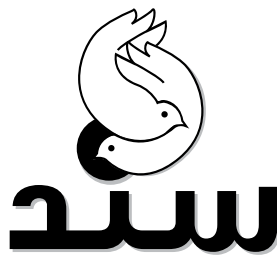# MEDIA UNDER ATTACK

Media Freedom Status in the Arab world 2014

Monitoring & Documentation of Violations
Executive Summary

شبكة المدافعين عن حرية الإعلام في العالم العربي
SANAD

The Report Team

Network for Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World "SANAD"

Supervision & Revision: Nidal Mansour
Executive President
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

Prepared by:
Main researcher:
Lawyer Negad El Borai

Senior research assistant:
Mohammed Hussein Al Najjar

Main researcher:
Mohammed Ghunaim
Network for Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World "SANAD"

Assistant Researcher:
Islam Al Btoush
Mohammed Ma'ayta
Network for Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World "SANAD"

The team of monitoring and documenting violations against media freedom in the Arab world, "AIN"

In Jordan:
Eman Abu Qaoud / Monitor
Heba Johar / Monitor

In Egypt:
Islam Azzam / "Ain" coordinator in Egypt / United Journalists Center

Safaa Rajab / Monitor
Hisham Shaban / Monitor
Saeed Al Mawardi / Monitor
Tareq Mousa / Monitor
Mohammad Abu Leila / Monitor

In Tunisia:
Lawyer Amneh Abbouda / Monitor
Lawyer Radiya Al Dridi / Monitor
Karima Al Waslati / Monitor
Karima Daghrash / Monitor

In Yemen:
Khalid Al Hammadi / Ain" coordinator in Yemen
Seddeq Al Fateeh / monitor
Abdullah Al Esa'e / monitor
Muad Al Fateeh / monitor
Abdul Razzaq Oun / monitor

Sanad's secretariat and overall coordination:

مركـز حماية وحـرية الصحفيين
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

Partner institutions:
United Journalists Center / Egypt
Freedom Foundation for Media, Rights and Development / Yemen
The Iraqi Association for Defending the Rights of Journalists / Iraq
JURNALIST FREEDOMS OBSERATORY
Skeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom/ Lebanon
Syrian Network For Human Rights
Kurdistan Journalists Syndicate
The Libyan Center for Democracy and Human Rights/ Libya
Tunisian Organization to Protect Journalist/ Tunisia

INDEX

Prelude

Backward March

• *Nidal Mansour*

March, Backward; may perhaps be the best term to summarize and illustrate how the scene of the media evolved after four years on what was known as "Arab Spring". Footsteps we thought to be vigorously taking us forward seem to have paralyzed now.

Sort of "clinical death" prevails in the scene after a fatal "spring", and it does not seem that this heavily wounded corpse can any longer hold on.

In introducing the 2013 report on the state of media freedoms in the Arab world, a question was raised:
"What terminology can be used to explain or present a future that holds a promise of devastation?".

But also few statements were made at the time:
"all bids that a tripped horse will rise again; that chants of victory are invincible and that guns and tear-gas will only be followed by liberty".

"Those were visions amid feverish thoughts which ended up bringing a nightmare of the consequence of turning back the clock. Not surprisingly, the only possible comparisons were between "boots" of an outgoing dictator and those of an incoming, or those of one who imprison freedom fighters and one who kills them".

"Alarming comparisons which their sweetest is bitter" ..

Yes, a Jasmine scent that was here is gone, so are the gulls that flew us to the shores of freedom.

And its only Yes, that what we are seeing now is marching backward, while the clash journey is out off and while those who defended freedom (and their dreams) are broken- the battle is over.

Exploring the scene now tells that some tyrants fell down. "Naivety" may conceived us to believe this is an evidence that freedom time has arrived. We were not capable of comprehending that the "Deep State" is only capable of producing a new dictator and a new face.

It is a necessity to account for what happened four years after revolutions and protest movements that held promises to "blossoming" while its equally necessary to explore delict mosaics of the state of media and freedom in the Arab world.

Albeit that violations may have scaled down slightly, as political confrontation and clashes have ended and which have in themselves provided instruments to restrict media freedom; such scaling down has not indeed reduce both the volume or types of violations [against media]. Most importantly, and with the increase in the number of "failed states" that are devastated by conflict and where governments do not control lands they govern; indicators of serious violations emerge. At times when Syria was the one place where the identity of journalists killers was not known (regime or armed groups), the phenomenon extended dramatically to places like Iraq, Libya and Yemen, although maybe in a lower intensity.

Libya's "legitimate" government fell and the country consequently drifted into a massive confrontation between the various armed forces and militias. Similarly, although in a different format, the group named the Islamic State "Daesh" controlled large areas of Iraq, while the same scene prevailed when the Houthis took control of the Sanaa and other cities in Yemen.

Abusers of media freedom change but the victim remain the same: journalists.

This is very much the environment in which media in the Arab world operate. If

journalists aspire to defend the truth and the society's right to know, they must be fully aware that the price is high, and that their lives in some states may be at risk.

In such circumstances, it seems that media is required to "not see, not hear and not speak". If the journalists community abided by that, they may (but not guaranteed) not face troubles, whether source of such troubles was the ruling establishment or armed militias, in a one carbonite copy of rulers who oppose and do not believe in freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

The Sanad network documented 3277 violation against the media in 2014. This is an appalling figure which only casts some light on the plight of the media in such a context. Documented violations vary and range from murder and undermine of the right to life, to kidnapping and abduction, as well as torture and physical assault. They also include blocking media coverage and the confiscation of camera equipment and destroying them, in addition to withholding information.

In light of that, how come we don't envision self-censorship to become phenomenal?

Journalists shall accept to imprison their own positions and refrain from disseminating information that illuminate the paths of truth, and would avoid often to break into areas of conflict and danger, because they are human, and do not want to become victims or disappeared unaccounted for, or behind bars. Journalists shall contaminate and restrict themselves practicing repression on themselves, and may become self-censors of their words, even before they are written. That is immensely what prevailed when journalists were suppressed in an overwhelming state of impunity.

The 2014 Report on State of Media Freedoms in the Arab World, is the third report Sanad network produced. It captures by means of monitoring and documentation violations against the media. This year's report has seen a breaking advancement through the development of indicator index of media freedom created by researchers who lived through media freedom issues and grounded in the heart of society's fabrics.

In its frits "pilot" year, this indicator is sought to assess the political and legislative environment in addition to trade union rights and the right of access to information, while paying attention to the issue of targeting of journalists and violations of which they are exposed to and impunity.

What we offer through this indicator may carry assumptions of right and wrong, but remains an attempt to pointing to dark and gray areas and even the bright, if any, in the scene of media freedoms.

Building the index and assign marks to accompany its points of inquiry is not an easy task. It has been a problematic process which brought difference even among member of the research team itself. If the violations are concrete and disciplined acts, the political and legislative environment measure, no matter how diversified and exploratory the survey questions were, remain ultimately discretionary. The latter has been evident as the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) organized focus group meetings in six countries to complete index questionnaires while listening to observations from participants who filled them out. One interesting overall observation here was that marks assigned by media professionals and human rights activists in these countries were not compatible with those assigned by the researchers who prepared the report. In response, we included views of the focus groups while recording the researchers' position in general index, accompanied by a special index dedicated only to targeting journalists.

Remarkably, and as an example to complexity around the development of the index, and assessment of the reality of the Arab world, the problem of impunity has been given the largest weight (95 degrees) in the questionnaire form, but after review by researchers, it was found that there is no proof of seriousness in prosecuting or accountability against any violators of media freedom in any of the countries of the Arab world. As result, all countries were assigned the Zero mark.

This report captured the continuation in monitoring and documentation the stories of victims of violations the attacks in order to expose abuses record against the media in countries that are know no shame in talking about respect

for freedoms while breaching them day and night. This report should not be viewed as only a quantitative document, but a humane document that illustrates the suffering and struggle of victim journalists.

The year 2014 has been explicitly a year of gross violations against journalists. It has seen times when abusers, regardless of who they are, raced to the top of abusers list. Ruling authorities are no longer the prime or only suspect in restricting the media, but were armed groups and militias presented themselves as a more deadly adversary while inventing new forms of "savagery" to terrorize journalists and oppress them.

In its third year; this report send an alarm, while stating in the utmost clarity that media is in the range of targeting; its being attacked under no accountability, and that the violations are not stopping but becoming more vicious and violent.

At the same time, the report offers a road map to a way out of such darkness by candling a path that provides aids those who want to extend help to curb abuses, stop journalists bleeds, and to mobilize voices that do not accept perpetrators escaping punishment.

We continue despite the fractures and pain, freedom of the media deserves the trouble, it is the gate to freedom of societies. An Arab poet once wrote:

We will continue to dig in the wall ..
Either we open path to light
Or die confronting the wall ..
No despair our shovels shall see
Nor boredom or break..
Tomorrow will be victory ..

<div align="center">(Abdulaziz Makaleh)</div>

• Executive President
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ)

Introduction

This executive summary presents a brief of the main parts of the report on the Media Freedom Statue in the Arab world in 2014. It does not, however, replace the need for a full reading of the reporting. Like any summary, it cannot but be lacking in some areas; however, it is sufficient to give the hasty reader a quick glimpse of the full report, which requires some time to be read and analyzed.

The Network of Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab world (SANAD) issues the third consecutive report on the Media Freedom Statue in the Arab world, under the title of "The Media under Attack" for 2014. Its first report was published under the title of "Freedom under Batons" and was made public in May 2012 on the occasion of the International Day for the Freedom of the Press. The report was the first of its kind. SANAD developed the report and published it the following year, also in May 2013, under the title "Falling Down" SANAD announced its reports during the first and second meetings of the media freedom defenders, and it is now publishing its third report using a developed scientific methodology, as a result of the experience gained during the past three years.

SANAD emphasizes that it succeeded, since publishing the first report, in preparing the first comprehensive report of its kind, which monitors and documents violations to which media practitioners are subjected in the Arab world. For this purpose, SANAD employed and brought in researchers and legal experts, in order to prepare the report in a scientific manner and using a methodology compatible with international legal standards.

SANAD believes that launching the third edition of the report represents a new success for it, despite the difficulties it faced since its establishment in 2012 following an initiative called for by a meeting of the defenders of media freedom, and organized the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) in Jordan in December 2011. CDFJ was the first Arab civil society organization to take the initiative to organize the first international forum for

defenders of media freedom, to discuss what the Arab Spring did in the media, and the dialectical relationship between protest revolutions and movements on one side and the media on the other, in addition to discussing the progress that the media achieved with these changes, the nature of the challenges it faces, and the future questions that present themselves. Hence, came the birth of SANAD, and from this emanated the first report that was prepared under exceptional circumstances prevalent throughout the Arab world. Meanwhile, SANAD continued to observe changes and transformations, and their effect on the state of media freedoms in a scientific, objective, and accurate manner.

SANAD will continue to develop its methodology and tools, and will take note of remarks and comments about the reports it prepares and publishes. It will also analyze such remarks in order to avoid any failure or weakness.

In addition to its annual reports, SANAD has been working, since the beginning of 2014, on publishing monthly and quarterly reports through which it monitors and documents violations that media practitioners face and are subjected to throughout the Arab world. SANAD emphasizes the fact that it collects information about violations as much as is possible and accessible by its researchers, monitors, and institutions and activists collaborating with it in many countries.

The reader of this report will notice that its chapters, sections, and research are interconnected. After explaining its methodology and the mechanism for preparing the content in the first chapter, the report addresses the environment within which the media operated in 2014 in its second chapter, taking into consideration the Arab political situation, the challenges of terrorism, the accelerating political transformations, the extent of Arab judiciary independence, and the positions of Arab countries vis-à-vis human rights issues, particularly the freedom of expression and the media as related to the periodic comprehensive review before the United Nations and the presentation of media practitioners' presentation in six Arab countries of their media status in focal action groups organized by SANAD network to contribute to crystallizing the freedoms index.

In chapter three of the report, the senior researcher attempts to create an approach between the theoretical material of the first two chapters and the general trends of violations and impunity in the Arab world, where the effects of these violations against media practitioners, monitored and documented in the report reflect on the substance and content of the theoretical material in a clear and noticeable manner, This is especially since this year's report presented a comprehensive comparison of the types and forms of the violations and their recurrence over the three years since the report's inception. The results of this comparison show the extent to which media freedoms have been affected by the environment in which they exist, while maintaining the specificity of each Arab country. The numeric and quantitative results in the scientific material included in chapter three also reflect the quality of violations and the level of their seriousness, and include addressing impunity in crimes against media practitioners.

The report presents scientific and practical material on the violations to which media practitioners are subjected in each Arab country. The senior researcher deliberately distributed countries on the level of four geographic regions, in order to maintain justice and impartiality. Furthermore, his study of the political and legislative environment led him to this distribution because countries are affected, in each region, by their political environments and similar legislations. In addition, and more importantly, countries in the region share similar types of violations against media practitioners, which emphasizes the fact that the theoretical material prepared by the senior researcher reflects on the monitoring and documentation processes carried out by researchers in SANAD network. Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya were listed under the Arab Maghreb countries. Egypt and Sudan were listed under the Nile Valley basin. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine were listed under the Levant countries, while Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq were listed as Arabian Gulf countries.

For the first time, the Report on the Media Freedom Statue in the Arab world presents its first experience of introducing a general index related to protecting the rights and freedoms of journalists in the Arab world, as well as another

special index related to targeting media practitioners in the Arab world. Once again, the results of the general index of the state of media freedoms, which included measurement of the status of legislations, the definition of a media practitioner, the political situation, the freedom to form and join associations, and the right to obtain information, and impunity in each country included in the index, have also impacted the index of targeting media practitioners in a constant and noticeable manner, as is the case with the rest of the items and chapters of the report.

Finally, the report addresses recommendations to non-governmental organizations that are concerned with defending the freedom of expression and the media, and to countries on the basis of the recommendations they had accepted during the comprehensive review in 2012 - 2014.

The Report on the State of Media Freedoms in the Arab world 2014 is divided into four main sections, comprising 11 chapters. Some of the chapters have special research subjects, totaling 22 such subjects.

MEDIA UNDER ATTACK

Media Freedom Status in the Arab world 2014

Executive Summary

Section I of the report was dedicated to the monitoring and documentation methodology followed by SANAD, and the methodology followed by the report in research and analysis.

• **Chapter 1: On the Methodology of Monitoring and Documentation**

This is the third report by SANAD, which is the network established by CDFJ. It acts as its permanent secretariat. This report covers the reality of media freedoms in the Arab world in 2014.

SANAD had formed four specialized monitoring teams in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen, and initiated positive cooperation with legal institutions concerned with the freedom of media practitioners in Egypt, Palestine, Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, and Algeria. It also monitors, through its centers in Amman and its activists spread throughout the Arab world, the state of media freedoms in the Arab world in general. SANAD calls its monitoring program "Ayn".

Through Ayn, the program for monitoring and documenting violations against the media, SANAD monitors violations against human rights and freedoms of media practitioners as natural persons and as a result of their profession in the media. Through this, SANAD measures media freedoms.

SANAD's Ayn program aims at monitoring and documenting violations against the rights and freedoms of media practitioners.

For the purpose of collecting information, SANAD uses the following tools:

✓ Information form
✓ [Complaint]
✓ Information form
✓ [Notification]
✓ Self-monitoring form.
✓ Written documents and evidence.
✓ Testimony of witnesses.
✓ Field interviews and visits.
✓ Indirect evidence and sources.
✓ Positions of the government.
✓ Positions of international

organizations and agencies.

✓ Cooperation and partnership with institutions defending media freedom and freedom of expression activists.

In view of a tough media reality and direct and indirect threats to media practitioners in the Arab world, it is possible to highlight eight basic difficulties and challenges that faced SANAD's researchers as they investigated the state of media freedoms in the Arab world. These are:

✓ The low level of freedoms and rights in general in all Arab countries, and the struggles fought by some Arab societies, which had been expected to have more stability and freedom, such as Egypt and Yemen, as an example.

✓ The failure of some Arab countries in managing state affairs and providing peace. The collapse or loss of state authority and the spread of terrorism in some countries constituted an element of pressure and a new additional challenge to freedoms in the Arab world.

✓ Methods used in committing violations, with threats made by telephone calls, anonymous text messages or other methods have become tools used by media rights' violators who know that proving such violations is difficult.

✓ The continued refusal and indifference of media practitioners to disclose violations, as a result of despair, fear, indifference, or ignorance.

✓ The lack of awareness in the Arab world of human rights or media freedoms issues. Despite the fact that media practitioners are the vanguard, or are supposed to be the vanguard, of human rights' defenders, experience indicates that many of them do not know a great deal about international conventions protecting freedom of expression or defending media practitioners, and do not know how to contact international organizations operating in this field.

✓ The impact of the media practitioners' political position on their position vis-à-vis violations against them. Some media practitioners in the countries that are experiencing a stage of

violent struggle, such as Egypt or Yemen, are indifferent to what their colleagues are subjected to, since they do not belong to their political team.

✓ The violations that are related to the law's abuse and criminal pursuit by some authorities provide legitimacy to many violations.

✓ The disparity in political and legislative environments in countries included in the monitoring and documentation process. In some Arab countries, there is a political environment that permits the release of information and knowledge of what takes place inside society, while other environments do not permit this.

Chapter 2: On the Methodology of Research, Study, and Analysis

This report places violations against media practitioners and media freedoms within a comprehensive context of the environment in which they take place. Hence, the report is concerned with the political and legal environments in which the media practitioners operate and where violations are committed. The report used the following tools and research methodologies to arrive at an analysis of the results:

✓ Questionnaire to measure media freedoms and the environment in which they reside.

✓ Focus groups.

✓ Quantitative analysis of violations.

✓ Adopt the inductive research method to arrive at results.

✓ Classification of violated rights and grouping similar rights.

✓ Observation and identification of qualitative and quantitative differences in detailed information and testimonies, their magnitude from one country to another as a result of the disparities in political environments, and the freedom of access to information.

In its third annual report 2014, SANAD focused, as was the case in the two previous reports of 2013 and 2012, on monitoring all types of violations to which journalists throughout the Arab world are subjected. However, in this report, it focused on serious violations and a policy of impunity , using the law and the judiciary to hinder media

freedoms, particularly that a number of the Arab Spring countries included in the methodical monitoring based on the method of complaining, witnessed a retreat in media freedoms in a clear and tangible manner. These violations now affect all activities of media practitioners and are no longer restricted to specific types and forms. SANAD was also interested in the change that occurred in the aftermath of what was called "the Arab Spring" to the sources of violations against media freedoms and the rights of media practitioners in the Arab world. These violations are no longer restricted to the authorities and the official systems, but now include non-officials from organizations and political movements, as well as the militias affiliated with some of them.

In its report of 2014, SANAD deliberately expanded the study and research of the state of media freedoms in the Arab world, four years after revolutions and protest movements took place in many Arab countries, in a serious attempt to interpret the challenges that face the Arab media and in anticipation of expected future questions. Therefore, SANAD indicates that this

experience is subject to development and criticism and to analysis and extraction, since the report was not restricted to monitoring violations against the freedom of media practitioners and media institutions in the Arab world only, but rather was expanded to study the incubating environment into which the Arab media operates and within which it moves around. Hence, the report includes in its new component this year two theoretical and practical materials. The theoretical material was applied to the practical material and vice versa in order to verify the effects of the media incubator on the freedom and independence of the media and media practitioners.

The senior researcher, who designed this report and brought it to light after many continuous brainstorming sessions with the researchers and SANAD's secretariat, which is adopted by CDFJ in Jordan, has focused on a number of aspects that touch on the state of media freedoms directly and clearly. He proved that violations against media practitioners in the Arab world and their media institutions have their underlying reasons, circumstances,

occasions, and forms. He succeeded in documenting and designating the state of media freedoms accurately and consistently by establishing a methodology independent from that of the previous reports, as well as pairing the two methodologies. Hence, the previous methodology reflected the report's scientific material, and the second and new methodology reflected its theoretical material. Work on the preparation of the report was a cohesive and shared team effort, and it was presented by SANAD in this form for the first time.

Since its establishment, SANAD thrives to achieve a number of objectives, foremost of which is monitoring and documenting violations against media freedoms in the Arab world in a systematic and scientific manner, in accordance with internationally approved standards in the field of monitoring, investigation, and documentation. It set up its program to monitor and document violations against the media under the title of "Ayn" [The Eye].
SANAD relies on the efforts of its researchers in collecting information from the outlets and reports of international, national, and regional organizations. This is a huge effort within a short period of time. The problem is that checking and verifying information is of the utmost importance in order for the report to be credible. This required communicating with some victims (journalists) in order to cross-match information. The difficult part of this task is the absence of disclosure of these violations or the lack of institutions to pursue them in some countries. An example is extreme secrecy in some Gulf countries, and the absence of information about some African countries such as Comoro Islands and Djibouti.

SANAD continued to perform its duties and continued to develop its "Ayn" program for monitoring and documenting violations against the media in the Arab world. It has continued to carry out the process of monitoring and documentation of violations against media freedoms in the Arab world, maintaining its motives for which it was established, which are:

✓ Verify the level to which Arab countries honor international

standards applicable in the field of media freedoms and relevant human rights.

✓ Mobilize Arab and international public opinion against practices which involve violations of these freedoms and rights.

✓ Understand prevailing patterns of violations in the Arab region and their reasons.

✓ Provide valid evidence and basis for pursuing those who commit serious violations against media practitioners and to prevent perpetrators from impunity.

✓ Motivate media practitioners to document what they are subjected to in terms of problems and violations, and raising their awareness of the importance of freedoms and human and media rights for them, in order to enable them to perform their tasks smoothly and easily.

✓ Spread the idea of scientific and systematic monitoring and documentation of media freedoms violations in the Arab world.

✓

Definition of Media Practitioner

The report adopts the media practitioner's definition as indicated by CDFJ, namely: "Anyone who provides regular information to the public and accepts professional standards regulating and governing his work, regardless of the method of publishing, the motives and reasons for publishing, regardless of whether he consider the provision of information to the public is a profession of his, or whether he practices another profession in addition to it." Based on these principles, the report did not include the monitoring and documentation of any violations against media activists who are normally active on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and others. They also did not monitor what popular bloggers are subjected to in their countries and their Arab environment.

Section II: The Environment in which the Arab Media Operates 2014

Section II of the report explains the environment in which the Arab media operates. It represents a feature that should be discussed in order to understand the nature of violations to which Arab media practitioners are subjected, their source, and their reasons throughout the Arab world, and in order to find the reasons that lead to the failure of control systems to perform their functions in pursuing, and apprehending perpetrators and bringing them to justice. Section II arrives at the conclusion that 2014 was characterized by two basic phenomena that severely affected media freedoms. The first was represented in the growth of the terrorism phenomena, which plagued countries of the Arab East in general much more than it did the countries of the Arab Maghreb. The second is the increase in Arab regional struggles and the lack of political stability.

Section II of the report comprises four chapters. Chapter 1 addresses the Arab political situation in 2014, terrorism challenges, regional conflicts, and accelerating political transformations. Chapter 2 discusses the status of the judiciary and public prosecution in the Arab world countries in general, and the extent to which they provide protection for the media. Chapter 3 examines the position of Arab countries before the comprehensive periodic review at the United Nations' Human Rights Council, concentrating on media and expression freedoms. Chapter 4 presents a field perception of Arab media practitioners in six Arab countries of their reality by presenting the results of discussions by focus groups composed of accurate representative samples of the region's countries.

This section, with its four chapters, represents a foundation for the next sections. The Arab media does not operate in a vacuum but is, at the end of the day, an organism that lives in an environment which affects him and is affected by it, helping develop it while it resists and hampers this development.

Chapter 1: The Arab Political Situation in 2014 - Challenges of Terrorism and the Accelerating Political Transformations

In this chapter, the senior researcher arrives at the conclusion that the Arab Spring may be called "The Spring of Islamic Fundamentalism." The bigger winners from the Arab Spring are the political Islamic trends, and the biggest winners among these trends are the Salafi trends, with all their colors and gradations, from those that embrace the call for God and delivering the message of His Prophet, such as the «Tabligh and Da›wah», to the most brutal of these trends, such as what is known as what is known as the Islamic State organization (DA›ISH), passing through the Muslim Brotherhood, which managed to guarantee for itself a legitimacy which crowned its share of the prestigious public opinion, achieving power in Egypt and ruling an Arab country for the first time.

Political Islam›s trends, throughout the spectrum from ultra-extremists to moderates, had been buried under the pressures from non-democratic governments, but after the uprisings for democracy in some Arab countries, they re-appeared powerfully, and were perceived by some as a threat to the freedom of expression and the media. Some of these trends targeted journalists and media practitioners with death, imprisonment, or destitution.

The report concluded that the exacerbation of the terrorism phenomena in the Arab countries, even in those that were supposed to be models for democracies and freedom of expression after toppling their former authoritarian rulers, has led to a number of results:

1. That under the pretext of combating terrorism, many Arab countries adopted measures that limit the freedom of expression, restrict the movement of media practitioners, or render them highly risky.
2. As a result of the prevalence of terrorism and the threat it posed to the very existence of some countries, or its attempts to establish new mini-states, access to information has

become a forgotten right even in those Arab countries that guaranteed it in its constitutions, or enacted laws that facilitate access to it.

3. That under the slogan of war against terror or unity to confront it, many media voices that have a different approach, or even those that talk about the need to respect human rights were «stifled.»

In addition, the report arrived at the conclusion that regional problems and accelerating political transformations represented an additional reason for the Arab media and Arab media practitioners› crisis. The year 2014 witnessed a number of crises among Arab countries which affected media freedoms negatively. Perhaps the crisis between Qatar and the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries on one hand, and between Qatar and Egypt on the other, are among the most significant regional problems that resulted in negative effects on the media, though they are not the only ones. There is also the chronic problem between Syria and Lebanon, and the ongoing crisis between Morocco and Algeria. Then

there is the settling of accounts taking place in Yemen between Iran, which supports the Huthis on one hand, and Saudi Arabia which supports groups close to the Muslim Brotherhood there on the other. We quote from the report here, which says: «It is important to emphasize that those problems affect the media and its role, and media practitioners and their rights clearly, meaning that the media, in most cases, enters as a party to these conflicts either to support one party against the other, or to be used by one party to promote dissent and unrest, or to magnify local conflicts for the other party. Obviously, media practitioners frequently pay the price for these conflicts regardless of whether they were directly involved in them or simply for reporting them to the public.»

In addition to terrorism and regional problems among Arab countries, the report finds that the Arab political system, which suffered from stagnation prior to 2011, is now suffering from accelerating transformations that defy the ability to solve them, trampling in its path a number of media practitioners› freedoms. The report says that «in 2011, unexpected political revolutions

and uprisings toppled a number of Arab political systems. The state of the Arab political system in 2014 was ‹from complete stagnation to rapid movement.› Those accelerating and unforeseen Arab political developments affected the media and its practitioners, and in some cases these rapid transformations trampled the freedom of the media, becoming one of the victims of the «Arab Spring.» The report also monitors some positive developments at the constitutional level. Two of the Arab Spring countries approved in 2014 two new constitutions that included advanced texts regarding media and media practitioners› freedoms and the right to access information, namely, the Egyptian and the Tunisian constitutions. The report also monitors a number of countries holding pluralistic or parliamentary elections, which reveals a democratic movement that was not reflected in all cases on the status of media practitioners in these countries. Rather, these very elections witnessed violations against journalists and media practitioners who attempted to cover their events. Among these countries were Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Mauritania, Iraq, and Tunisia, while Lebanon failed in organizing the presidency issue for reasons related to the balance of powers there. The report reveals that some of these elections were a «sham», such as those in Syria and Mauritania, and one way or another in Algeria or in Egypt, as a result of the absence of political competition, or the presence of an environment that is non-conducive to free elections as a result of a wide-scale political advocacy process. Tunisia may be the only Arab country whose election process escaped sharp political polarization and ended satisfactorily.

Within the framework of monitoring the political environment in which Arab media practitioners operate, the report examines the countries that held their parliamentary elections in 2014, and how these elections ended. Tunisia and Bahrain held parliamentary elections, with a clear distinction between the two elections, for while democracy witnessed the successful transformation from a revolution to a state in Tunisia, the Bahrain election witnessed numerous accusations of rigging, and was boycotted by the opposition.

The report also examines political

protests and their effect on media freedom. Egypt took the front stage. Since toppling the former president Muhammad Mursi, there has been dozens of weekly protests. Yemen also witnessed extensive protests after the Huthi army took control of the capital city of Sana'a on 21 September 2014. The same situation seems clear in Baghdad and Libya where unrest plagues everybody. In Libya, for example, teams from the Egyptian embassy there were kidnapped. The Jordanian ambassador was also kidnapped. Finally, the government in Tripoli collapsed and most embassies closed down. In Baghdad as well, the struggle does not seem to have ended with the elections. There are still complaints about cleansing taking place against Sunnis under the cover of fighting DA'ISH. The situation extends to Lebanon as well, while Algeria, Morocco, and countries of the Arabian Gulf, with the exception of Bahrain, seem to have escaped a troubled situation for now.

The report states that the Arab world after the revolution is exposed to the risks of disintegration or re-partition as a result of the lack of political stability to an extent never imagined by a researcher over the past five years. Yemen, threatened by an impending total control by the Huthis seems to be disintegrating into small states. At least, it is more likely that the south will separate soon to return to being a an independent state, leaving the north to suffer alone from chaos caused by the Huthi army pushing on north and west in an attempt to overrun the oil-rich regions and access to the sea as well. As for Iraq, where the cessation of the Kurdish region is a matter of time, it is also exposed to the separation of Sunni regions in favor of the DA'ISH coalition with the remnants of the Ba'th regime, whereby the Shiites are entrenched in their traditional position in the south, maintaining their oil-rich areas along the Gulf, and leaving the conflict over the oil region in the north for DA'ISH and the Kurds, and perhaps what remains from Iraq's central government. In Syria, it is clear that the president Bashar Al-Asad's regime does not seem to be in control except on parts of the coast and the south, and that the north and the north east now belong to DA'ISH and others. In Libya, talk about two states, the Burqah region and the Tripoli region does not annoy anyone. As for Sudan, it has experienced

political separation after the south seceded, and we now wonder if the north will remain united or that parts of west Sudan may have a different opinion. The issue of the Moroccan Sahara continues to form a rift in the Moroccan body, which presented all that it could to guarantee the Sahara remains part of the Moroccan Kingdom. However, it continues to suffer from the Algerian position towards this conflict.

The report says: "It has become clear that these deep transformations revealed the fragility of some countries which could not, until now, confront the ramification of the revolutions, particularly with the high expectations of the various components and groupings inside these countries, particularly regarding ethnic or national minorities, which found themselves facing new government systems that acquired power without much effort, and without having the sufficient political experience to maintain the state in its traditional sense, to the extent that many Arab countries are passing through a dangerous turn that could threaten its existence in a united manner, with the appearance of numerous harbingers of separatist and cessation trends within vast

sectors of these states. Doubtlessly, the failure of the Arab state in absorbing the post popular uprisings stage carries with it internal motives towards changing the form of the state itself as a result of the internal structural cracks on one hand, and as a result of external motives on the other."

Chapter 2: The Arab Judiciary and its Independence

Regarding the legislative environment, the report says that "all Arab countries adopt the principle of unconditional open reporting on crime. The unconditional open reporting of crime principles means that anyone, even if they were not directly affected by the crime, may inform the authorities about it, without having to verify the information reported or providing evidence of its truth, and without the report's invalidity resulting in any legal criminal or civil proceedings against the reporter."

The report also clarifies that the Arab legal system in general, which is based on the principle of "consolidating modern laws (Latin, most likely) and the provisions and

rules of the Islamic Shari'a" considers all violations against journalists and media practitioners as crimes whose perpetrators should be pursued and brought four punishment.

The report concludes that "all constitutions and laws in Arab countries in general stipulate that judges are independent and cannot be dismissed, and are free to issue judgement without any power over them, except for their conscience and the law." Practically, however, many Arab political systems are still, as a result of their tribal structure or military backgrounds, incapable of absorb the concept of separation of authorities, with the executive authority controlling other authorities, directing them as it pleases, including the manipulation of legislations, which increases the power of the latter to take any action it deems suitable to preserve its excellent position towards the other authorities.

Chapter 3: Response of the Arab Political System to International Pressures

In order to know the extent to which the Arab political system is responsive to international criticism, represented in the universal periodic review before the United Nations' Human Rights Council, the report examines the countries that were subjected to this review and the recommendations they received from the international community during the discussion, as related to the reality of human rights and freedom of expression and the media. Eleven Arab countries were subjected to this review in 2012, 2013, and 2014. These are: Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, Yemen, Egypt, and Iraq. After extensive deliberations, the Council presented a number of recommendations and observations on the 11 countries' performance regarding human rights. The report examines the observations and recommendations submitted to each state, the ones accepted totally or partially, and what was totally rejected, especially what is related to the media, since these recommendations were accepted by the governments and they should work on implementing them.

Chapter 4: How Do Media Practitioners in Six Arab Countries See their Reality

In an attempt to find out the reality

of the Arab media in 2014 in the field, CDFJ, the mentor and founder of SANAD, the Network of Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab world, designed a questionnaire to measure the level of media freedoms and the political and legal environment they operate in, and implemented this questionnaire through focus groups in six selected Arab countries representing models of all Arab countries targeted by monitoring and evaluation. Tunisia represents a model of the Arab Maghreb countries which are progressing at a faster pace towards democracy, while Egypt represents a model of the Nile Valley, and is considered the largest and most important Arab country geo-strategically, and the oldest in the evolution of the media. Jordan was selected as a state enjoying extensive political stability in a region replete with turmoil, and Yemen as a member in some committees of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and one of the countries hit by the Arab Spring typhoon and almost destroyed it.

This leaves Iraq and Palestine, which constitute special cases. The former has fallen prey to an internal sectarian war that led DA'ISH to seize three main governorates. Palestine is undergoing a long settlement occupation which is tightening its grip on it, leaving some parts in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for a self-rule that lacks power and authorities. Hence, the focus groups are actually suitable to be representative models to a good extent of the Arab world countries, whether in terms of the political regime (monarchy - republic) or in terms of having been exposed to revolutions that toppled well-entrenched rulers, or traditions and customs, and similarities among the ruling regimes in their positions from media freedoms or the development of the same media freedoms in the state, or the geographic vicinity.

In the light of all this, CDFJ organized six focus groups in the six countries referred to. Leaders of journalism and the media and journalism unions participated in these groups, in addition to human rights organizations and legal and experts. Looking at all the participants, we find that 101 media experts and specialists participated, with 22 from Jordan, 20 from Tunisia, 16 from Egypt, 15 from Yemen, 14 from Iraq, and 14 from Palestine. This is depicted in the following chart:

Number of participants

Country	Value
Iraq	14
Palestine	14
Yemen	15
Egypt	16
Tunisia	20
Jordan	22
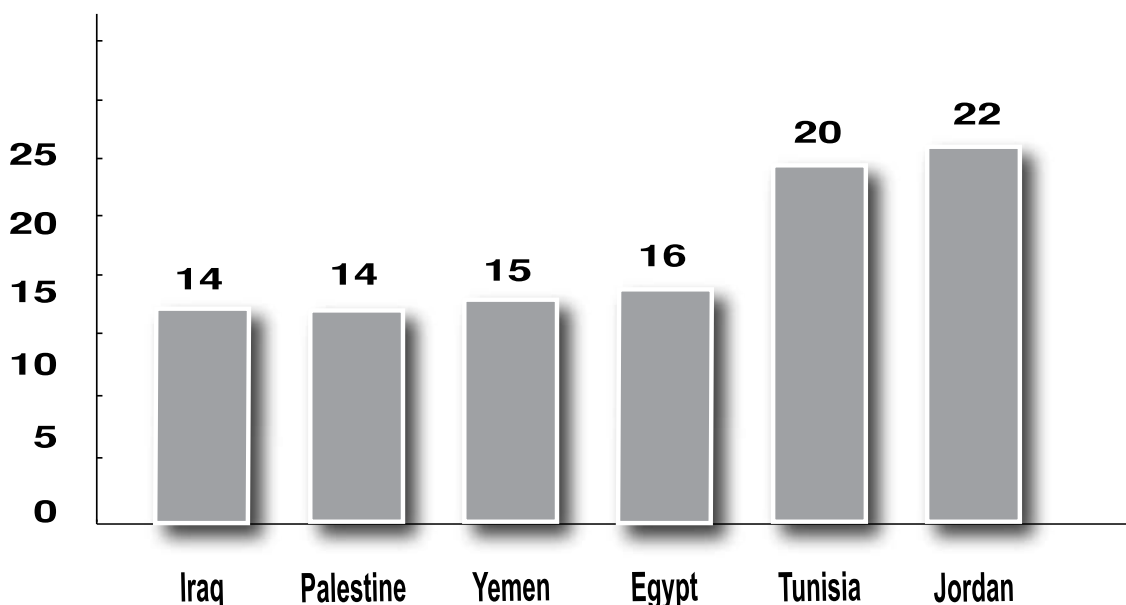
In terms of specialization, the participants were divided into two main categories, namely, media professionals from the press, television, or radio, or members in the Press Association, or the second category which includes legal experts who work as lawyers or in civil rights organizations which defend the rights and freedom of media practitioners.

Due to the diversity of these categories, we find that Egypt assumes the top position in terms of diversity, with the ratio of media professional being 69% against 31% for legal experts, followed by Tunisia with the ratio of 70% for media professionals and 30% for legal experts, and Yemen in the third rank with 73% for media professionals and 27% for legal experts, followed by Palestine at 79% for media professionals and 21% for legal experts, Jordan with 82% for media professionals and 18% for legal experts, and finally Iraq at 93% for media professionals and 7% for legal experts.

The report examined the opinions of focus group members regarding the conditions affecting media freedoms

in their countries, from their responses in the index questionnaires and their discussion of those conditions.

Working Focus Groups - A Perception of the Political Environment

Within the framework of evaluating the political environment in which media professionals operate and the area within which the state interferes in their work, the investigation questionnaire discussed the political environment in which media practitioners operate. This part of the questionnaire included eight

standards with a total of 40 points. Reviewing the questionnaires, it was found that none of the six countries obtained half the points allocated for the political environment. Palestine came first with an average of 19.9 points, followed by Tunisia with a small difference, scoring 19.5 points, and Jordan with a small difference as well, scoring 19.2 points. The fourth rank was occupied by Iraq with an average point of 18.1. Yemen assumed the rank before last with an average point score of 17.2, and Egypt came sixth and last with an average point score of 16.7.

Political environment

| | Egypt | Yemen | Iraq | Jordan | Tunisia | Palestine |
| 16.75 | 17.2 | 18.11 | 19.19 | 19.45 | 19.89 |
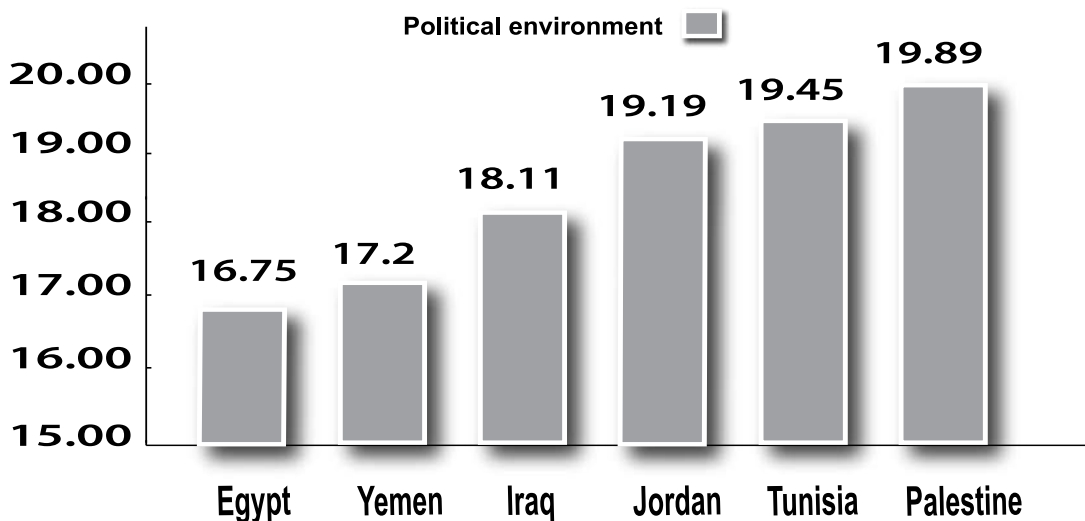
During the focus groups› meetings, there was a clear disparity regarding the political environment in the targeted countries.

The political environment axes included the media practitioners› perception of the political environment and parties, the parliament and elections, and the state›s censorship of the media and its interference in its work.

## • Focus Work Groups - A Perception of the Legislative Structure

Regarding the legislative framework, which includes the laws and constitutions that govern the work of media practitioners, and the extent to which they affect media freedoms, which includes three standards with a total point average of 15, the following chart shows that the best legislative environment, according to those on whom the index was tested, exists in Palestine, which slightly exceeded the middle point, scoring and average of 8.4 points, followed closely by four countries, with Iraq scoring 6.9 points, followed by Egypt at 6.8 points, and Tunisia and Yemen tying at 6.5 points. Jordan comes at

the bottom of the list with 4.5 points. It is understood and clear that this index measures legal texts in an absolute manner, far from practices and violations of the law.

The following chart shows the evaluation of the focus groups› participants regarding the legislative framework, each in their country:

• Focus Work Groups - Targeting Media Practitioners

Targeting Media practitioners' axis is considered one of the main and influential axes, and includes 16 standards with a total of 80 degree points. The following table shows the average points for the six countries according to the perception of the focus groups. Jordan is the country where media experts are least subjected to violations, compared to the other countries, at an average of 47.3 points according to the focus group there, followed by Palestine in second rank with 43.1 points. The third rank is occupied by Yemen with an average of 38.8 points, and Egypt in the fourth rank at 31.8 points. Tunisia occupies the rank before last at 31.3 points, and Iraq comes last at

Jordan	Tunisia	Yemen	Egypt	Iraq	Palestine
4.5	6.53	6.53	6.81	6.86	8.39
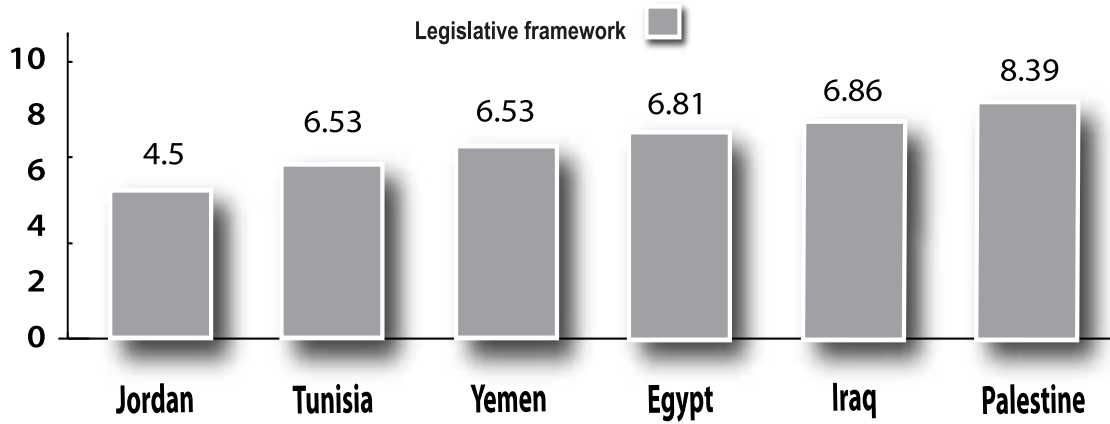
27.8 points. It is important to note that targeting media practitioners in Palestine is carried out in most cases by the Israeli occupation authorities, directly or indirectly, and through air raids during bombing operations of the Gaza Strip. This means that the focus group in Palestine evaluated the violations based on what is committed by the Palestinian Authority and/or the dismissed Hamas government in Gaza.

Participants in the focus groups noted that targeting media practitioners is considered the core of the media freedom issue. In Egypt, for example, there is abuse by members of the public authority by raising court cases for slander and libel against media practitioners, which is considered an extremely negative index regarding targeting media practitioners through the use of oppressive legislations and extensive authority of the indictment authority. Some believe that members of the public authority raising court cases against media practitioners gives them a positive edge, represented in the speed of pursuit, arrest, and detention, especially that if the plaintiff is in power, he is raising his court case by virtue of his position and not in person. Participants from the focus group in Egypt noted that journalists are the ones targeted most. During 2012, 2013, and 2014, Egyptian journalism lost more than ten martyrs. Not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice as yet.

• **Focus Work Groups - Impunity**

This axis is considered the largest and most influential in the media

Targeting the Media Persons

Chart values: Iraq 27.79, Tunisia 31.35, Egypt 31.81, Yemen 38.87, Palestine 43.14, Jordan 47.30
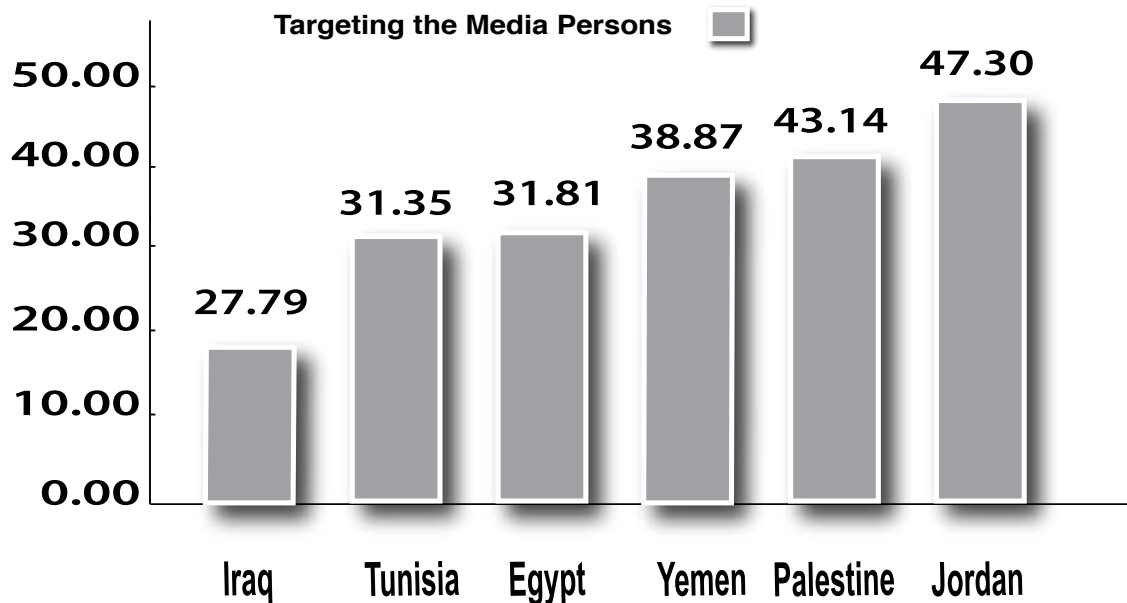
environment. The following chart shows that the country with lowest impunity level, as seen by its media practitioners who participated in the focus groups is Palestine at 51.5 degree points, followed by Yemen at 47.1 points. Jordan assumed the third rank at 45.3 points, followed by Iraq at 42.2 points. Egypt came before last at 38.2 points and Tunisia came at the end of the list at 32.3 points. It is noted that the ratios are very close in the participants' evaluation of impunity, ranging between 38% in Egypt and 47% in Yemen.

It is important to point out here once again that these degrees represent the point of view and opinion of the participants in the focus groups, while researchers in SANAD agreed that all Arab countries did not take any measures or procedures to prevent impunity. Hence, they gave all countries in the general index mentioned in chapter 4 a zero grade.

Regarding the written comments by the participants in the questionnaire, we find that the issue that was most commented on was the effect of

Impunity

Tunisia	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Yemen	Palestine
32.33	38.22	42.21	45.34	47.13	51.50
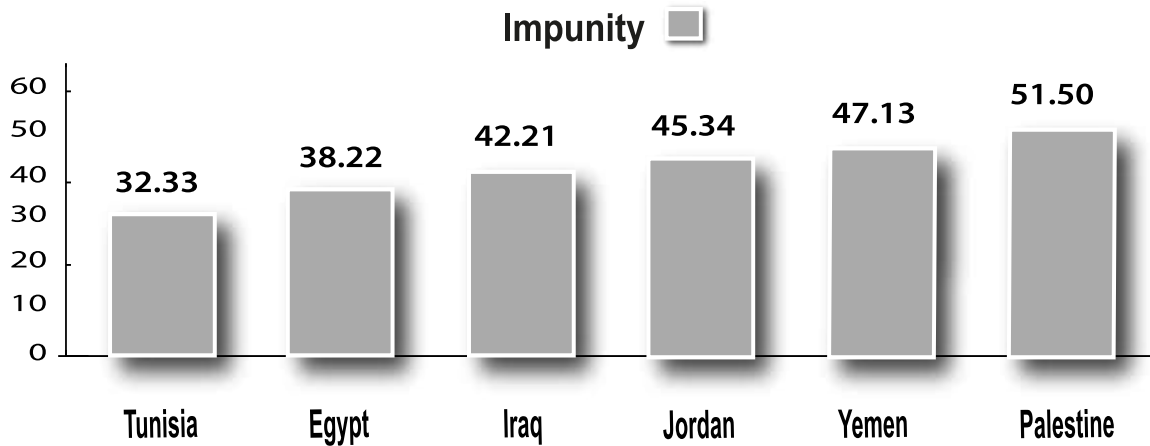
political or financial influence on assisting perpetrators in impunity at the rate of 42% of the total comments, which focused on a problem related to the potential for submitting a report if the violation was by the police, the army, or some officials. In some cases where submitting a report is permitted, the case remains stagnant. The issue of the independence of the investigation and attempts to influence it, and its role in impunity came in the second place at the rate of 33% of total comments, followed by the role of parliament in impunity, and its enactment of legislation related to this, at 17% of total comments. At the end came the issue of a flawed legislation that results in impunity, at 8% of total comments.

• Focus Work Groups - Access to Information

Accessing information from their sources is considered one of the main issues determining the existence of media freedoms. Regarding the magnitude of media practitioners accessing information, and the right of the state to withhold it, the access to information axis included four standards with a total of 20 degree points. It can be said that the prevailing culture in the six countries where the index questionnaire was tested is to withhold information. None of these countries reached half the total points. Palestine came first with a large difference from the other states, as an average of 9.3 degrees, followed by Tunisia in the second

Access to information

Palestine ████████████████████ 9.36
Tunisia ██████████████ 6.43
Yemen ████████████ 5.60
Egypt ████████████ 5.56
Jordan ███████████ 5.36
Iraq ██████████ 4.86

0.00 1.00 2.00 3.00 4.00 5.00 6.00 7.00 8.00 9.00 10.00
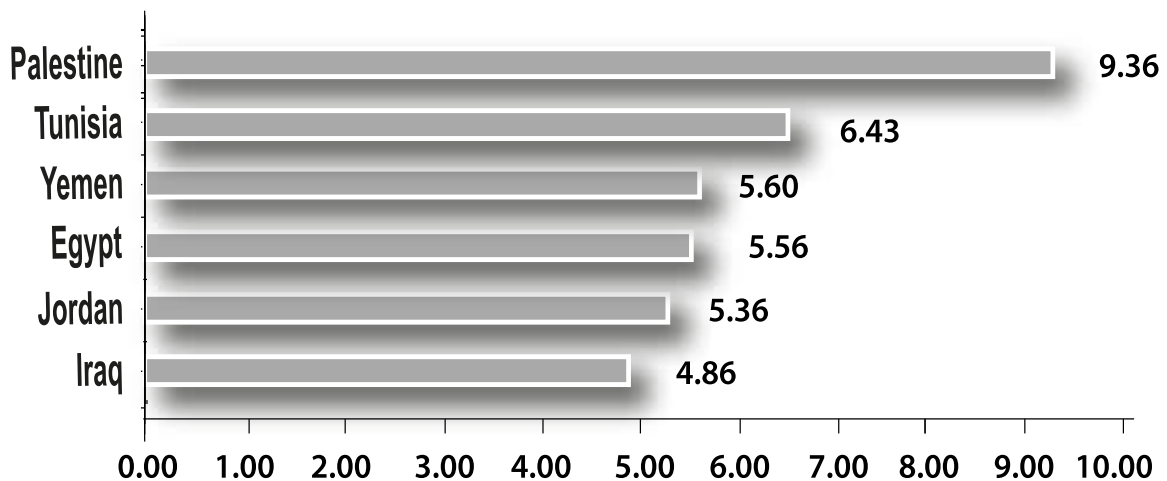
rank with a difference of about 3 points, scoring 6.4 points. Yemen came third with a total of 5.6 points while Egypt occupied the fourth rank with an average of 5.5 points. Jordan came before last with a score of 5.3 points, and Iraq came as the worst of the six countries in accessing information, with a score of 4.8 points.

Regarding written comments by the participants, we find that they were divided over two main issues, namely, the law for accessing information, whether it existed or not, and whether it supports the right to access information. This issue received 53% of total comments. The second issue was the actual practices of official parties in making information accessible to media practitioners. This issue received 47% of total comments.

• **Focus Work Groups - Trade Union Rights and the Right to Association**

Regarding media practitioners enjoying their union rights and whether the union is assuming its role with media practitioners, and regarding the right to establish associations, and the role of these associations in defending the rights of media practitioners, the research questionnaire allocated the seventh and last axis for this issue, which

Associations Rights

Country	Value
Palestine	13.93
Yemen	13.53
Tunisia	12.95
Iraq	12.29
Egypt	10.22
Jordan	9.67
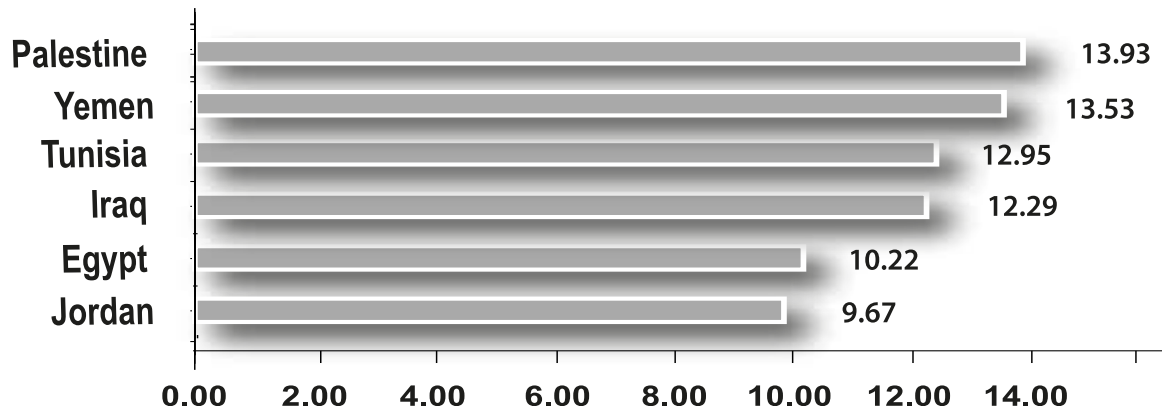
included four standards with a total of 20 points.

Palestine came out first with an average of 14 points, followed by Yemen with 13.5 points, Tunisia in the third place with 13 points, and Iraq in fourth place with 12.3 points. Egypt occupied the rank before last with an average of 10.2 points, while Jordan came last with an average of 9.7 points.

• **Focus Work Groups - The Final Ranking According to the Participants› Opinions**

The following chart the ranking of the six countries in which the focus groups were held according to what the participants arrived at in those groups and the opinions they expressed in the evaluation forms:

Country	Value
Yemen	104.80
Egypt	110.31
Tunisia	113.95
Iraq	121.94
Jordan	138.65
Palestine	158.46
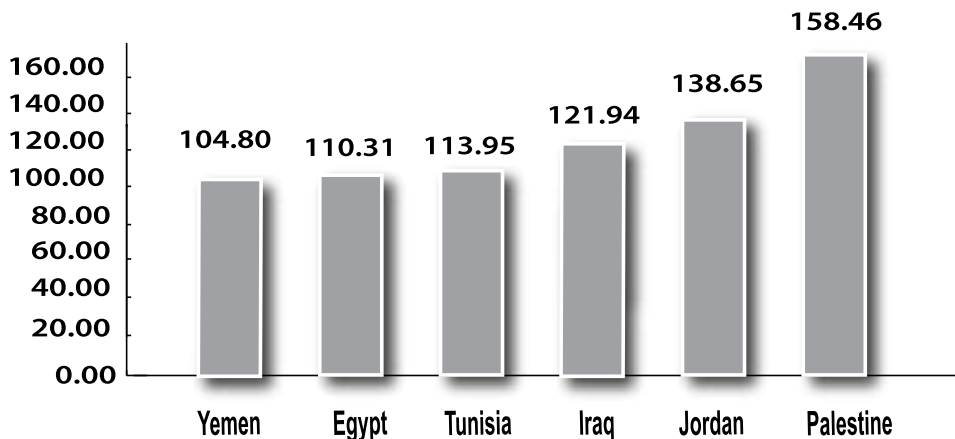
Looking at the above chart of the ranking of the six countries evaluated, and based on the opinions and responses of the focus groups participants, we find that one country only surpassed half the total number of the points by half a point, namely, Palestine, which came first with an average of 158.5 points, followed by Jordan with an average of 138.6 points. In the third rank came Iraq with an average of 122 points, followed by Tunisia in the fourth place with 114 points. Egypt came before last with an average of 110.3 points, and Yemen came last with an average of 104.8 points.

It is noteworthy that the first and third countries are suffering from severe political crises represented in a struggle with an occupier and a huge lack of infrastructure, in addition to an internal strife between Fatah and Hamas movements in the case of Palestine, and a bloody struggle close to a state of war with the Islamic State known as DA'ISH, in addition to sectarian struggles between Sunnis and Shiites. In the meantime, three of the Arab Spring countries, namely, Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen occupied the fourth, fifth, and sixth positions on the list respectively, although the among the objectives of the Arab Spring revolutions were freedom and democracy. It seems that the ceiling of expectations was much higher than reality.

• **Final Outlook**

A number of important notes may be made:

Note 1: There is a widespread media suffering in Arab countries from withholding of information. The media thrives on information, and withholding it has pushed media practitioners either to stop working or to resort to rumors and guesses. Here, it is easy to indict them with a charge like spreading false news or disturbing public peace, in addition to what resorting to false information causes in terms of the loss of public trust in what the press publishes.

Note 2: Countries whose media practitioners were not expected to complain from violations against them were the ones with the loudest voices complaining and talking about violations. Tunisia and Egypt are two examples indicating

this. The two countries witnessed revolutions against oppression, and both countries are deep-rooted in the media profession. Media practitioners in both countries are united in complaining from violations to which they are subjected in the new era, along the same lines as the old one.

Note 3: In countries being subjected to disintegration such as Yemen, or to settlement occupation such as Palestine, media practitioners feel deep anger as a result of the violations they are subjected to at a much lower degree, compared to their colleagues in Tunisia and Egypt. This is due, in our estimate, to the fact that the media practitioners' estimate of the level of freedom they were hoping for was much higher than the expectations of media practitioners living and working in a totally dangerous environment such as Yemen and Palestine, and hence are thankful to any kind of freedom they achieve.

Note 4: Impunity for perpetrators of violence against media experts was the largest obsession of all Arab media practitioners, at different rates.

It is well-known that the phenomenon of impunity is rampant in Arab societies. Not a single perpetrator who assaulted media practitioners was brought to justice according to information we received.

Note 5: Self-censorship of media practitioners has become an obsession for them regardless of the country they live in. Self-censorship exists where there are pressures on the journalist, and a lack of safety, which makes him subject himself to accountability before himself, before the authoritarian regimes hold him accountable. He watches out for what he writes and draws red line for himself without interference from anyone to avoid what may lead to depriving him from work or from freedom, and sometimes from his right to life.

Note 6: The answers of journalists cannot be separated from the state of political polarization and political trends. This may be the case in some countries more than others, which reflects attention for some to beautify the image more than the reality.

Section III: Freedom of the Arab Media - A Look at a Tough Reality

The report dedicates its third section to discussing the media reality in the targeted Arab countries. Each geographic group was allocated a separate chapter. Chapter I discusses the Arab countries of the Maghreb, namely Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Chapter 2 discusses the two countries of the Nile Valley; Egypt and Sudan. Chapter 3 describes the situation in in the countries of the Levant, namely Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Chapter 5, the last chapter in this section, examines the countries of the Arabian Gulf, namely Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen.

Section IV is divided into five chapters:

✓ Chapter 1 discusses the general trends of violations against media practitioners and impunity in the countries of the Arab world in general, noting that in countries like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Djibouti, and Comoro Islands, SANAD could not access sufficient information regarding violations against media practitioners there. This is due to the poor standards of democratic rule there, and the weakness of effective civil society organizations in monitoring and documentation, and the lack of an independent media from the authority or its orbits.

✓ Chapter 2 presents violations from which the media practitioners suffer in the countries of the Arab Maghreb, namely Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia.

✓ Chapter 3 addresses violations against media practitioners and journalists in the Nile Valley countries, namely Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, and Djibouti, noting that Djibouti is one of the countries from which no information can be obtained, and suffers from a

very poor political life.

✓ Chapter 4 addresses violations against media practitioners and journalists in the Levant countries, namely, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine.

✓ Chapter 5 reminds of violations against media practitioners and journalists in the countries of the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, namely, Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, within the limits of the information available from inside, taking into account what we expressed in terms of the absence of strong institutions for monitoring and documentation in some of these countries, and fear by media practitioners from disclosing what they face, leading to poor accessibility to information.

• **Chapter 1: General Trends for Violations and Impunity in the Arab world**

It can be said that in spite of the different political environment and rate of growth from one Arab country to the other, they all share a basic feature, namely, that the Arab world does not welcome free media. Regardless of whether the political system is a constitutional monarchy or a republic, and whether there was a parliament with one or two houses, or even if there is no parliament, and whether the judiciary is independent or not, it is certain that Arabs live in a conflict with their world, and more importantly, with their media.

The political situation in most countries of the Arab world indicates that the political environment is not conducive, and even crippling of democracy, with some simple exceptions. Regarding the governance systems, we find that there are nine Arab countries governed by a republic system, and two countries governed by a representative parliamentary system. There are also three countries with constitutional monarchies, and two with absolute hereditary monarchies. Two countries are considered hereditary emirates, and finally, there is one country with a presidential union. Some countries suffer from

the absence of a parliament, such as Egypt after the former parliament was dissolved by a decision from the constitutional court, while no parliamentary elections took place in Palestine since 2006. There is also a struggle over the parliament and suspicions over its legitimacy in Libya, and the Lebanese parliament extended its own term twice until the middle of 2017.

The report emphasizes that there are Arab countries governed by regimes that are not established on any democratic standards, and that provide or have no information about media violations. In addition to authoritarianism, this can be attributed to the lack of disclosure by media practitioners about the problems facing them, and the lack of strong and effective monitoring and documentation institutions or an active partisan life.

No Arab country is free from violations of the rights of media practitioners, particularly journalists. The following table explains the number of violations monitored by

SANAD, whether countries where national teams collect information, or those monitored by SANAD in its central offices in Jordan. There is a total of 3277 different violations.

Number of Violations Monitored in 2013 - 2014

Year	No. of Violations	Percentage
2013	3595	%52.3
2014	3277	%47.7
Total	**6872**	**100%**

It is important to state that the number of violations monitored by SANAD through its national teams and the mechanisms it follows to collect information about these violations against media practitioners in the Arab world reached about 3595 in 2013. This indicates a decrease in the average of violations monitored by 4.5%, as the following table and chart show:

Comparison of the Number of Violations 2013 - 2014

3860

3286

4000	
3800	
3600	
3400	
3200	
3000	
2800	

2014   **2013**
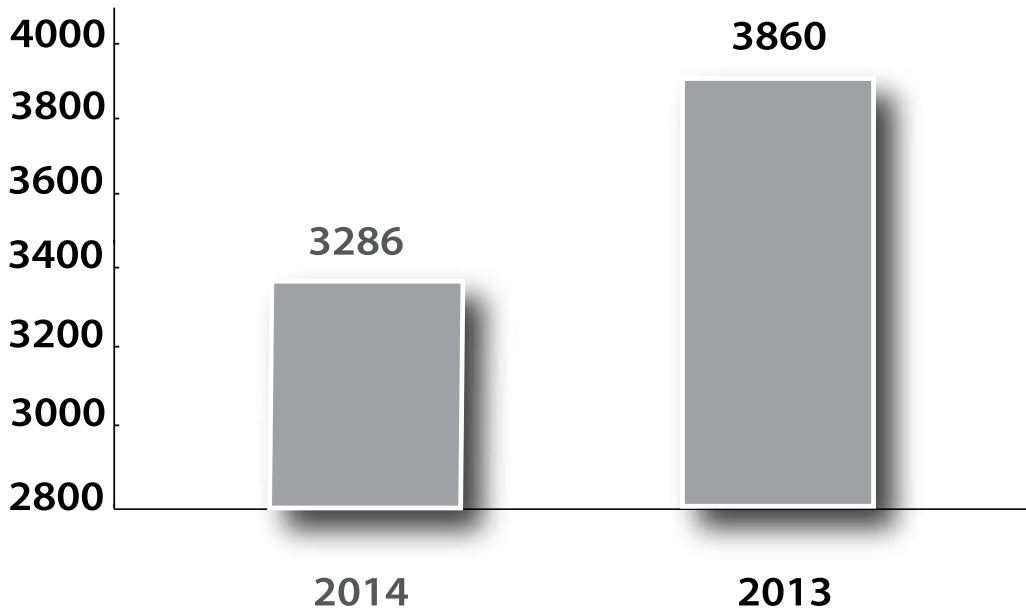
From the above table and chart, it is evident that violations monitored in 2014 are less than those monitored in 2013 by 4.5%. This percentage cannot be considered a positive change because its low value may indicate a flaw in collecting information more than an improvement in the conditions of media practitioners. Hence, violations against Arab media practitioners' rights have not changed.

The report also shows that some violations of media practitioners' rights, such as the right to life,

personal physical safety, freedom, and others, are violations that involve criminal penalties against their perpetrators according to prevailing laws in the Arab countries in general, and therefore hold these countries responsible for pursuing perpetrators and bringing them to justice. The situation in the Arab world, however, is slightly different, since the control and investigation authorities do not show interest in violations against media practitioners. It is even evident that they look in the other direction and pave the way for the perpetrator to go unpunished.
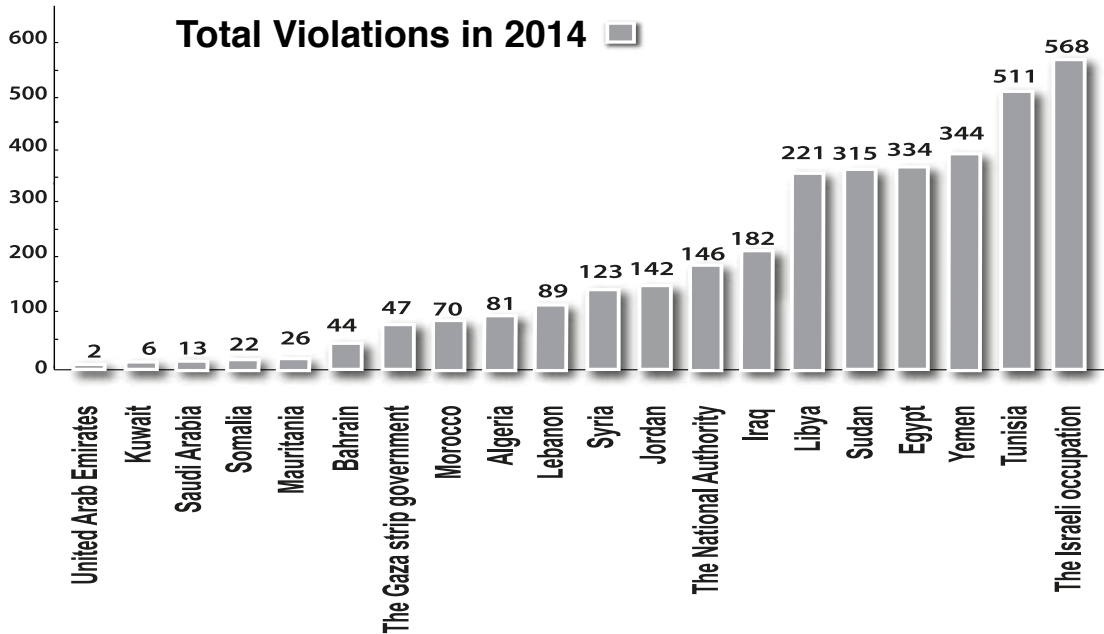
• Countries where there is Insufficient Information about Violations

The report finds that it is difficult to obtain sufficient information in some of the Arab countries about media violations. This may be attributed to the following reasons:

✓ Prior censorship practiced by some chief-editors towards their editors, through which editors are not permitted to practice the freedom of expression. This exempts the state from taking stringent measures against media practitioners.

✓ Failure of media practitioners to disclose the violations they are subjected to. This is either because some of them hold the citizenship of other countries such as Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Jordan, and Palestine, and work in the newspapers of these countries as foreigners or expatriates, which renders them wary of the risk of being deported in case of disclosure, or the loss of benefits and gains, or because some of the citizens of the state live a life of affluence provided by the excellent economic situation, and therefore has no reason to complain, even if some freedom of expression violations are practiced against them, so they would not lose a lucrative job which provides a good standard of living, or so that h their citizenship is not withdrawn, leaving them "stateless."

✓ Most of these countries do not permit civil society organizations to operate, and if they did, it would be in charitable fields only. Hence, there are no completely effective and independent civil institutions which monitor and reveal media violations, or even provide media practitioners with the assistance they need.

✓ Information cannot be obtained from some countries due to the language barrier. In Djibouti, for example, information is available in French only. In other country, the relative lack of proximity means they are far from the lights, such as Comoro Islands.

Total Violations in 2014

Country	Violations
United Arab Emirates	2
Kuwait	6
Saudi Arabia	13
Somalia	22
Mauritania	26
Bahrain	44
The Gaza strip government	47
Morocco	70
Algeria	81
Lebanon	89
Syria	123
Jordan	142
The National Authority	146
Iraq	182
Libya	221
Sudan	315
Egypt	334
Yemen	344
Tunisia	511
The Israeli occupation	568

• Countries under the Microscope - Violations Everywhere

Forms of violations against Arab media practitioners and journalists are distributed over eight categories, namely right to life, right to physical safety, right to freedom, right to personal safety, right to free expression of opinion, right to ownership, right to access to information, and right to non-discrimination.

It is clear that media practitioners in occupied Palestine are the ones who suffer most. The number of violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the sovereignty of the national authority in the West Bank, and the blatant and serious acts in the Gaza Strip amounted to 568 violations. If we add to this violations perpetrated by the national authority against media practitioners and journalists in Ramallah, and those committed by the deposed government of Ismail Haniyeh in the Gaza Strip, the number will increase to 761 violations, which represents the highest number of violations against media practitioners in all Arab countries.

Tunisia assumes the second position in terms of violations, reaching 501,

followed by Yemen at 344, Egypt at 334, Sudan at 315, Libya at 221, and finally Iraq at 182 violations.

It is noteworthy that Tunisia, Yemen, and Egypt, which are Arab Spring countries, assume an advance position in terms of violations, while violations monitored in countries like the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia were very few. Only two violations were committed in the United Arab Emirates, 6 in Kuwait, 13 in Saudi Arabia, 22 in Somalia, and 26 in Mauritania. No violations at all were recorded in countries like Qatar or Oman.

• **Violated Rights and their Percentages Distributed over the Countries Monitored:**

The researchers distributed the quantitative results and their percentages for monitoring and documentation processes over the type of rights violations against media practitioners in the Arab world in 2014. The following chart shows violations monitored by type of violation and its percentage:

**Distribution and Percentages
of Violations against Media Practitioners by Rights**

0%
6%
15%
13%
15%
5%
18%
27%

The right to life ■
The right to physical integrity ■
The right to freedom ■
The right to personal security ■
The right to freedom of ■
expression and assembly
The right to possession ■
The right to information access ■
The right to non-discrimination ■
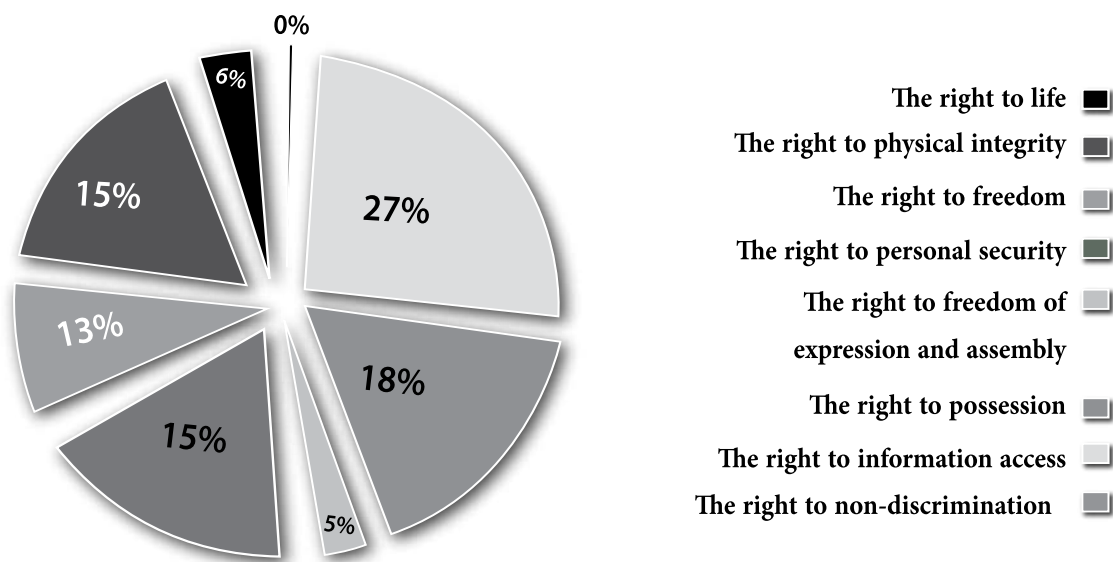
✓ The Right to Access of Information: It is clear that the right to access to information is one of the rights most violated in the Arab world countries. It has been repeated 892 times, with a percentage of 27% of the total number of rights violated, followed by the violation of the right to own, which was repeated 601 times with a percentage of 18%. It is noted that these two rights are connected, for violating the right to ownership takes place mostly against the media practitioners' tools, such as breaking cameras, destroying pictures, or damaging transport vehicles, cellular phones, and others. We believe that this is meant to hinder the transfer of information to the public, or preventing journalists from accessing information and storing it for transfer afterwards. Violations against right to physical safety comes third, and was repeated 497 times, at a rate of 15% of the total number of rights violated.

✓ Right to Physical Safety: It is noteworthy that violating the right to physical safety, in many cases, is connected to violations against the right to ownership. Normally, media practitioners are physically assaulted before confiscating their work tools. Next is the right to freedom, which includes obstructing movement, short or long-term detention. It was repeated 444 times to come fourth, with a rate of 13.5%. It is also part of the previous two violations, since journalists are sometimes detained for a very short period of time, physically assaulted, and his camera or cellular phone confiscated.

The Israeli occupation, Egypt, and Tunisia occupy the top three positions in violating the right to physical safety for media practitioners.

Adding violations against the right to physical safety committed with the knowledge of the Israeli occupation to those taking place in the national authority territories and the deposed government of Hamas in Gaza, it is evident that 184 media practitioners

and journalists suffered from violations of their rights to physical safety.

✓ Right to Life: In spite of the fact that the right to life is violated at a rate of 6% of the total violated rights monitored, and was repeated 197 times, it represents a high rate, for if anyone violates one journalist's right to life, he is actually violating the rights of all journalists, since depriving one of their life is the highest form of violations, and being severe and brutal, it affects the freedom of all media practitioners and journalists in expressing their rights. It is expected that some would tolerate their right to physical safety being endangered as a price for airing their opinions and transferring their information to the public, however, assassination cannot be an acceptable price for transferring information regardless of how sacred we claim that mission to be. Generalizations aside, details show that the number of violations of the right to life is an inalienable one in the Arab countries.

Palestine is the country with the highest rate of the right to life violations. The report states that investigations show that the Israeli occupation violated the right to life for 51 Palestinian media practitioners and journalists in the territories subjected to its assaults in the West Bank or Gaza. Its military operations in the Gaza Strip resulted in the martyrdom of 9 journalists, in addition to targeting media practitioners and journalists, leading to serious injury for a number of journalists in the national authority territories. The total number of Palestinian media practitioners and journalists whose rights to life were violated amounted to 58.

Syria, suffering from a wide-scale civil war and military interventions by numerous Islamist fundamentalist groups controlling vast areas of

Syrian territories, participating with the regime in Damascus in violating the rights of media practitioners, occupied the second position in terms of violating the right to life for media practitioners and journalists operating there. The number of violations recorded there is 36.

In Iraq, which is plagued by a sectarian wave of violence, and where extremist Islamic trends control parts of its territories, 34 cases of violation of the right to life were recorded against media practitioners operating in its territories. Iraq is followed by Yemen and Libya in the fourth and fifth positions respectively, with Yemen showing 27 cases of the right to life violations against Yemeni media practitioners, and Libya showing 24 cases. It is clear that the major five countries in violating media practitioners' right to life are countries suffering either from civil wars, armed struggles, ethnic tensions, or religious conflicts, or are subject to a foreign occupation which uses excessive force to silence those who report its crimes to the world.

It is important to note, however, that Egypt recorded two cases of media practitioners who lost their right to life, while Tunisia and Morocco did not witness any similar cases.

- ✓ The Right to Freedom: As far as the right to freedom is concerned, Egypt occupies the top position in violating this right, at 103 cases, surpassing the Israeli occupation, where 72 cases of violating this right were monitored in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Libya, Iraq, and Yemen occupy the next three positions respectively, with violation numbers ranging from 44 to 37. These figures indicate the crisis of the media freedom Egypt lived during 2014, but they also indicate that defenders of the media in Egypt were severely vanquished and the efforts they exerted to guarantee the safety of media practitioners and journalists were futile.
- ✓ The Right to Freedom of Opinion, Expression,

and Association: The media and journalism are the profession of free opinion, and when media practitioners are prevented from announcing their opinions freely or forming their unions and independent associations, this is considered a threat more serious than any other. Tunisia, the icon of the Arab Spring revolutions, occupies the top position among the Arab countries which violate the right to the freedom of opinion and association. Although Tunisia has the best law for establishing national associations, the revolution protection leagues, formed by members of the Islamic Trend, suppressed the freedom of expression there to an alarming extent.

Jordan jumps to the fourth position among the countries which violate the freedom of expression and the right for association, after the Israeli occupation and Algeria, being, for the first time, among the five worst countries of violation. The surprise, however, is that Lebanon and Syria were equal in the number of violations of this right, although many people place Lebanon in a very advanced position regarding the right to expression in general, and the right of the media to expression in particular. While Syria is torn by a civil war, in addition to the political regime, which is infamous for oppression, its opposition, which occupied and continue to rule parts of the country, are no less oppressive.

✓ Freedom to Ownership: The right to ownership includes the authority granted by the law to a person over an object. It is an authority that gives only the object's owner the right to use it, and no authority may prevent the owner from enjoying his ownership or using it within the limits of the law and without prejudice in using this right.

For purposes of this law, violation of the right includes the acquisition

of the media practitioners' field working tools, including cellular phones, cameras, recorders and computers. Members of the security apparatus and other armed groups commit these violations to obscure information from the public opinion or to cover up on crimes committed by their colleagues.

The Israeli occupation forces occupied the top position in violating the right to ownership, with 122 violations. Adding to this the violations taking place in Ramallah and Gaza, the total number of violations concerning the right to ownership from which media practitioners and journalists suffered in Palestine amount to 145 violations. Sudan comes second in violating this right, with 98 violations, and Libya, Egypt, and Yemen are almost equal, with very small differences.

Once again, the similar records in violating the right to ownership in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen indicate the extent to which the state of the media reached in Egypt, which was one of the most important countries of the Arab Spring. What is also noteworthy is that both Yemen and Libya are also countries of this Arab Spring, which left nothing except miserable rubble in its wake, with the exception of Tunisia.

✓ Right to Personal Safety: Violating the right to personal safety includes a number of forms, including incitement and character assassination, the threat of abuse, verbal abuse, and security summons for investigation. These were repeated 481 times during 2014, at the rate of 15% of the total violations of human rights. While performing their professional duties of news coverage, particularly in the field, many journalists are subjected to such violations. Threats of abuse in some violations may be similar to security summons for investigation, in spite of the clear differences between the two. Some security systems summon journalists for

investigation as some sort of threatening, while some journalists are threatened after publishing reports on corruption by officials and influential people. They receive messages threatening them with injury, so that they would retract their stories or not repeat them. Researchers noticed that a large percentage of threats of injury were received by journalists from armed organizations.

✓ Right to Access Information: The last station in violations against media freedoms in the Arab world is violating the right to access information.

Tunisia returns to assume the top position among Arab countries in violating the right to access information; a right considered basic for the work of media practitioners and journalists as transmitters of information, which belongs to society, while the state is considered a protector of information only. Tunisia came at the top of the violators' list, with 260 violations; a large figure that makes us wonder if the public knows what is taking place in its country.

According to quantitative analyses, Tunisia, the "icon of the Arab Spring," has surpassed, in withholding information, the Israeli occupation, which occupied the second position on the list, with a very large difference from Tunisia. Even if we add to the violations committed by the Israeli occupation authorities against the right of journalists to access information, to those committed by the Palestinian national authority in Ramallah and the deposed government in Gaza, which raise the figure to 183 violations, the situation in Tunisia regarding access to information remains much worse than that in Palestine, which suffers from occupation, political fragmentation, and authoritarianism together.

• **Against Unknown: Impunity in Crimes against Media Practitioners**

The second part of Chapter 3

addresses the issue of impunity in crimes against media practitioners, emphasizing that there is a difference between legal and actual impunity. Legal impunity takes place according to the law for the purpose of protecting specific persons by granting them immunity from accountability for crimes they committed. Actual impunity, however, refers to a weakness or corruption in the judicial system, or the absence of the political will on behalf of the regime or the people to confront the past.

It is noteworthy that some violations adopted by this report represent totally criminal actions punishable by Arab criminal legislations with various penalties, some of which are very harsh, such as premeditated killing, kidnap, battery, theft or destruction of property, threatening, and others.

The country should investigate all of these crimes seriously and bring the perpetrators to justice, and to take protective measures that guarantee society's safety in general and the safety of the victims, if they are specifically targeted. If the country was intentionally lax in this respect, this will be considered a breach of its legal obligations, basically violating the reason for its existence, namely, guaranteeing stability, organizing life, and preventing individuals, working with it or otherwise, from aggression against citizens.

It can be said that there are five rights out of eight approved by this report, that are of a criminal nature, namely: The right to life, the right to physical safety, the right to freedom, the right to personal safety, and the right to ownership. The rest of the rights addressed by the report, such as the right to free expression and association, the right to access to information, and the right to non-discrimination, are rights that may not entail criminal penalties in many Arab countries, but may lead to receiving compensations or the issue of judgements to cancel any decision based on violating these rights, which are like their predecessors, constitutional rights that should be preserved. The state should commit to this even if there are no penalties of a criminal nature for violating them.

Rate of Violations of a Criminal Nature to those of a Civil Nature
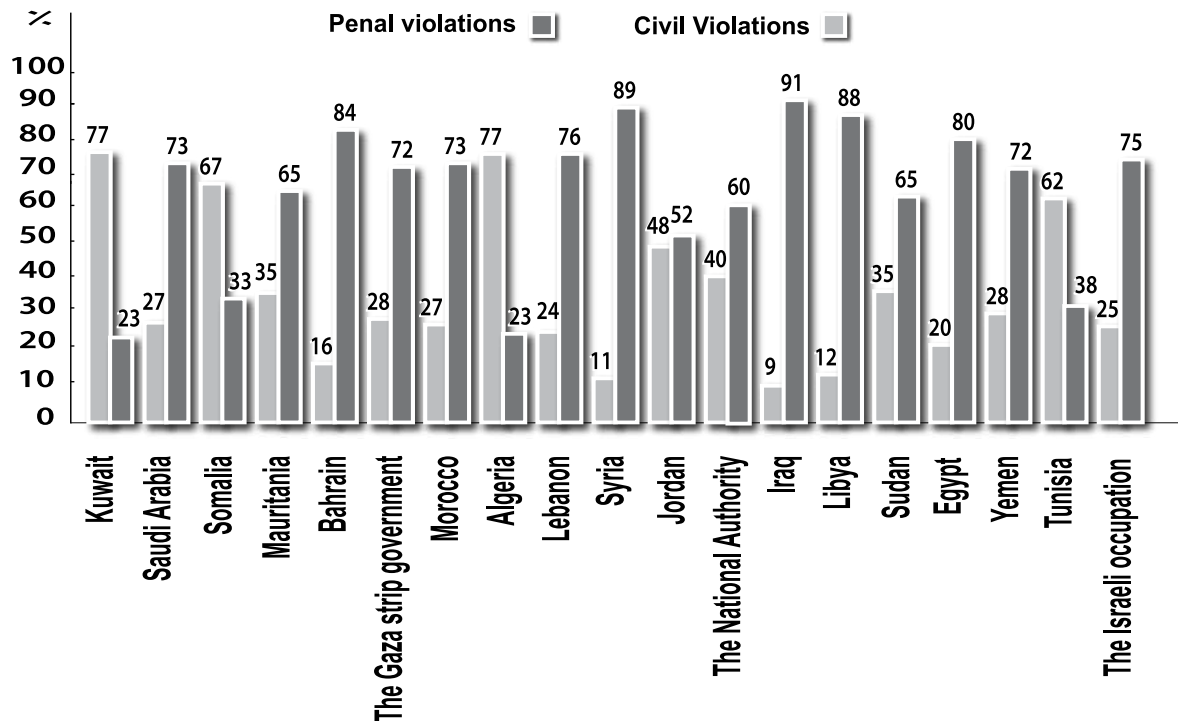
The following chart explains the rate of these violations of a criminal nature, those of a civil nature, and those that are partly criminal in each of the countries the report covers.

It is noticeable that Iraq, Syria, Libya, Bahrain, and Egypt are among the countries where physical assaults of a criminal nature form the overwhelming majority of violations committed in them. The clear percentages in the table indicate that violations there are criminal, such as murder, physical assault, confiscation of property, destruction of property, arbitrary detention, and others. However, in general, it is clear that all Arab countries at different percentages have higher rates of violations of a criminal nature more, and perhaps no attention is given to civil violations, while light is shed on criminal violations such as murder, torture, and imprisonment, because this type of violations cannot be concealed.

Impunity Rates in Arab Countries Covered by this Report

Impunity percentage

%																				
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(Bar chart with y-axis 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100. Categories: United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Mauritania, Bahrain, The Gaza strip government, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, The National Authority, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, The Israeli occupation)

It is also possible to say that all those who committed these and other crimes in Arab countries that appeared in the tables, or those that appeared in tables of different violations, which will be detailed later on, were not brought to justice, and their impunity levels were 100%, as clarified in the following chart:

• **Arab Media under Fire: Comparison and Analysis of the Types and Forms Violations and their Frequencies in 1012, 2013, and 2014.**

Chapter 1 of Section III presents a comparison and analysis of the types and forms of violations and their frequencies over the years 2012, 2013, and 2014, and arrived at two basic observations that should be addressed when comparing 2014 with previous years. These are:

Observation 1: The magnitude of violating media freedoms in the Arab world has decreased in total during 2014 compared to 2013. In 2012, SANAD monitored 2148 violations, and in 2013, it monitored 3595 violations. In 2014, however, violations monitored by SANAD were 3277 only.

The report also finds that the increase in violations in 2013 came as a result of an increase in political heat compared to 2014. For example, this year witnessed the deterioration of the situation in Syria, whereby DA'ISH entered the playground in force. The situation in Egypt also exploded in Egypt, where the former president Mohammad Mursi was deposed after one year of assuming power as a result of mass demonstrations followed by an announcement that the constitutional government's would assume the presidency temporarily. Restlessness from the reign of "Al-Nahdah movement" in Tunisia almost led to an explosion like that in Egypt, had that movement not been more rational than the mother movement in Egypt, and accepted that the last prime minister from it, Ali Al-Arid, would resign to pave the way for a transitory administration in implementation of the agreement made by the political powers to end the political crisis that plagued the country over the second half of 2013.

It is also clear that as the serious violations increase, the rate of the less serious violations decreased, and vice versa.

Observation 2: It was noticed that some of the violations which increased in 2014 over 2013 were very serious, such as torture, murder, inflicting injury, intentional targeting, kidnap, and random detention. It is also noticeable that security summons for investigation increased in 2014 at a higher rate than 50% over 2013; a very troubling issue, because although a security agencies' summons of a media practitioner for investigation does not indicate a deprivation of his freedom, it is, however, some type of threatening and intimidation, and may instigate the journalist to practice some sort of self-censorship in future, or to resort to compromises in his work to avoid clashing with the security forces.

Targeting and confiscating the tools of the trade increased largely in 2014 over 2013. SANAD monitored an increase in assault cases against tools of the trade by a higher rate than 40% in 2014 over 2013. Confiscation of the tools of the trade increased in 2014 at an unimaginable rate in 2014, rising from 6 cases monitored in 2013 to 89 cases in 2014.

The number of withholding

information violations increased from 30 cases in 2013 to 104 in 2014. In addition to all this, one can notice violations which appeared in 2014 for the first time, and were not seen in 2013, such as prevention from printing (which is different from confiscation after printing) and confiscation of official documents, which can be considered a type of imprisonment within the borders of the state.

In short, violating media freedoms, though they decreased quantitatively in 2014 over the previous year, increased qualitatively during 2014, threatening the physical safety, tools of the trade, and workplace of journalists and media practitioners, and restricting his work, without information or printing.

• Serious Violations of the Criminal Nature, Accompanied by Impunity

In spite of the overwhelming majority of violations being carrying a potential for criminal penalties, some violations can be described as serious, and affects either the journalist physically, or his freedom, life, or tools of trade, and are inflicted intentionally in order to prevent him from practicing, or totally disabling him from practicing his professional duties. For this type of violation, the country, any country, if unable to prevent it, should seek the perpetrators and bring them to justice, and is considered to have breached its obligations if it fails to do so.

The results of the report show that there are serious obligations of the type punishable by Arab criminal laws, and all, except for a minimum, increased in 2014 over 2013. Threats of killing, torture, intentional targeting for injury, sustaining injuries, physical assault, and attempted assassination are all referred to as crimes against the self, whose penalties in the Arab criminal system range between imprisonment, and life imprisonment. Enforced disappearance and arbitrary witnessed a noticeable increase in 2014, and are crimes severely punishable in the Arab legal criminal system. Assault of the places of work, private property, or tools of the trade is an assault against property, and are also crimes in the Arab legal criminal system, even if they were intentional with the intent of destruction.

- ✓ Murder: Reports by SANAD over the past three years documented the death of 178 journalists and media practitioners, who were victims of premeditated murder, and killing during coverage because they were performing their media work. Perpetrators of these crimes have not been brought to justice as yet. Syria registered the highest average of killing documented by the report with 71 cases, followed by Iraq with 38 cases, Somalia with 28 cases, Libya with 15 cases, followed directly by Palestine with 14 cases at the hands of the Israeli occupation authorities.

It is strange, though, that this serious violation should appear in Egypt, where SANAD documented the death of 9 journalists over the past three years, followed by Yemen with two cases, and Saudi Arabia and Sudan with one case each. It is important to note that not one perpetrator was brought to justice, as far as we know, as a result of violating the right to life for media practitioners, whose main role is to search for and declare the truth.

- ✓ Death Threats: One hundred and forty five journalists and media practitioners were subjected to death threats. According to indexes, this type of violations appeared clearly and to a large extent in Yemen with 67 cases, followed by Iraq with 26 cases, and in Libya, Syria, and Lebanon thereafter. It is possible to say as well that investigations are not being pursued seriously, and in some cases are not being pursued at all, in spite of the serious nature of the death threat act and its effect of the ability of the media practitioner to report the truth to the public. A journalist worried about losing his life may falter and lose his objectivity.

- ✓ Torture: Torture has no specific form. According to article one of the International Convention against Torture, torture is "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for any purpose." It is interesting to say, however,

that SANAD documented 63 cases of torture to which journalists were subjected because of their media work, whose perpetrators went unpunished. Thirty of these acts were committed in 2014 alone.

✓ Physical Abuse: According to SANAD monitors' observations, some cases of physical abuse result in severe injuries as a result of beating. Some cases of arbitrary detention are sometimes accompanied with physical abuse against the journalist detained. Researchers in SANAD have documented 1059 cases of physical abuse over the past three years. IT can be said, based on their reports, that in Egypt, Palestine, Tunisia, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Libya, and Bahrain, it is common that journalists are subjected to physical abuse, separately or in conjunction with another violation.

✓ Arbitrary Detention: Reports by SANAD monitored the presence of 592 cases of arbitrary detention against media practitioners over the past three years. Once again, Egypt appears on top of the list of countries which practice this violation, with 128 cases, followed by Palestine with 95 cases, Iraq with 93 cases, Syria with 54 cases, Somalia with 50 cases, Sudan with 49 cases, Bahrain with 28 cases, Mauritania with 10 cases, and Saudi Arabia with 8 cases.

✓ Injury: Media practitioners sustain different forms of injuries while performing their coverage in the field. They are either injured as a result of physical assaults by members of the security apparatus or other parties, from shrapnel while covering armed clashes in conflict areas, live bullets, or by being intentionally targeted, as is the case for Palestinian journalists when covering clashes between Palestinian protestors and the Israeli occupation forces. As an example, journalists were injured while covering the aggression against Gaza Strip in July and August 2014. The areas where SANAD reports recorded most such types of

violation were Palestine at the rate of 202 cases of injury, followed by Syria with 64 cases, and Iraq, Somalia, and Morocco, consecutively.

✓ Targeted Injury: In its three years, the report recorded 141 cases of targeted injury. These are cases where journalists were targeted while performing coverage in the field, and the perpetrators were not brought to justice. This type of violations occupies the fifteenth rank in the general violations' table, and the seventh in the serious violations table. This type of violations in specific is usually directed against Palestinian journalists in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In its three years, the report documented 122 cases of targeted injury against Palestinian journalists while covering news, by the Israeli occupation forces. Palestinian journalists are normally targeted by tear gas bombs or rubber-coated bullets, as well as direct targeted killing, particularly during the past two wars against the Gaza

Strip. Among the victims was journalist Rami Rayyan, who was targeted with a missile from a military aircraft while he was in a car covering the fighting, although the press sign was clear on the car.

✓ Abduction and Forced Disappearance: Forced disappearance is also considered one of the very serious violations also. An abducted person is completely under the control of his kidnappers and does not enjoy any legal protection as does a "detained" or "imprisoned" person, who has legal rights such as visits by family members, and his rights to life and physical safety are guaranteed. SANAD noticed that journalists being abducted or disappearing are violations whose perpetrators are not brought to justice. Over the past three years, 167 cases were documented. This is the most common violation in Syria, at the rate of 62 cases over the past three years, followed by Libya with 52 cases, Iraq with 25 cases, Yemen with 23 cases and finally Lebanon with 3

cases. Abduction included Arab reporters and journalists, as well as foreigners sent to cover the events in these countries.

✓ Imprisonment of Journalists: SANAD's report recorded 38 cases of imprisoning journalists because of their media activities. SANAD researchers believe that most such cases take place in Palestine, by the Israeli occupation forces, followed by Egypt, and Somalia by security systems. Morocco, Libya, Jordan, the Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Syria recorded a few cases but at lower rates. In most cases, imprisoning journalists takes place after they are tried, normally with charges like "public disturbance" or "publishing news that is detrimental to public safety," and other flexible designations. More important is resorting to the exceptional judiciary channels, such as the state security courts.

✓ Confiscation of Tools of the Trade, Assault on them and on Work Places and Private Property: SANAD reports over the years from 2012 to 2014 recorded more than 370 cases of assault against work places of journalists or tools, by destroying or confiscating them, and against their private property. This is a common violation with a criminal penalty, but whose perpetrators are not brought to justice because countries are too lax to identify them and bring them to justice and compensate the journalists for their losses. This type of violations is common one way or another in Somalia, Mauritania, Egypt, and other countries.

✓ It can be said, based on information collected by SANAD that there are 12 countries in the Arab world where these serious violations of criminal nature were repeated, and were coupled with impunity at various levels.

Total percentages of countries where serious violations were repeated over the past three years (2012 - 2014)

	State	Number and Frequency of Serious Violations	%
1	Palestine	773	%23.7
2	Egypt	509	%15.6
3	Syria	470	%14.4
4	Iraq	381	%11.7
5	Yemen	366	%11.2
6	Libya	169	%5.2
7	Tunisia	158	%5
8	Somalia	125	%4
9	Lebanon	95	%3
10	Morocco	77	%2.3
11	Bahrain	74	%2.2
12	Sudan	67	%2
	Total	**3264**	**100%**

• Most Common Violations in Targeted Arab Countries

SANAD noticed, from its database, that most common violations over the past three years are, in the first place, violations to prevent coverage, physical abuse, verbal abuse, and arbitrary arrest and restriction of freedom, followed by the second degree violations of threats of abuse, infliction of injury, harassment, and loss of property and confiscation of tools of the trade.

Figures show that the "prevention from coverage" and "physical abuse" violations are the highest levels of violations to which media practitioners are subjected. Although the prevention from coverage" violation is considered a historically common violation to which most journalists in the Arab world are subjected, SANAD believes, however, that this violation is directly connected to physical and

verbal abuse, arbitrary arrest, and restriction of freedom. Hence, these violations took place in the first five levels of total violations.

SANAD also believes that the "prevention from coverage" violation increases the volume of violations and assaults against journalists during coverage, and is connected with the less common violations. It is also connected to the more common violations, and also with a number of serious violations where perpetrators enjoy impunity, such as physical assault and arbitrary arrest.

Journalists are normally subjected to arbitrary arrest, restriction of freedom, and physical abuse while they are prevented from coverage. According to information monitored by SANAD, the parties that prevent coverage may use restriction of freedom and arbitrary arrest as a means for that purpose, and often commit physical abuse against journalists and target them with injury, confiscation of equipment, assault, and harassment to prevent them from covering.

The "loss of property" violation, considered to be a common violation, includes destroying tools and equipment, assault against the working place, and confiscation of newspapers after printing. The more serious is targeting and destroying the work place, resulting in large losses. If we add the confiscation of work tools and equipment to these losses, this type of violation is common and large in volume in most, if not all, Arab countries.

In our opinion, the destruction of property and the confiscation of equipment, including cameras, aim either at preventing coverage or the infliction of maximum material damage to the media practitioner or the media outlet, rendering them inoperable and incapable of continuing to work. In either case, the aim is to prevent "society" from "knowing."

The countries where journalists are most subjected to prevention from coverage are Tunisia, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, and Bahrain. There, however, other countries where free press coverage is not available and which do not have independent media institutions, such as Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Qatar, for example. Furthermore, prevention from coverage, with all that it entails in terms of assault

against property and confiscation of tools and equipment are considered very common in areas under the control of armed groups, or what is known as the Islamic State, areas of armed conflict, and even areas under the control of official authorities in Syria and Iraq. It is difficult for independent journalists, particularly reporters from news agencies and international satellite channels, to perform media coverage freely in these territories, assuming they can be present there to begin with.

• **Semi-Common Violations:**

Some violations are semi-common in targeted countries that are mentioned in SANAD's reports during 2012-2014, foremost of which is security summons for investigation. What is noteworthy and serious, however, is that the "abduction and enforced disappearance" assumes the second position on the semi-common violations' list, with 167 cases, followed directly by death threats at 145 cases, and intentional targeting at 141 cases.

SANAD believes that these indexes raise loud alarms and warnings. With absolutely the most serious

violations, namely, "death and loss of life," in addition to violations like "attempted assassination," abduction and enforced disappearance," and others, being mentioned as part of the semi-common violations practiced in the Arab world, this is the most serious index against the freedom of the press and the media. SANAD also believes that the "security summons for investigation" being at the top of the list semi-common violations is a matter that requires studying in-depth. It is semi-common in most Arab countries with the exception of Sudan and Palestine, where this type of violation is abundant.

Throughout its three years, the report recorded 187 cases of security summons for investigation for journalists along the background of their media activity, including 75 cases of security summons in Sudan, followed by Palestine with about 62 cases of journalists who were summoned either by the security systems of the Palestinian national authority in the West Bank or by the deposed government in the Gaza Strip, but mostly by the Israeli occupation authorities.

The previous chart also indicates that there are significant violations

that should be addressed with special attention, such as withholding information and closing websites, which represent a wide window for freedom. Withholding information came as a common violation to a medium level in the targeted countries, followed by closing websites. It seems that the two issues are interrelated, for closing website is in reality one form of withholding information in an indirect way, and Jordan, which was the first Arab country that enacted a law for the right of access to information was the pioneering country in preventing websites in 2013, and continued to do so in 2014.

Confiscation after printing represents one form of punishment for a publication and inflicts heavy losses to its owners. It is a mostly prevalent issue in Sudan. It is noticed, however, that these three violations aim at inflicting the heaviest possible losses for newspapers or closing them, or for withholding information from the public. These are interconnected and integrated violations for one objective.

• Least-Common Violations
Torture is one of the most serious violations, yet SANAD believes that it is the least common violation in the Arab world. It is a violation that may be accompanied by imprisonment. SANAD's reports recorded 63 cases of torture against journalists over the past three years of the report's lifetime that researchers were able to monitor, including 33 cases in Egypt alone and 15 in Libya. Reports also recorded 38 cases of imprisonment of lawyers, mostly in Palestine, Egypt, Somalia, and Bahrain. It is noteworthy to mention here that countries in which journalists file complaints and disclose that they were tortured have active and effective monitoring institutions. Torture may be taking place in other countries but is being covered up. This reflects the courage of journalists who report what they were exposed to.

It is clearly evident that most least-common and prevalent violations are directly connected to the "prevention from coverage" and the "withholding information" violations, which does not permit the free flow of information. Most of these are violations that actually limit and prevent publishing news and information. We can point out here to violations such as deleting the content of cameras, deliberate obfuscation, obstruction of movement, and others. It is important here to highlight what

SANAD succeeded in documenting, which is actually the tip of the iceberg, whose larger and deeper part is still obscured. There were many cases that SANAD could not document due to the difficulty in obtaining information regarding them, especially in countries where there is no disclosure of information or effective monitoring institutions, in addition to other countries involved in internal armed conflicts, such as Syria.

• Countries with Most Violations of Media Freedoms as Documented by SANAD in 2012 - 2014

The following table presents the classification of Arab countries where SANAD was able to monitor and document violations in 2012 - 2014.

Classification of Countries According to the Magnitude and Number of Violations

Country	2012	2013	2014	Total	%
Palestine	369	596	761	1726	19%
Egypt	334	637	334	1305	14.4%
Yemen	288	389	344	1021	11.2%
Tunisia	152	313	501	966	10.6%
Iraq	325	315	182	822	9%
Sudan	111	248	315	674	7.4%
Syria	133	171	124	428	4.7%
Jordan	74	417	142	633	7%
Libya	12	71	221	304	3.3%
Lebanon	117	72	89	278	3%
Bahrain	60	128	44	232	2.5%
Morocco	57	83	75	215	2.3%
Somalia	66	70	22	158	1.7%
Algeria	8	22	81	111	1.2%
Saudi Arabia	14	53	13	80	0.9%
Kuwait	25	15	6	46	0.5%
Mauritania	20		26	46	0.5%
Qatar	16	4		20	0.2%
UAE	4	13	2	19	0.2%
Oman	1			1	0.01%
Total	**2071**	**3375**	**3015**	**9085**	**100%**

Two issues can be noticed here:

The first is that the first seven countries ranked as the highest, are countries where SANAD could monitor violations, namely, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Iraq, Sudan, and Syria. These are countries that enjoy an active civil society, a strong press with extensive power and influence, and an active political movement. Hence, the flow of information about what takes place is straightforward and easy. It can be stated here that it is possible to create positive change in these seven countries which would help improve the structure of the media to be compatible with international standards.

The second is that no extensive violations were evident in these countries. The SANAD research team faced difficulties in obtaining sufficient information about violations, since they had no independent and effective civil society institutions for documentation and monitoring. They are also not witnessing any political movement, and most media practitioners in most of these countries do not carry their citizenships and prefer to remain silent over complaints or talking about censorship or violations. In spite of all these obvious matters, one cannot judge on whether these countries witnessed extensive and obscure violations.

• First Index: "Protecting the Rights and Freedom
of Journalists in the Arab world"

	Countries Outside the Index	Degree
	Indicates that the reality is bad and includes serious restrictions and violations	0 - 50
	Indicates that the reality is bad and that restrictions and violations exist and current, but are slightly better than the previous level.	50 - 100
	Indicates that the restrictions and violations are present but are paralleled by margins of freedom	100 - 150
	Indicates that the state of freedom is sovereign and that restrictions and violations are rare.	150 - 200

SANAD succeeded for the first time in designing a questionnaire for a special index for media freedoms, based on all considerations and factors that influence the freedom of the media negatively or positively, together forming the incubator environment for the media.

The index's questionnaire for "Protecting the Rights and Freedom of Journalists in the Arab world" was designed for the purpose of contributing to exploring the reality of media freedoms more accurately and objectively, and highlighting the problems that face journalism most, weakening their role.

The questionnaire included six axes that addressed the political environment, the legislative framework, targeting media practitioners, impunity, access to information, union rights, and the right to association, in each country where the index questionnaire was implemented.

SANAD researchers implemented the index in 16 Arab countries,

namely, Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, and Yemen, while SANAD researchers excluded Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Djibouti, and the Comoro Islands due to the lack of sufficient information on the reality of violations journalists were subjected to in these countries, in addition to the difficulty of monitoring and documentation in them. It must be noted that excluding these countries from the index does not mean automatically that their record in media violations is bad. However, the monitoring and documentation team found that this gives better credibility to its work in view of the absence of sufficient information and for the purpose of providing a fair and equitable evaluation.

The total points in the index were 295 points. Due to the decision by the researchers to give a zero for all countries for impunity, because what is current is unaccountability, in addition to the absence of clear evidence on the pursuit of perpetrators, they saw it better to exclude 95 degree points, which is the weight given to the impunity index. Hence, the total general index points for the questionnaire become 200 points.

• Ranking of Countries

✓ Countries with restrictions and violations, with parallel margins of freedom:

Tunisia came in the first position on the index scale with 120 points, followed by Lebanon in the second position with 117 points, Morocco in the third position with 115 points, Kuwait in the fourth position with 114 points, Jordan in the fifth position with 102.5 points, and finally Mauritania in the sixth position with 100 points.

The general index results showed that six countries came at the top of the index's list. These are Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco, Kuwait, Jordan, and Mauritania, receiving between 100 and 150 points, meaning that restrictions and violations exist in these countries, but are paralleled by margins of freedom. It can also be said that these countries parallel what is referred to in some international legal reports as partially free countries.

Countries with restrictions and violations, but are paralleled by margins of freedom, which occupied the top five positions in the general index and received between 100 and 150 points.

Position	Country	Degree	% out of 200 Points
First	Tunisia	120	60%
Second	Lebanon	117	58.5%
Third	Morocco	115	57.5%
Fourth	Kuwait	114	57%
Fifth	Jordan	102.5	51.5%
Sixth	Mauritania	100	50%

✓ Countries with Restrictions and Violations but Paralleled with Margins of Limited Freedom

As for the countries that received between 50 and 100 points, these are the countries with serious and common restrictions and violations, but in parallel, they have limited margins of freedom, called by legal reports as "unfree" countries. These are: Algeria in the seventh position with 94 points, Bahrain in the eighth position with 88 points, Egypt and Sudan together with 78 points for each, Somalia in the tenth position with 69 points, Yemen in the eleventh position with 68 points, Iraq in the twelfth position with 63 points, Palestine in the thirteenth position with 62 points, and lastly Libya in the fourteenth position with 49 points.

It is noteworthy that Palestine's retreat on the general freedoms index is due to Israeli violations, and if these violations are taken out of the index, Palestine's rank will witness a marked improvement.

Countries that suffer from a bad reality in media freedoms, that have current restrictions and violations, and that occupied positions between seventh and fourteenth on the index between 50 and 100 points

Position	Country	Degree	% out of 200 Points
Seventh	Algeria	94	47%
Eighth	Bahrain	88	44%
Ninth	Egypt	78	39%
Ninth	Sudan	78	39٪
Tenth	Somalia	69	34٪
Eleventh	Yemen	68	34٪
Twelfth	Iraq	63	31.5٪
Thirteenth	Palestine	62	31٪
Fourteenth	Libya	57	28%

✓ Countries where the reality is very bad and includes serious restrictions and violations

Syria came last on the index list, scoring 49 points, and even freedom margins are almost non-existent in it. It is the only Arab country that scored this low evaluation, with no other country sharing this score with it, scoring 0-50 points on the general index scale, which indicates that the reality of media freedoms in Syria is very bad and includes serious restrictions and violations, and therefore it was ranked 15 and last on the scale.

Countries with a bad reality in media freedoms, and where journalists are subjected to serious restrictions and violations, occupying the last rank in the general index, receiving less than 50 points.

Position	Country	Degree	% out of 200 Points
Fifteenth	Syria	98	24.5%

Grades of Countries in the «Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of Journalists in the Arab Word» Index
[Table to be presented sideways by the designer]

• **Arrangement of Countries under the General Index According to its Various Elements**

✓ **Political Environment:**
Regarding the Arab countries' legal environment in the index, we find that the first six countries which came at the top of the general index occupied the top six positions as well in the political environment index. Tunisia was ranked as the best political environment in the Arab countries at an average of 22.5 points of the total of 40 points for this axis.

Lebanon and Morocco both came second with a total score of 22 points for each, followed in the third position by Kuwait with a total score of 18 points, and Jordan in the fourth position with a total score of 16.5 points, and Mauritania in the fifth position with an average score of 15.5 points.

As for the rest of the countries, their ranks in the political environment axis were close to those in the general index, with Algeria assuming the sixth position with a score of 12.5 points, followed by Bahrain in the seventh position with a score of 11.5 points, Egypt in the eighth position with a score of 11 points, Iraq in the ninth position with 10 points, Sudan and Yemen in the tenth position with 8 points each, Somalia in the eleventh position with 7 points, Palestine in the twelfth position with 6 points,

Libya in the thirteenth position with 5 points, and Syria assumed the fourteenth and last position on the list of Arab countries with the worst political environment, with a total of 4 points.

✓ **The Legislative Framework:** The legislative framework which governs media freedom in the targeted countries reflects, through the index, to what degree it can be said that the legislation protects media practitioners, or at least does not restrict their work and profession.

The index allocated 15 degree points for evaluating the legislative framework in the Arab countries. Tunisia assumed the top position as the best legislative framework, scoring 7.5 points out of a total of 15 points, followed by Jordan in the second position with 7 points, Morocco in the third position with 6.5 points, Kuwait in the fourth position with 6 points, followed by Lebanon, Algeria, and Bahrain in the fifth position with 5 points each, Mauritania and Egypt in the sixth position with 4 points each,

Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Iraq in the seventh position with 3.5 points each, followed directly by Palestine in the eighth position with 3 points, and Libya, and Syria at the bottom of the list in the ninth and last position with 2 points each.

✓ **Definition of the Media Practitioner:** The definition of a media practitioner in the countries targeted by the index reflects the extent to which it is possible for the law to provide more or less protection to the journalist compared to the media practitioner, whether the media practitioner needs a permit from the state for media work, are the procedures to obtain a permit for media work from the state easy or complicated, does the media practitioner need a permit from a union or an association to work as a media practitioner, and does the state or the union require graduation from a specific college or institute to work as a media practitioner?

The index allocated 25 grade points to evaluate the definition of a media

practitioner in the Arab countries. It is noteworthy that the countries that came at the top of the general index assumed almost the same positions on the definition of the media expert's index. Tunisia assumed the top position with 9 points as the best country to give a definition to the media practitioner and the journalist, allowing them to perform their professional duties clearly, followed in the second position by Lebanon with 7 points, Morocco in the third position with 6.5 points, Kuwait in the fourth position with 6 points, followed directly by Jordan, Mauritania, Algeria, and Egypt in the fifth position with 5 points each, followed by Bahrain, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, and Palestine in the sixth position with 4 points each, Somalia in the seventh position with 3.5 points, Libya in the eighth position with 3 points, and finally Syria in the ninth and last position with 2 points.

It must be noted here that the authorities used the presence of a definition of the media practitioner and journalist to install restrictions on practicing the profession of journalism. They also used the unions by many governments to control the media scene and those operating under its umbrella by making membership criteria stringent, and considering anyone who practices the profession without membership in the union as breaking the law. Furthermore, many countries require that for journalists to practice coverage and media work, they are required to obtain special permits from the Ministry of Information. This represented another method of controlling who practices the profession under the pretext of organization.

✓ **Impunity:** The picture throughout the Arab world regarding preventing impunity seems similar. There may be slight differences that permit accepting complaints before investigation parties in assaults and violations against journalists, yet the procedures are all formalities and aim at creating obstacles for media practitioners. Investigation authorities do not move seriously towards taking measures that guarantee the pursuit of perpetrators or collecting evidence on the crime.

SANAD researchers intentionally installed the impunity index to test the extent to which it is possible to measure the degree of impunity in violations and crimes against media practitioners. It was found from questions related to this axis that all Arab countries have no facilities for reporting violations against journalists, especially that the largest part of violations are committed by the security apparatus.

In addition, the authorities concerned are in no hurry to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Normally, reports submitted by media experts are not preserved or submitted to the courts, or take a long time to get there, in addition to the absence of transparency in the litigation process.

SANAD researchers and monitors were unable to monitor and document and/or identify violations against media experts, with the state compensating them for the damage sustained. The state is responsible for violations against media practitioners and for identifying perpetrators and holding them accountable in accordance with the current laws. All information indicates that media practitioners do not receive reparations for violations against them in any form, especially when the sources of these violations and the reasons behind them are security officials and influential people.

In view of the fact that the judicial authorities in the Arab world are mostly not independent, in spite to claims to the contrary, district attorneys and the public prosecution do not move independently and effectively to investigate violations they learn about on their own. Even when complaints are submitted to them, they do not take the necessary measures that guarantee accountability and justice for media practitioners.

Although information may be received about complaints submitted by journalists in many Arab Countries about violations against them, and in spite of very few serious investigations, limited and rare announcement about the formation of investigation committees for violations some of which resulted in the death of journalists, the SANAD

team of researchers managed to identify the involvement of more than one party in committing violations against journalists in the Arab world, while they were unable to document any case where the perpetrators were pursued or brought to justice, or where charges were made against any member of the security or any other party involved in violations against journalists. The researchers received no information about trials or judicial decisions in which any of the perpetrators was penalized for acts, many of which should receive criminal and severe punishment.

Hence, the researchers decided it was preferable not to assign grade points for any Arab country, particularly with the difficulty in having guaranteed verification tools to pursue accountability and impunity mechanisms. In spite of the relative disparity and different circumstances among the Arab countries, some of them have no control over their territories and are torn by armed militias and powers which, in turn, violate the media and media practitioners' freedoms. This, however, does not absolve them from the responsibility of pursuing perpetrators and providing positive protection for journalists.

✓ **RighttoAccesstoInformation:** Due to the importance of the right to access to information, being an important indicator for measuring the extent of openness and transparency in the state, the index allocated 20 grade points for evaluating the extent to which media practitioners enjoy the right to access to information. Due to the prevailing situation in the Arab countries, we find Yemen assuming the top position with 8 points, whereby Yemen has the best law for accessing information in the Arab world, with Tunisia and Lebanon tying the second position with 7 points for each, whereby Tunisia also has a law on access to information, considered to be one of the good laws, followed by Morocco, Kuwait, and Jordan in the third position with a total of 5.5 each. Palestine occupied the fourth position with 5 points, followed by Iraq, Mauritania, and Egypt

in the fifth position with 4 points each, Sudan in the sixth position with 3.5 points, Algeria, Bahrain, and Somalia in the seventh position with 3 points each, Libya in the eighth position with 2 points, and lastly Syria in the ninth and last position with 1 point.

Researchers relied in their evaluation on information they have regarding the potential for media practitioners in the Arab countries to obtain the information they need to be able to practice media work professionally and freely. Statistical information available proved that most countries and authorities withhold information from media practitioners and media outlets and prevent them from accessing information they need. The extent to which this is done varies from one country to another, however.

The researchers believe that most Arab countries do not permit media practitioners to access information, in addition to statements and circulars prohibiting publishing of material, issued by the authorities every now and then. Meanwhile, there are laws which grant the governments the right to withhold information for the purpose of protecting national security and the interests of the state. These are laws that are present not only in the Arab world but in most countries of the world. Governments in the Arab world, however, expand the imposition of secrecy of information and do not permit challenging decisions by the authorities refusing disclosure of information to protect national security.

✓ **Unionization and Association Rights:** The presence of unions for media practitioners that enjoy independence from the state, raise legal awareness, defend media practitioners, and interfere in case of any violation, and the right to establishing civil society organizations and assuming their role in defending media practitioners, represent a basic guarantee for media practice. Hence, the index allocated 20 grade points for measuring the extent to which media practitioners enjoy union rights and the rights to association.

Tunisia assumed the top position as the best country in this field, with 9 points, while Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine shared the second position with 8 pints each, followed in the third position by Morocco with 7 points, Yemen in the third position with 6 points, Bahrain and Egypt in the fifth position [fourth?] with 5 points each, followed by Kuwait, Algeria, and Libya in the sixth position with 4.5 points each, Jordan in the seventh position with 4 points, Mauritania in the eighth position with 3.5 points, and Sudan, Somalia and Syria sharing the ninth and last position with 3 points each.

Position	Country	Grade - 80
First	Kuwait	74
Second	Mauritania	68
Second	Lebanon	68
Third	Morocco	67.5
Fourth	Tunisia	65
Fifth	Jordan	64.5
Sixth	Algeria	64
Seventh	Bahrain	59.5
Eighth	Sudan	56
Ninth	Egypt	50
Tenth	Somalia	49
Eleventh	Libya	40.5
Twelfth	Yemen	38.5
Thirteenth	Syria	37
Fourteenth	Palestine	36
Fifteenth	Iraq	33.5

• **Second Index: Targeting Media Practitioners in the Arab world - According to SANAD's Perception.**

In the context of evaluating the sixteen Arab countries on which SANAD could obtain information, from a total of 80 grade points, we find that Kuwait comes first with a total of 74 points. The second position was shared by Lebanon and Mauritania with 68 points each, followed by Morocco in with a difference of half a point and a total of 67.5 points, Tunisia in the fourth position was occupied by Tunisia with a total of 65 points, Jordan in the fifth position with 64.5 points, Algeria in the sixth position with 64 points, Bahrain in the seventh position with 59.5 points, Sudan in the eighth position with 56 points, Egypt in the ninth position with 50 points, Somalia in the tenth position with 49 points, Libya in the eleventh position with 40.5 points, Yemen in the twelfth position with 38.5 points, Syria in the thirteenth position with 37 points, and Palestine in the fourteenth position with a total of 36 points. It should be noted here that Palestine's points included violations by the Palestinian Authority, those

of the deposed government in Gaza Strip, and violations by the Israeli occupation authorities. Iraq comes at the end position as the worst country in targeting media practitioners with a total of 33.5 points.

The targeting index is the most disciplined one, and represents the real expression of the state of freedoms on the ground and in practice, far from the constitutions and laws that talk about rights and freedoms, with the executive authority and its apparatuses violating them without paying any attention to constitutional values and the rule of the law, and without regard to conventions signed and ratified regarding preserving human rights, dignity, and freedoms.

The targeting index shows the seven countries with less commitment of serious violations, namely, Kuwait, Mauritania, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, and Algeria, whose grade points came at the top of the index list. At the bottom of the list are the seven countries which target media practitioners most, and where serious, noticeable, and systematic violations take place, namely, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Libya,

Somalia, and Egypt. The rest of the countries, namely, Sudan, Bahrain, and Algeria came after the seven countries that commit fewer serious violations, and before the seven countries that target media practitioners.

Data shows that most countries and regions that received the lowest points on the index and came at the end of the list of countries, are those where journalists are intentionally targeted, or are subjected to killings, injuries, and abduction while they perform their professional duties. They are considered the most dangerous regions for journalists around the Arab world. These are Iraq in the top position, with 33.5 points on the index scale, followed by Palestine with 36 points, Syria with 37 points, Yemen with 38.5 points, and Libya with 40.5 points.

It is noteworthy that Palestine's retreat on the freedom index is due to Israeli violations. If these violations were to be removed from the index, Palestine's position would improve substantially.

Bahrain scored 59.5 points, Egypt 50 points, Somalia 49 points in the middle of the list, where targeting journalists is less serious than in countries at the bottom of the list.

• **Abstracts and Final Recommendations**

The report presents 16 general abstracts and a number of recommendations directed to all non-governmental organizations operating in the field of defending media freedoms, and to the Arab countries which were subjected to the comprehensive process of periodic examination before the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the Arab countries in general.

✓ General Abstracts: The report presented some references and abstracts it believed should be attended to and extracted from the report:

Abstract 1: Media freedoms in the Arab world are in a difficult position. It is true that the level of difficulty varies from one country to another, from one media outlet to another, and from one media practitioner to another. However, at the end of the day, the media goes through a similar

crisis. Almost the same violations are repeated, with the same patterns and methods, which indicates that the Arab countries exchange experiences in how to silence the voice of the media and how to suppress freedom.

Abstract 2: The security apparatus is the first and basic culprit in most media violations or violations against media practitioners. The minute security forces see a camera or a journalist, they approach him to make him leave and stop taking pictures, which emphasizes that violations perpetrated by the security apparatus are the worst people suffer from on one hand, and because security people know that they are violating the law and wish to operate in the dark away from the scrutiny of society.

Abstract 3: Terrorist organizations or those who use religion to achieve their societal purposes use the media skillfully to deliver their messages to the world, but deal brutally with the media if it tries to report their terrorist actions to the world.

Abstract 4: There is a case of political employment and use of the media in many Arab countries, stripping it of its professionalism. The ultimate goal of the Arab political systems in general is to use the media. If they could not, then killing and imprisoning media practitioners are the least they can do!

Abstract 5: Some Arab countries have discovered that attacking the economics of the newspaper industry by continuing to confiscate newspapers after printing and preventing their distribution could lead to breaking the will of journalists and media practitioners, or break their economic steadfastness. In either case, silencing the voice of the media can be achieved without bloodletting!

Abstract 6: In many cases, journalists are forced to practice self-censorship to avoid being subjected to the authorities' brutality, or that of terrorists, or to preserve their livelihoods, which emphasizes that the Arab media work is "work under threat."

Abstract 7: Arab constitutional documents tend to overuse special expressions related to the media freedom and the independence of the judiciary, and other outstanding

principles, but when it comes to application, all these constitutional principles are wasted, and the fangs of oppression appear clearly without any shame or equivocation.

Abstract 8: Judicial authorities, even those that enjoy "relative independence" in some Arab countries, do not provide any level of judicial protection for Arab media practitioners. On the contrary, they provide for those who violate media rights a level of protection that is much higher than that provided for the victims, if any was provided. Hence, committing crimes against media practitioners is done under the protection and the eyes of the "protectors of the law". The result is that they provide the cover for the perpetrators, whether by supporting and overlooking them or through their silence.

Abstract 9: This abstract is part of the previous one. As a result of it, impunity has become a rampant phenomenon in the Arab world. Nobody would believe that over the past three years (2012 - 2014) not a single perpetrator who assaulted a media practitioner or more was brought to justice, or even interrogated.

Abstract 10: The Internet journalism, which spread rapidly throughout the Middle East recently, to circumvent the economic cost of the print, audio, and visual media, is facing a state of restrictive attempts in most Arab countries, aiming at restricting the electronic media by subjecting it to restrictions that it cannot tolerate or fulfill its requirements.

Abstract 11: Bloggers and social media activists, most of whom do not enjoy the protection enjoyed by media practitioners, are subjected to numerous violations which most people give no attention in spite of the importance of what is known as the "citizen journalism" for revealing the truth.

Abstract 12: The Arab legal structure is similar to a large extent. It is true that countries like Egypt cancelled the imprisonment penalty in publishing cases, however, its legal system still comprises many texts that result in the imprisonment of media practitioners, such as "publishing news that could disturb public security." Many legal systems are similar to the Egyptian system, copying and emulating it, which leads to the state that the Arab legal structure being "antimedia" rather than media-friendly.

Abstract 13: Violations do not distinguish between male and female media practitioners even in societies which claim to be traditional and respect women in an exaggerated manner, and want to protect them. In the field, media women are assaulted on a larger scale than men. Journalist Mayyada Ashraf was martyred in Egypt while she was performing her professional duty. In Iraq, participants in the focus groups said that media women are regularly harassed.

Abstract 14: Acquiring information, or in other words, not acquiring it by media practitioners, has become a joint Arab worry for media practitioners. They all complain from the lack of access to information, even in countries that enacted laws facilitating access to information. It is important to point out that complaints be media practitioners of confiscating their rights to access of information indicates that their awareness of the importance of this issue in building a credible professional media has increased. Furthermore, this indicates that media practitioners now know that countries guard information, not own it, and that their right to accessing this information is a basic right, and that no media freedom can be built without it.

Abstract 15: Some Arab countries do not need to violate media rights, because they use their surplus money to buy from some media practitioners their freedom. Their newspapers and media outlets are built on media practitioners from other countries who do not care much about defending the profession and its freedom, but are more interested in their life sustenance and living security, as well as obtaining benefits and concessions that they may not find, most likely, in their countries. Hence, we see that some countries finance newspapers or "free" television stations, provided they avoid addressing or criticizing or revealing what takes place in these countries.

Abstract 16: The number of violations coming from some countries could be an indicator that the space of freedom is larger than those countries from which no violations come out. Sometimes, silence is more indicative of violations than noisiness.

1 -For Non-Governmental Organizations Interested in Defending Freedoms of Expression

The report recommended to the non-governmental organizations defending the freedom of expression in Arab countries to attempt to implement the following:

✓ Continue efforts to monitor and document violations against media practitioners, and exert sufficient efforts for building national teams in the Arab countries, that are trained and professional to carry out the mission of supporting human rights, and encourage institutions defending freedoms to build additional units to monitor and document violations.

✓ Support the establishment of legal assistance units for media practitioners that undertake the task of defending journalists in cases raised against them, and to play an effective role in pursuing violators and bringing them to justice.

✓ Work with UNESCO and other international institutions defending the freedom of expression, the media, and media institutions, to call on the international community to adopt the 2016 declaration to combat the phenomenon of impunity in crimes of assault on journalists, in order to reduce them and identify the dangers of this phenomenon on democracy and the right of society to know.

✓ Communicate with the government and its apparatuses to work at preparing a manual for independent media coverage in dangerous zones, which sets binding guidelines for law enforcement staff, and another one for media practitioners.

✓ Urge governments in the Arab world to commit to the voluntary nature of joining unions and to guarantee their pluralism based on constitutions and international conventions ratified by the countries, which are binding to them and which preserve this right.

✓ Work at ratifying legislative amendments which consider assault against media practitioners and/or journalists during the performance of their

duties tantamount to assaulting a public servant while performing his duty, and to impose the same penalties.

✓ Work at guaranteeing the independence of research, investigation, and evidence-gathering agencies and public prosecution in the Arab countries as the parties that provide evidence which leads to litigation against those who assault media practitioners.

✓ Develop the foundations regulating the operation of media institutions in a manner that guarantees their independence, separate management from editorial, and start to prepare a manual for policies that includes professional and editorial standards that reduce the power of the chief editor and/or anyone who represents him in practicing prior censorship on media practitioners under the pretext of practicing his professional role, rendering his decisions in amendment, deletion, cancellation, and prevention from publishing accompanied by clear and specific controls, which preserves the independence and freedom of the media work, preventing its political employment for the benefit of the media institution's management.

✓ Urge governments in the Arab world to ratify laws that guarantee the right of access to information for members of society, particularly media practitioners and researchers, provided they are compatible with international standards, demanding that countries which ratified these laws implement them, to review the reasons behind the absence of this right, to develop transparent and fair practices to access information, and to penalize anyone who influences the imposition of restrictions on or waste this right.

✓ Urge civil society institutions to build measurement indicators and specialized observatories to pursue the governments' implementation of the recommendations they approved in the periodic comprehensive examination of human rights before the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

To the Arab Countries that were Subjected to the Comprehensive Periodic Examination in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

Eleven Arab countries were subjected to the comprehensive periodic examination before the United Nations Council for Human Rights during 2012, 2013, and 2014. These countries are Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain, UAE, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, Yemen, Egypt, and Iraq. Recommendations were directed at each of these countries to improve the status of human rights in general, and recommendations to improve media freedoms in particular.

The report recommended the following to the countries mentioned above, which were subjected to the periodic examination:

- ✓ Work at implementing all the recommendations they accepted, at least before being subjected to the comprehensive periodic examination once again, particularly those related to improving the legislative structure, and stop targeting media practitioners and prevent trying them for loose charges and before a judiciary that is not independent.
- ✓ Permit the freedom of access to the internet and to facilitate access to information.
- ✓ Bring those accused of crimes against media practitioners to justice.
- ✓ Refrain from obstructing the work of non-governmental organizations in their countries, provide support for them, upgrade their capacities, and facilitate their work.
- ✓ Guarantee the freedom of opinion, expression, and the media, and the freedom of congregation for media practitioners.

Network for Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World

شبكة المدافعين عن حرية الإعلام في العالم العربي
SANAD

Network for Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World (Sanad) is a coalition of civil society institutions advocating the freedom of the press.

Sanad was established in implementation of recommendation by the First Forum for Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World, organized by the center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) in Amman, in December 2012, immediately after the birth of the Arab Spring.

The first achievement of Sanad was the "Ain" (eye) Program for Monitoring and Documentation of Violations against the Media. Work was kicked off by training national teams to monitor and document such violations in Egypt and Tunisia, while work was still underway in Jordan to achieve that goal.

Under "Ain" Program, a plan was designed to expand in the Arab world through setting up national teams for monitoring and documentation, within a realistic and workable timeframe.

The national teams will be working on detecting and documenting violations against the media in the countries where they function, applying a scientific rights-based approach consistent with international media and human rights criteria. Side by side with that, professional researchers will be monitoring violations in the countries where "Ain" monitors do no exist, relying on data collected from the media, communication with rights group and monitoring their reports on violations against the press, along with field visits and direct contacts with journalists who are victims of these violations.

Sanad seeks to institutionalize efforts exerted to defend the media freedom in the Arab world. Towards that end, it has launched its web-based observatory to shed light on the violations against journalists, providing an electronic platform that works effectively to expose violators, mobilize support for journalists and offer a venue for networking between advocates of media freedoms.

Sanad will continue embracing the Forum for of Media Freedom Defenders in the Arab World, and working to expand the base of media supporters, eying a wider margin of freedom, enhancement of achievements and attracting international experts to back Arab journalists who are struggling with huge challenges to win their freedom and independence.

The Unit for Monitoring and Documenting of violations against the media

برنامـج رصد وتوثيـق
الإنتهاكـات الـواقعـة عـلى الإعلام

Vision:

To end violations committed against journalists and media institutions to strengthen the freedom and independence of the media

Mission:

To monitor and document the problems, transgressions, and violations committed against journalists and media institutions during the exercise of their profession, and to peruse their perpetrators.

Objectives:

• To build a qualified team of lawyers, journalists, and researchers to monitor and document the violations against journalists and media institutions according to internationally agreed upon principles and standards.

• To encourage journalists to disclose the problems, transgressions, and violations they encounter during the exercise of their work and to use relevant reporting mechanism.

• To develop and institutionalize the mechanisms for monitoring the problems and violations that journalists encounter

• To raise the journalists' awareness of their rights and their knowledge of the international standards for media freedom, as well as the definition of the violations they encounter.

• To urge the government to adopt the necessary measures to end the violations against the media and to hold their perpetrators accountable.

• To urge the Parliament to formulate legislation and laws that guarantee media freedom in order to end the violations against the media and hold their perpetrators account-

able.
- To provide support and legal assistance to media practitioners who encounter problems and violations, inclusive of helping them receive fair compensation for violations they encountered and suffered from.
- To use UN mechanisms to limit violations committed against journalists.

Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists [CDFJ]

مركـــــز حماية وحـــرية الصحفيين
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists [CDFJ] was established in 1998 as a civil society organization that works on defending media freedom in Jordan; the center was established after a series of major setbacks on a local level, starting with issuing the temporary press and publication law in 1997, which added more restrictions on media and caused many newspapers to shut down.

CDFJ works on protecting freedoms and democracy in Jordan and the Arab world, in addition to respect of human rights, justice, equal rights, and development in the society encouraging non-violence and open dialogue.

CDFJ always maintain an independent role like any other civil society organizations, and is not part of the political work, but in terms of defending media and journalists freedoms CDFJ stands against all policies and legislations that may impose restrictions on media freedom.

CDFJ is active on regional level to develop media freedom and strengthen the skills and professionalism of journalists in the Arab countries, through specialized and customized programs and activities, in addition CDFJ works with media and the civil society on protecting the democracy and promoting respect of human rights principles.

CDFJ Vision:

Creating a democratic environment in the Arab Countries that protects media freedom and freedom of expression and enhances the society's right in knowledge through building professional Journalists committed to the international standards of independent and free media.

CDFJ Mission:

CDFJ is a non-government organization, committed to defending the freedom and security of journalists through addressing the violations to which they are exposed, and building sustainable professional capacities as well as enabling them to have free access

to information, along with developing and changing restrictive media related legislations, and building a supportive political, social, and cultural environment for free and independent media.

CDFJ main Goals are:
Supporting the freedom and independence of media organizations and journalists.
Defending journalists, protecting their safety, and stand against the violations committed against them.
Strengthening the professionalism of media and its role in defending democracy, freedoms and reform.
Developing the legislative, political, social, and cultural environments that embrace media and journalists.