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Director-General condemns ongoing violence and attacks on media personnel in Syria

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The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, today condemned ongoing attacks on media personnel in Syria and deplored the heavy tribute paid by reporters and their colleagues in the exercise of their professional duties.

The Director-General made her statement after information was confirmed concerning 14 journalists and media workers killed in 2014 and 2015: Turad Mohamed al-Zahouri, Mouaz Alomar (also known as Abu Mehdi Al Hamwi), Al-Moutaz Bellah Ibrahim, Ahmed Hasan Ahmed, Mohammed al-Qasim, and Mahran al-Deeri in 2014. Fayez Abu Halawa, Dirar al-Jahad, Nouredine Hashim, Jamal Khalifeh, Humam Najjar (also known as Abu Yazan al-Halabi), Ammar al-Shami, Wasem Aledel, and Jomaa Al-Ahmad Abu Nour in 2015.

“I condemn this deadly violence along with all attacks on media personnel,” said the Director-General. “This violence and these killings are unacceptable. Attacking the media is tantamount to attacking freedom of expression, a fundamental human right that is vital to democracy. Violence targeting the media strikes every member of society.”

Turad Mohamed al-Zahouri, a freelance reporter and photographer, died on 20 February 2014. Mouaz Alomar (also known as Abu Mehdi Al Hamwi), a freelance photographer, was killed on 25 April 2014. Al-Moutaz Bellah Ibrahim, a correspondent for Shaam New Network and a freelance reporter, was killed on 4 May 2014, after being held hostage by militants. Xinhua News Agency photojournalist Ahmed Hasan Ahmed died on 20 June 2014. Mohammed al-Qasim worked as a reporter for local radio Rozana Radio was killed on 10 September 2014. Al-Jazeera correspondent Mahran al-Deeri was killed on 10 December, 2014.

On 2 January 2015, Fayez Abu Halawa and Dirar al-Jahad were killed by unknown gunmen. Halawa worked as a stringer for Orient News. Al-Jahad, a freelance journalist, had co-founded the community-based Abtaa Media Office. Nouredine Hashim, a correspondent for the online news outlet Al Etihad Press, was killed during a mortar attack on 8 March 2015. Freelancer Jamal Khalifeh was killed on 1 April 2015. Humam Najjar (also known as Abu Yazan al-Halabi) died on 16 April 2015 from injuries sustained in a car bomb attack. Najjar worked as a reporter for TV channel Aleppo Today. Airstrikes claimed the life of Qasioun News reporter Ammar al-Shami on 31 May 2015. Wasem Aledel, a member and co-founder of the Maarat Media Center, was killed on 23 October 2015. Jomaa Al-Ahmad Abu Nour, correspondent for the Shahba Press Agency, died of wounds sustained during airstrikes on 27 October 2015.

The Director-General of UNESCO issues statements on the killing of media workers in line with Resolution 29 adopted by UNESCO Member States at the Organization’s General Conference of 1997, entitled “Condemnation of Violence against Journalists.” These statements are posted on a dedicated webpage, [UNESCO condemns the killing of journalists](#) .

Media contact: Sylvie Coudray, [s.coudray\(at\)unesco.org](mailto:s.coudray(at)unesco.org), +33 (0)1 45 68 42 12

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