including attempted murder and direct injuries of journalists, arrest and detention of journalists, the closure of stations and the media outlets, and denying access of journalists to their workplaces.

The "Women Journalists Without Chains" organizations monitored scores of violations in Sudan in 2022, where (52) journalists were subjected to direct violations, including life-threatening violations, including (20) female journalists. Ten journalists were shot by security forces, the army or armed groups while reporting on the protests, and other ten journalists were subjected to Assaults and degrading treatment.

On several occasions, army forces stormed the headquarters of Al-Araby and Al-Jazeera Mubasher channels before revoking their license and of its correspondents, and detained BBC and Xinhua correspondents, and correspondents and journalists from local newspapers.

### Charging Journalists under Several Laws

Journalists in Sudan are charged under three laws simultaneously: the Press and Publications law, Cybercrimes law, and Criminal law. They are subjected to investigation and trial in more than one prosecution specialized in the same case. Which exposes them to imprisonment and fines penalties under these laws, which are swords hanging over the necks of journalists, and categorically contradicts the most basic foundations of justice.

Sudanese law is often used by the authorities to punish online activists, journalists, and common users, as a measure of retaliation for posting contents online.

According to a report in April 2022, the Sudanese authorities is developing a law to criminalize insulting the country's leaders.

Article 23 of the Cybercrimes Law imposes penalties such as “imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year, flogging, or paying a fine” on “any person who uses the Internet, or any means of communication or information transfer, or applications, to publish any news, rumor, or report, knowing it is false, to cause public fear or panic, threaten public safety, and harm the prestige of the state.”

### Return of the Journalists Syndicate

The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate has returned to work 33 years after it was banned by the Omar al-Bashir regime. Thus, journalists aspire to work in complete freedom, with the Syndicate that defends their rights and freedoms. By convening the General Assembly, approving the press code of honor and the draft statute, and forming an election committee responsible for electing the dean for journalists and members of the syndicate council.

The list (the press unity), which was headed by Abdel Moneim Abu Idris, won the elections of the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate Council, and he became the dean of the journalists.

The Journalists Syndicate was dissolved after ousted President Omar al-Bashir seized power on June 30, 1989.

### First: Crimes of Violating the Right to Life and Physical Integrity

December 17: Journalist Salma Abdel Aziz was injured by a tear gas canister while covering demonstrations in Khartoum. She sustained a superficial wound in her left side, which necessitated her transfer to the hospital for treatment.

October 30: Freelance photojournalist Fayez Abu Bakr was hit in the head with a tear gas canister during opposition protests in Khartoum marking the one-year anniversary of the military coup.

October 30: Journalist Muhammad al-Mustafa was hit in the back by a stun grenade, while covering protests in Khartoum.

September 14: The freelance journalist, Omar Ibrahim Henry, was injured by a stun grenade while covering protests in Khartoum.

December 19: Journalist "Mohamed Saeed Halfawy" was injured while covering a demonstration calling for civil rule, with a tear gas canister.

October 30: journalist, Al-Hudaybi Yassin, was subjected to an incident of looting and assault with a machete by the "9 Long" gangs - a gang that practices coercive theft crimes - in the East Nile region while he was returning from covering demonstrations in Khartoum. His hands, along with other wounds in his body, were inflicted with machetes. He was taken to the hospital to have the wounds stitched, and he was discharged the next day.

November 01: The journalist, Lubna Abu Al-Qasim, was subjected to a similar assault on the street of her home in Al-Nasr neighborhood, east of the Nile.

May 30: Journalist Saleh Abdullah Bilal Sorour was seriously injured by rubber bullets in the eye while covering demonstrations in Omdurman.

May 26: journalist Amira Saleh was hit directly in the chest by a tear gas canister while covering demonstrations in Khartoum. Amira was taken to hospital for treatment.

May 26: Journalist Imtithal Abdel-Fadil suffocated with tear gas and was taken to hospital for treatment.

January 13: journalist Shamael Al-Nour was beaten by the army forces. Journalists Othman Fadlallah and Bakri Khalifa miraculously escaped death when they were run over by military vehicles while covering the demonstrations in Khartoum.

## Second: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

November 24: The Suakin local police in the Red Sea state detained journalist, "Muhammad Al-Amin Oshik", on the background of a post he published on his Facebook page, and released him later.

The Red Sea State, the journalist, "Muhammad Al-Amin Oshik", for a post he published on his Facebook page, and released him later.

October 16: A government force in the city of Zalingei, Central Darfur state, arrested journalist "Hafizah Abdullah Musa" while reporting on a protest. A group of

policemen forced the journalist to go with them to the police station, and they tried to put her in custody, without filing a complaint against her, which was refused by the officer on duty in the station. The force insisted that journalist Hafiza Abdullah write a pledge not to cover such events again, but she categorically refused the pledge. She was released later.

September 22: Security forces arrested journalist "Abdul Rahman Al-Ajeb" from central Khartoum for unknown reason. The journalist was arrested on (September 15) in a humiliating manner before being release on the background of a complain to the Informatics Prosecution by the Sudanese Mineral Resources Company due to articles about the appointments of the Minister of Minerals to relatives.

August 17: The Informatics Court sentenced journalist Aisha al-Majidi to one month in prison, after convicting her of violating Articles 25 and 26 of the Informatics Law, and moved her to Omdurman Prison, in the case brought against her by the security advisor to former Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdouk, after accusing the journalist of publishing false news.

June 17: The Office of the Public Prosecutor in Khartoum summoned Sherine Abu Bakr, a journalist for the international newspaper Al-Sudani, on the background of a news article published in the newspaper revealing a plan to carry out a strike within the Public Prosecution Office. Sherine appeared before the prosecution and was interrogated by three prosecutors, according to her statement. She explained that she was pressured to reveal her sources within the Public Prosecution, but she refused. A journalist familiar with the details said that the summons was made by the Security and Intelligence Service, and for the Public Prosecution to do so is considered a serious development in suppressing freedom of the media and the press, and the right to obtain information.

June 17: Police forces assaulted journalist, Hanadi Othman, and asked her to get out of her car. When she refused, they destroyed the door of the car, and took her to a police station, claiming that she was distributing money to the protestors, and she was detained for 24 hours.

May 20: Police in El Dhaein, East Darfur state, summoned Mohamed Salih Al-Bishr, a journalist for the Darfur 24 website, and interrogated him for publishing news on the site, quoting local sources, regarding the death of a person in one of the regions of East Darfur.

March 31: journalist Ma'ab Mirghani at al-Jarida newspaper, was arrested while reporting on the protests that took place in the Arab market region, and she was detained and interrogated for more than (8) hours at the North Khartoum police station, and a complaint was filed against her, under Article (77) on public nuisance.

February 8: The BBC said that the Sudanese authorities arrested 3 of its journalists in Khartoum, while covering protests against the army's takeover of power. They were released later.

January 27: Security forces arrested journalist Youssef Abdel Manan and referred him to the Informatics Prosecution. He was later released.

January 13: A military force arrested Muhammad Khader and Majdi Abdullah, the photojournalists for the Chinese Xinhua Agency, in Omdurman, and their detention continued for days before they were released. They were subjected to interrogation that lasted for hours, after their mobile phones were taken away.

January 13: The army forces stormed the office of "Al-Araby" channel in Khartoum and took journalists Islam Saleh, Wael Muhammad Al-Hassan and photographer Mazen Onur to an unknown place. They were later released, and Al-Araby correspondent Wael Muhammad Al-Hassan said after his release that the channel's crew was subjected to brutal treatment.

Photographer Ibrahim Nuqdallah:

Photographer "Ibrahim Naqdallah" faces 3 charges after he was violently arrested on July 17 by Military Intelligence and handed over to the police after Assaults him while he was covering a demonstration in Khartoum. He appeared before the court in the Criminal Court on August 18 on charges of filming military areas, and breach of public safety. He was referred to the court after his release on bail.

Taha Muddathir

On May 19, a force of three vehicles affiliated with the security apparatus raided the house of journalist Taha Muddathir in Deem al-Nour neighborhood, and forcibly took him for an article in which he talked about the army selling drinking water to the citizens of the city of Gedarif. He was released on bail. In July: Al-Gedarif Criminal Court acquitted Taha Muddathir of "publishing false information with the

intent of defaming the army." A military commander directed a complaint against Muddathir because of an article he wrote in Al-Jarida newspaper, in which he confirmed that the army sells drinking water to citizens. On January 17, 2023, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the journalist, "Muddathir", and against the army commander in Gedarif.

## The Judiciary and Media Institutions

February 17: The Administrative Appeals Chamber of the Supreme Court of Sudan issued a ruling annulling the decision to dismiss 78 employees of the Public Authority for Radio and Television and reinstate them to their jobs.

On December 10, 2021, the transitional government in Sudan dismissed 79 journalists working for the Public Authority for Radio and Television, due to allegations of "loyalty" to former President Omar al-Bashir and the administrative violations in their appointment years ago.

The court appended other judicial rulings on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022, invalidating the decisions to dismiss the journalists of Sudan News Agency, and on 29<sup>th</sup> April, the Supreme Court issued a ruling invalidating the decision of the Disempowerment Committee to confiscate Al-Shorouk TV, as the court ordered the return of its shares to its original owner, and the Supreme Court justified its ruling on the basis of incompetence of the Committee to issue such decision, as the committee referred to Article (1/7/n) of the law to Dismantle the 30th June Regime, which contradicts the provisions of the Constitutional Document for the transitional period of 2019, Article 61/2, where private property may not be expropriated except by law and in the public interest and in exchange for fair and immediate compensation, and private assets may not be confiscated except by virtue of a judicial ruling.

October 11: The General Union of Sudanese Journalists welcomed the decision of the General Registrar of Workers' Organizations to cancel the decision of the Disempowerment Committee, to dissolve the union and freeze its assets. The union affirmed in a press statement that the decision was in line with the union's statute and the regulations governing its work, and congratulated its broad base. inside and outside Sudan to restore this legitimate right, and confirms that it will carry out its activities.

### Third: Assaults and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

September 19: Al-Jazeera Mubasher cameraman in Khartoum, "Osman Abdel-Rahim", was injured by a tear gas canister while he was covering protests.

September 14: Journalist Amira Saleh was severely beaten and arrested by security forces. She was released later.

March 14: An army force attacked two journalists, Shatha Al-Sheikh and Nesma Abu Khamshah, near Al-Jarida newspaper office in central Khartoum. The two were forced to sit on the ground and insulted.

March 14: A military force beat and verbally abused Azza Ira, a journalist in Port Sudan.

March 03: The car of journalist Tariq Abdullah was set on fire by persons who were spotted by the neighbors. The neighbors were able to control the fire without any losses. The police did not do their part to pursue the perpetrators.

April 9: Unidentified persons raided the apartment of journalist Rajaa Nimr in Halfaya district of Khartoum North.

March 9: Journalist Mohamed al-Mukhtar said he survived "a looting attempt by a police force in the Arab market" in Khartoum.

March 9: journalist Bahram Abdel Moneim was looted by forces in Central Security uniforms at the entrance to Al-Muslimiya Bridge in Khartoum, and lost his phone and 50,000 pounds.

### Fourth: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage

December 17: the freelance journalist, Amira Omar, received calls and voice messages from several unknown parties threatening her with murder and violating her honor, after she published the news of the killing of one of the defendants in the El Fasher case.

September 27: The Sudanese authorities blocked the website of Al-Sudani newspaper for no reason and without prior warning.

September 12: Journalist "Aya Al-Sabbagh" was suspended from working for "Al-Bayt Al-Sudani" radio station for hosting journalists during her program to discuss the recent elections of the Journalists Syndicate.

October 11: The official authorities in the River Nile state prevented the BBC Arabic channel team from preparing a video report in the regions of Al-Mikaylab and Kandatu in the River Nile State, for two consecutive days, despite the channel's team following the official procedures. The BBC team said that an official group, which presented itself as the intelligence of the Third Infantry Division, prevented them from working and ordered them to leave the state, which is what they did.

January 16: The Sudanese authorities revoked the license of Al-Jazeera Mubasher channel in Sudan. The licenses of the channel's correspondent, Muhammad Omar, and the cameraman, Badawi Bashir, were also revoked.

October 3: Journalist Nasef Salah El-Din, who runs the Monte Carro news website, threatened by government forces because of his publications related to corruption cases in the country.

May 27: Journalist "Saleh Abu Alama," Sudan TV's correspondent in East Darfur, was arbitrarily dismissed because of a television report on the increase in tuition fees at El Dhaein University.

October 19: The governor-designate of South Darfur state racially abused journalist Mahjoub Hassoun in a text message in a group on the "WhatsApp" application. The governor later apologized to Hassoun by visiting his home.

October 30: The Disciplinary Committee of the Sudanese Football Association sent a letter of summons to the member of the board of directors of the Gedaref Police Club, journalist Nahid Bashir Al-Baqer, for unknown reasons, and it is believed that the reason was his criticism of officials in the Federation. On November 15, the committee summoned the coach of the Olympic team, Mohamed Mohieddin Al-Diba, as a witness in the case of journalist Nahed. In December, "Al-Baqer" was banned from traveling. In January 2023, the committee decided to cancel the complaint submitted by the member of the Board of Directors of the Sudanese Federation against Nahed Bashir.

August 24: Hajar Suleiman, the head of the Cases and Accidents section in "Al-Intibaha" newspaper, filed a complaint with the Informatics Crimes Prosecution Office against a suspect who impersonated her and fabricated a story about purchasing the lands of the University of Khartoum. The suspect signed the news with the journalist's name to gain some credibility and published it on social media.

December 11: Ishtiaq Abdullah, journalist at Al-Watan newspaper, was subjected to armed robbery while returning to her home in the "Al-Salama, Khartoum" area. The

thieves robbed her bag, which contained all her documents and sums of money, at gunpoint and threats of stabbing.

June 10: The journalist Adel Ibrahim “Kalar” was severely beaten by gunmen, while on his way to participate in the (June 9 processions) in Khartoum. The gunmen stole his mobile phone and money.

June 05: The journalist in Al-Jarida newspaper “Fadwa Khazraji” said that she had been threatened with arrest by an unknown person, while interviewing the father of one of the martyrs of the December revolution about the violations on the third anniversary of the sit-in massacre, someone broke into their interview and threatened her with arrest soon.

March 26: Two unidentified persons stormed the venue of the General Assembly of the Journalists Syndicate and tried to create chaos.

## Hashemite Kingdom of Morocco

### Repression, Revenge and Defamation

Defamation led by journalists loyal to the authorities against independent journalists who address issues of public concern, or criticize the authorities, has escalated in Morocco.

The authorities insist to pursue journalists under the criminal law in publishing cases, not only under the Press and Publication Code in prosecuting journalists. The Code also restricts freedom of the press and breaches the international standards for freedom of expression.

The Moroccan appeal court continued the trial of journalists Omar Arradi and Suleiman Raissouni, which are clearly politically motivated trials, and sentenced bloggers and public speakers to prison terms.

The Moroccan authorities is planning to add new restrictions to the criminal law against freedom of expression and the media in the country, according to statements by the Moroccan Minister of Justice in December 2022.

In 2022, there was a significant rise in the state's arbitrary detention of journalists, censorship and surveillance, and the expulsion of foreign journalists in Morocco. This alongside a broader repression against freedom of expression in the country. Journalists critical of the Moroccan government have been subjected to judicial

harassment. These journalists have been subjected to unfair trials. And the courts relied on articles published by pro-state media and tabloids to prosecute them.

21 journalists were subjected to violations in Morocco during 2022, including two female journalists.

Journalists in the courts in 2022: Omar Arradhi, Suleiman Al-Raysouni, Al-Mu'ti Monjib, Hisham Al-Mansouri, Abd Al-Samad Ayyash, Hisham Kharbishi (outside the country), and Maria Makrram.

Bloggers who have been prosecuted or summoned for investigation: Yasser Abadi, Hassan Benajeh, Abdul Razzaq Bujanpour.

Imprisoned journalists: Omar Arradhi (since 2020), Suleiman Al-Raysouni (since 2020), Tawfiq Abu Al-Ashreen (since 2018).

Bloggers and activists imprisoned for expressing their opinion during 2022: Redha Benothman, Mohamed Zayan, Saida Alami, Rabih Al-Ablaq.

## First: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

### The case of Omar Arradhi

March 2022: The Court of Appeal upholds the sentence of the freelance journalist, Omar Arradhi, 33, to six years in prison. A first instance court convicted him on July 19, 2021, not only of espionage charges for which he was arrested, but also of indecent assault and rape. The police arrested Arradhi on July 29, 2020 on charges of espionage, and he spent the next year in pretrial detention, before the court convicted him.

Arradhi was previously convicted, tried, and imprisoned for posting a tweet, his smartphone was hacked with spyware, he was subjected to a massive defamation campaign by pro-state media, and he was subjected physical assault, which the police did not investigate despite their promises.

### Journalist Suleiman Al-Raissouni

In February 2022: The Court of Appeal in Casablanca upheld the first instance court sentence of five years imprisonment for “sexual assault” against journalist Suleiman Al-Raissouni, who has been detained since 2020. During the trial, al-Raissouni, 49,

who was famous for his editorials criticizing the authorities, reaffirmed his innocence and the complainant's "contradictions", considering that his trial was "political", while the latter renewed his adherence to his story.

In June, al-Raissouni was transferred arbitrarily and without prior notice to him or his family from the local prison in Okasha to Ain el-Berja prison.

In September, after about 16 weeks, the journalist, al-Raissouni, stopped his boycott of communication and family visits, in protest at the deprivation of several rights, including writing.

### The case of Al-Mu'ti Monjib

The Moroccan judiciary continued to postpone Court of Appeal's sessions of journalist and historian al-Mu'ti Monjib and six other defendants in the 2015 case. The Court of Appeal summoned them for trial about ten times between April 2021 and December 2022. The ten sessions and the 33 first instance trial sessions, since 2015, were postponed since 2015, due to the absence of three of the defendants in exile, i.e.; journalists (Hisham Al-Mansouri, Abd Al-Samad Ayyash, and Hisham Kharbishi).

In January 2021, the Court of First Instance in Rabat convicted Monjib and six other defendants on various charges, including "receiving funds from a foreign organization to harm Morocco's internal security." This case was based on a grant from a Dutch NGO to the Moroccan Association for Investigative Journalism, which Monjib set up with other activists, to organize training on a citizen journalism application. The court sentenced Monjib and three other defendants to one year in prison, a fifth defendant to a suspended three-month prison term, and the other two to a fine. The rest of the defendants are the human rights activist Muhammad al-Sabr, journalist Maria Makrim, and activist Rashid Tariq.

### Muhammad Zayan and Rida Ben Othman

November 2022: Moroccan authorities arrested former human rights minister and lawyer Mohamed Zayan, on the same day that an appeal court upheld his initial three-year prison sentence.

Human rights defenders challenged the charges against Zayan, 80, who is also the founder of the Free Moroccan Party and a former head of the Bar Association. He was convicted for exercising the right to expression, according to the charges, for

insulting “the judiciary and public officials (...) and for publishing statements with the intent to influence judicial decisions before an irrevocable verdict is issued, for insulting judicial decisions, and for defaming people through informatics systems, in addition to incitement to breach health measures, through statements published on an electronic platform.”

In November 2022, a Rabat court sentenced blogger and human rights activist Redha Benatheman to three years in prison for contempt of institutions, after he used social media to call for protests against measures imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 last year.

Blogger Saida al-Alami et al

In September 2022: The Court of Appeal in Casablanca increased, on Wednesday, the prison sentence of blogger and human rights activist Saida Al-Alami from two to three years in prison.

The Court of First Instance in Casablanca had sentenced al-Alami on April 29 to two years in prison and a fine of 5,000 dirhams. After she was charged with insulting a body regulated by law, insulting public officials, insulting judicial rulings, and broadcasting false news about people with the intention of defaming them. Al-Alami is an activist with the group “Moroccan Women Against Political Detention.”

Al-Alami was denied the right to attend the previous sessions of her trial, and the appeals trial was convened in absentia. Al-Alami went on hunger strike for several weeks to demand her right to a fair trial, which she was denied in the first instance court.

June 2022: The Court of Appeal in Al-Hasmiyeh region upheld the preliminary ruling issued in April against blogger and activist Rabih Al-Ablaq, which sentenced him to four years in prison and twenty thousand dirhams as a fine. On charges of “violating the duty of reverence and respect for the supreme constitutional institution of the Kingdom by electronic means.”

June 2022: The Appeals Chamber in Salé upheld the preliminary ruling convicting blogger Yasser Abadi to 6 months suspended and paying a fine of 500 dirhams. He was charged with insulting an organized body, on the background of a post he made on Facebook, in which he criticized the behavior of the authority's apparatus during the Corona blockade.

September 2022: The National Brigade of the Judicial Police summoned Hassan Benajeh, a prominent leader in the Justice and Charity Group, for interrogation about an old blog. According to his statement, the matter relates to a complaint "by the Public Prosecution Office against me because of an opinion blog I wrote in May on the occasion of the martyrdom of the Palestinian journalist Sherine Abu Aqelah and about normalization (with Israel)."

February 2022: The judicial police in the security zone of Skhirat summoned blogger and human rights activist Abd al-Razzaq Bujanpour and interrogated him for posts he had posted on Facebook about the protest on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February announced by the Moroccan Social Front.

Second: Assaults and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

Defamation by the "Makhzen" Media

Makhzen (a term used by Moroccans and those concerned with Moroccan affairs to refer to the network of power-holders linked to the king and his cronies through loyalty and nepotism). The Moroccan authorities continue to use defamation and outrageous accusations to push Moroccan journalists to leave their work on prosecuting corruption. Journalists fear defamation even more than arrest.

Defamation beyond borders; On February 3, 2022, MAP, Morocco's official news agency, published an article criticizing Javier Otazo, the former correspondent of the Spanish News Agency (EFE) in Morocco, who had published a book in which he criticized the increasingly authoritarian policies in Morocco. The article by MAP relied heavily on a file on Otazo prepared by a news site considered one of the pro-Makhzen media outlets. The article talked about his "drowning in hatred of Morocco," and he "justified" this by the bitterness he experienced", where he married a Moroccan woman, with whom he had two children." Where he married a Moroccan woman with whom he has two children... They live with their mother after a divorce that was preceded by a set of problems." Although such comments are expected from a pro-Makhzen news site, it should be noted that the Moroccan News Agency (MAP) republished them in four languages.!

Espionage

According to an investigation on the Pegasus spyware project in July 2022, the Moroccan authorities are spying on the phones of seven journalists: Suleiman al-

Raissouni (now in prison), Hisham Mansouri, Maria Makram, Aboubakr Jamaie, Taoufik Bouachrine (now in prison), Omar Broksi Ali Ammar. Forbidden Stories Journalism Alliance.<sup>3</sup> In 2019 and 2020, another Amnesty International investigation confirmed the presence of Omar Arradhi (now in prison) and al-Muti Monjib.

This indicates that there is a pattern between the Moroccan authorities' spyware attacks on journalists and other abuses against journalists.

Travel Ban on Journalists:

In October 2022, the Moroccan human rights activist and historian, Muti Monjib, one of the founders of the Moroccan Association for Investigative Journalism, declared that he had entered a hunger strike, in protest of an “illegal ban” from traveling, due to his prosecution in two cases of “violating state security.” and “money laundering”. He said, “The travel ban as part of a judicial investigation cannot exceed a maximum of one year, while the decision taken against me dates back to September 24, 2020.”

Republic of Tunisia

Regression from the Jasmine Revolution

Freedom of opinion, expression, press and media are the most prominent gains of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia (2011). However, this gain is on the brink of collapse, considering the emerging totalitarian authority of the current President, Kais Saied. In 2022, journalists sounded the alarm, due to the arrests, harassment, and violation of freedom of press.

In the year 2022, Tunisian journalists were summoned before the military courts in cases that were supposed to be referred to the civil courts according to Decree No. 115 and 116 regulating the sector since 2011, not the military laws. Among them is Amer Ayad, who was sentenced by the Military Court of Appeal to two months in prison for broadcasting a poem on his television program on Al-Zaytouna TV that was considered defamation of the Tunisian President, Kais Saied, and a distortion of

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<sup>3</sup> An investigative alliance composed of several media organizations  
<https://forbiddenstories.org/pegasus-journalists-under-surveillance/>

the image of the Tunisian army. The Military Court of First Instance had sentenced him to four months in prison in April 2022.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, Tunisian President Kais Saied met with members of the National Security Council and declared the exceptional measures in the country, justifying his decision with the existence of an "imminent danger" threatening the entity of the state, referring to the Article 80 of the constitution; and despite his pledge to preserve the rights and freedoms in the constitution, he suspended it later, and insists on ruling through presidential decrees. Although the journalists have suffered since the arrival of "Kais Saied" - 2019 - to the Carthage Palace, their suffering intensified in the post-July 25 periods, through restrictions that impeded their work, caused them to be referred to the courts, and cut off communication between the government and the local media.

Intimidation of journalists has become common practice in Tunisia, where journalists and media professionals are subjected to acts of violence at the hands of the security forces and are often expelled from reporting on trials.

Despite the passage of more than 12 years since the fall of the dictatorship of "Ben Ali regime", the authorities in Tunisia still fail to accept the idea that the public media is independent of the executive authority, as it seeks to appoint its loyalists to key positions in radio, television, the national news agency, and control the editorial line of these outlets.

In 2022, "Women Journalists Without Chains" documented the violations committed by the Tunisian authorities against 132 Tunisian journalists, including (37) Tunisian women journalists. They varied between (22) being subjected to trials and investigations, (12) being arrested and temporarily detained, 31 journalists being subjected to direct assault, and (67) journalists being prevented from practicing their work and covering events.

#### Presidential Decree 54

In September 2022, Tunisian President Kais Saied issued a new decree related to combating crimes related to information technology and communication, called "Decree 54", which undermines freedom of opinion and expression in the country, and has already been used to file cases against journalists and lawyers. The decree included unprecedented restrictions, the application of which would intimidate

journalists and Tunisians from expressing their opinions, especially towards political officials.

Decree 54 includes thirty-eight parts distributed over five chapters, stipulating penalties of up to six years in prison and fines of up to \$20,000 for those who commit crimes such as “false news and rumors” and what it describes as “fabricated or forged documents.” However, the decree did not define the fake news or rumor or the documents it meant. These broad and ill-defined terms may be used to justify and legitimize press abuse, as the authorities have the power to interpret them.

Under Chapters 9 and 10 of the decree, judicial authorities may order the monitoring of people’s Internet use and the collection of their personal communications data from service providers on the vague grounds that “would help reveal the truth” or “necessary for the investigation” of a suspected crime. Under Chapter 35, Tunisian authorities can share this data with foreign governments.

Article 24 of the decree stipulates that “whoever deliberately uses networks and information and communication systems to produce, promote, publish, send, or prepare false news, data, rumors, fabricated or forged documents, or falsely attributed to others, with the aim of violating the rights of others, harming public security or national defense, or spreading terror among the population, shall be punished with imprisonment for a period of five years and a fine of fifty thousand dinars”. The prescribed penalties are doubled if the targeted person is a public official or his/her like.”

The new law does not target Tunisian journalists only, but even foreign journalists, as the provisions allow the Tunisian judiciary to prosecute violators of Article 34, even if the violation occurred outside Tunisia: if it was committed against Tunisian parties or interests. Foreign journalists and residents of Tunisia are threatened with prosecution if they violate the law, even if the criticism is towards foreign parties and interests: if it is committed against foreign parties or interests by a foreigner or a stateless person whose usual place of residence is within Tunisian territory, or by a foreigner or a stateless person who is found in Tunisian soil .

The law does not guarantee the protection of data in the means of communication and the Internet. It did not specify the period allowed for data storage, and it allows for violating the confidentiality of the journalist’s sources without any protection. Where the law specified an entire part related to the conditions and method of examining the crime, where “the public prosecutor, the investigating judge, or the judicial police officers who are authorized in writing to do so may order that they be

given access to the information and data stored in a system or information carrier, or related to the movement of communications, or its users, or other data, that would help reveal the truth.”

### First: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

#### The case of Saleh Attia:

On August 16, a military court sentenced the journalist, Saleh Attia, to 3 months in prison, according to his lawyer and member of the defense, Samir Dilo, who confirmed that “the case was reserved for deliberations after his interrogation and the arguments of lawyers in defense of the charges against him, which are: insulting the dignity of the army, its reputation and doing what would weaken in the army the spirit of military order and obedience to superiors, attributing illegal matters to a public servant without providing evidence to prove the truth, and abuse of others through the public network of communications.”

On June 10, Attia, the owner and editor of “Al-Rai Al-Jadeed” newspaper, an electronic newspaper based in Tunisia, made statements to the Qatari “Al-Jazeera” channel, in which he said, “President Kais Saied authorized the military establishment to close the headquarters of the Tunisian General Union for Work as a result of the latter’s invitation for a general strike.”

On June 13, a military investigating judge in Tunisia ordered the imprisonment (pending investigation) of journalist Attia, pending his trial on the grounds of statements about the army, while the Journalists Syndicate at the time expressed its refusal to try civilians before a military court. He was released on September 26, 2022, after a three-month imprisonment.

#### **The case of Amer Ayyad**

April 6: A military court sentenced "Amer Ayyad," a journalist for Al-Zaytouna TV, to four months in prison, on charges of "conspiring against the internal security of the state, calling for disobedience, committing an atrocious act against the President of the Republic, and attributing illegal matters to a state employee." And in December: the Military Court of Appeal ruled that the journalist Amer Ayyad be imprisoned for two months, and the deputy in the dissolved Tunisian parliament, Abdul Latif Al-Alawi, for a month.

Amer Ayyad was arrested on October 3, 2021, accompanied by Abd al-Latif al-Alawi, on the backdrop of broadcasting a poem on his television program on Zaytouna channel that was considered defamation of the Tunisian President, Kais Saied, and a distortion of the image of the Tunisian army. Ayyad remained for a month in prison, and Al-Alawi was released a few days earlier.

### **The case of Khalifa Al Qasimi**

November 29, 2022: The Specialized Chamber for Terrorist Cases issued a one-year prison sentence against Khalifa Al-Qasimi, a correspondent for "Mosaique FM" radio station in Kairouan, according to the Anti-Terrorism Law, on the grounds that he published an authentic press report related to the dismantling of a terrorist cell in Kairouan. The security asked the journalist to reveal the sources of his information, but he adhered to his legal right to protect his sources, as well as the confidentiality of his personal data.

The case dates back to March 18, when the (Counter-Terrorism Crimes Investigation Unit) interrogated Khalifa Al-Qasimi, the correspondent of "Mozabic FM" in Kairouan, in the National Unit for Research into Terrorist Crimes of the National Guard in Tunisia, for 9 hours, with the permission of the Public Prosecutor at the Judicial Chamber for Combating Terrorism who raised the lawsuit against him on the suspicion of publishing information directly or through a media outlet, for the benefit of a terrorist organization, or for the benefit of persons related to terrorist crimes with the intent of assisting in their commission or covering them up. He was pressured to hand over his source of information, and who later turned himself into the police.

On March 19, security forces detained "Al-Qasimi" and transferred him to El-Awaina barracks from a place where he was detained in Bouchoucha without interviewing him. Al-Qasimi was placed, according to him, in a room next to terrorists. His detention continued for another five days, during which he was on a hunger strike. on the ground of publishing on the radio website news about the dismantling of a terrorist cell in Kairouan Province. He was later interrogated on March 25, after being referred to the investigation judge, who ordered his release pending the completion of investigations into the file.

### **Other Cases**

October 28: The Public Prosecution Office initiated an investigation against lawyer Mehdi Zaqrouba, accusing him of defaming Justice Minister Leila Jaffal in a Facebook post on October 23. In the post, Zaqrouba accused Jaffal of “fabricating” the court files and making public prosecutors implement “Jaffal’s agenda”. Zaqrouba said that his post refers to sham judicial investigations instigated by Jaffal against judges who had been arbitrarily dismissed by Saied.

November 2022: The Anti-Crime Squad in Qurjani interrogated journalist, founder, and director of the "Business News" website, Nizar Bahloul, on the background of a complaint filed against him by Minister of Justice Laila Jaffal, after the website published an analytical article on the outcome of the work of Naglaa Boden's government during 13 months of work under the title " Najla Bouden, the Beautiful Woman...". Leila Jaffal filed the complaint against Nizar Bahloul on the ground of Article 24 of Decree 54 on charges of "publishing incorrect news, defaming the prime minister, false claims, and the impact on public security with the aim of harming state security."

March 28: An attempt was made to characterize the file of journalist Shatha al-Haj Mubarak in connection with her referral to the Anti-terrorism bureau in relation to the "Instalingo" case. Fortunately, the defense team won the cassation file and it was returned to its civil litigation.

Since September 2021, journalist Shatha al-Haj Mubarak has been sued, in “Instalingo Company” case, which is specialized in the content industry and digital communication, on charges including “committing a serious (grave) matter against the head of state, conspiring against internal state security, and inciting residents to attack each other with weapons, provoking commotion, killing and plundering in Tunisian soil, according to articles 67, 68 and 72 of the penal code.

November 30, 2022: Nizar Ben Hassan, a journalist at “MFM” radio station, appeared in his capacity as its editor-in-chief before the First Instance Chamber of the Mahdia Court, after he objected to the issuance of a judgment in absentia issued in March 2022 that sentenced him to one year in prison, due to news he published on the radio’s website about a citizen’s sit-in, in front of the headquarters of the state of Mahdia accompanied by his daughter. Bin Hassan was sentenced after he was accused of “collecting personal data belonging to others for illegal purposes and transmitting them with the aim of harming their owner” in connection with his filming of the child accompanying the man following a complaint filed by the child’s mother.

May 17: A first-instance court in Tunis sentenced journalist Mohamed Bouglab of Shams FM radio, to four months in prison and fined 2,000 dinars for insulting others through public telecommunications networks. For his criticism of the Director of Presidential Security during the reign of former President Habib Bourguiba during the Tunisia Today program on Al-Hiwar Al-Tunisi channel in October 2019.

April: A court of first instance in the state of Nabeul sentenced the journalist, Montaser Sassi, the former correspondent of "Shams FM" radio, to 4 months in prison, on the grounds that he published a news story about the closure of a clinic in March 2020, and charged him with "insulting others through public communication networks."

May 19: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Central Division for Research in the state of Tunis interrogated journalist "Maher Kassem" on charges of insulting others through public telecommunications networks.

March 18: The National Unit for Research into Terrorist Crimes of the National Guard (the Anti-Terrorism Crimes Investigation Unit) investigated journalist Hussein al-Dabbabi, editor-in-chief of the news department of "Mosaïque FM" radio, on the background of publishing a report on the radio's website regarding the dismantling of a terrorist cell in Kairouan, sent by a reporter there. Dababy was accused of "disseminating news that would help terrorists escape," and the charge was annulled a week later.

March 19: The National Unit for Research into Terrorist Crimes of the National Guard (the Anti-Terrorism Crimes Investigation Unit) investigated the journalist Amal Al-Mannai on "Mosaïque FM" radio station, on the grounds that she had published a news story on the radio's website related to the dismantling of a terrorist cell in Kairouan, which was sent by the reporter Khalifa Al Qasimi.

February 3: The judicial division of the National Guard in Kasserine interviewed Hossam El Hermassi, Programming Director of Psilium FM, and the General Director of Radio, Mohamed Saleh Kaheri, following a complaint submitted by the Regional Health Administration and the head of the emergency department in Kasserine, for publishing an article on the site about the hospital's condition.

March 3: The Sub-Department for Criminal Cases interrogated journalist Shahrzad Okasha from the "Scope Info" website, on the grounds of a complaint filed against her by the Ministry of Interior, accusing her of promoting false news that would

harm public security after she posted posts on her Facebook account about smuggling cases. It was previously published on the site on March 17 last year.

February 15: An investigation judge at the Court of First Instance in Tunis investigated journalists Sanaa El-Mejri, Mona Bouazizi, Walid El-Mejri, and photojournalist Housseem Bouhli, on the ground of a complaint filed by the former head of the Aircraft Protection Squad at Tunis-Carthage Airport, Abdel Karim al-Obeidi, as defendants. Journalists and a photojournalist were investigated on charges of forming a criminal alliance, attributing illegal matters to a public official without providing evidence, and insulting others through the public communications network” on the background of articles published in 2013 and 2015 on “parallel security” and “airport security.”

June 18: The judicial police in Bab Bahr region of Tunisia interviewed the two journalists of Al-Shorouk newspaper, "Mona Bouazizi and Iman Khalfat" and the director of the newspaper, Saida Al-Amiri, following a complaint submitted by the leader of the Ennahda movement, Noureddine Al-Bahiri, on the background of an article published in November 2022, accusing al-Bahiri of subjugation of the judiciary.

November 15: National Guard units in Zarzis from Medenine state detained the freelance photojournalist, Ezzedine Musallam, while he was reporting on the Zarzis protests. He was released later.

October 28: Police arrested university student Ahmed Hamada, and confiscated his computer and phone. And he was detained. Later, on October 31, they interrogated him about data extracted from his computer and a Facebook page he created about Tadamon, a working-class neighborhood in Tunis where police recently clashed with protesters, according to lawyer Samia Abbou, who attended the interrogation.

May 8: Security forces detained Al-Araby TV correspondent Khalil Al-Kalaei and transferred him to the security center in Ibn Khaldoun Street in the capital, Tunis, on charges of filming a security center on Habib Bourguiba Street. Al-Kilaei was on Habib Bourguiba Street covering a demonstration organized by supporters of President Kais Saied. The security forces asked for a permit, and despite giving them the permit, they asked him to come to the security station. He was released an hour after his detention.

March 23: Security forces in civilian clothes detained the photojournalists at the "Nawat" website, Saif Al-Kousani and Tariq Al-Obeidi, and seized their equipment.

They took them to the "Brades Melian" police station in the state of Ben Arous while they were filming a reportage in the region. The two journalists refused to reveal what they were filming because it did not comply with the applicable law. The commander of the police station contacted the editor-in-chief of the site, who refused to provide an answer about their work in compliance with the law, and a report was drawn up to present them to the prosecution in the following month.

March 9: An official prevented the Tunisian TV team from reporting on a press conference on the evaluation of wasted water, organized in a hotel in the northern suburbs of the capital.

January 14: Members of the security forces destroyed the phone of journalist Zina Al-Mejri from the "Falso" platform, and she was transferred to the security center in Ibn Khaldun Street in the capital, on the background of her filming the arrest of a 15-year-old child during protests against the decisions of President Kais Saied, on Muhammad V Street. She was detained for more than an hour until her lawyer attended.

January 14: Security forces assaulted the reporter of the French newspaper "Liberation", Mathieu Galtier, while he was reporting the dispersal of protests on Bourguiba Street. He was beaten and his phone was smashed. He was taken to the Ibn Khaldoun station and detained for more than an hour, and his phone's memory was confiscated, as there were photos and videos of the sit-in disperse. He was released after confirming his identity.

January 14: Most of the journalists who were reporting the protests were assaulted, including Amira Jabali, journalist for Facts Online; Halima Ben Nasr, journalist with "Arabi 24"; Ahmed Zerrouki, freelance photojournalist. Fadia Al-Husseini, correspondent of the Lebanese New News Agency. Arabi Al-Mahjoubi, a photojournalist with the Anatolia Agency. And Yassin Al-Qaidi, the photojournalist for the "Anadolu Agency". Aya Mokadam and Ahmed Lali the freelance journalists. And Nour El-Din Ahmed, a photojournalist for the American Shutterstock Editorial Agency, and EFM journalist Anisa Al-Mekshah; Nahla Habashi, a journalist for "Akher Khabar Online" website, Iskandar Nawar, freelance journalist, Wajdi Ben Massoud, a journalist for "Tunis Gate" website, and Asma Kanaqan, freelance journalist.

January 14: Security forces arrested Mahdi al-Ash, a journalist from The Legal Agenda, while he was covering protests around John Jurass Street in the capital. He was taken to the security center in Ibn Khaldun Street in the capital. The security

personnel also transferred the photojournalist of the "Business News" website, Marwan Al-Suhaili, to the same center because of the filming on Habib Bourguiba Street.

The security forces assaulted Sofiane Ghoubantini, a journalist for the "Business News" website, while he was reporting the January 14 protests in front of the Central Bank. The security guard deliberately pushed the journalist and hit his camera to prevent filming the security forces' attack on a citizen.

The security forces closely monitored the two journalists, Reem Marzouk and Sarah Al-Aouji from the "Tuniscopie" website, and one of them hacked Reem Marzouk's phone during their live coverage of the protests against President Kais Saied's resolutions, under the allegations that they are broadcasting to Al-Jazeera channel, which is transmitted from their pages on social media networks.

January 3: Security forces prevented Wesal Ayadi, a journalist at the Jeunesse news website, and Amna Buhaira, a photojournalist, from filming in the Bab Bahr area of the capital.

The security forces took journalist Nourz Al-Mashrawi and photojournalist Makram Moftahi, who work for the "Al-Hiwar Al-Tunisi" channel, while they are preparing an investigative report for the Four Facts program, to the National Security in the state of Nabeul while filming in a public park adjacent to the National Security. They were later released.

## Second: Assaults and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

September 17: Security forces in the state of Tunis severely assaulted Radio Tunis International journalist Sofiane Ben Nejmech while he was at the security center to file a complaint about a night robbery he was subjected to while leaving his workplace. Three of the officers were later suspended, leaving two at large.

August 7: Members of security unions in the state of Sfax assaulted journalist Sorour Al-Haddar from Radio Sfax, journalist Fathi Al-Tariqi, and photojournalists Ayman Hadidar and Ahmed Hantoush, while they were covering and filming an assault by security officials at the Sfax International Festival on officials. The four journalists were photographed and threatened with reprisals if they published the photos after scanning their videos.

August 16: Photojournalist Mohamed Al-Samawi was harassed by security forces and his press card was confiscated during the Carthage International Festival in Tunis. His card was returned, but the perpetrators were not identified or referred for investigation.

July 22: Security forces assaulted the head of the Journalists Syndicate, Muhammad Yassin al-Jalasi, while he was participating in a march against the draft constitution regarding rights and freedoms, including freedom of the press. He has to undergo a medical intervention.

July 22: Security forces assaulted journalist Ghaya Ben Mubarak, a journalist for Meshkal website, while she was covering the march protesting the draft constitution, which was later held in a referendum.

July 22: Security forces assaulted journalist Yusra al-Sheikhawy of Facts Online website while covering the protest march against the draft constitution. One of the security forces slapped her after he tried to prevent her from reporting until she fell to the ground and fainted.

April 14: Security forces assaulted journalist Karim Meqni, a journalist for Al-Diwan FM, and denied him access to Tayeb Al-Muhairi Stadium (in Sfax), despite showing his press card, which they tried to confiscate.

April 23: Two security soldiers severely beat Shukri Al-Shehhi, a journalist at Al-Hosari website, while he was leaving Al-Qurjani Hall after covering a handball match. They prevented him from reaching his car and detained him in a car and beat him, after which he was taken to the hospital.

February 19: Security forces and an observer of a football match in the state of Besiliana assaulted the freelance journalist, Maher Al-Hamassi, while he was covering the match at Al-Waslatia Stadium.

February 10: Walid Abdullah, the correspondent of "Al-Arabiya" channel, received an official confirmation from the security authorities to open an investigation regarding the fact that his name was included in the list of those threatened with assassination in Tunisia. Walid Abdullah was interviewed by the specialized team and provided with protection to avoid any danger that might affect him.

Third: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage:

August 20: Security forces prevented journalist Nadira bin Rajab and audio technician Hamdi al-Naqbi from al-Mustanir Radio from covering the Fezqiyeh Festival in Kairouan. Despite prior coordination with the festival director and his intervention to let them in, the security forces refused.

August 23: The harassment of the security forces responsible for securing Medenine International Festival, on journalists, prompted them to withdraw after they were prevented from photographing, deporting them, and changing their places. The journalists are; Faiza Sokkara, Aida Bougherra from Tunisian TV, Najah Haddad and Taira Chebani, Hadia Qari from Radio Tataouine, and Afaf Belarabi from Digital Tunis website.

August 24: Journalist Saber Belarabi of "Sabra FM" radio station was prevented from entering the headquarters of the Kairouan state headquarters to cover the meeting of assigning the steering body of the Kairouan Youth Association by government officials in the state, at the governor instructions.

August 26: The Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs prevented representatives of the Tunisian media from covering the meeting of the Tunisian Foreign Minister and the Japanese Foreign Minister at the Tokyo International Symposium on African Development.

September 15: The guards of the government palace in the Kasbah state denied access to Al-Jazeera staff, consisting of journalist Lotfi Al-Hajji and cameraman Anis Al-Abbasi, to cover the agreement concluded between the Government and the Tunisian General Labor Union.

September 15: The media services at the government in the state of Tunisia prevented "Arab TV" staff, journalist Khalil Kalaei and cameraman Ayman Mansour, from live broadcasting of the agreement ceremony to increase the wages of public employment and the private sector between the government and the Tunisian General Labor Union.

September 19: The government authorities in the state of Kasserine prevented the Tunisian TV team, journalist Nadia Al-Rutibi and photojournalist Jad Al-Mansari, from filming.

September 30: The "Four Facts" investigative program team, journalist Hassan Bahloul, photojournalist Makram Mifthi, and driver Hossam Ferchichi, were assaulted by guards of the Tunisian Railway Company while reporting on the

company's conditions, and the photographic equipment was confiscated before being returned with the intervention of security forces. Security.

November 15: Units of the National Guard detained a TRT journalist team for two hours to prevent them from reporting, namely journalist Rahma al-Sayyari and photojournalist Muhammad al-Zarqi, at the orders of the official of the Sidi Omar Bouhajla region in the state of Kairouan.

November 29: Hamza al-Khalafawi, a journalist at Sabra FM, was prevented from covering the visit of the Minister of Women to the Kairouan state headquarters, at the instructions of the Kairouan governor.

In July: The Tunisian Journalists Syndicate documented 39 cases of denial of news coverage during the referendum, in most states. Most of them are against Tunisian female journalists working for local or international media.

May 18: Security forces closed the office of the Tunis Afrique News Agency in Manouba, and suspended the head of the office, Naima Aouichaoui, from work. In response to a ban decision issued by the state secretary of Manouba due to a dispute between " Aouichaoui " and the state secretary-general, during a working session organized by the state on May 11.

March 31: Security forces banned the freelance journalist, Nahla Habshi, from working in the court, in implementation of the decision of the Public Prosecutor, who decided to prevent journalists from filming and working to report on the case of "Omar Al-Obaidi," a victim of security violence.

March 31: The Public Prosecutor at the Court of First Instance in the state of Ben Arous banned filming in the court premises, following an altercation that occurred during the trial session of the defendants in the case of "Omar Labidi," a victim of police violence. The journalists Ghaya Ben Mubarak and Shahd Lina, for the "Mishkal" website, Yousra Al-Sheikhawy, the journalist for "Haqaiq Online" website, and Reem Al-Shaabani, the journalist for the "Roots TV" website, and Intisar Kassara, the journalist for the "Enyas" website, were not allowed to report from the court.

Libya

Tough Situation

Despite the high hopes journalists had following the fall of the dictator Muammar Gaddafi, and that the revolution of February 17, 2011, will lead to the removing the restrictions imposed on freedom of the press and freedom of opinion and expression. However, what happened was the opposite of hopes, as no significant improvement could be noticed compared to dictator Gaddafi's rule.

Within a complex environment of fear and risk, the work of journalists and press in Libya has become extremely dangerous, as the country plunges further into the chaos of armed groups, the influential military leaders in the country, and growing tribal interests.

Leaders of armed groups and factions in Libya believe that there are no independent journalists, but rather journalists affiliated with parties, which increases the risk of journalists' work and becoming victims of polarization in order to obtain protection.

Over the past ten years, no faction or party in Libya has clearly wanted to make freedom of the press a priority. On the contrary, the fact that several media outlets belong to or depend on warring factions makes it difficult for them to be independent and forces journalists to reflect the vision and policy of the donor to the media outlet.

(11) journalists were subjected to violations, including two female journalists. including assault, beating, kidnapping, and denial of news coverage. Usually, journalists were often directly assaulted to intimidate other journalists or send messages to their media institution that they will be next if they dare to criticize, considering the continuing state of impunity. A Libyan journalist told "Women's Journalists Without Chain", in the condition of anonymity for security reasons - that "some journalists have been subjected to violations by the party to which that media outlets affiliates, for criticizing officials in this party, or in another party allied with them, and there were warned not to declare or complain to the press or human rights organizations.

### Prosecuting Journalists and Bloggers on the Internet

The Libyan Parliament issued Law No. (5) of 2022 regarding combating cybercrime on September 27, 2022. "Women Journalists Without Chains" viewed the law, which contains many articles and powers to withhold, ban, and limit the circulation and dissemination of information and press work, and it can be manipulated to convict journalists for doing their job. Among these articles:

“The National Commission for Information Security and Safety may monitor what is published and displayed in the world wide web or any other technical system, and block materials that spread strife or ideas that would destabilize the security and stability of society or affect its social peace.” Article 7.

“Anyone who disseminates a rumor or publishes data or information that threatens public security and safety in the country or any other country through the world wide web or using any other electronic means shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than five years and a fine of not less than 10,000 ten thousand dinars and no more than 100,000 hundred thousand dinars.” Article 37.

“Anyone who publishes or distributes information that provokes racial, regional or sectarian strife that aims to discriminate between specific persons through the world wide web, or other electronic means, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than a year and a fine of not less than 1,000 thousand dinars and no more than 10,000 ten thousand dinars.” Article 29.

“Anyone who eavesdrops for himself or for others on communications made through the world wide web or any other electronic means shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not less than one year. The penalty shall be imprisonment if the eavesdropping is intended to obtain government, security, military, or banking secrets. If he publishes the secrets through the world wide web any other electronic means or enabled a person or other entity to obtain them, the penalty will be life imprisonment.” Article 47.

“Anyone who seizes identification and identity tools belonging to another person used in an information system shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine of not less than 1,000 thousand dinars and not more than 3,000 three thousand dinars. Anyone who knowingly and illegally uses identification tools belonging to another person in an information system shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of no less than one year and a fine of no less than 1,000 thousand dinars and no more than 10,000 ten thousand dinars.” Article 18.

“Whoever produces, possesses, installs, markets, manufactures, exports or imports encryption software/devices without a license or permit from the competent authority in the state shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine of not less than 20,000 twenty thousand dinars and not more than 100,000 hundred thousand dinars.” Article 39.

Article 7 grants wide powers to surveillance the internet, including social media networks and electronic newspapers, without a warrant, for specific cases. The law does not provide a specific definition of society's security and "social peace". The ambiguity of the sentence “any other technical system” also adds another dilemma in the extent to which the authority can expand in monitoring other technological systems and means of communication that may not fall under this law.

Article 37, is also of general nature, where the law does not provide any definition of “rumor, public safety,” and the punishment is extremely exaggerated. And in Article 29, there is no definition of “how to stir up strife and discriminate between people”!

Where Article 47, seems to be like a direct targeting of journalists and their right to access information, communicate with officials and private sources, and publish information obtained within the framework of their job.

Articles 39 and 18 criminalize the right of citizens and journalists to encrypt their Internet connection, including the use of a VPN. Digital encryption means are one of the most significant rights of Libyans to exercise their right to opinion, expression, and privacy, and therefore the authority has no right to criminalize their right to possess or use them.

### Unreasonable Conditions for Practicing Media

On September 15, 2022, the Government of National Unity issued Resolution No. 811 of 2022 related to the conditions and controls for practicing media activity, and Women Journalists Without Chain reviewed the resolution.

This decision contains unreasonable articles and paragraphs, as Article 2 requires security approval to engage in audiovisual media activity. This is for Libyan individuals and entities. And for non-Libyan foreign media, two approvals are required, the first from security, and the second from the Libyan intelligence service. This opens the door to security and military control over the media outlets.

Article four of the resolution stipulated that the license shall be revoked “if a penalty is issued that includes revoking the license or the permit to practice from one of the competent authorities,” and “the permit to practice is revoked if a penalty is issued that includes the cancellation of the permission to practice from one of the competent authorities”, according to Article 6, and no one knows what these competent

authorities are and do they include the authorities that granted licenses as in Article 2!

The permit to practice is revoked or the license is withdrawn in the event of a violation of the "media controls", and the law refers to them, in broad paragraphs that open the door wide for security and intelligence services to target whoever they dislike, such as: preserving the values, morals, principles and teachings of Islamic Sharia; Refrain from inciting strife and tribal conflicts and spreading rumors; not to stir up sectarian and cult strife; not incite violence, hatred, and terrorism; Not to broadcast or disseminate visual or audio news that would destabilize the security of the homeland and the citizen; Not to disclose and publish the secrets of the Libyan state and what threatens its national security; Not to violate the constitution, laws, and regulations in force in the Libyan state.

What raises concerns is the lack of independence of the committee regulating the work of private audio-visual channels that grant permissions to engage in media activity, as it is supervised by the Department of Media and Government Communication at the Cabinet Office. Journalists and media outlets owners in Libya say that the head of this committee is a former security officer and includes members representing the Ministry of Interior and Libyan Intelligence.

#### First: Assault and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

December 24: A security personnel beat the photojournalist of the Libyan al-Ghambia News Agency, "Al-Mutasem Billah Al-Harari," before he was detained for some time, and seized a camera and photographing equipment and erased the recorded material while he was covering the celebration of the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Libya's independence.

August 15: The correspondent of Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath channels in Libya, "Muhammad Masoud", was assaulted by Parliament Security in Tobruk, and all the channel's equipment was broken and the live broadcast was cut off.

February 14: The journalist "Mabrouka Al-Mesmari" was beaten by gunmen in Benghazi, while she was performing her work.

February 20: beating and ban from work of TV 218 correspondent Ali Al-Mahmoudi in Tripoli while he was covering the celebrations of the eleventh anniversary of the February Revolution in Martyrs Square.

December 9: the sports journalist Ahmed Gomaa was threatened by the former president of Al-Ahly club in Tripoli, to arrest and beat him if he did not disclose his sources regarding the article, he published on the club elections.

August 15: The correspondent of Al-Arabiya and Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath channel, “Muhammad Masoud,” was beaten during a press coverage in front of the House of Representatives in Tobruk, which resulted in an eye injury and some bruises.

March 26: An armed group abducted “Ali Al-Rifawi” in Sirte city, for “reporting on the work of the Sirte municipality, which would inflame public opinion,” according to reliable sources from the city. He was released on July 5, 2022, after more than 100 days in detention.

## Second: Denial of News Coverage and Restrictions on Movement

November 14: The Arab TV crew, two journalists were banned from going to eastern Libya despite obtaining all the necessary permits, under the pretext of a security restriction on the reporter due to his previous interventions with local radio stations.

September 17: The journalist "Zainab Ben Chrada" was expelled during a press conference by the Minister of Dabaiba government Affairs.

February 20: The correspondent of the official Libya channel, "Mohammed Sabry", was assaulted during the government's press conference, the "microphone" was taken away from him, and he was prevented from asking his question about the source of financing the loans approved by the government.

January 24: The Libyan government decides to establish a commission to monitor press breaches.

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria,

## Facing the Redlines

Press freedom in Algeria collides with many redlines, as journalists are threatened with arrest and liquidation if they raise issues such as corruption, suppression of demonstrations, and opposition.

Press freedom is deteriorating in Algeria since 2018, reaching its worst phases in 2022, making it the worst year, as independent media are under pressure, journalists are regularly imprisoned and prosecuted, and many websites are blocked.

The repression intensified after the election of president Abdel Majeed Tebboune in December 2019, despite the decline in the marches and political movement in the past year, however, the crackdown continued, as journalists, human rights activists, and lawyers were subjected to prosecution for expressing their opinions. As the authorities have increasingly used terrorism-related charges, after expanding the definition of the crime in June 2021, to prosecute journalists, human rights defenders, activists, and other critics. Also, legal measures took place to dissolve civil society organizations and opposition political parties or otherwise restrict their activities.

Although the authorities focused their attack on human rights organizations in the country during 2022, journalists suffered a share of violations, as Women Journalists Without Chains documented cases of 11 Algerian journalists who were subjected to violations, ten of whom were subjected to prosecution and prison sentences. And a radio station, a news website, and a TV channel were closed, and the internet was banned.

#### First: Trial, Arrest, and Detention of Journalists

December 29: The investigation judge of the Sidi Mohamed Court in Algiers, ordered the imprisonment of journalist Ihsane El Kadi, director of Radio M and the Maghreb Emergent news website after five days in police custody on December 24, and the closure of the two outlets he runs. The judge accused him of using "money received from inside and outside the country to carry out actions that undermine state security, national unity, territorial integrity, Algeria's interests, and public order." The journalist denied these accusations outright, as did his supporters. His imprisonment seems to be because of his recent articles and tweets that he published questioning information mentioned by the Algerian president.

December 23: after Ihssane Kadi's arrest, the offices of Interface Médias, which runs Radio M and the news website Maghreb Emergent, are closed and blocked in Algeria.

December 6: A court in Bejaia sentenced cartoonist "Ghilas Ainoush" in absentia to 10 years in prison, on several charges, including "insulting the President of the Republic."

October 25: Journalist Belkacem Hawam was sentenced to one year in prison, including two months in prison, and the editor-in-chief of Al-Shorouk newspaper, Abdel Hamid Othmani, to six suspended months in prison, for publishing false news.

October 18: The Dar El Beïda Criminal Court in Algiers issues an imprisonment sentence against journalist Mohamed Moulog for two years, with one year suspended. At the time of the verdict, Moulog, had been in Al-Qulea prison for 13 months, on charges of belonging to a "terrorist group".

The case is based on a text message sent from Moulog on April 27 to an opposition figure Farhat Mhanni, leader of the Movement for the Independence of Kabylie, to interview him in the context of preparing an article in the daily newspaper Liberté, and it was used as a pretext to accuse him of belonging to a terrorist group. Although the Supreme Security Council of Algeria had designated Farhat movement as a terrorist group on May 18, 2021, after "Moulog" message, which contradicts the principle of the non-retroactivity of the law.

October 12: Nazir Kari, the journalist and director of the Auto Algeria website, was arrested and placed under investigation, following a complaint from the Ministry of Industry about an article he wrote about importing cars into Algeria.

October 4: Police in Algeria interrogated Reporters Without Borders representative in North Africa, Khaled Drareni, over a radio program he presented in February 2022 on Radio M.

September 26: The Indictment Chamber of the Algerian Judicial Council refuses to release Belkacem Haouam, a journalist for Al-Shorouk newspaper who was imprisoned two weeks earlier (September 8) for an article related to the export of dates. He was released on November 8.

### **Saad Bouqba Case**

The security services detained journalist and writer Saad Buaqba for two days on February 4, 2022, and was charged for writing an opinion article. He was placed under judicial control and has been banned from leaving the country since then. He is being tried under Combating of Discrimination and Hate Speech Act. He was

arrested four days after he published a column entitled "Away from Politics" on the Al-Madar website, in which he touched on what he considered to be ambiguous relations between power and citizens. He apologized for his last column, explaining that the criticism he faced, resulted from the "misunderstanding", stressing while he did not intend to harm or offend anyone.

January 3: Blogger and activist Merzoug Touati was sentenced to one year in prison and fined 100,000 Algerian dinars (US\$700) on January 3, 2022, for "insulting a statutory body" and "publishing false information" in connection with a post on Facebook". The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling on February 16. Tawati went on a hunger strike for three weeks to protest his arrest and the conditions in which he was held, which ended in April 2022.

Second: Denial of Coverage, Assault, and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

October 20: Journalist Mustapha Ben Jamaa was prevented from traveling by the police, although he is not under a travel ban. He was then arrested and taken to the police station.

November 16: The Algerian authorities decided to permanently close the Al-Ajwaa TV channel, due to broadcasting scenes they described as "contrary to the values of society and the Islamic religion."

## **Mauritania**

More Restrictions on the Press

Mauritania is still better off in terms of press freedoms compared to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This is not inconsistent with the fragility, weakness, and decline of the press freedom in Mauritanian since 2019.

The Mauritanian authorities continue to use the "Reforming the Journalism Course" project, and a law was enacted to restructure the Higher Authority for Press and Audiovisual "HAPA", and it was expected to address the fragility and weakness in the press, but the authorities exclude civil society organizations, and the Journalists Syndicate, from its membership, according to the Syndicate statement in July 2022, which led to the Syndicate to boycott the HAPA.

Journalists are counting on the new laws and decrees launched by the government to enhance the role of the independent press in Mauritania.

In 2022, Women Journalists Without Chains monitored violations against four journalists in Mauritania.

### Code of National Symbols

In 2022, the “Protection of National Symbols and Criminalizing Infringement of the Prestige of the State and the Honor of the Citizen” law, was enforced, after it was approved by the Mauritanian parliament in November 2021, to combat “any act that would affect the unity of the people, the prestige and sovereignty of the state that reflects its **reference** symbols.” and putting an end to the misuse of social media platforms.” The law contains very general articles that limit the work of journalists and threaten the profession of journalism.

Article 2: whoever intentionally, uses media and digital communication technologies and social media platforms, prejudices the constants and sanctities of the Islamic religion, national unity and territorial integrity, or insults or humiliates the President of the Republic, the national flag or anthem, is considered an offense to the prestige of the state and its symbols.

Article 3: Any publication or distribution of text, audio, or video materials using technologies, media, digital communication, and social media platforms aimed at undermining the morale of members of the armed forces and security forces, or undermining their loyalty to the Republic, is considered a violation of national security.

Photographing, publishing, and distributing pictures of individuals or formations of the armed forces and security forces while performing their duties without explicit permission from the responsible commander, is also considered an offense to national security. Committing this offensive is punishable by imprisonment from one (1) to two years and a fine from one hundred thousand (100,000) Ouguiya to one hundred and fifty (150,000) Ouguiya.

The law contains general terms such as “constants”, “insults and humiliates”, sanctities of the “Islamic religion”, “morale” and “shaking their loyalty”, which are inaccurate and ambiguous. These two articles contribute to restricting the activities of journalists and human rights defenders.

As for insulting and defaming the president, it is somewhat similar to the laws in royal dictatorships that criminalize insulting "lese majeste". Public figures, including senior positions of political power, are legitimately exposed to criticism and political opposition.

Article 4: It is considered a violation of civil peace and social cohesion any distribution using the media techniques and means, digital communication and social media platforms of audio, text, or video materials that include defamation, slander or insult directed at a part of the country or a component of the people or spreading hatred between these components or incitement against each other.

The law does not provide a definition of "defamation," "slander," and "insult," and unleashes authorities and the court's hand for interpreting written criticism according to what they see. Also, failure to distinguish between insulting, defamation, and slander on the one hand, and spreading hatred and incitement on the other hand. The combination of these terms in one article can have a chilling effect on press freedom.

#### First: Trial, Arrest, and Detention of Journalists

August 17: The director of the Nouakchott daily website, Moussa Samba Sy, is brought before the Public Prosecutor following a complaint by a bank over a newspaper article.

June 6: Mauritanian police interrogated journalist Al-Heiba Ould Cheikh Sidati, publishing director of the Independent News Agency after he published reports about the decision to bring former President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, and some of the symbols of his rule, to trial, including details of their property.

January 15: Judicial police summoned Mauritanian journalist Salek Zeid. Ould Zeid said he believed it was a post he had made about corruption in a public institution.

#### **Second: Suspension from Work**

July 16: The police prevented journalist Ahmed Ould Mohamed El Mostafa, editor-in-chief of the Independent News Agency, from covering a demonstration in the center of the capital, Nouakchott, against the rise in gasoline prices, and confiscated his phone.

## Palestine and the Occupied Territories

### Assassination of Press

Palestine appears to be the worst country in the Middle East and North Africa in terms of the number of violations against journalists, as the Israeli occupation exacerbates these violations and undermines the work of press in the occupied territories.

The pattern of violations shows that the Israeli occupation practices a policy of systematic targeting of the press and press institutions, which has led to the physical liquidation of journalists, as happened with Sherine Abu Aqleh and Ghufran Haroun, and deliberately shooting them with live and rubber bullets, stun grenade and tear gas, severely beat them, arresting and confiscate their equipment and the threatening them, bombing their crews and institutions, and restricting their movement and traveling.

The Israeli occupation targets journalists directly, despite their clearly visible identities and wearing of vests bearing their press identity. Cameras and press equipment indicate the identities of the journalists, at the moments of targeting, but the occupation forces did not care about that and attacked journalists and confiscated their equipment.

Despite the international and national commitment to the authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to respect, protect and implement freedom of opinion and expression and respect for freedom of the press, the two authorities continue their policy of persecuting journalists and opinion-makers.

Women Journalists Without Chains monitored violations against 195 male and female journalists in Palestine and the occupied territories, including 36 female journalists and correspondents. Two female journalists were killed, and scores of others were injured in the assaults. More than 90% of the violations were committed by the Israeli occupation army and security, which exceed 500 violations including killing, wounding, direct assault, detention, and arrest.

It seems that the violations will escalate considering the impunity of the occupation army.

## **Sherine Abu Aqleh**

On May 11, Al-Jazeera correspondent Sherine Abu Aqleh (51), was shot dead by Israeli forces, who targeted her and producer Ali Smoudi with live bullets, which led to her death, as she was hit in the head and Smoudi was wounded by a bullet in the back. The martyr "Abu Aqleh" and "Smoudi" were covering the Israeli soldiers' raid on Jenin camp in the northern West Bank.

The Palestinian journalist, Shatha Hanaysha, said that Israeli snipers shot at her and another journalist, along with "Shireen Abu Aqleh" and "Smoudi", and they did not stop shooting even after the fall of Abu Aqleh, which prevented her from dragging her away from the fire shots and "Sherine" left to bleed till death. Sherine murder was incredibly brutal. An autopsy confirmed that Abu Aqleh was killed by an armor-piercing bullet that hit her in the back of her head, exited from her forehead and bounced off her helmet, causing skull fractures and brain damage.

The Zionist authorities committed one of the most heinous crimes against journalists in decades. Sherine was killed in cold blood, and journalists around the world mourned her death. On May 11, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine, Francesca Albanese, said the crime constituted a "serious violation of international humanitarian law and a potential war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court."

The occupation army committed other crimes against Sherine Abu Aqleh, as it stormed her house, confiscated Palestinian flags, and banned "playing patriotic songs." Abu Aqleh's niece reported that she was threatened with beating by an Israeli officer.

Abu Aqleh's funeral was held on Friday, May 13, in Jerusalem. The procession was stopped in the French Hospital (Saint Joseph), in the footage taken from the security cameras installed in Saint Joseph Hospital, dozens of Israeli police officers were seen storming the hospital building, and they were beating, pushing, and trampling patients, and the Israeli police also stopped the mourners who tried to carry her coffin and beat them with batons, and her coffin nearly fell to the ground. The journalists who covered the funeral of their colleague were targeted with stun grenades, tear gas, rubber bullets, and severe beatings, injuring more than 15 journalists, including eight female journalists.

Israel refused to take responsibility for Sherine's killing, or to investigate her murder and came up with different accounts of what happened to mislead and cover up the

facts. Most of the press reports, including those from the Hebrew press, confirmed that the Israeli occupation army was behind her deliberate killing.

An investigation by the Israeli army determined the circumstances of her death in two possible cases; an indiscriminate shooting by Palestinians and a possible wrongful Israeli sniper fire. In the first case, the occupying army assumed that she might have been killed when Palestinian gunmen fired dozens of bullets indiscriminately at IDF vehicles in the direction in which she was standing. In the second scenario, it is believed that a soldier in an armored vehicle about 200 meters from Abu Aqleh armed with a pistol with a telescope was firing from a slit in the vehicle during an exchange of fire with a Palestinian gunman. Several eyewitnesses, including two journalists who were standing next to Abu Aqleh, reported that the area was relatively quiet immediately before her death and there were no Palestinians, civilians or otherwise, thus contradicting the occupation narrative. Sherine was also wearing her bulletproof vest and helmet and was hit by a sniper's bullet in an open area under her ear, which reveals that she was killed deliberately.

On June 16, 2022, Al Jazeera reported that it had obtained a picture of the bullet and that according to ballistic and forensic experts, the green-tipped 5.56mm armor-piercing bullet was designed for use in the M4 rifle, like those used regularly by Israeli forces. The IDF will not conduct a criminal investigation, saying there is no doubt on their part that a criminal act was committed. The Israeli government issued a statement that no criminal investigation was needed.

### **Ghufran Haroun Hamid**

On June 1, 2022, journalist Ghufran Haroun Hamed Al-Warasneh (31) was killed by Israeli army bullets at the entrance to Al-Arroub camp, north of Hebron. She worked on Radio Al-Raba'a and a trainee in Palestine TV, also served on some local radio stations such as (ONP), Siraj, and Orouba.

Ghufran was killed while she was on her way to join Dream Radio. She had a voice exam the day before yesterday, and she auditioned for it. On her way, she was shot by Israeli soldiers at the entrance to Al-Arroub camp, where the bullet penetrated her chest from the left side (under the armpit), and exited from the right side. The occupation army refused to open an investigation into her death.

## **Journalist Nidal Aghbaria**

On September 4, 2022, journalist Nidal Aghbaria (44) was shot dead inside his car by unknown assailants in Umm al-Fahm. Aghbaria was the editor for the news website Baladna, which covers developments in Umm al-Fahm. The family accuses the Palestinian police of inaction, and in November 2022 the suspects in his killing were discharged.

In June 2021, Aghbaria said that his house was subjected to a barrage of gunfire with more than 50 bullets after midnight in the city of Umm al-Fahm, and the police did not investigate the case.

First: Violating the Right to Life

the West Bank:

May 11: Al-Jazeera correspondent Sherine Abu Aqleh was shot dead by Israeli forces after they targeted her and her colleague, producer Ali Samoudi, with live bullets, which led to her death after she was hit in the head and Smoudi was wounded by a bullet in the back. Abu Aqleh and Samoudi were reporting on the Israeli soldiers storming of the Jenin camp in the northern West Bank.

June 1: Journalist Ghufraan Haroun Hamed was shot dead by the Israeli army at the entrance to Al-Arroub camp, north of Hebron.

September 4: Journalist Nidal Aghbaria was shot dead in his car by unknown assailants in Umm al-Fahm. Aghbaria was the editor for the news website Baladna, which covers developments in Umm al-Fahm. No progress has been made in the investigation of the party responsible for his killing.

January 7: Israeli forces targeted Quds Network correspondents Naseer Abu Thabet and Mutasim Saqf al-Hait. with rubber-coated bullets and gas bombs during their news coverage.

January 9: Occupation soldiers targeted Palestine TV correspondent Rima Al-Amleh with rubber-coated bullets and gas bombs while she was reporting on the news.

January 14: The occupation soldiers targeted reporter Muhammad al-Khatib with rubber-coated bullets and gas bombs while he was reporting on the news.

January 12: Israeli forces targeted Palestine TV cameraman Youssef Shehadeh with rubber-coated bullets and gas bombs while covering events.

February 4: The Israeli forces targeted, with gas bombs, rubber bullets, and stun bombs, the correspondent of "Al-Koufiya" channel, Rajaa Ma'rouf Jaber, and the cameraman of "G-Media" agency, Laith Jaar.

February 11: The occupation soldiers targeted with rubber bullets Muhammad Thabet and the photographer of Quds News Network, Abdullah Bahsh, while he was reporting the confrontations between the occupation soldiers and the Palestinian demonstrators.

February 18: G-Media photographer Ashraf Abu Shawish was shot with rubber bullets and beaten on February 27.

February 27: The Israeli occupation forces attacked the freelance photographer, Nasser Shtayyeh, the Reuters photographer, Adel Abu Nima, the freelance photographer, Mahmoud Fawzi, the French Agency photographer, Jaafar Shtayyeh, and the Anadolu Agency photographer, Hisham Abu Shaqra.

February 11: The occupation forces severely beat and shoved the director of the office of the Turkish "Anadolu Agency" Anas Janli, the agency's cameraman Issam Rimawi, and the Reuters correspondent, Raneen Sawafta, and targeted them with stun grenades and tear gas.

February 25: The occupation forces beat and used tear gas against the correspondent of the official news agency "Wafa" Hamza Muhammad Al-Khattab, the cameraman of "Space Media" Louay Saeed, the correspondent of "Palestine TV" Mahmoud Farash, and the cameraman Iyad Al-Hashlamoun.

February 27: The occupation forces beat and used tear gas against Quds News Network reporter Mutassim Saqf Al-Hait, the freelance photographer Nasser Shtayyeh, the French Agency photographer Jaafar Shtayyeh, and the freelance journalist Nidal Natsheh.

May 17: Israeli soldiers tried to run over the photographer of the French Press Agency, Jaafar Shtayyeh, in Nablus.

May 13: The occupation soldiers threatened "Al-Ghad" TV crew, which included the reporter Raed Al-Sharif and the cameraman Jamil Salhab, by firing squad. They also broke the windows of the channel's car and the Reuters agency's car.

August 9: Israeli forces targeted the "Shabab FM" radio station with live bullets in Nablus.

August 9: Israeli forces targeted the "Shabab FM" radio station with live bullets in Nablus.

August 26: Israeli Forces attacked, with bullets and tear gas, the Palestine TV correspondent Fadi Yassin, the European Agency photographer Alaa Tawfiq Badarneh, the French Press Agency photographer Jaafar Shtayyeh, and the Xinhua agency photographer Nidal Shtayyeh.

September 6: Israeli forces targeted the car of the correspondent of "Al-Irsal" network and "Sanad" news agency, Karim Khamaysa, with live bullets in Jenin.

September 28: Israeli forces targeted Quds Network photographer Abdullah Bahash and Xinhua agency photographer Nidal Shtayyeh with gas bombs south of Nablus.

October 8: Israeli forces targeted the cameraman of Quds News Network, Ahmed Abed, the photographer of the French Press Agency, Jaafar Shtayyeh, and the photographer of the Chinese News Agency, Nidal Shafiq Shtayyeh, with live bullets, but they were not injured.

November 29: Israeli forces targeted Associated Press photographer Ihab Allami with a rubber-coated metal bullet.

December 16: Israeli forces targeted the "Palestine TV" crew; correspondent Muhammad al-Khatib and cameraman Fadi al-Jayousi, cameraman of "Al Jazeera Mubasher" channel Muhammad Samreen, the correspondent of "Palestine Post" agency Mujahid Tabanga, and cameraman for "Palestine Today" channel Jihad Badawi, the cameraman of "G-Media" agency, Laith Jaar, and the correspondent of "Palestine News Network" Abdullah Bahash, with tear gas canisters east of Nablus, which severely suffocated them.

The 48 Territories:

January 26: The occupation forces attacked "Agence France Presse" photographer Ahmed Gharabla with a rubber bullet in Jerusalem.

April 14: Two unidentified gunmen shot journalist Mustafa Sarsour, wounding him with seven bullets. He was taken to a hospital in a serious condition. Doctors

managed to save him. On May 17, the Magistrate's Court in the city of "Petah Tikva" released the suspects of involvement in Sarsour assassination attempt.

September 5: Unidentified gunmen fired live bullets at the home and car of journalist Kamal Adwan in Daliat al-Karmel.

the Gaza Strip:

August 7: Journalist Nahed Abu Harbeed was injured in the Israeli air strikes on her home in Beit Hanoun.

Second: Trials, Arrests and Detention of Journalists

the West Bank:

January 29: Israeli forces detained G-media journalists Laith Jaar and Fayhaa Khanfar.

January 30: The Israeli military court ruled to imprison journalist Assem Al-Shannar for six months.

January 3: The Palestinian Preventive Security Service summoned Abd al-Salam Awwad, a journalist for the Ikhbariyat website, for interrogation.

January 20: The Nablus Court (Palestine) ruled to imprison the director, Abdel-Rahman Zaher, for 3 months, due to a post he published.

February 2: The Israeli forces detained the freelance photographer, Wahaj Bani Mufleh, for an hour, while he was reporting on clashes between soldiers and Palestinian youths and residents in different areas.

February 13: Palestinian security summoned the freelance journalist, Amin Abu Warda, and interrogated him about his press work.

March 21: Israeli forces arrested the freelance journalist, Bushra Al-Taweel, while she was passing through the Za'tara military checkpoint.

March 22: The Palestinian Intelligence Service interrogated journalist Ibrahim Abu Safiya about his press work.

April 14: Israeli forces beat and detained PalPost correspondent Shadia Bani Shamsa while she was reporting the clashes.

April 1: The Israeli occupation forces arrested journalist Omar Abu Al-Rub from his home.

April 10: The "Palestine" TV crew, which included reporter Hani Fanoun and cameraman Fares Janazra, was detained near a military checkpoint.

April 28: The Israeli occupation forces arrested the director of the "Al-Qastal" website, Ayman Qawarek, at a checkpoint for unknown reasons.

June 20: Israeli forces arrested Sanad news agency reporter Musab Qafisha and released him after four days.

June 14: Palestinian security forces abducted the correspondent of "Al-Araby Al-Jadeed" newspaper, Samer Khuwaira, and severely beat him on the grounds of his press work.

July 19: Israeli forces arrested Quds Press news agency reporter Amer Abu Arafa after raiding his house in Hebron.

July 20: Israeli forces arrested journalist Faisal Al-Rifai, a day after his house was raided.

July 21: Palestinian intelligence arrested journalist Thaer Al-Fakhouri after summoning him for an interview at the agency's headquarters in Hebron.

August 6: Israeli forces arrested journalist Ibrahim Abu Safiya from his home.

August 12: The Palestinian intelligence services arrested the reporter and photographer of the "Pal Post" website, Mujahid Tabanga, for 3 days in Nablus, and released him after interrogating him about his press work and subjecting him to beatings and torture.

September 4: Israeli forces detained Reuters correspondent, Raneen Sawafta, and her driver in the Jordan Valley.

September 3: Palestinian security forces arrested journalist Mujahid al-Saadi while he was reporting a house raid in Jenin. He was released later.

September 14: Palestinian security forces arrested photographer Saleh Hamad while he was covering protests in Nablus and journalist Muhammad Ateeq from his home near Jenin.

October 21: Israeli forces detained the correspondent of the "Al-Irsal" network and the "Sanad" news agency, Karim Khamaysa, and the correspondent of "Al-Jazeera Mubasher" channel, Muhammad Turkman, for two hours.

October 30: The Palestinian Intelligence Service arrested "G-Media" correspondents, Muhammad Turkman, and Hatem Hamdan, for unknown reasons. They were released later.

November 17: Israeli forces detained G-media correspondent Abdel Mohsen Shalalkeh for four hours after beating him.

November 28: The Israeli occupation forces arrested Sabri Jibril, the correspondent of "G Media" agency, and interrogated him about his press work. They prevented him from covering their raid on the village of Harmala, east of Bethlehem, on November 24.

November 28: Palestinian security forces arrested journalist Ayman Qawarek on charges of "possessing a weapon."

December 1: Israeli forces arrested journalist Moatasem Samara, interrogated him about his press work, and released him after 13 days.

December 8: Israeli forces detained the freelance photographer, Abdul Rahman Hassan.

December 20: Israeli forces detained Quds News Network photographer Mutassim Saqf Al-Hait and Palestine Post correspondent Saja Al-Alami.

The 48 Territories:

January 10: The Israeli police detained journalist Yasser Al-Aqabi for three hours while he was covering the clashes in the Negev.

August 3: The Israeli court of "Ofar" upheld the administrative detention sentence issued against journalist Faisal Al-Rifai for a period of six months.

September 4: Israeli forces detained journalist Lama Ghosheh for nine days for allegedly "incitement through social media" and released her under harsh conditions.

September 25: Israeli police detained journalist Manar Shweiki while he was covering settler attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

September 27: The Israeli police detained photographer Ahmed Abu Subeih while he was reporting settlers' attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

November 22: The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court extended the house arrest of journalist Lama Ghosheh, under the pretext of "incitement through social media." On December 24, the Jerusalem Court adjourned Ghosheh's hearing and kept her under house arrest, which has continued since her conditional release last September.

### The Gaza Strip:

January 11: Hamas's Internal Security detained journalist Ahmed al-Louh and his wife at the Rafah crossing on their way back from travel, and interrogated him twice about the reasons for his travel.

January 20: The Hamas-run Khan Yunis Magistrate Court, postponed the sentencing of journalist Ihab Fafous for the sixth time on charges of "misuse of technology". And it was postponed again on February 15, and March 15, and on April 5 it was postponed to hear defense witnesses and pass the verdict, but it was postponed for the tenth time in May.

April 11: The Hamas-run Public Prosecutor interrogated Muhammad Abu Jayyab, the editor-in-chief of Al-Iqtisadiyah newspaper, for posts on Facebook.

April 12: Gaza prosecutor investigated journalist Ahmed Saeed for Facebook posts.

November 14: Hamas's intelligence service interrogated Hani Abu Rizk, a journalist for Al-Hayat Al-Jadida newspaper, on the background of a Facebook post.

November 30: Hamas's Internal Security Agency arrested the executive director of the "Mayadeen" media group, journalist Faris al-Ghoul, and interrogated him.

December 28: Hamas's General Investigation Service summoned the two journalists of the "Nawa" news agency, Marah al-Wadiyya and Islam al-Astal, for interrogation on the grounds of an investigative report on "Academics Betrayed the Trust."

### Third: Beating and other Forms of Violence and Degrading Treatment

#### The West Bank:

June 3: The Israeli occupation forces assaulted the correspondent of "Al-Khalil" Radio, Musab Al-Tamimi, with a stun grenade.

June 7: The Israeli occupation forces pepper-sprayed Quds News Network correspondent Abdullah Tayseer Al-Bahsh, Reuters correspondent Raneen Sawafta, freelance photographer Adel Abu Nema, and Palestine TV correspondent Amir Shaheen.

June 11: The Israeli occupation forces assaulted the "European Agency" photographer, Abdel Hafeth Al-Hashlamoun, with a stun grenade to the head.

June 11: The Israeli occupation forces beat, kicked and verbally abused, the freelance cameraman, Mamoun Wazoz, the cameraman of Al-Hadath newspaper, Musab Shower, the correspondent of Palestine TV, Azmi Banat, the freelance cameraman, Sari Jaradat, and the Reuters crew, the correspondent Yousry al-Jamal, and the photographer, Musa Al-Qawasmi.

October 5: The Israeli occupation forces attacked with gas bombs and rubber bullets the correspondent of the "Palestine Post" Saja Al-Alami, the correspondent of the "G-Media" news agency Bilal Arman, the cameraman of the "Quds" news network Mutasim Saqf Al-Hait, and the photographer of the "Associated Press" agency Majdi Shtayyeh.

October 11: The Israeli occupation forces beat the reporter of "G-Media" Muhammad Thabet and detained him for four hours

October 19: The Israeli occupation forces assaulted with gas bombs and rubber bullets the correspondent of "Palestine" TV, Bader Abu Najm, the cameraman, Salim Sawafta, and the crew of the Malaf Al-Yum, "Today's File" program on the TV, and the broadcaster, Moataz Sudani, was wounded in the chin.

October 20: The Israeli occupation forces beat the photographer, Mutasem Saqf Al-Hait.

The 48 Territories:

January 13: The Israeli police assaulted the correspondent of the "Al-Jarmaq" news website, Atwa Abu Kharma, while he was reporting the clashes in the Negev.

January 5: Settlers beat Anadolu Agency photographer Fayez Abu Rumaila during his news coverage.

January 30: Settlers beat Al-Jazeera correspondent Najwan Samri and cameraman Wael Al-Salaymeh during their news coverage.

February 13: Settlers attacked photographer Rajai Al-Khatib and obstructed the work of other photographers.

April 15: The Israeli police hit with rubber bullets the correspondent of Al-Ghad TV, Nisreen Salem, the cameraman of "Russia Today" channel, Ali Yassin, the freelance cameraman, Ahmed Al-Sharif, the cameraman of "Al-Mayadeen" channel, Muhammad Asho, and the cameraman of the Jordanian "Al-Hayat" radio station, Muhammad Samreen, who was arrested and beaten.

April 27: The Israeli police beat Rami Al-Khatib, the photographer of the Islamic Endowments Department, the photographer of the French Press Agency, Ahmed Gharabla, the blogger Alaa Al-Sous, and the freelance photographer, Ragai Khatib, who was detained for two hours.

April 29: The Israeli police arrested the freelance journalist, Abdel Salam Awwad, and the freelance photographer, Mohamed Dweik, and interrogated them.

April 11: The Israeli police prevented the freelance photographer, Ibrahim Al-Singlawi, from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque for news covering.

April 12: The Israeli police detained the freelance photographer, Ahmed Abu Sbeih, for two hours, and the correspondent of the "Al-Jarmaq" news website, Najat Hammouda, and released her the next day.

May 5: The Israeli police assaulted the photographer, Ahmed Jalajel.

May 13: The Israeli police assaulted, with rubber bullets and beatings, during the funeral of the martyr Sherine Abu Aqleh, the correspondent of the Jordanian TV and Radio "Al-Taj" Ahlam Melhem, the correspondent of "Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda" newspaper, Diala Jwehan, and the correspondent of the "Jerusalem Square" news website, Baraa Abu Ramuz, "Al-Ghad " TV reporter, Nisreen Salem, Al-Araby TV correspondent Ahmed Jaradat, "Al-Jazeera" correspondent Nawal Hijazi, "France 24" correspondent Laila Odeh, "Ma'an" agency correspondent Maysa Abu-Ghazaleh, "Al-Mayadeen" channel crew; correspondent Hana Mahamid and the photographer, Wahba Makiya.

May 29: The Israeli police assaulted, with rubber bullets, the staff of "Al-Araby Al-Jadeed" website, which included the reporter, Muhammad Abd Rabbo, the

cameraman Ali Diwani, the freelance photographer, Wissam Bukhari, and the director of the "Safad Media" website, the journalist Ahmed Al-Safadi.

June 8: Members of the "Preventive Security" and "Intelligence" of the Palestinian Authority, the security of "An-Najah" University, and members of "Ashabiba" severely beat the cameraman of "G Media" agency, Laith Jaar, and smashed his camera.

July 7: Israeli police assaulted Palestine TV cameraman Fadi Yassin, Quds News Network correspondent Abdullah Bahash, and freelance cameraman Mahmoud Fawzi with tear gas.

July 27: The Israeli police assaulted the correspondent of the Jordanian "Roya" channel, Hafez Abu Sabra, with a stun grenade.

August 8: The Israeli police beat and pushed the cameraman of "Al-Mayadeen" channel, Muhammad Esho, the freelance cameraman, Muhammad Al-Sharif, the correspondent of "Palestine" TV, Layali Eid, the cameraman of the French Agency, Ahmed Gharabli, and the freelance cameraman, Ghassan Abu Eid.

October 17: The Israeli police beat the correspondent of "Nabdulquds" agency, Heba Najdi, the cameraman of "Al-Mayadeen" channel, Muhammad Esho, the correspondent of the Turkish "Anatolia" agency, Moaz Khatib, and the correspondent of "Al-Ru'ya" channel, Baraa Abu Ramuz.

November 23: Settlers assaulted the France 24 TV crew, which included correspondent Laila Odeh and cameraman Nader Baybars, while they were covering the explosion that occurred west of Jerusalem.

#### The Gaza Strip:

June 30: Security employees at Bank of Palestine assaulted and pushed the correspondent of Palestine newspaper, Muhammad Abu Shahma, and confiscated his cell phone.

#### Fourth: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage

##### The West Bank:

January 29: Israeli forces obstructed the work of Agence France-Presse correspondent Ayman al-Qawasmi, G-media cameraman Abdel Mohsen Shalaldeh, Palestine TV cameraman Iyad al-Hashlamoun, Quds News Network cameraman Sari Jaradat and Anatolia Turkish news agency photographer Mamoun Wazoz in Hebron.

July 25: The Israeli forces prevented the correspondent Abdullah Bahsh, the correspondent of Al-Ghad channel, Khaled Bdeir, and the Ma'an TV crew, which included the reporter Raed Omar and the cameraman Ayman Aliwi, from reaching the village of Qarawat Bani Hassan, west of Salfit, to report on the demolition of the house of two prisoners.

July 25: The Israeli authorities prevented the correspondent of the Turkish "TRT" channel, journalist Majdoleen Hassouna, from traveling through the Karama crossing to Jordan.

July 26: The Israeli authorities prevented the freelance journalist, Mujahid Al-Saadi, from traveling through the Al-Karama crossing to Jordan.

August 21: Israeli forces prevented journalist Ayman Qawarek from traveling without explaining the reasons.

September 10: Israeli forces obstructed the work of "Palestine TV" correspondent Azmi Banat and cameraman Fadi Khallaf and prevented them from filming in Beit Ummar, north of Hebron.

October 20: The Israeli forces prevented the correspondent of Al-Ghad TV, Raed Al-Sharif, the cameraman Jamil Salhab, the correspondent of Al-Arabiya channel, Musab Shamer, the cameraman of "G-media" Abdul Mohsen Shalaldeh, the photographer of the Chinese agency "Xinhua" Mamoun Wazoz, and the correspondent of "Quds" network. Sari Jaradat from reporting on the confrontations in Hebron, while the European Agency photographer Abdul Hafeth Al-Hashlamoun, the correspondent of Palestine TV, Azmi Banat, the TV director in Hebron, Jihad Qawasmeh, the cameraman Muhammad Awadeh, and the photographer of the Wafa Agency, Mashhour Al-Wahwah, were prevented from arriving in their cars to cover an incident.

November 8: Israeli forces prevented Quds News Network photographer Abdullah Bahsh from entering the gate of the town of Azzun, east of Qalqilya.

November 8: Palestinian security forces prevent journalists and photographers from covering a press conference in Ramallah.

December 30: The Israeli forces obstructed the work of the photographers Abdullah Bahsh and Fadi al-Jayousi, the correspondent of "G Media" agency Samer Khuwaira, and the correspondent of "Palestine TV" Bakr Abdel Haq, and prevented them from filming in the city of Nablus.

#### The 48 Territories:

February 16: The Israeli police prevented Palestinian journalists holding Palestinian and international press cards from entering the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem to report on incidents there.

March 7: The Israeli police prevented photographer Ibrahim Al-Singlawi from approaching and filming the scene of a stabbing attack in Jerusalem.

May 29: Israeli police prevented AFP photographer Ahmed Gharableh, Reuters photographer Ammar Awad, and Associated Press photographer Mahmoud Ghalyan from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque for news reporting.

July 31: The Israeli police prevented Al-Qastal news network correspondent Baraa Shaloudi from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque.

October 12: The Israeli police prevented Al-Ruya channel correspondent, Aya Khatib, from covering settler incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

#### The Republic of Lebanon

##### Fear Tool

Although Lebanon has been known as the Republic of freedom of opinion and expression for many years, this image has changed over the past years, especially during the year 2022, as the security services trample and undermine the freedom of the press and opinion, in addition to the political parties that try to silence critics.

Lebanese law prohibits referring journalists to a court other than the Publications Court. Nevertheless, security summons continues by the Informatics Crimes Bureau, and at other instances by Army Intelligence. Journalists and media workers in Lebanon are struggling to protect their freedom and limiting their accountability to

the applicable laws such as the Publications Law, while the authorities are trying, through people or militias, to push the journalist to places of criminals or terrorists.

Journalists in Lebanon are prevented from reporting on incidents from areas affiliated with other parties. In addition to defamation campaigns on social networks, threats of murder and rape, threats to the family, and the career in the press.

The economic conditions force journalists in Lebanon to practice self-censorship as a result of the lack of job security and the fear of arbitrary dismissal, which affects the freedom of the press, and the freedom to express their opinions.

In 2022, the "Women Journalists without Chains" organization documented violations against 48 journalists, including 14 female journalists. At least 3 media outlets were targeted, either by firing direct bullets at them, throwing bombs, or storming them. Journalists were subjected to direct death threats.

Several Lebanese media outlets dismissed scores of journalists, photographers, and administrators under the pretext of "difficult financial conditions," including Al-Jadeed TV and MTV. German Deutsche Welle TV, which broadcasts from Lebanon, dismissed four journalists and a journalist collaborating with its academy in Beirut, in what looked like a collective punishment because of their political views against the Israeli occupation and German television accused them of "anti-Semitism".

### Refusal to Protect Female Journalists

March 8, 2022: Lebanon alone, out of 50 members of the Freedom of Expression Alliance, refused to sign a plea to protect female journalists and media professionals, coinciding with International Women's Day. The statement pointed out that "the escalation of violence and attacks on female media workers distorts the media landscape by threatening the diversity and entrenching inequality, in addition to posing a threat to media pluralism and democracy as a whole."

It added, "The threats that face women aim to silence their voices and limit their ability to exercise their freedom of expression."

The Lebanese authorities had refused to sign a similar statement in November 2020, at a media conference in Canada, which brought together 36 countries out of 37 members of the "Alliance for Media Freedom", during which the dialogue sessions were moderated by the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and attended by

government, civil society organizations, academics, and international organizations, representatives.

Although the two statements are not binding on the government, the refusal to sign is an implicit stance against their contents, which includes a provision to "promote accountability for those who harm journalists and media workers, or unnecessarily restrict them from doing their work."

### Updates in the Assassination of Luqman Selim

There has been no development in the investigations or the defendants in the case of the murder of the writer and publisher Luqman Mohsen Selim (1962 - February 4, 2021); who was assassinated by four bullets in the head and one in the back while he was in his car in the "Adousia" area while returning from southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese judicial authorities have not provided any information about the party that assassinated him, and despite the increasing demands in 2022 to find out who was behind his brutal assassination, the authorities failed. In the investigation and conviction of the numerous threats that "Selim" received from Hezbollah, which "Suleiman" was known to criticize. Selim had mentioned in the days before his death that Hezbollah was threatening him in his home and accusing him of treason.

### First: Violating the Right to Life

September 1: Unidentified persons placed a bottle of petrol and two batteries under the car of photographer Hassan Shaaban in front of his house in the southern town of Yahoun.

October 18: Unidentified assailants fired at the home of journalist Ahmed Musa in western Bekaa.

December 27: Al-Jadeed channel was subjected to repeated attacks, as unidentified persons attacked the channel's building with a Molotov cocktail that exploded on the outer sidewalk. The next day, unknown persons fired live bullets at the building. Two days later, they fired bullets at the building and hit some floors, including "Dar Al-Farabi" with 14 bullets. This comes after a campaign of incitement and hatred against the channel and the presenter of "Fashat Khalq" program, Dalia Ahmed, and

the actress Joanna Karaki on the social media, on the background of a satirical clip by Karaki.

## Second: Trial, Arrest, and Detention of Journalists

January 10: The Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Protection Bureau investigated journalist "Mohammed Awwad" because of a post about a woman's abuse case.

January 24: The Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Protection Bureau detained social media activist Tariq Abu Saleh after interrogating him for a post in which he criticized MP Faisal Karami.

January 26: The Information Division summoned the correspondent of "Syria TV", the Syrian journalist Ahmed Al-Qaseer, for unknown reasons.

February 2: The Information Division of the Internal Security Forces interrogated the correspondent of "Syria TV," the Syrian journalist Ahmed Al-Qaseer, about his press work.

March 31: The Publications Court sentences journalists Ibrahim al-Amin and Zainab Hawi to three months in prison and commuted the sentence to a fine of one million lira over an article and a cartoon.

March 11: The Criminal Investigation Department summoned the editor-in-chief of the "Greater Lebanon" website, journalist Muhammad Nimr, on the grounds of a notification that the Presidency of the Republic had given against him due to a piece of news, but he refused to appear before it.

April 10: Public Security detained American journalist Nada Homsy for 17 hours at Rafic Hariri International Airport upon her arrival in Beirut, under the pretext of having an administrative entry ban.

April 25: Security forces affiliated with the municipality of Bint Jbeil detained Haneen Haidar, a correspondent for Beirut Today.

May 12: The Publications Court issued a verdict in absentia convicting the journalist, Riad Tawq, of "slander and defamation" and imprisoning him, with the sentence commuted to a fine.

June 15: State Security agents investigated Sabine Youssef's house, after the Public Prosecution Office issued a search warrant against her under the allegation that she insulted the President of the Republic in a tweet.

June 8: Freelance journalist Luna Safwan said that she had received a call from the Baabda police station with a complaint filed against her by Jaafar al-Attar (accused of a case of harassment he committed against more than 25 young women), on charges of "defamation, slander, and spreading lies."

June 20: General Security summoned writer Joy Ayoub for interrogation, but he did not respond to the summons, as he is outside Lebanon.

June 21: The Cybercrime Bureau investigated freelance journalist Marwa Saab over a complaint filed against her by Jaafar al-Attar on the background of a Facebook post.

August 3: The Election Supervisory Authority referred 592 media outlets to the Publications Court "because of violations related to the parliamentary elections" for the year 2022.

September 27: The Central Criminal Investigation Office summoned political analyst and journalist Nidal Al-Sab'a, on the grounds of a complaint of "defamation and slander" filed by Nader Hariri over two tweets.

October 3: Criminal Investigation summoned journalist Nidal Al-Saba' and interrogated him for two tweets.

October 27: Gebran Bassil, MP, filed a criminal complaint against journalist Youssef Diab and a broadcaster for "Al-Jadeed" channel, Rif Aqil, on charges of "slander and defamation" because of his report.

November 15: The Tripoli Investigation Department summoned Ghassan Rifi, the editor-in-chief of the "Safir al-Shamal" news website, because of an article about businessman, and political activist, Omar Harfoush

### Third: Violence, Degrading Treatment, and Arbitrary Dismissal

January 29: A young man assaulted the "Voice of Beirut International" cameraman Rabie Daouk, in Ras al-Nabaa.

February 7: The management of the German channel "Deutsche Welle" (DW) dismissed the director of its office in Beirut, the journalist Basil Al-Aridi, and the journalists Murhaf Mahmoud, Farah Maraqa, Maram Salem and Dawood Ibrahim, on the background of their tweets criticizing Israel, which the channel considered "Anti-Semitic!"

May 15: The photographer of the "Megaphone" platform, Hussein Basal, was beaten by Hezbollah supporters while he was reporting on the voting process in the south.

May 26: The staff of the "Lebanon and the World" website, which included the editor-in-chief, Sarah Hammoud, and photographer Andre Garabed, were beaten by members of the Lebanese army while they were covering a demonstration.

July 20: The journalist and writer Nawfal Daou was verbally assaulted in the Ras Al-Nabaa area in Beirut, and attempted to get him out of his car.

July 22: The "Voice of Beirut International" platform, which included reporter Muhammad Zanati and cameraman Youssef Fawaz, was attacked after they covered a protest in front of Fakih Hospital in Saksakieh, in the south.

August 8: Supporters of "Hezbollah" beat freelance photographer Hassan Shaaban and threatened him with death after he reported on the demonstrations by the people of his town, Beit Yahoun, in protest against the water cuts.

August 15: the freelance photographer, Hassan Shaaban, has received repeated threats, as he found a bullet in the window of his car. A few days later, his car tire was torn.

September 14: An armed group stormed the offices of Al-Binaa newspaper on Al-Hamra Street and tampered with its contents.

September 7: The family of harasser R. F. beat the crew of "Al-Jadeed" TV while preparing a report on the case of "the harasser of the beach resort in Beirut."

September 30: An officer in the Internal Security Forces, along with several young men, beat the representative of the National Information Agency in the town of Mazboud, journalist Ahmed Mansour, because he objected to the officer firing in the air to disperse people while putting out the fire in the town.

August 13: Journalist Dima Sadiq was subjected to a campaign of incitement, and death threats, because of a tweet that included an image attacking Qassem Soleimani and Ayatollah Khomeini.

December 17: Journalist and writer Tony Boulos was subjected to a campaign of incitement and death threats on social media for blaming Hezbollah, in a post on his Twitter page, for the killing of an Irish soldier from UNIFIL in the south.

#### Fourth: Restrictions on Movement and Denial of News Coverage

January 13: Partisan elements prevented the reporter of "An-Nahar" newspaper, Ahmed Muntash, the head of the Photographers' Syndicate, Aziz Taher, and journalist Ali Hashish, from accessing the scene of an explosion that occurred in Romine, in the south.

January 31: The Public Prosecutor charged Marcel Ghanem, a broadcaster on MTV, with crimes of "attacking state security and provoking sectarian strife" on the background of an episode of the "Sar Al-Waqt" program.

April 6: The Lebanese American University administration banned journalists and photographers from entering the university's campus in Beirut to cover a student protest.

April 12: Partisan elements prevented Ruba Fern, the correspondent of Al-Jadeed channel, and the cameraman, Muhammad Al-Samra, from filming the scene of the explosion in the southern city of Banafoul.

May 15: The security forces prevented the Sky News crew; correspondent Salman Andari and cameraman Muhammad Hanoun, from going out in a live broadcast from inside a polling station in Dekwaneh.

August 30: Solidere security prevented the Sky News crew; correspondent Salman Andari and cameraman Naji Hamza, from filming under the pretext of not obtaining prior permission.

September 9: Security forces prevented Al-Jadeed, MTV, and LBCI channels from reporting from the Palace of Justice in Beirut.

November 3: Supporters of the "Free Patriotic Movement" destroyed the screens and external fence of the MTV channel, due to a problem inside the studio of the "Sar Al-Waqt" program.

#### Gulf Cooperation Council Countries

##### No independent Press, and no Right of Expression

Freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the press are inseparable, and they are linked to the right to access information and the right to peaceful assembly, which are rights confirmed by international covenants and declarations related to

human rights. During the past ten years, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have occupied the bottom of the ranking in the freedom of the press, freedom of opinion and expression, and all human rights.

In 2022 the violations against journalists and those expressing their opinions continued. The option for those who speak freely in public affairs in these countries is either to go to prison or go into exile. However, the third option is silence and refraining from speaking in public affairs.

The Gulf countries impose strict censorship on the newspapers, most of which are either state-owned or quasi-government, and prohibit the circulation of foreign publications if they address a sensitive issue in the concerned country. It should be noted that the levels of press freedom and expression of opinion in these countries differ, as there is more margin of press freedom in Qatar and Kuwait, while in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the margin narrows down.

## Laws

The GCC states have a set of broad laws around "public security" or "national security" that are used to penalize freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the press, no matter how simple this practice is. In recent years, the Gulf states have added new repressive laws under the title of anti-terrorism or cybercrime laws, which contain broad terminology used in confronting freedom of opinion and expression and targeting freedom of the press. These penalties are intensified accordingly, as the UAE did in 2022 by tightening penalties in the Cybercrime Law and the Penal Code.

The GCC states apply blanket bans on the dissemination of information, based on vague definitions of "false news", "rumors", or "dissemination of misinformation", used by these regimes to muzzle all dissenting voices and imprison critics and human rights defenders. In addition, the existing legal systems prohibit free access to information or its dissemination and circulation, nor do they specify the parties that can be resorted to for grievance, considering that the judicial authorities are subject to the executive authorities in these countries.

These laws confuse the person of the head of the state with his actions. If they consider that the person of the head of the state is protected, then his actions are supposed to be subject to criticism and discussion, but the laws do not differentiate between deeds and the person. Rather, the matter extended to criminalizing criticism

of government officials or anyone from the ruling family, a criminalization that also goes to prevent criticism of their deeds.

In addition, laws in these countries require prior licensing to authorize the issuance of newspapers, periodical publications, or websites, and impose excessive financial insurance, and the executive authority and intelligence agencies have the powers to revoke licenses of newspapers, dismiss workers and journalists, and ban them from writing.

Journalists and public speakers are not suffering from the absence of an independent private press only, they suffer also on social media, as they are caught between the hammer of freely practicing freedom of expression, and the anvil of laws that are amended regularly, to summon and interrogating them on the grounds of accusations related to “state security.”

#### Arrests, Deportations and Withdrawal of Nationality

There are dozens of journalists and bloggers in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, especially Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain, who have been detained due to the exercise of the right of freedom of expression.

Detainees in these prisons are subjected to various forms of torture, degrading treatment, and countless violations under total blackout by the media and officials in the Gulf Cooperation Council, and denial of access to the United Nations mechanisms related to detention and torture to visit these prisons and assess their conditions.

Besides native journalists, there are also expatriate journalists in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, working in official and semi-official media outlets, and when breaching the red, they will be detained and expelled from the country. As happened with Al-Ruya newspaper, in September 2022, when all journalists were dismissed due to a report about Emiratis fueling their cars with gasoline from the Sultanate of Oman due to its high price in the UAE.

Lack of freedom of opinion and expression in the GCC countries has turned into a nightmare that haunts journalists and led to self-censorship, corruption, and fear. In addition to the arrests and threats, the past years produced corrupt journalists who justify authorities' repression and ban on freedom of the press, which led to a decrease in the professional levels of workers in press and media institutions.

In addition, citizen journalists in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are at risk of losing their nationalities easily if they wrote any critical article, as seen in the UAE and Bahrain who deprived some journalists and bloggers of their nationalities, and became stateless (Bidun), which deprives them of basic rights, with disturbing signs that suggest using this method to punish journalists.

## United Arab Emirates

The UAE lacked any improvement in the status of freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the press and media. On the contrary, it increased censorship and intensified penalties on the exercise of the right to opinion and expression, targeting journalists and their right to access information.

The State Security Agency continued to intimidate bloggers and human rights activists abroad. On 08 March: Blogger and human rights activist Jannat Al-Marzouki said she was threatened after participating in a webinar titled, "Women's Solidarity in Human Rights Activism: Telling Stories from the Arab Peninsula" organized by human rights organizations. She has been asked not to talk about any issues related to human rights in the UAE and to stop "insulting the state" because of her demand for the release of political prisoners. Al-Marzouqi was subjected to several threats in 2022.

Although the UAE presents itself as a regional and international hub for international visits throughout the year, it does not allow journalists to cover the visits except through state-run media.!

The authorities of the UAE control the media through the National Media Council, which is affiliated with the Council of Ministers, in accordance with Federal Law No. 11 of 2016, and its decisions are enforceable only after the cabinet's approval. It also controls the media content through Resolution No. 23 of 2017 on media content which prohibits all publications that offend the government system in the state, its symbols and institutions, and the supreme interests of the state and society, or publish what offends national unity and social cohesion, and disrespects the policies followed by the state.

In addition, it controls information and freedom of expression through notorious laws, including the Penal Code, the State Security Apparatus Law, the Cybercrime Law, and the Anti-Terrorism Law.

## Laws Targeting Journalists and Bloggers

In 2022, amendments were made to laws in the UAE that restrict freedom of opinion and expression, and the laws still prohibit the criticism of rulers, and officials and criminalize speech that the authorities believe is “inciting or provoking public opinion,” and impose severe penalties on the basis of vaguely defined charges.

In 2022, amendments to the Penal Code came into force, which increased penalties for journalists and those who exercise the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The new Cybercrime Law, which was adopted by a decree of a Federal law No. 34 of 2021 and entered into force on January 2, 2022, to replace the previous Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combating Information Technology crimes, also criminalizes information that the authorities believe is “false or misleading”, “sharing information with foreign organizations or countries and "insulting a foreign country".

The State Security Agency continued to use the penalty of "revocation of nationality" in extrajudicial, arbitrary, and unaccountable measures, as a weapon against opinion-makers, dissidents, civil society activists, and their families, and to limit any criticism of the authorities.

## Extended Prison Terms

The Emirati authorities continued to imprison, Amina Al-Abdouli and Maryam Al-Balushi, who completed their term in prison in 2020. They were charged with new charges due to leaking audio recordings from prison accusing the authorities of subjecting them to torture and brutal human rights violations. On April 28, 2021, the Federal Court of Appeal issued a prison sentence for three years against Al-Abdouli and Al-Balushi in Case No. 61 of 2021 for “publishing false information that disturbs public order.” Al-Abdouli and Al-Baloushi had served five years in prison since their arrest in November 2015 on false charges related to supporting the Syrian revolutionaries against the Assad regime. The UAE authorities ignored human rights calls for their immediate release in 2022.

The UAE authorities continue to detain more than 70 citizens and dozens of others for several years, and nearly 50 detainees completed political sentences of ten years in prison in 2022, but the UAE authorities refused to release them and placed them in new detention centers under the name of "advisory centers", accusing them of being a "terrorist danger". Most of them were convicted in political trials in 2013 on

charges of "overthrowing the regime" with evidence approved by the court extracted from interviews and press articles.

According to local reports and testimonies in the UAE, the State Security Apparatus developed a bargaining process with detainees, which it used during 2022, by forcing detainees who have completed their long prison sentences to appear in official media to denounce their human rights and press work, and express remorse in exchange for their release. Most of the detainees refused, so they continued to keep them in prison.

Since 2015, Emirati authorities have ignored or denied entry requests to the country for UN experts, human rights researchers, academics, and critical journalists.

### Mansour and Bin Ghaith and al-Rukn

In 2022, the UAE continued to spy on journalists using advanced spyware produced by Israel and the European Union. Some of those whose communications and devices have been taped by the UAE government surveillance over the past years are residents of the UAE, who have subsequently been subjected to arrest and abuse while in detention. Among them is the prominent human rights activist and blogger Ahmed Mansour, who was arrested in March 2017, and an Emirati court sentenced him to 10 years in prison in May 2018 after a trial that lacked the most basic standards of a fair trial, based partly on private emails and WhatsApp conversations; Ahmed Mansour is still in solitary confinement since his arrest in 2017, and is subjected to numerous violations, including denial of family visitation and remain incommunicado.

Ahmed Mansour has been in solitary confinement since his arrest in 2017, and during 2022 he was subjected to many violations, including being prevented from contacting his family.

The Emirati authorities continued to subject Nasser bin Ghaith, a professor at the Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi, to violations during 2022, and he was arrested in August 2015 on trumped-up charges that violated his right of freedom of expression, and association after he criticized the "Rabaa al-Adawiya" crime in Egypt, and he was sentenced in an unfair political trial to 10 years in prison in March 2017.

Author, writer, and human rights advocate, Dr. Muhammad Al-Rukn, completed his sentence on July 17, 2022. He is an academic and specialist in constitutional law. He

wrote many articles, appeared in television interviews, and spoke on various topics that were used in his conviction in the well-known “UAE 94” case in 2013. He was awarded the 2017 Ludovic-Trarieux International Prize for Human Rights, in addition to other awards for his tireless and dedicated work in the field of human rights.

### Self-censorship and the Threat of Arrest and Deportation

Extensive domestic censorship by the State Security Apparatus has led to widespread self-censorship by UAE residents and UAE-based press organizations.

Local media, newspapers, and news websites, most of which are owned or controlled by the state, practice self-censorship according to unofficial red lines. Journalists and academics working in the UAE say they practice self-censorship for fear of arrest or deportation.

Self-censorship in state media in the UAE is very extensive, with most journalists knowing the red lines not to be crossed; The slightest criticism is prohibited. In some cases, journalists believed that their reports were within the scope of what was permitted, but it turned out not to be so.

6 journalists working for Emirati government media told “Women Journalists Without Chains” in interviews during 2022 that the authorities banned any report on Sheikha Latifa’s story, or talk about Emiratis’ refusal to normalize with the Israeli occupation or cover any reports about the residents’ position on “unemployment, high gasoline prices, high water, and electricity tariffs, high value-added tax, or positions on the Russian war in Ukraine.”

Two journalists - working for an English-language Emirati newspaper - informed Women Journalists Without Chains that they received warning phone calls from the government that included threats of immediate arrest or deportation due to reports on "education and value-added tax", and were referred for investigation by the newspaper. Four others who work for local government newspapers indicated that colleagues were interrogated intermittently during the year.

In September: dozens of journalists were dismissed from "Al-Roya Newspaper" and then dissolved, a newspaper owned by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed, the brother of the President of the Emirates and owner of the British club Manchester City, as the newspaper's editorial staff was laid off following the publication of a report

published in June, on fuel prices, where it contained interviews with citizens who said they had crossed into Oman to fuel their cars. Some of them said that they installed extra fuel tanks in their cars.

### Heavy Censorship and Threat

January: The Associated Press reported that during Expo 2020 (from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022) Emirati officials attempted to force journalists visiting the world fair to sign documents stating that they would face criminal prosecution if they failed to follow the instructions by site officials.

March: The UAE authorities imposed strict media censorship during the visit of Israeli President Isaac Herzog to Abu Dhabi. Media censorship was also imposed on Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's visit to the UAE. The UAE authorities did not invite journalists to the palace where the meetings were taking place, nor did they plan to hold any press conferences.

The UAE uses some of the world's most sophisticated surveillance technologies to monitor public spaces, online activity, and even individuals' phones and computers, in violation of their right to privacy, freedom of expression, association, and other rights. The UAE authorities aim to monitor all residents using closed-circuit television cameras, vehicles plate number recognition and facial recognition technologies.

Citizens and residents face heavy fines and prison sentences; for social media posts, websites, blogs, chat rooms and social media platforms are heavily monitored. The authorities prohibit and censor online content that they deem critical of the UAE's rulers, government, and policies, and any topic, whether social or political, that the authorities may deem sensitive. The UAE also continued to criminalize virtual private networks (VPNs) during 2022.

### Denial of Entry

September 2022: Bahraini journalist Wafaa Al-Am said that the security authorities in the UAE prevented her from entering its territories. And she mentioned - through her Twitter account - that an official there told her that she was "prohibited according to a circular issued by the security, and when I asked him about the reason and the solution, he said that it is better for me to contact the authorities in my country."

In the same month, Bahraini journalist Nazeeha Saeed said that the security authorities in the UAE prevented her from entering the country. And she said on Twitter, she was prevented from "entering the country I was visiting on a business trip," noting that the authorities stopped her for more than two hours without answering her questions, and then "starting deportation procedures without explaining or even informing me of the decision, after I insisted on knowing what was happening, and why I was transferred to the departure gates instead of the arrival, I was told without details, you will not be allowed to enter for security reasons."

Since 2011, the UAE authorities have randomly denied entry to academics, writers, artists, and journalists, some because of their criticism of the Emirati authorities, and others often without any declared justification.

### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, there is hardly any distinction between bloggers on social networks and journalists. Since freedom of the press is almost non-existent, the Internet was a space, even before 2015, to criticize the actions of officials and authorities. Now, with the laws of "terrorism" and "cybercrime", the repression has spread to everyone, including women human rights activists and writers.

The independent journalists in the Kingdom, are subjected to arrests and exclusion from press and media institutions if they do not comply with the policies of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, where the suppression campaign has intensified since he assumed the mandate of the Covenant in 2017.

The kingdom has relied on notorious laws since the early 2000s, such as the Press and Publications Law of 2000 (amended in 2003) and the Anti-Cyber Crimes Law of 2007, which targets freedom of the press on the Internet and social media. Saudi authorities use this approach to limit press work and restrict access to information for Saudis. The extent of the violations that journalists and activists are subjected to in prisons imposes an atmosphere of strict self-censorship, in addition to greater security control that prevents journalists from carrying out any press and informational activities in the Kingdom, where independent press work is described as "terrorism" and "crime".

The Saudi authorities not only use evidence from what is published or criticism on social networks and the Internet but even through snitching, by recording criticism

in private sessions, to convict bloggers and journalists. Where the media activist, Mansour Al-Raqiba, was arrested in May 2022, on the accusation that he was recorded in a private session, in which he criticized some of the events taking place in the Kingdom.

In August 2022, the Saudi Court of Appeal sentenced a doctoral student and online activist, Salma Al-Shihab, to 34 years in prison, for following and retweeting posts of Saudi dissidents, and the decision included closing her Twitter account and canceling her phone number. Al-Shihab was arrested on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The sources also said that blogger Noura bint Saeed Al-Qahtani received a 45-year prison sentence for publishing tweets criticizing the authorities, who accused her of “seeking to break the social fabric in the kingdom.”

Foreign journalists are also targeted in the Kingdom, such as the Yemeni journalist and blogger residing in Saudi Arabia, Marwan Al-Muraisi, after he was arrested from his home on June 1, 2018 and forcibly disappeared for nearly a year. He was tried and denied legal representation and family visits in October 2020, and in November 2022, "Women Journalists Without Chains" learned that he had been sentenced to imprisonment by the Criminal Court of Appeal, which specializes in state security cases, a five-year prison sentence, and overturned a previous ruling (issued by a court of first instance) confirming his innocence of the charges against him. Al-Muraisi never commented publicly or criticized Saudi policy, but in June 2016 he appeared in a television interview alongside the well-known reformist preacher Sheikh Salman al-Awda, who has been detained since 2017, and the Saudi prosecution demanded his execution.

#### the Case of Journalist Jamal Khashoggi

There are no new developments regarding the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at his country's embassy in Istanbul in 2018, in which the prime suspect is Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. In November 2022, the US State Department provided a statement to a US district court in a civil lawsuit filed against Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince, and 20 others allegedly involved in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, saying that it “recognizes and allows the immunity of the Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Salman, as the current head of government of a foreign country.”

In August 2022, a US court convicted the former employee of Twitter, Ahmed Abu Ammo, on charges of espionage for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Indicted in 2019 for failing to register as an agent of Saudi Arabia, Abu Ammo, along with two other Saudi nationals who worked for Twitter, is said to have provided Saudi authorities with the data of more than 6,000 Twitter accounts, including emergency disclosure requests, for 33 Saudi accounts, submitted to Twitter by Saudi law enforcement authorities. The list included the murdered journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, the dissident Omar Abdulaziz, and the imprisoned humanitarian worker, Abdul Rahman Al-Sadhan, who is currently serving 20 years in prison for writing in an anonymous satirical account on Twitter.

### Trial, Arrest, and Detention of Journalists and Bloggers

February 3: The journalist "Fahad Al-Sunaidi", who was arrested on September 11, 2017, was released, and the human rights activist "Fahad Al-Fahd" was released on the same day, almost a year after he completed his five-year sentence. Al-Fahd was arrested in April 2016.

December 25: Journalist and writer Khaled Al-Alqami was released after completing his sentence, he was arrested on December 12, 2017.

July 23: The Saudi authorities released writer and human rights activist Nazir Al-Majid, who had been detained since January 2017 and is currently under a seven-year travel ban.

April: The writer, "Muhammad Al-Khweldi", was released after nearly 6 years of imprisonment, following his arrest on June 23, 2016, and he is still subject to a travel ban.

March 11: Saudi blogger Raif Badawi was released, several days after completion of his 10-year prison term. He has been detained since June 2012. Human rights groups welcomed the release of Saudi blogger and human rights defender, Raif Badawi, after he served his 10-year sentence for freedom of expression on the Internet. Badawi still faces a 10-year travel ban, a ban on using social media, and a fine of one million Saudi riyals (approximately \$266,600).

In May, Al-Ha'ir prison administration deliberately placed some prisoners of conscience in a cell for mentally ill patients, including writers and human rights activists: Muhammad al-Qahtani, Issa al-Nukhaifi, Fawzan al-Harbi, and

Muhammad al-Hudhaif. On May 26, one of the prisoners assaulted Muhammad al-Qahtani.

Although the activist and writer "Mohammed Al-Qahtani" served his 10-year sentence on November 22, 2022, he has been forcibly disappeared since October 24 until the publication of this report.

August 9: The Specialized Criminal Court of Appeal sentenced women's rights activist Salma Al-Shihab to 34 years in prison, followed by the same period of a travel ban. The decision included closing her Twitter account and canceling her phone number. Al-Shihab was arrested on January 15, 2021.

August 9: The Specialized Criminal Court of Appeal sentenced activist Noura al-Qahtani to 45 years in prison, followed by the same period of a travel ban, on charges of incitement and spreading false news on Twitter.

December 29: The Specialized Criminal Court of Appeal sentenced writer, translator, and activist "Osama Khaled", who has been detained since 2020, to 37 years in prison on charges related to the right to freedom of expression.

July: The sentence issued against blogger "Abdulaziz Al-Awda", who was arrested in September 2019, was increased from 5 years in prison (with a half-term suspension) to 5 years imprisonment, after he posted tweets on Twitter. The Court of Appeal also increased the sentence issued against activist Israa Al-Ghamgham, from 8 to 13 years in prison.

October 16: The Specialized Criminal Court postponed the trial session of researcher Hassan Farhan Al-Maliki without setting another date.

May 23: The media activist Mansour Al-Raqiba was arrested with two of his friends in a suspicious manner for unknown reasons. Later, it turned out that it was because of a snitch that was conveyed to the authorities by one of participants in a private session after his speech was recorded, in which he criticized some of the incidents in the Kingdom.

February 11: Conditional release of the activist "Naima al-Matrod" after six years she spent in prison in Dammam, and the imposition of restrictions that limit her freedom (denying her the right to freedom of opinion and expressing her opinions on social media, or speaking freely to the media, travel ban and preventing her from obtaining a job in the civil service.)

March 3: release of Abdulaziz Al-Zahrani, professor in the Media Department, College of Arts, King Saud University", after his health condition deteriorated significantly due to medical negligence and ill-treatment inside prison.

December 29: The Saudi judiciary issued a 37-year prison sentence on the background of charges related to his right to express an opinion.

October 30: The Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh issued an arbitrary ruling against the detainee, "Mohammed Al-Ezzi", of a 15-year prison term; On the background of his tweets expressing his opinion.

October 18: Saudi court sentenced Saad Ibrahim Al-Madhi (72), to 16 years in prison, due to tweets that Al-Madi published while he was in the United States, in which he criticized the Saudi regime. Al-Madhi had referred in one of his tweets to the Saudi-American journalist Jamal Khashoggi, whom Riyadh is accused of murdering in its consulate in Istanbul.

October 15: Saudi sources said that the judiciary issued an arbitrary ruling against the journalist, "Maha Al-Rafidi" who has been detained for 1153 days; to a 6-year prison sentence, followed by another 6-year travel ban, due to her peaceful activities on social media.

### Movement Restrictions

October 4: The correspondent of the "Action Yadori" program was prevented from attending the first press conference of Al-Ahly coach Musimani.

December 25: A reporter for SSC, the exclusive broadcaster of the Saudi League, was denied entry to Marsool stadium.

October 5: The Saudi Minister of Energy prevents a Reuters correspondent from asking him a question because of Reuters' reliance on fake sources, as he put it.

### Kingdom of Bahrain

the Kingdom of Bahrain is in a very bad human rights situation, as the authorities continue to target the press, journalists, and workers in the field of press and media, and are preparing to enact a new law that limits press freedom in the country - which is almost non-existent.

The Bahraini authorities also continued to use slander to retaliate against dissidents and journalists, considering the continued policy of impunity and protection from judicial accountability.

### New Press Law

In March, the Bahraini Parliament Services approved a bill on Regulating the Press, Printing, and Publication (2022), then the government withdrew for further study the following month. The bill is seen as an attempt to strengthen state control and dominance over local media, both conventional and electronic.

A local newspaper published excerpts from the proposed amendments to the law, where all articles that allow the trial of journalists under the Penal Code, were abolished, and it also abolished the “pretrial detention” of journalists pending investigation and replaced the word “discipline” with the word “accountability” in all articles of the law. However, by reviewing the published amendments, the Bahraini Press Association confirms that most of what the government and private media reported about the proposed amendments is inaccurate.

The bill does not provide legal immunity for the journalist with regard to his work, as Article 81 of the law stipulates that the Minister of Information and the Journalists' Association should be notified before investigating the journalist, writer, editor-in-chief, or editor. This notification does not provide legal protection for journalists from arbitrary prosecution, investigation, and arrest, as it obliges the Public Prosecution to notify without attending.

While the project apparently prohibits the “precautionary detention” of journalists pending investigation, this prohibition is limited to the crimes stipulated in the Press, Printing, and Publication Law exclusively, and excludes other laws, including the Penal Code from Articles 92 to 98, as well as the articles of the Terrorism Law. Noting that the current Press Law, prior to the amendments, prohibited the pretrial detention of a journalist for all crimes committed by newspapers, except for one crime, which is stipulated in Article 214 of the Penal Code (insulting the King of Bahrain, its flag, or its national emblem), for which the penalty reaches imprisonment for seven years.

The proposed amendments to the Press, Printing, and Publication Law replaced the imprisonment penalty with a financial fine, but it kept Article 22 of the current law, which stipulates a prison sentence. The proposed articles in the amendment stipulate

Article (67) bis (3) that any Bahraini who wishes to establish, possess or contribute to the possession of an electronic media website should not be deprived of exercising his civil and political rights. It is the same condition stipulated in the amendments introduced by the House of Representatives to the Law on the Exercise of Political Rights, as well as the amendments to the Law on Civil Associations and Clubs, and according to these amendments, a wide segment of Bahraini society (members of dissolved political societies) is deprived of the right to run for parliamentary and municipal elections, as well as being denied from running to the boards of directors of NGOs, civil society organizations and clubs.

### Courts and Prosecutions

February 5: The Anti-Cybercrime Department summoned Jalal al-Qassab, head of Al-Tagdeed Social and Cultural Association, for interrogation regarding the content of lectures he gave on the association's YouTube account, before releasing him on the same day.

February 16: The Public Prosecution Office interrogated journalist Muhammad Al-Ghasra, director of the Delmon Post website, on charges of publishing false news.

May 20: The Public Prosecution Office interrogated lawyer Abdullah Hashem for “insult and defamation” due to a complaint from the journalist, “Mohammed Al-Arab.” The case was referred to court. On the sixth of July, he was sentenced to a fine of 200 dinars.

September 6: The Cybercrime Department summoned lawyer "Abdullah Hashem" after he called on the unemployed to stage a protest movement.

June 29: the Anti-Cyber Crime Department summoned a blogger nicknamed “A. N” to investigate on her opinions on the social network “Twitter”, in which she criticized the performance of members of the Bahraini Parliament.

August 15: The Anti-Cybercrime Department summoned the activist and blogger, "Nawal Attia", and interrogated her about the content of a tweet she posted on her Twitter account. She was released on the same day.

September 18: the Anti-Cybercrime Department summoned the activist and blogger, Nawal Attia, and interrogated her about a complaint filed against her by a candidate for the parliamentary elections. She was released on the same day.

December 14: The Anti-Cybercrime Department interrogated the activist and blogger, "Nawal Attia" for comments she made on Twitter. She was released on the same day.

November 10: The Anti-Cybercrime Department interrogated Muhammad Hassan Al-Aradi, a social activist and blogger, regarding posts on the "WhatsApp" chat application related to one of the parliamentary candidates. The cybercrime department previously summoned Al-Aradi on July 17 for investigation due to a complaint made by a senior official in the Ministry of Education.

November 20: a court of first instance detained a "Bahraini" for a month on charges of "insulting a working government entity and providing misleading information" for publishing a video criticizing the Ministry of Education.

December 14: The Cybercrime Department investigated Nawal Attia, blogger, and social media activist, for comments she made on Twitter. She was released on the same day.

December 25: A government agency forced journalist Hani Al-Fardan to delete a news article from his "Instagram" related to a demonstration that took place in the capital, Manama, to protest the normalization with Israel, according to what he reported.

## Nader Kazem

On July 21, the Bahraini authorities arrested academic Nader Kazem, a faculty member at the University of Bahrain, where he was interrogated for hours about his opinions contained in some of his books. He was transferred to the hospital during the detention because he suffered from previous medical problems. He was released after a week. During the fourth day of detention, the media circulated a document issued by the University of Bahrain, dated July 24, stating that Nader Kazim's services at the University of Bahrain had been terminated under the pretext of "the lack of need for him in the academic department as a result of the lack of an academic quorum for teaching." On October 12: It was reported that a government agency (undisclosed) forced the Bahrain History and Antiquities Society to cancel a seminar at its headquarters in which the academic and researcher Nader Kazem was scheduled to participate. The symposium was entitled "How to change the dietary in Bahrain" and the Association included it in the 69<sup>th</sup> season seminars. The association was forced to cancel it, after they received orders from state authorities to cancel it.

## Abuses

January: Information indicated that the health of photojournalist Yasser Ahmed, is deteriorating, he is detained in Jaw Central Prison and sentenced to life imprisonment. The prison administration refused to transfer him to a doctor. “Ahmed” suffered from dizziness and was unable to move.

January: An investigation issued by the Irish “Front Line” organization revealed that the phone of human rights defender Ibtisam Al-Saegh was hacked by the Israeli “Pegasus” program at least 8 times during the year 2019.

February: The state-run press incited against human rights and civil figures in Bahrain after they met the new US ambassador, "Stephen Bondy" at his home in Manama. They are "Osama Al-Baharna, Huda Al-Mahmoud, Ahmed Al-Khuza'i, and Hussein Al-Rubaie, Although the meeting discussed the political participation of Bahrainis and human rights.

March: Academician Abduljalil Al-Sinkees health deteriorated several months after he entered into a hunger strike due to the confiscation of his research in the prison (according to an urgent intervention appeal launched by detained political leaders, on March 4, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

Al-Sinkees was sentenced to life in 2011, and he has already spent eleven years behind bars. More than a year ago, he went on a hunger strike to protest his detention conditions.

September: Sawsan Al-Shaer, writer of the columnist of “A Last Word” in the official government newspaper, Al-Watan, wrote an article in which she complained about the National Communication Center’s control over what is published in the press, which includes news headlines and interviews.

## Revocation of Nationality and Denial of Entry

Bahrain is still revoking the citizenship of four journalists since 2015, namely: Ali Al-Dairi, Abbas Busafwan, Ali Abdul-Imam, and Hussein Yousef. The penalties and revocation of citizenship led to the majority of journalists, especially the opposition, refraining from reporting news and information, expressing their opinions freely,

and publishing reports and facts dealing with political affairs or issues of public opinion.

September 2022: Bahraini journalist Wafaa Al-Am said that the security services in the UAE prevented her from entering the UAE. Wafaa Al-Am said on her Twitter account that an official there told her that she was “prohibited according to a circular issued by the security services, and when I asked him about the reason and the solution, he said that it is better for me to contact the authorities in my country.”

September 2022: Bahraini journalist Nazeeha Saeed said that the security authorities in the UAE prevented her from entering the country. She added on Twitter, “I was prevented from entering the country I was visiting on a business trip,” noting that the authorities stopped her for more than two hours without answering her questions, and then “starting deportation procedures without explaining or even informing me of the decision, after my insistence on knowing what is happening and why.” I was transferred to the departure gates instead of the arrival, I was told without details that I will not be allowed to enter for security reasons.

## The State of Qatar

Escalating tensions in Israeli-Palestinian violence prompted many fans to raise Palestinian flags during World Cup matches as a gesture of solidarity and while pro-Palestinian sentiments were allowed, security forces cracked down on fans seeking to express their support for anti-government protesters in Iran.!

October: Journalists said that Qatari authorities issued a list of conditions that media outlets must agree to when applying for filming permits; They include bans on filming in government buildings, places of worship, universities, and hospitals, as well as residential properties and private companies. The new list relaxed previous conditions for obtaining filming permits, which required media outlets to “acknowledge and agree” that they would not prepare “inappropriate or offensive reports to the Qatari culture and Islamic principles.” However, limiting where media can film restricts foreign journalists' ability to move.

## State of Kuwait

Although Kuwait is considered one of the best countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council in terms of press freedom, it is also at a poor level compared to the region

and the world. Political events and chronic problems, such as the Bidoon problem, impacted the relationship of the Kuwaiti authorities with journalists and public speakers.

### Prosecution of Anwar Al-Rasheed

Prominent writer, blogger, and activist Anwar Al-Rasheed have been targeted several times in Kuwait due to his peaceful activities in defense of the civil and human rights of Kuwaiti citizens. He appeared before the Media Public Prosecution on July 27 due to posts supporting "Bidoon" on Twitter. On June 30, he said that he has been threatened with physical assault on Twitter if he continued to support Bidoon's demands."

### Safaa Zaman and the Charge of False News

January 11: academic, Safaa Zaman, head of the Kuwaiti Information Security Society, stands trial, on charges of broadcasting false news that undermined the prestige of the state, caused panic in society, and exposed the country to the danger of severing its ties with a friendly country, Egypt, filed by the security apparatus. On March 29, the Criminal Chamber of the Court of First Instance acquitted Safaa Zaman of these charges. The charge was related to "Zaman's" statement about the existence of the Servers of the Civil Service Bureau in Egypt, and the resulting risks of piracy that threaten data security.

### Bidoon Dilemma and Exchange of Information

March 16: Abdul Hakim Al-Fadhli, General Coordinator of the Kuwaiti Bidoon Coalition, appeared before the Public Prosecution on charges of insulting and defaming the reputation and work of a government employee. This is the third summons in the same month (on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of March) after a complaint was filed against him by Colonel Muhammad Al-Sharaf, who was delegated ten years ago from the Ministry of Interior to work in the Central Agency for Illegal Residents Affairs. On September 1st, the Misdemeanor Court acquitted Abdul Hakim Al-Fadhli of all charges against him.

August 31: The Public Prosecution Office summoned 14 human rights defenders from the Bedoon community and arrested them. They released ten after nine days. They are: Falah Muhammad Bashir, Youssef Ghaseb Mohsen, Hamad Hizam, Hamid Khalaf, Hammoud Rashid Jaber, Salem Hassan Ashour, Dhari Hussein Khalif, Abd al-Hadi Khaled, Jabr Sharif Jabr, and Nasser Farhan Saket. And continued to detain four of them: Fadel Farhan, Abdullah Fayrouz, Muhammad Barghash, and Basil Atallah. Their detention continued until September 15, when the Misdemeanor Court released them on bail. They were charged with: harming the reputation of the country after publishing false information, misusing the telephone, misusing social media for the purpose of crime by disseminating false news, participating in a public gathering, and disobeying the authorities after they were asked to disperse.

### Sultanate of Oman

During 2022, the Omani authorities continued to enforce laws that limit press work in the country and increase the prosecution of bloggers.

October 20: Royal Decree No. 68/2022 was issued amending some provisions of the Penal Code: Article (97): Whoever commits, publicly or by publication, an insult to the rights and authority of the Sultan, or insults him in person, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period no less than (3) three years and not exceeding (7) seven years. The same penalty applies to anyone who commits, publicly or by publication, an insult to the Sultan's wife, crown prince, and children, or insults them in person.

And Article (102) shall be punished with imprisonment for a maximum period of (3) three years whoever criticizes the head of a foreign state while he is in the territory of the state.

Article (249) of the Penal Code, whoever publishes an investigation or document publicly without permission from the Omani prosecution or the competent court shall be punished by imprisonment for a maximum of two years and a fine of up to 1,000 OMR. This article was used against journalist Al-Mukhtar Al-Hinai for publishing a tweet on March 9, 2022, about a case of financial and administrative corruption in an Omani ministry.

### Violations against Press in the Sultanate of Oman

December 11: Internet activist Majid bin Abdullah al-Ruhaili was abducted by the Internal Security Agency while he was at a gym in Muscat. Majid was released by the end of 2022.

August 04: The prominent environmental activist, Dr. Ahmed Issa Qattan, was arrested by the Internal Security Agency. Article (97) of the Penal Code shall punish anyone who criticizes the Sultan, his family, or his authority with a maximum of 7 years in prison. It was used against Dr. Ahmed Qattan, following tweets on Twitter, calling for greater powers for the Shura Council.

May 5: The Omani Public Prosecutor referred a complaint to the Muscat Court of First Instance against journalist and activist Mukhtar Al-Hana'i, for publishing a tweet on March 9, 2022, about a case of financial and administrative corruption in one of the Omani ministries, a case in which the Muscat Court convicted 8 defendants of embezzlement and forgery. Al-Mukhtar Al-Hana'i also mentioned in his tweet that the Ministry of Information prevented Omani newspapers from publishing the topic. The case was filed for hearing on May 8, but on July 17, the court ruled acquittal.

March 2: The security authorities arbitrarily arrested the engineer and online activist Ahmed Musallam al-Kathiri for a tweet in which he spoke about al-Mrouj land, which is marred by suspicions about the unlawful distribution of land to influential people and those with high positions in the government.

February 17: Security forces arrested Internet activist Dr. Abdulmajeed bin Hammoud Al-Rawahi (Abu Al-Yasa Al-Rawahi) because of his criticism of the ruling family. He was released after four days of detention, on 21 February. Al-Rawahi uses his Twitter account to express his views and defend the civil and human rights of citizens.

## **Republic of Yemen**

Women Journalists Without Chains monitored, in its annual report of 2022, on press freedoms, (85) cases of violations against journalists, including killings, assassination attempts, arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances, abductions, threats, trials, and incitement, defamation, suspension from work, and denial of medical care to detained journalists.

"Women Journalists Without Chains" documented two cases of the killing of two journalists in 2022: photojournalist Fawaz Al-Wafi, who was found dead in his car with stab wounds, and journalist Saber Al-Haidari, who was killed in a terrorist bombing that targeted his car in Al-Mansoura district in Aden governorate.

### **Torture of Abducted Journalists**

"Women Journalists Without Chains" said that there are still (8) journalists abducted by the Houthi militia, who are being tortured and suffering from very serious illnesses, and they are denied visitations and health care. They are; (Akram al-Walidi, Tawfiq al-Mansoori, Harith Hamid, Abd al-Khaleq Omran, Muhammad Abdu al-Salahi, Muhammad Ali al-Junaid, Nabil al-Sadawi, Waheed al-Sufi - forcibly disappeared) journalist, Muhammad al-Maqri, is under forced disappearance by al-Qaeda in Hadramout since October 2015, and journalist Ahmed Maher has been abducted by the Security Belt forces of the Southern Transitional Council, in addition to the trial of journalist Sultan Qatran, who was released by the Criminal Court of the Houthi militia, with provided that he would not leave Sana'a, and attend the trial sessions, and the trial lacks the minimum standards of fair trial.

Four of the journalists abducted by the Houthi militia are facing death sentences; (Akram Al-Walidi, Tawfiq Al-Mansouri, Harith Hamid, Abdul Khaleq Omran), which is rejected by the "Women Journalists Without Chains" organization, which considers it invalid sentences, issued by an incompetent court, and renews its call to quickly release them along with other abducted journalists.

On September 21, 2015, the Houthis abducted Nabil Al-Sidawi, a journalist and engineer working for the official Saba News Agency, and he remained incommunicado, by his family until July 2019, when Houthis charged him with communicating with the coalition, and sentenced him to eight years in prison.

In August 2022, "Women Journalists Without Chains" documented a crime of brutal torture that the abducted journalists were subjected to in the prisons of the Houthi militia, where journalist Tawfiq Al-Mansouri and two of his fellow journalists, Abdul Khaleq Omran and Harith Hamid, were tortured by Abdul Qadir Al-Murtada ( The head of the Prisoners Committee of the Houthi militia) and his brother Abu Shihab, and the torture and enforced disappearance continued without even knowing their whereabouts, even to their colleagues.

On September 5, 2022, "Women Journalists Without Chains" documented a crime of physical and psychological torture against journalist Ahmed Maher, who was abducted by the Southern Transitional Council militia, as he appeared in a video clip forced to make fabricated confessions under torture, with signs of torture by the STC militia, clearly seen.

Women Journalists Without Chains believes that what journalist Ahmed Maher was subjected to by the Transitional Council militia is a full-fledged crime, and a flagrant violation of the Yemeni constitution, and all international laws and covenants, and the organization affirms that these videos condemn his captors.

"Women Journalists Without Chains" deplors these inhumane practices against the abducted journalists in the prisons of the "Houthis and the Transitional Council" militia, which violate the international treaties and covenants, and renews its demand for their speedy release along with other abducted journalists, and affirms that the assaults on the abducted journalists are a crime against humanity and a flagrant violation of the Yemeni constitution and international law.

### **Hadramout Trials**

Several journalists were harassed by the authorities of Hadramout Governorate. Recently, a court ruling acquitted Abdullah Bakir and Hala Badawy, after a long journey of abuse, enforced disappearance and reputational damage. The Hadhramaut authorities also caused the displacement of other journalists, including Muhammad al-Yazidi, a former correspondent of Belqis TV. and Sabri bin Makhashin, who is currently being tried in absentia.

Hala Badawy was arrested by the Hadramout authorities in January 2021, and forcibly disappeared in the Military Intelligence prison in the second military region. She was tortured on the third day of her arrest, in addition to a defamation campaign on Mukalla Radio, then she was transferred for treatment in the central prison, and she was released on bail in April 2022, and her trial continued throughout the past year until the court acquitted her last December.

In May 2020, the security services arrested journalist Abdullah Bakir, a journalist in the media office of the Governor of Hadramout. His health worsened and he was transferred to the hospital twice. He was released in April 2021, coinciding with the month of Ramadan. His trial continued and the court acquitted him last December 2022.

## The Code of Conduct.. Additional Restrictions

On November 7, 2022, the Houthi militia approved the "Code of Professional Conduct" to be followed by public servant, which includes provisions that undermine media freedoms and press work, as stated in Chapter Four, which contained a special section on "Controls for dealing with the media and social media." "

The Code includes clauses stipulating that the public servants “should not disclose to the media or post on social media any information, submit any documents, comment, declare, or interfere in any issues related to the public service units and contravenes public directives and the supreme interest of the state.” This is inconsistent with the right to access information, which is established by the Constitution and regulated by the Right to Information Act. The Code of Conduct also includes a provision obligating public servant not to issue or publish statements, letters, materials, or information that contradicts the teachings and values of Islam, or opposes the general policy of the state and conflicts with public order.” Of course, the state intended in this text is the political authority of the Houthi militia that took control of the government by force, and imposes provisions on public servants that prevent them even from expressing an opinion or opposing it, equating between the sanctity of Islamic values and its general policy in one text!

In this context, "Women Journalists Without Chains" warns against the enactment of any laws or legislation that undermine freedom of opinion and expression, impose additional restrictions on freedom of the press, and put obstacles in front of press and media work.

Women Journalists Without Chains believes that the Code of Conduct imposed by the Houthi militia on civil servants violates the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen and contradicts the Civil Service Law and international charters and treaties.

## Suspension of Journalists' Salaries

Journalists suffer from extremely difficult living and economic conditions, especially with the coercive measures that affect them, starting with the Houthis cutting their salaries, forcing them and public servants to work under forced labor, and the internationally recognized government's abandonment of its constitutional

and moral duties and its refusal to pay salaries of workers in official institutions in areas under Houthis control.

The organization expressed its full and absolute solidarity with the journalists, calling on the internationally recognized government to undertake its constitutional and moral duties and pay the salaries of all workers in the official media without exception.

On the other hand, "Women Journalists Without Chains" indicated that the vast majority of the employees of the Ministry of Information, the Saba News Agency, state radio and television, and the official newspapers, have lost their jobs or have been forced to work, according to the editorial policy imposed by the Houthi militia, without pay, in exchange for aid from international humanitarian organizations.

### **Closure of Media Outlets**

In light of the war and the absence of public freedoms, some workers in the media sector have established local radio stations that do not express any political opinions, but the Houthis in 2017 devised an illegal regulation that requires these radio stations to obtain permits from the Ministry of Information and to pay fees for these permits, in addition, to interfere in its programmatic map. And in January of last year Houthis closed six local radio stations under the pretext of not obtaining a license from the Ministry of Information. The Journalists Syndicate said that the radio stations that the Houthis closed are Voice of Yemen, Grand FM, Al Oula, Community Childhood, Al Diwan, and Delta.

Voice of Yemen Radio published video clips of the raid that it was subjected to, and it shows scenes of soldiers tampering with equipment and others trying to cover the surveillance cameras.

Later, Voice of Yemen Radio obtained two court rulings to allow it to return to work and oblige the Ministry of Information to return the looted equipment and issue a license, but the radio station is still closed until the moment of writing this report.

Other local radio stations obtained licenses, paid illegal fees, and committed themselves to broadcasting programs imposed on them by the Houthis related to general mobilization and directing the public toward war.

## Celebrities of Social Media and New Media

New voices emerged during the past years that were able to exploit opportunities to reach the public through non-conventional media and through social networks, some of which operate from abroad, while others inside the areas controlled by the parties to the conflict.

These voices do not abide by the charter of press work, and most of the time they do not present mature discourse, but in any case, they exercise a legal right of in freedom of opinion and expression.

Many non-conventional media activists have been subjected to various forms of assaults by the Houthi militia, to mobilize them or muzzling them, including imprisonment, subjection to sectarian lectures, incitement through the media, and the threat of fabricating cases and trials.

### **Indicators:**

- Targeting journalists through terrorist bombings
- Continued restrictions on press freedoms
- The conflicting powers, without exception, dealt with absolute hostility towards journalists and press freedoms in general
- The Houthi militia and the Transitional Council dealt with the abducted journalists in their prisons in an inhumane manner and tortured them physically and psychologically.
- The deterioration of the living and economic conditions of journalists and media workers due to the suspension of salaries and the narrowing of job opportunities for them.

## **The Republic of Türkiye**

### Tightening Restrictions on Press Work

Despite promises of media and press freedom, the Turkish authorities continued to confront independent journalists, and to issue laws that increase restrictions on press work.

Killings, arrests, detentions, threats, prison sentences, restricting laws, sums up the state of the press in Turkey in 2022. In February, journalist Gungur Arslan, owner,

editor-in-chief and columnist of the daily newspaper Ses Kocaeli, was killed in an attack in front of the newspaper's office after reports of corruption and nepotism in the country.

by the end of 2022, at least 43 journalists were still in prison on charges related to their press work. In June, the Turkish authorities arrested 20 journalists, released four later, and kept 16, including four Kurdish female journalists, in Diyarbakir. They work in Kurdish websites and media. The authorities put them in pretrial detention on charges of "suspicion of belonging to a terrorist organization." In October, nine Kurdish journalists were arrested on the same charges. These 27 still in prison by the end of the year.

The Turkish authorities continued to block electronic media outlets that refuses to obtain licenses. In June, a court in Ankara blocked the websites of Voice of America and Deutsche Welle at the request of the Radio and Television Supreme Council, after the two sites decided not to apply for licenses from the Council on the grounds that doing so would expose them to disproportionate penalties and censorship.

In October, the parliament approved a government-backed law that criminalizes publishing "false information" which Turkish journalists consider a threat to freedom of expression. The law tightens censorship of social media and online news websites and gives authorities more powers to censor the independent press and restrict access to information.

Tactics such as censorship of the media and the Internet, lawsuits against media outlets, and arrests promote the authority's viewpoints, while other voices are suppressed. Even though the authority does not own official media, most media companies are linked to the government in some way.

In 2022, WJWC journalists documented that more than 50 journalists were subjected to violations, including 10 women journalists, including murder, arrest, prison sentences, assault, and denial of news coverage.

Journalists and workers in the Turkish media are complaining about the decline in job security, which increased after the Corona epidemic (Covid-19), and the devaluation of the national currency. The employees of the BBC TV office in Istanbul went on strike in 2022 to claim some demands and rights. After months, they were able to reach an agreement to raise their salaries by 32%, health insurance for their families, and daily food vouchers. The success of the BBC Istanbul bureau staff is just the beginning of encouraging colleagues struggling with job insecurity,

low wages and poor working conditions in the media sector to unite and raise their voices.

Turkish newspapers in general suffer from financial constraints. In addition, independent daily newspapers which are not close to the government complain of being denied state advertisements. They accuse the Press Advertising Council of misusing state advertisements to put financial pressure on daily newspapers, while the Supreme Council for Broadcasting is economically weakening important TV channels by charging them heavy fines. Some daily newspapers have had to reduce the number of their pages because of the price of paper.

### **Gungor Arslan**

Gungur Arslan was killed in front of the office of his newspaper, Ses Kocaeli, on 19 February. Gungur Arslan was shot in the chest and right leg by an assassin outside his office in the city of Izmit. He was taken to the hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

The security authorities arrested a suspect in connection with the journalist's murder. According to the media, the suspect said that “two people incited him to commit the crime,” without specifying them.

Güngur Arslan has been regularly threatened because of his reporting on cases of corruption, bribery, and nepotism in his media outlet, Ses Kocaeli. The threats escalated in April 2020, when a group of unidentified assailants opened fire on the offices of the local newspaper.

### **New Law**

On October 14, the Turkish parliament passed a law to combat disinformation, which imposes, in particular, on those who publish "false or misleading information", a penalty of up to three years in prison.

The new legislation consists of 40 articles, amending several laws including the Internet Law, the Press Law and the Turkish Penal Code. It considers "dissemination of false information" a criminal offense punishable by up to one to three years imprisonment.

The law imposes tighter government control over online news sites; The government-controlled Information and Communications Technology Authority (Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu, BTK), charged with regulating the internet, is given far-reaching powers to compel social media companies to comply with requests to remove online content and hand over user data or be subject to a ban if they do not comply.

Article 29 of this law provides for, the imposition of a prison sentence of between one and three years on anyone who commits the crime of “publishing false or misleading information that contradicts the internal or external security of the country, or that is likely to harm public health, or disturb pacifying public order, or spreading fear or panic among people.”

This provision is ambiguous and allows prosecutors and courts to determine what constitutes "false information" and even to determine "the intent to cause fear, panic and disturb public order"; Which is considered a direct threat to press work and the publication of facts, which the Justice and Development Party government repeatedly undertakes to protect.

Also, the law deprives journalists who are criminalized under these provisions of their press cards; which puts them under great pressure in the event of circulation of facts and information dealing with corruption and other sensitive issues, which makes it difficult to publish quality materials.