

Syria - The Killing of Journalists Gave Birth to the Fake Activist Movement During the War

By [Sarah Abed](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*Journalists have been targeted in war zones for decades. "[Local and foreign correspondents](#) were among the first detainees of the victorious Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1975. Western journalists, and even those who sought to free them, were held hostage for years during Lebanon's civil war in the 1980s, and dozens of reporters in Latin America have been grabbed by paramilitaries or drug cartels." **Robert Mahoney** CPJ/Deputy Director*

But the sheer scale of the problem since the Arab uprisings is unprecedented, according to CPJ data. Of the 227 journalists killed globally since 2011, one-third died covering Syria.

in numbers:

journalism under fire in

SYRIA CPJ

of the **227** journalists killed globally since 2011,

1/3 died covering Syria.

more than **80** journalists have been kidnapped in Syria over the past three years.

approximately **20** are still missing.

71 journalists have been killed covering the Syrian conflict.*

84% of those killed were local Syrian journalists.

* as of 8/18/14, in direct relation to their work as journalists

Source: [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

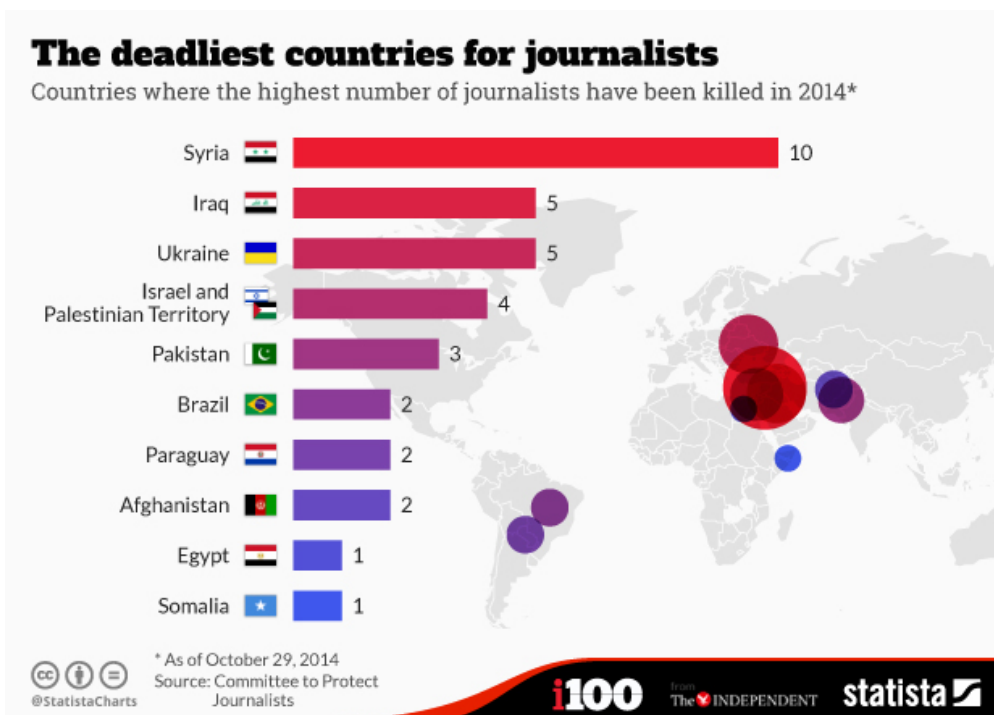
"To hold a pen is to be at war" Voltaire.

More than in any other war in recent history, a highly-funded, well-coordinated [propaganda](#) campaign has fueled the aggressive interventionist [invasion](#) in Syria. Mainstream media has led entire populations of people, especially in the West into supporting a foreign created and imported war on a sovereign nation, that prior to this invasion did not have any of the issues that exist today.

War propaganda has led to hundreds of thousands of deaths in Syria, and millions of refugees, and billions in losses due to infrastructure being destroyed. The fact that well-meaning people will support such a devious, deadly, unrighteous, harmful and illegal war without even questioning the motives behind, the key players, the amount of suffering and damage it has caused is both disheartening and outrageous.

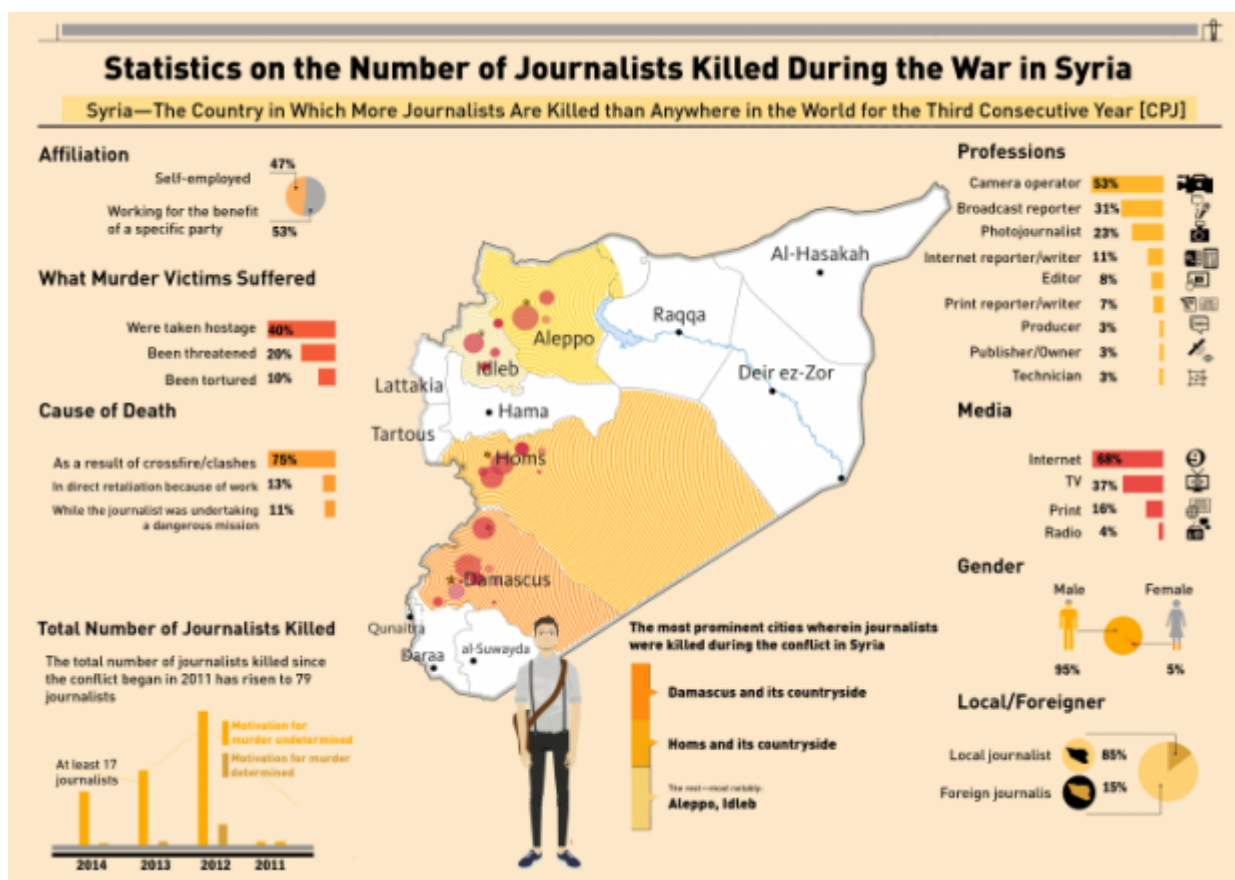
It has also led to a significant number of journalists being kidnapped and killed while reporting on the ground. As a result, many fake activists have taken over social media and mainstream media. They have risen to fame under the guise of being truthful citizen reporters who just want the world to see the misery that the “regime” is putting them through. They are in fact paid mouthpieces for the opposition and armed terrorist groups. They have strong connections with Anti-Assad media and are the darlings of mainstream media news such as CNN, BBC, and Aljazeera. They are eager to have them on, give them airtime to spew their scripted narratives and convince a slew of people that the Syrian Army, Russian Army, and the Syrian government are committing atrocities against civilians. Of course, these media outlets take everything they say as the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help them, God. They do not question nor do they debate. They will, however, push a story and make it into a headline and that is how propaganda is bought and sold to the masses.

However, they will not afford that same attention, time, or respect for independent journalists that do not follow the demonization script. They will altogether ignore them and pretend like they do not exist. It’s really quite cynical.



This article will armor the everyday civilian with enough information to thoroughly convince any critical thinker of the truth. This serves two purposes, first, the reader is exposed to information from different sources that corroborate the same story and prove that the official narrative is nothing but a lie. Secondly, once they have fully understood and absorbed the information it is their duty to educate others. This ripple effect is critical if we are going to make any progress towards ending these bankers wars. This global war that is being waged on peaceful nations through staged uprisings and [Soros funded Color revolutions](#) needs to be stopped. Some may not realize the negative effect that these wars will have on humanity as a whole.

That's why it's imperative that We take whatever action necessary to get people out of this submissive trance that they are under, and free them from the chains of their own [cognitive dissonance](#), which they have been placed under by the government, educational system, marketing, media etc. for far too long.



[Robert Mahoney/CPJ Deputy Director](#) wrote an [article](#) about journalist beheadings in Syria reigniting a debate over risk and safety for freelancers. In it, he said

“now that the initial wave of revulsion at the beheading of two young journalists has passed, the international media is wringing its hands and asking how it can spare others the heartbreak of the families of U.S. journalists **James Foley** and **Steven Sotloff**. In talking with freelance and staff journalists, and editors, it's clear that the murders have rekindled the debate about safety and responsibility in the news business.”

“Once you are kidnapped in Syria it's a completely black hole you're never going to come out of,” [Nicole Tung](#), a freelance photographer who worked

with James Foley, said.

Janine di Giovanni, who has been covering conflict for multiple outlets since the Balkan war, agreed that journalists were being increasingly targeted, especially for kidnap.

“The freelancers I am concerned about are the freelancers who are really out there and off the grid... who have a string of people they work for, you know, but aren’t in constant contact with their editors, aren’t getting backing, have to buy their own flak jackets, have to rent their own satellite phone, don’t have anyone looking after them,” she said.

This is done in an effort to silence the truth. The most dangerous weapon against a mass media campaign is the truth.

Syria - Killing Journalists Enabled “Media Activist” Domination - Intended Effect?

By [Moon of Alabama](#)

As [pointed out](#) yesterday, a recent tweet series by [Club des Cordeliers](#) made some [interesting observation](#) about the [#StandWithAleppo](#) propagand campaign:

The “Stand with Aleppo” campaign in the U.S. was started and is propelled by a Democratic party operative who is also CEO of a public relations company and “strategic affairs consultant” in Chicago, Becky Carroll.

The *Cordeliere* made some additional remarks on anti-Syria propaganda. These about the U.S. directed Information Warfare campaign from inside Syria. This leads me to the thoughts below about the U.S. waged Unconventional Warfare in Syria and how it may be responsible for the elimination of “neutral” journalists on the ground.

We start with *Club des Cordeliers* [remarks](#) on the video campaign coming out of Syria and currently especially out of east-Aleppo:

US State Dep’t has openly trained Syrian “activists” in social media propagand techniques since 2012. *U.S. Embassy Geneva, Aug 21, 2012* , [.S. Equipment, Training Reaching Syrian Opposition](#):

The State Department has \$25 million in nonlethal assistance that it can use for training purposes, and [State Department spokeswoman Victoria] Nuland said “a broad cross section of activists” inside Syria and in neighboring countries is benefiting from an “extremely active” U.S. training effort that is focused on Syrians who have not left their country.“We are doing training on free media, countering the government’s circumvention technology, legal and justice and accountability issues, and how to deal with the crimes that have been committed during this conflict, programs for student activists who are encouraging peaceful protest on the university campuses, [and] programs for women,” Nuland said.

She added that the State Department has been working for years with Syrians

and others on ways to counter Internet censorship, as well as supporting Syrian human rights and justice programs.

US-trained Syrian contra propagandists via seminars conducted in Istanbul. *St. Louis Public Radio*, Dec 3, 2012 [U.S. Steps Up Aid \(But No Arms\) To Syrian Exiles](#):

[T]he U.S. State Department is supporting Syria's political opposition, in projects that have been under wraps until recently. One program, a multimillion-dollar media project called Basma, or "fingerprint" in English, is run out of an office in Istanbul where Syrian activists write and produce reports for a Facebook page and the Basma website. A promotional video explains the goals of Basma: "to support a peaceful transition for a new Syrian nation that supports and guards the freedom of all of its citizens."

...

In another U.S.-funded program, kept quiet over security concerns, young activists, mostly those in the front lines in the early days of the revolt, are invited to Istanbul for workshops. They gather in hotels, from towns and villages inside Syria. They are now members of revolutionary councils — civilians trying to restore services and local government in places out of regime control.

Syrian "activists" given electronic equipment & technical instruction in State Dep't-sponsored Istanbul training. *Wired*, Oct 25, 2012, [Exclusive: U.S. Rushes to Stop Syria from Expanding Chemical Weapon Stockpile](#):

U.S. intelligence agencies are believed to be helping with the training of opposition groups, while the Pentagon denies shipping arms to the rebels. In public, American aid has largely been limited to organizational advice (Washington is trying to set up a council of opposition leaders in Doha in the next few weeks, for instance) and technical assistance. Several hundred Syrian activists have traveled to Istanbul for training in secure communications, funded by the U.S. State Department. The rebel leaders received tips on how to leapfrog firewalls, encrypt their data, and use cellphones without getting caught, as *Time* magazine recently reported. Then they returned to Syria, many of them with new phones and satellite modems in hand.

To NATO military strategists, social media propaganda is an element of "winning the online information war" in Syria. *Small Wars Journal*, Apr 26, 2016, [The Impact of Cyber Capabilities in the Syrian Civil War](#):

The events of the Syrian Civil War have clearly demonstrated the power of cyber capabilities in warfare. [...] However, it would appear that all of the actors have used cyber capabilities for propaganda purposes. The use of social media, DDoS attacks, and the defacement of websites were all used to promote strategic narrative or to undermine and embarrass the enemy. Although all of these activities would fall under the category of information war, developments in social technology has increased the importance of winning the online information war. This is illustrated by the fact that most of the information that the public receives about the conflict is transmitted through social media.

Revealing chart outlining US Army Special Ops doctrine on use of electronic communication

in unconventional warfare. *FM 3-05.130 Unconventional Warfare*, Sep 2008 [Table B-1 - Information operations integration into joint operations](#) (pdf)

Highly influential 1989 paper on Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) called for technology-driven psychological warfare. *Marine Corp Gazette*, Oct 1989 [The Changing Face of War - Into the 4th Generation](#) (pdf)

Psychological operations may become the dominant operational and strategic weapon in the form of media/information intervention. Logic bombs and computer viruses, including latent viruses, may be used to disrupt civilian as well as military operations. Fourth generation adversaries will be adept at manipulating the media to alter domestic and world opinion to the point where skillful use of psychological operations will sometimes preclude the commitment of combat forces. A major target will be the enemy population's support of its government and the war. Television news may become a more powerful operational weapon than armored divisions.



All this is to make clear that **there is nothing random or organic about online propaganda produced by Syrian “activists.”**

Bana hoax, Aleppo “farewell” videos, et al. should be seen as coordinated, strategic information warfare funded and organized by US actors.



Some additional thoughts on this.

A recent piece by **Patrick Cockburn** in the *Independent* points to the mass of propaganda about and out of Syria, mostly U.S. directed as shown above, and explains why we only see and hear this and nothing else: [There's more propaganda than news coming out of Aleppo this week:](#)

[T]he jihadis holding power in east Aleppo were able to **exclude Western journalists**, who would be abducted and very likely killed if they went there, and **replace them as news sources with highly partisan "local activists"** who cannot escape being under jihadi control.

...

The precedent set in Aleppo means that **participants in any future conflict will have an interest in deterring foreign journalists** who might report objectively. **By kidnapping and killing them, it is easy to create a vacuum of information that is in great demand and will, in future, be supplied by informants sympathetic to or at the mercy of the very same people (in this case the jihadi rulers of east Aleppo) who have kept out the foreign journalists.** Killing or abducting the latter turns out to have been a smart move by the jihadis because it enabled them to establish substantial control of news reaching the outside world.

We have to see the killing and kidnapping of journalists as a (secret) part of the arsenal of the Unconventional Warfare and the U.S. created propaganda storm out of Syria.

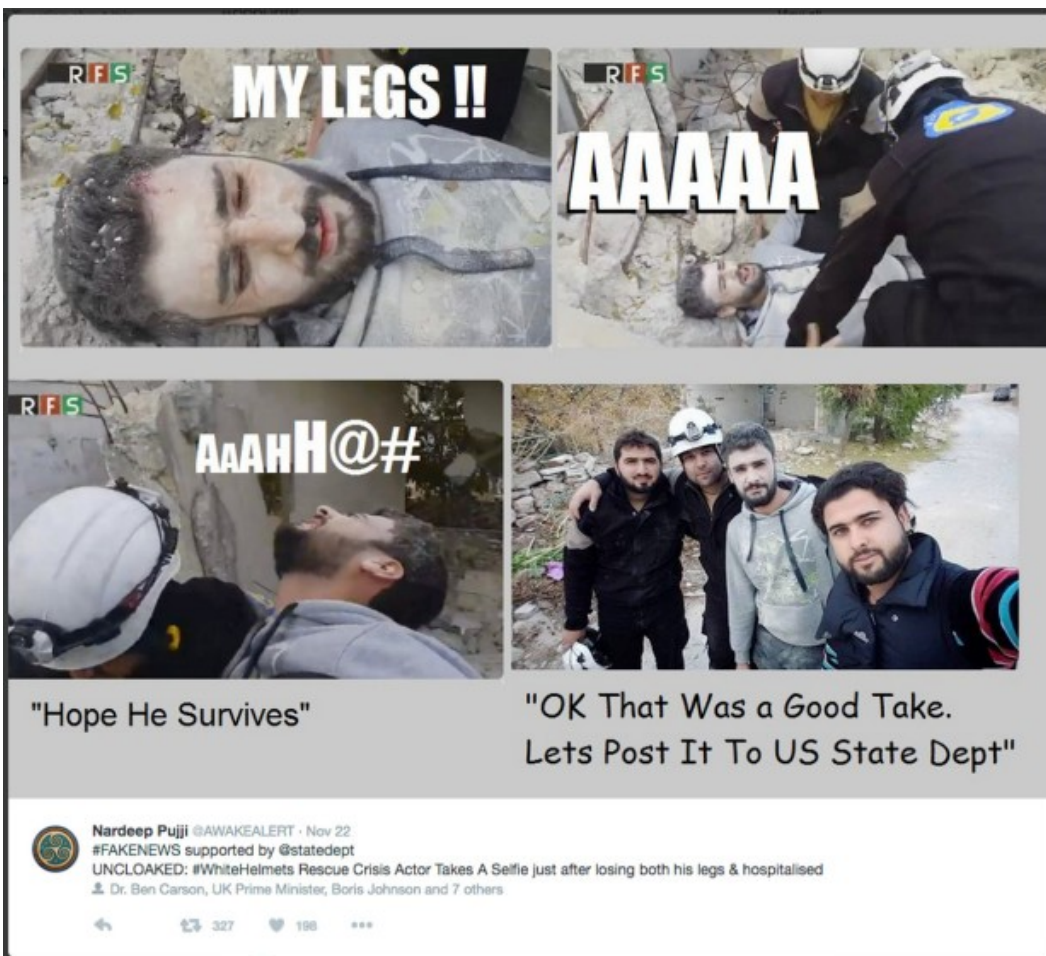
The same applies to [humanitarian Non-Government Organizations](#). Neither the United Nations nor the Red Cross or any other neutral NGO had staff in east-Aleppo. Only the MI-6 propaganda outlet SOHR in Coventry provides numbers allegedly sourced from Syria. Only (U.S. trained) "media activists" on the Takfiri side report or tweet from inside east-Aleppo. Only these get interviewed. Only the U.S./UK created and directed "White Helmets" and the French government sponsored Takfiri "Aleppo Media Channel" produce pictures and videos

from inside east-Aleppo. As this was the only available information source and sole available audio-visual material it was heavily used by news outlets around the world. It reflected solely the armed oppositions and its sponsors' views and warfare needs.

If one intends to give a maximum effect to the propaganda output of one's proxies in an Information Warfare operation, it makes great sense to eliminate all other potential sources of information from the wider warzone. Thus – the abduction and killing of neutral professional journalists is a conscious process that enables their replacement with one's own Information Warfare assets. I believe we have seen such a process in Syria.

A similar process was applied earlier when the U.S. invaded Iraq. News outlets which gave a different than the official U.S. view were targeted by U.S. military forces. The Al-Jazeera offices in Baghdad were [bombed](#) by the U.S. military. (The White House even [considered](#) bombing the Al-Jazeera head office in Doha, Qatar.) Wikileaks [published](#) a video which showed a U.S. helicopter killing Reuters staffers. Only journalists embedded with the U.S. military were protected against U.S. military action. Their reports were naturally heavily skewed towards the official U.S. propaganda view.

(On top of all of that we have to consider that even regular news outlets and journalists are often [vehicles of intelligence services](#) and as such far from neutral.)



The killing or abduction of journalists in a war zone allows their replacement with better controlled and more partisan assets. Just raising the (security) costs for real journalists has such an effect. A news outlet has to pay for professionally made news agency photos or videos. The U.S./UK propaganda operation "[White Helmets](#)" has produced hundreds of

“gripping” and “emotional” [staged rescue operation pictures](#) and videos. It distributes those for free in “ready to be used” high quality. Many news outlets prefer these no-cost pictures even though their veracity is highly questionable.

Keeping journalists away from the battle zone by killing or abducting a few of them at the beginning of the conflict helped enormously to increase the effect of the later Information Warfare operation known as “White Helmets” and other similar organizations.

This brings me back to U.S. Embassy Geneva [report quoted above](#). In the very same speech in which U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland lauded the creation, training, and outfitting of U.S proxy teams for propaganda creation and other purposes (aka “media activists”) she also *lamented* the demise of real journalists in Syria:

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters August 21 that the United States has provided more than 900 sets of communications gear to groups and individuals inside Syria.

...

Nuland also offered condolences to the family of Japanese journalist Mika Yamamoto, who was killed August 20 while she was traveling with Syrian opposition forces in Aleppo, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Yamamoto, who worked for the Tokyo-based Japan Press, was caught in gunfire, the Foreign Ministry said.

Nuland also said the U.S. government had lost contact with two stringers reporting for the Alhurra television network who had reportedly been traveling with Yamamoto.

In an August 21 interview with the Voice of America, Reporters Without Borders spokeswoman Soazig Dollet said five foreign journalists have been killed since the start of the Syrian uprising in March 2011, and that Syria “is now the most dangerous place for war reporter[s] in the world.”

The lauding of U.S. proxy media efforts and the (fake) lamenting over the killing of real journalists by Victoria Nuland in one speech were totally unrelated to each other – unless they were not. It was totally unintended that the resulting lack of real journalists in Syria amplified the effect of the U.S. Information Operation by proxy. Or maybe it was not.

[**48 journalists killed in 2016; Camera operator and photographer most dangerous jobs: CPJ report**](#)



Source: Dawn

48 journalists killed in 2016; Camera operator and photographer dangerous jobs: CPJ report
The Committee to Protect Journalists said at least 48 journalists were killed in 2016. CPJ is also investigating the death of 27 journalists to determine whether they were work-related.

The deadliest countries for journalists were, in order, Syria, Afghanistan, Mexico, Iraq and Yemen.

“More than half of the journalists killed in the year died in combat or crossfire, for the first time since CPJ began keeping records. The conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, and Somalia claimed the lives of 26 journalists who died covering the fighting,” the New York-based group said.

This year, 18 journalists were targeted directly for murder, the lowest number since 2002. “The reason for the decline is unclear, and could be a combination of factors including less risk-taking by the media, more efforts to bring global attention to the challenge of combating impunity, and the use of other means to silence critical journalists,” the report said.

According to the report, photographer and camera operator were the most dangerous media jobs in 2016. 20 of journalists killed in 2016 were freelancers. 75 percent of journalists killed in this year were war reporters.

- 26 journalists killed in the conflict zones of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan & Somalia
- Photographer & camera operator are the most dangerous jobs in 2016
- 75% of the journalists killed were war reporters
- 20% of the journalists killed in 2016 were freelancers
- Syria is the deadliest country for journalists
- 9 out of 10 journalists killed were local reporters
- ISIS responsible for the disappearance of at least 11 journalists in 2016

**DEADLY PROFESSION!
48 JOURNALISTS
KILLED IN 2016**

(Source: Committee to Protect Journalists)

www.News18.in



Journalists who risked their lives in the conflict were also kidnapped and executed by Islamic State and other militant groups. “Islamic State is responsible for the disappearance of at least 11 journalists since 2013. They are feared dead, but do not appear in CPJ’s data on killed journalists because their fate cannot be confirmed,” the report added.

[Al-Qaeda Propagandist Employed By CNN To Make Prize-Winning Syria Doc](#)



CNN is seeking to distance itself from Bilal Abdul Kareem, pictured here, a known propagandist for al-Qaeda, who was hired to create the network’s award-winning documentary, “Undercover in Syria.” (Photo: Facebook)

“CNN is trying to distance itself from an al-Qaeda propagandist who helped the network create a documentary about the Syrian conflict. The man’s ties to the network are just the latest in a series of scandals that have dealt a blow to the network’s already tenuous grasp on credibility.”

“CNN has had a difficult few weeks, with scandals ranging from [false reporting](#) in order to boost ratings to [blackmailing a private citizen](#) who created a meme lampooning the network. As a result, CNN has seen [a massive drop](#) in its prime-time ratings, suggesting that its viewership is shrinking amid the controversy.

Now, yet another controversy for the embattled network has come to light in the making of its award-winning “Undercover in Syria” documentary.

[Syrian Social Media All-Stars Spread Pro-War Propaganda In News & Social Media](#)

“While [millions of Syrians have suffered](#) since the current civil war evolved from the Arab Spring protests of 2011, it’s become all but impossible to separate real news from pro-war propaganda paid for by the United States and its allies. As dubious claims of genocide, often [based on fake photos](#), flood social media and mainstream media alike, people are faced with the complex task of separating real reporting from U.S.-government backed “fake news.”

Efforts to lure the West into a supposedly “humanitarian” military intervention with Syria have been almost continuous throughout President Barack Obama’s eight years in office. WikiLeaks’ archive of U.S. diplomatic cables reveals that the [United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia](#) have been planning to overthrow Syrian leader Bashar Assad since at least 2006. Although the Obama administration never openly declared war on Syria, the United States has repeatedly offered [training](#) and [materiel](#) to so-called “moderate” rebels, even though these groups have repeatedly been linked to [war crimes](#) and [atrocities](#) and have ties to [terrorist groups like al-Qaida](#).”

When a story is flipped 180 degrees

In a previous article, I wrote about the “[Aleppocaust](#)” that took place on social media while Aleppo was being liberated by the Syrian Arab Army and their allies. The exact opposite of what was actually happening was what was being reported by Fake Activists and Fake Journalists. It was quite a sight. People changed their profile pictures to Aleppo is Burning! Pray for Aleppo! An entire media campaign was created to distort information for that particular occasion. What many of us were showing were celebrations in the streets and people cheering and thanking the Syrian Arab Army. Actual footage including videos and pictures that proved in fact that this was a joyous celebration and should be portrayed as such. Instead, the media was inciting fear, sadness, and whatever else it could do to purposely impede the progress being made by the army in freeing civilians who had been brutalized while under the rule of terrorist factions.

Liberation and Celebration

“Shortly after the [Liberation of Aleppo](#) in December 2016, media chaos erupted in what seemed like another coordinated and deliberate Assad demonizing worldwide mainstream media propaganda campaign. This in no way reflected the reality on the ground in Aleppo. What wasn’t shown on mainstream media was that people in Aleppo were actually engaged in joyous celebrations after being liberated from head chopping, organ eating, kidnapping and murdering

terrorists.”

In conclusion, there are two sides to every story, and you're quite frankly only being told one side of it on mainstream media. The information included in the coverage of most news agencies is carefully chosen to fit the warmongering US/NATO's "regime change" narrative. The above information included in this article, reveals the other side, the less-known often hidden truths behind the headlines. With a little rational thinking, questioning, discussing, and researching, one can find these buried little nuggets of truth. It's our responsibility as one human race to end the tyrant Western war-propagating fact deprived media's reign. If we are at all concerned with the world we are leaving for generations to come.

***Sarah Abed** is an independent journalist and political commentator. Focused on exposing the lies and propaganda in mainstream media news, as it relates to domestic and foreign policy with an emphasis on the Middle East. Contributed to various radio shows, news publications and spoken at forums. For media inquiries please email sarahabed84@gmail.com.*

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