



**Risking Their Lives: Ongoing Attacks Against Journalists
in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen**



**A Report by the
Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
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I. Introduction:

Through this report the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) aims to highlight cases of ongoing killings, attacks and threats against journalists and other media workers in four countries, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and makes recommendations to enhance their protection using international mechanisms including the United Nations system. Journalists working in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen carry out their activities and advocate for human rights at great and imminent risk to their lives and have been killed, forcibly disappeared, subjected to threats and harassment, arbitrarily detained, tortured, had travel bans imposed on them and had fabricated charges brought against them. The cases presented in this report are illustrative and many more journalists, photographers, cartoonists and other media workers have been targeted in all countries.

Journalists have been caught in the crossfire of conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Yemen and have been directly targeted for their activities in defence of human rights in all countries by governments, armed extremists and militant groups. These attacks have remained with impunity leaving journalists working in all countries at grave risk while [losing hope with the international community](#). With regard to journalists who have been murdered in these countries, not a single case has yet been brought to justice. As recognised by the UN Security Council in its resolution 2222 (2015), “Impunity for crimes committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflict remains a significant challenge to their protection and that ensuring accountability for crimes committed against them is a key element in preventing future attacks.”¹

II. Country Reports

Bahrain

Since the uprising in Bahrain in 2011, journalists and photographers have been systematically targeted by the Bahraini authorities. They have been arrested, detained, tortured, had travel bans imposed on them, had false charges brought against them and had their citizenship revoked. In November 2015, according to the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), at least ten journalists and photographers were already in detention in Bahrain.²

Among these is **Ahmed Humaidan**, an award-winning photojournalist, who is serving a 10-year prison sentence for documenting the pro-democracy demonstrations in Sitra. He has been incarcerated since December 2012, accused of taking part in an attack on a police station. During his interrogation, the authorities subjected him to ill-treatment. He was allegedly beaten, forced to stand in freezing temperatures for hours at a time, and threatened that his brothers would also be arrested and have criminal cases fabricated against them.³

On 30 September 2015, journalists **Hussam Suroor**, **Ahmed Zainaldeen** and **Mustafa Rabea** were sentenced to ten years in prison for illegal assembly and charges related to an explosion in Duraz. They had been arrested on 4 September 2014 and subjected to enforced disappearance for five days after their arrest.⁴

¹ http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2222.pdf

² <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7645>

³ <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7645>

⁴ <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7645>

On 28 December 2015, human rights defender and “Al-Wasat” journalist **Mahmoud Abdul-Ridha Al-Jazeera** was arbitrarily arrested. On 28 December 2015, security forces in civilian clothing raided the home of Al-Jazeera and arrested him without a warrant. He was subjected to enforced disappearance for three days. The arrest of Al-Jazeera came one day after he wrote an article reporting on the regular consultative (Shura) council’s session, during which an MP asked authorities to punish Bahrainis who had their citizenship revoked on political grounds by depriving them of government housing.⁵

In 2016, the authorities have intensified their crackdown on the political opposition, human rights defenders and civil society including many journalists and online activists. This crackdown has provoked severe condemnation from the United Nations Secretary General,⁶ United Nations Special Rapporteurs⁷, the European Parliament⁸, the US government⁹ and governments of EU member states. Journalists as well as human rights defenders have been arbitrarily arrested, detained, tortured, prevented from travelling and harassed in connection with their legitimate activities in defence of human rights. Ahead of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in June 2016, human rights defenders and journalists were prevented from travelling to the HRC in Geneva and since then others have been prevented from leaving Bahrain.¹⁰ Reprisals have been used against journalists who have cooperated with international mechanisms.

On 14 February 2016, a United States journalist, **Anna Theresa Day**, and three of her camera crew were arrested and interrogated by Bahraini authorities as they sought to report on protests on the anniversary of the 2011 uprising.¹¹

On 17 July 2016, **Nazeeha Saeed**, a journalist with France 24, was summoned by Bahrain’s public prosecutor’s office for interrogation based on a legal complaint from the Information Affairs Authority (IAA). The prosecution charged her under article 88 of Law 47/2002, which regulates the press, printing and publication. Article 88 states that no Bahraini can work for foreign media outlets without first obtaining a license from the IAA, which must be renewed annually. In June, Saeed was prevented from travelling at Bahrain international airport. This is not the first time Saeed has been targeted by Bahraini authorities. In 2013, a policewoman was acquitted of torturing Saeed, despite the fact that Saeed had presented three medical reports corroborating her accounts of torture.¹²

On 15 August 2016, journalist, blogger, women’s rights defender and President of the Women’s Petition Committee (WPC), **Ghada Jamsheer**, was detained upon arrival from London, the United Kingdom at Bahrain’s airport in Manama. As of 12 September 2016, she had not been released and had not been granted the right to speak to a judge in order to request community service as an alternative to serving a prison sentence. On 22 June 2016, Jamsheer, was sentenced on appeal to one year in prison by the Second High Criminal Court for four cases related to her tweets about corruption at King Hamad hospital. Jamsheer has 12 charges against her related to this case and has already been sentenced to eight months in prison on three other also related charges, in addition to one year in prison (suspended) on trumped up charges of allegedly “assaulting a police officer” while in custody. She was also fined 10,000 dinars (approx. USD\$26,500) for alleged defamation of the management of the hospital, headed by a member of the ruling family. Jamsheer was first arrested on 15 September 2014, and jailed for three months.¹³

⁵ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1154>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2016-07-18/statement-attributable-spokesman-secretary-general-bahrain>

⁷ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20375&LangID=E>

⁸ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P8-RC-2016-0900+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

⁹ <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/07/260157.htm>

¹⁰ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1287>

¹¹ <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-calls-release-four-us-journalists-detained-bahrain>

¹² <https://cpj.org/mideast/bahrain/>

¹³ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1351>

As well as targeting journalists and human rights defenders the Bahraini authorities have also restricted Internet access¹⁴ and imposed further legal restrictions on the media and freedom of expression in the country with the adoption of Decree 68/2016, an extension of Bahrain's 2002 Press Law. The Press Law has already been frequently used to impose severe restrictions on journalists and this new decree will further restrict the legitimate activities of journalists in Bahrain.¹⁵

Iraq

In Iraq, journalists have been targeted by all sides in the conflict and have been killed, threatened and harassed. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), “armed clashes and politically-motivated violence make Iraq one of the world’s most dangerous countries for journalists, who are targeted by gunmen with pro-government militias, and by militant opposition groups including Da’esh.”¹⁶

Journalists killed during the conflict include **Ammar Shahbender**, director of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting in Iraq (IWPR), who was killed on 2 May 2015 during a terrorist attack in Baghdad. His colleague, IWPR staff member **Emad Al-Shara’a**, was injured in the attack.¹⁷

In Iraqi Kurdistan, on 13 August 2016, journalist **Wedat Hussein Ali** left his home for work in the city of Duhok. He was later kidnapped in Malta district within the same city by an unknown armed group. He was found dead later the same day. Information suggested that he was tortured to death.¹⁸ The murder of Ali was strongly condemned by Yorgy Busztin, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and concerns were expressed about a “growing pattern of threats, intimidation and violence directed against journalists and other media professionals carrying out their duties in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.”¹⁹

On 14 August 2016, **Mustafa Saeed**, a cameraman with *Kurdistan TV*, a satellite TV channel owned by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK), while covering fighting in the east of the city of Mosul. His colleague, **Hayman Nanqli**, was badly injured in the same attack.²⁰ The murder of Mustafa Saeed was condemned by the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova.²¹

Journalists have also been attacked and beaten by Iraqi state agents, according to reports received by the Gulf Centre for Human Rights. On 18 February 2015, a group of journalists were attacked by the bodyguards of Iraq’s National Security Advisor. The attack started when one of the journalists tried to take a photo. The journalist was allegedly beaten by the bodyguards and when other journalists protested in solidarity with their colleague, they were also attacked. Journalists **Senan Al-Saba'a** and **Ahmed Al-Badairi** were reportedly severely beaten during the assault.²²

¹⁴ For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1335>

¹⁵ <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/07/ngos-bahrain-new-expansive-press-regulations-threat-journalists/>

¹⁶ <https://rsf.org/en/iraq>

¹⁷ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/994>

¹⁸ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1337>

¹⁹ UN in Iraq condemns reporter’s death, calls for journalists’ safety amid ‘growing pattern of threats’

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54687#.V7UAifkrLIU>

²⁰ <https://rsf.org/en/news/kurdish-reporter-murdered-another-killed-while-covering-fighting>

²¹ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/director_general_denounces_killing_of_journalist_mustafa_sae/#.V8b-CPkrLIU

²² For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/918>

Legal and judicial harassment has been used by authorities in Iraq to target journalists. On 14 March 2016, charges of criminal defamation and insult were brought against **Montadhar Naser**, journalist and editor of the independent news site Al-Aalem al-Jadeed (<http://al-aalem.com/>). The charges were connected to a report he published alleging corruption at Iraq's Media and Communications Commission, a telecommunications regulatory official. On 22 August 2016, the charges against **Montadhar Naser** were dropped and he was acquitted as the judge in the case stated that there was insufficient evidence to uphold the charges.²³

On 26 July 2016, journalist **Ibrahim Al-Saragey**, head of the Iraqi Journalists' Rights' Defense Association (IJRDA), was threatened by the Iraqi parliament after he described in a press statement the Iraqi Parliament as a profitable instead of a legislative body because a proposed internal law of the Parliament includes many privileges for MPs. On 26 July 2016, the Iraqi Parliament issued a statement threatening to resort to the judiciary if Al-Saragey did not make a formal apology to the Iraqi Parliament for his statements.²⁴

Iraqi authorities have also targeted media outlets by closing them and suspending their licenses to operate. On 27 April 2016, Iraqi authorities suspended Al-Jazeera's licence to operate in the country, accusing the broadcaster of violating the official codes of conduct and broadcasting rules and regulation. According to reports, the Iraqi government used "war on terror" media guidelines to shut down the Baghdad bureau of the Qatari based news network. In March 2016, the authorities had closed down Al- Baghdadia TV.²⁵

Iraqi journalists are also under threat from a proposed new law which may restrict freedom of expression in Iraq. Civil society organisations have stressed the need for substantial modifications of the law on freedom of expression and peaceful demonstration before it is voted upon in the Iraqi parliament.

Syria

In Syria journalists reporting on the conflict have been murdered, forcibly disappeared, tortured, arbitrarily detained and threatened and attacked by all sides. Syria was the deadliest country for journalists in 2015 and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has documented eight killings of Syrian journalists so far in 2016.²⁶ Many citizen journalists have also been killed and injured. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reports that 10 media activists were killed in July alone, with one missing. Another 21 were injured. The perpetrators were government forces, Russian forces and Da'esh.²⁷ SNHR also recorded three assaults on media centres.

SNHR says, "Media activism in Syria is continuously deteriorating as many international organizations are not paying enough attention to what is happening in Syria and the notable decline in media coverage over the last year compared with previous years."²⁸

In a mission to Syria carried out by GCHR in late 2015, journalists interviewed during the mission told of "widespread insecurity, constant fear, and the normalisation of violence"²⁹ and in 2016 journalists continue to face grave risks.

²³ <https://cpj.org/2016/03/iraqi-editor-on-trial-for-alleging-corruption.php#more>

²⁴ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1321>

²⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/02/iraq-al-jazeera-closure-blow-free-speech>

²⁶ <https://cpj.org/killed/mideast/syria/>

²⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/08/08/25900/>

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1204>

Recent comments in July 2016 by Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, in which he said US journalist **Marie Colvin** was “responsible” for her own death in 2012, demonstrate the Syrian government’s complete disregard for the right of journalists to carry out their legitimate activities.³⁰

Journalists have also been seriously threatened and attacked by Da’esh and other extremist groups. A video purportedly showing the execution of five Syrians accused of working with media and non-governmental organisations was released by Da’esh on 25 June. According to CPJ, the narrator of the video warns all journalists that Da’esh “will reach them, regardless of their location.”³¹

Journalists killed in 2016 include press photographer **Osama Jumaa** on 5 June in Aleppo,³² cameraman **Khaled Eissa** who died in hospital in Turkey on 24 June 2016 - having been injured in an attack in Aleppo while covering clashes between the Syrian army and rebel groups,³³ and **Ibrahim Al-Omar**, a Syrian reporter for Al-Jazeera, who was killed while covering airstrikes near the north-western city of Idlib.³⁴

Journalists working outside of Syria have also been targeted. On 12 June 2016, Da’esh attempted to murder Syrian human rights defender and journalist **Ahmed Abdel-Qader** in Turkey. Two gunmen riding a motorbike shot at the journalist three times, as reported by the news outlet “Eye on the Homeland”, which Abdel-Qader had founded in Syria and took with him into exile to Turkey. The attack was claimed by Da’esh on their “Amaq” news agency.

Da’esh already claimed responsibility for killing several journalists, including Abdel-Qader’s brother, **Ibrahim Abdel-Qader**, in October 2015.³⁵

According to Frontline Defenders, in 2015 at least five journalists affiliated with Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) were killed between July and December. RBSS was founded in April 2014 by a group of young Syrian journalists in order to disseminate information and media reports about abuses and crimes committed by Da’esh in Syria. On 15 July 2015, Da’esh released a video showing the killing of two RBSS journalists, **Bashir Abduladhim Al-Salem** and **Faisal Hussain Al-Habib**. On 16 December 2015, an RBSS reporter, **Ahmad Mohamed Al-Mousa**, was murdered by a gunman on a motorcycle in Idlib.³⁶

The whereabouts of many journalists and free speech activists detained during the conflict remain unknown. The Syrian government authorities frequently arbitrarily detain human rights defenders and journalists and hold them in incommunicado detention, and torture is reportedly commonplace in detention centres.

³⁰ https://www.ifex.org/syria/2016/07/27/marie_colvin_death_assad/

³¹ <https://cpj.org/2016/06/fresh-threats-to-journalists-from-islamic-state-gr.php#more>

³² https://www.ifex.org/syria/2016/06/10/killed_in_aleppo/

³³ For further information see <https://www.cpj.org/killed/2016/khaled-eissa.php>

³⁴ <https://rsf.org/en/news/al-jazeera-reporter-killed-russian-air-strike>

³⁵ For further information see GCHR appeal <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1289>

³⁶ <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/upr-submission-syria>

Free speech activist and software developer **Bassel Khartabil** was arrested on 15 March 2012 by military authorities and held in incommunicado detention for eight months before being moved to 'Adra prison in Damascus in December 2012. During this time he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment. He remained in 'Adra until 03 October 2015, when he managed to inform his family that he was being transferred to an undisclosed location. Since then his whereabouts remain unknown and there are serious concerns for his life.³⁷ On 21 April 2015, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) declared his detention a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and called for his release, yet the Syrian authorities have refused to free him.³⁸

Journalists held in detention by Syrian government authorities have died as a result of torture. On 21 September 2015, news of the killing of editorial cartoonist and human rights defender **Akram Raslan** was reported. Raslan, the Cartoonists Rights Network International (CRNI)'s 2013 winner of the Award for Courage in Editorial Cartooning, died under torture in a government detention centre. He had been arrested in October 2012 at his workplace in Hama. Since he was detained in 2012, there had been no confirmed news of Raslan's whereabouts until his death was reported. After he was allegedly severely tortured, Raslan's health reportedly deteriorated suddenly and as a result, he was transferred to a hospital for treatment.³⁹

On 10 August 2015, **Mazen Darwish**, journalist, lawyer and founder of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom (SCM), was finally released after being held on spurious charges of "publicising terrorist acts" for nearly three and a half years. His colleagues from the SCM, **Hussein Ghrer** and **Hani Zaitani**, had been released in July 2015. All three had been reportedly subject to torture and ill-treatment during their detention.⁴⁰ On 31 August 2015, the charges against them were dropped. On 3 May 2015, World Press Freedom Day, Darwish was awarded the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.⁴¹

Yemen

In Yemen, the media is being used as a weapon of war by all sides. In May 2015, the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) published a special report about Yemen "Yemeni journalists and human rights defenders at risk during wartime". In this report, journalists and human rights defenders interviewed by GCHR reported that media freedom "had been compromised during the conflict, with little media neutrality, and electricity outages mean online sources of independent news are not always available."⁴²

According to **Sherif Mansour** from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) "the Yemeni press is under threat from all directions, and journalists are unable to report or even defend their own colleagues without fear of retaliation."⁴³ In 2016, the situation has remained extremely serious, with seven journalists being murdered since the beginning of the year, according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS).⁴⁴ The failure thus far of the peace process and recent suspension of UN sponsored peace talks will no doubt exacerbate the situation for journalists and freedom of the media in Yemen.

³⁷ For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1207>

³⁸ [A/HRC/WGAD/2015/5](http://www.hrc.org/wgad/2015/5)

³⁹ For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1093>

⁴⁰ http://www.ifex.org/syria/2015/09/01/charges_dropped/

⁴¹ <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/974>

⁴² For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/report/view/36>

⁴³ For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1292>

⁴⁴ <https://www.nuj.org.uk/news/mubarak-al-abadi-seventh-journalist-killed-in-yemen-this-year/>

Despite the supposed cessation of hostilities between April and August 2016, civilians have continued to be killed in Yemen, including journalists. On 5 August, correspondent **Mubarak Al-Abadi**, working for Suhail TV, was killed by Houthi forces while covering clashes in Al-Jawf province. Al-Abadi was also the head of Al-Nabaa Media in Al-Jawf province. He was the main source for news and images from the area.⁴⁵

The murders of journalists such as **Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani**, who was murdered on 18 March 2015 in Sanaa, remain with impunity. Al-Khaiwani was a brave journalist and former editor-in-chief of the pro-democracy online newspaper “Al-Shoura.” Al-Khaiwani reported to GCHR during its mission to Yemen in April 2013 about the numerous attacks, threats and imprisonment that he had faced. “The only thing they haven’t done to me is to kill me,” he told GCHR. Unfortunately his worst fears came true.⁴⁶

As of July 2016, fifteen journalists have been kidnapped, fourteen by Houthi forces and one by Al-Qaeda according to GCHR’s sources. On 9 May 2016, ten journalists detained by Houthi forces began a hunger strike in protest against their maltreatment which has included denial of access to medical treatment, visits and access to adequate nutrition. On 23 May 2016, the journalists were transferred from Habra pre-trial detention facility to an unknown location and their whereabouts remain unknown.⁴⁷

Houthi forces have also targeted journalists who have engaged with international mechanisms. **Abdulrasheed Al-Faqih** was detained by Houthi forces in Sana’a International Airport as he was returning from an international conference on freedom of expression and journalism in Jordan. He was questioned and his passport was confiscated. The conference was organised by the YJS, IFJ and the Arab Federation of Journalists to discuss the challenges faced by journalists in Yemen, and to develop strategies to protect and strengthen them and their work. This targeting of Al-Faqih is an example of how the militias respond to those who engage with human rights issue both at home and on a regional and global level.⁴⁸

In an interview with “Muftah”, **Mohammed Al-Qadhi**, a war journalist reporting in Taiz, describes the risks faced by journalists in Yemen as follows: “While covering battles between the Houthis/Saleh and Hadi government forces allied with Saudi Arabia in March 2016, I was slightly wounded. That same month, I was also kidnapped by gunmen from a pro-Hadi government militia. They snatched me, my cameraman, and another colleague from the street with guns aimed at our heads, and took us to an unknown place for questioning. They searched my cell phones, which they confiscated as soon as they captured us. When I asked why we were being kidnapped, they said we were ‘filming for the Houthis,’ which is, of course, a serious accusation. When I asked them who they were and to which pro-government militia they belonged, they told us they were ‘followers of God.’”⁴⁹

There has been an overwhelming failure by the transitional government and the international community to prevent and investigate the attacks against journalists and human rights defenders in Yemen. As the conflict continues, journalists are in urgent need of protection so that they can carry out their legitimate activities.

⁴⁵ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/media.aspx?IsMediaPage=true>

⁴⁶ For further information see <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/952>

⁴⁷ <http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/take-action-now/yemen-release-ten-journalists-ua-2716>

⁴⁸ For further information see GCHR report <http://www.gc4hr.org/report/view/52>

⁴⁹ http://muftah.org/interviewing-mohammed-al-qadhi-war-yemeni-reporter-taiz/#.V7TIN_krLIV

III. Conclusion

The necessity to create a safe environment for journalists, particularly for those working in conflict situations, has been recognised by the UN Security Council with the adoption of its Resolution 2022 in 2015.

GCHR welcomes the recognition that journalists are at risk of danger and persecution worldwide, usually with no justice served, which necessitated the creation of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, marked each year as a UN day on 2 November.⁵⁰ The Resolution called on Member States “to implement definite measures countering the present culture of impunity.”

The UN says the Resolution “also urges Member States to do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability, bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers, and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies. It further calls upon States to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference.”

However, in 2016, journalists working in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen continue to face grave risks of death, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, threats and harassment. It is imperative that all UN bodies take immediate action and follow up on the measures outlined in Resolution 2022 to protect journalists, and ensure accountability for all crimes committed against them.

IV. Recommendations

Journalists working in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen are in need of urgent protection so that they can carry out their legitimate activities in defence of human rights.

The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) urges all UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and UN member states to:

- Ensure that all parties to the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen end all violations committed against civilians, including journalists;
- Take immediate action to protect journalists working in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen;
- Appoint a Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for the protection of journalists;
- Refer cases of journalists killed and attacked in Syria and Iraq, which are not parties to the Rome Statute, to the International Criminal Court.

GCHR calls upon the government of Bahrain to:

- Immediately and unconditionally stop all forms of reprisals against journalists, photographers, human rights defenders and other activists who are working with international mechanisms including the UN system;
- Release all journalists, photographers and human rights defenders immediately and ensure their protection from any judicial harassment and persecution in relation to their human rights activities;
- Repeal any laws that restrict, criminalise, or otherwise infringe on the freedoms of expression, speech, and press in Bahrain; and

⁵⁰ <http://www.un.org/en/events/journalists/>

- Ensure that journalists, media workers and all human rights defenders in Bahrain are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

GCHR calls upon the government of Iraq, all parties to the conflict and the authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan to:

- Ensure that any new laws do not further restrict freedom of expression in Iraq; and
- Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders, media workers and journalists in Iraq are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

GCHR calls upon the government of Syria and all parties to the conflict to:

- Immediately stop airstrikes that target civilians in Syrian and provide a safe environment for journalists and other human rights defenders to do their peaceful and legitimate work;
- Ensure the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic conducts investigations that focus on the targeting of media activists given their vital role in recording human rights violations;
- Also, the report calls on international and Arabic media institution to advocate their colleagues in the field of media by publishing periodic reports that shed light on their daily suffering and memorialize their sacrifice
- Immediately and unconditionally release all journalists and other human rights defenders in Syria held for exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of expression and association; and
- Cease the practice of holding human rights defenders and journalists incommunicado, or in secret or unofficial detention centres, and immediately disclose the whereabouts of all journalists and human rights defenders, currently in detention; and
- Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders and journalists in Syria are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

GCHR calls upon the government of Yemen and all parties to the conflict to:

- Protect civilians and continue negotiations; and respect and protect freedom of expression;
- Release all detained journalists and human rights defenders; and
- Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders and journalists in Yemen are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.