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# Journalists in Armed Conflicts



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## **Journalists in Armed Conflicts**

In the continuation of the atrocities that journalists get subjected to every day, comes the detrimental effect of armed conflicts. Armed conflicts and wars continue to take the lives of many and cause displacement and suffering on a massive scale. According to data from Peace Research Institute Oslo, there were 54 active armed conflicts across the globe in 2019 with the number of registered victims reaching around 51,000. Consequently, the mayhems of armed conflicts affect the lives of all involved, from civilians to journalists working there. Journalists are exposed to many dangers while covering the incidents in the areas of armed conflicts. According to Statista, 39 per cent of journalists' deaths in 2019 occurred in countries in armed conflicts. This report will first define what armed conflicts are and their types. It will then move to the rights of the journalists working in those areas under international laws. Finally, the report will highlight several cases of human rights violations that journalists were subjected to doing their job in the areas of armed conflicts in 2020 and 2021. This report sheds light on the violations that occurred to journalists in the areas of armed conflicts in the years 2020 and 2021.

### **What are Armed Conflicts?**

Armed conflicts occur when force is resorted to between one or more countries in the context of a political context, regardless of the reasons or the intensity of the confrontation. No formal declaration of war or recognition of the situation is required. Before the Geneva Conventions was passed, international law distinguished between two types of armed conflict. The first is the conventional conception of "war" which is regarded as an armed conflict between two States. If such conflict occurs, the laws of war will automatically apply. The second type of war is "civil war", which was a condition of armed conflict between a country and an internal rebel movement that has taken up arms. Traditionally, this is regarded as a national concern and generally does not involve any international laws and regulations at all. The law of war between the two parties will only take effect when the "host country" or a third country recognizes the rebels as belligerents.

However, The International Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Conventions later distinguished between three types of armed conflicts to help control the casualties of such hazards; international armed conflicts, internationalized armed conflicts and non-international armed conflicts. Whenever force is used between two or more opposing countries, there will be international armed conflicts. While an internationalized armed conflict takes place when a war occurs between two different factions fighting internally but supported by two different countries. Finally, non-international armed conflicts are prolonged armed confrontations occurring between the armed forces of the government and the forces of an armed group or more, or between such groups arising on the territory of a country. The armed confrontation must reach a minimum level of intensity and all parties to the conflict must show a minimum level of organisation.

### **Journalists in Armed Conflicts**

Journalists and their equipment enjoy immunity, the former as civilians, the latter as a result of the general protection granted to civilian objects by International Humanitarian Law, also known as the law of war. International Humanitarian law does not provide a precise definition of them, but it divides journalists working in conflict areas into two categories; war correspondents accredited to the armed forces and “independent” journalists. War correspondents are not considered as a part of the armed forces and they, therefore, enjoy civilian status and the resulting protection. Radio and television equipment are considered civilian objects and as such enjoy general protection. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the prohibition of attacks against civilian objects has been firmly established in International Humanitarian Law and was reaffirmed in Protocol I of 1977 and the Statute of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, when journalists fall into the hands of the enemy, they are entitled to prisoner-of-war status. Journalists are accordingly protected both against the effects of hostilities and against arbitrary measures taken by a party to the conflict, either by being captured or being arrested.

Nevertheless, this immunity is not absolute. Journalists are protected only when they have not legally and directly participated in hostilities during an armed conflict. Otherwise, they are entitled as combatants who are still protected by the Geneva Conventions and their protocols. The media, even if used for propaganda purposes, should not be subjected to attacks unless it is used for military purposes or incites war crimes, genocide or acts of violence. However, even if it may be reasonable to attack the media for such reasons, all possible precautions must be taken to avoid or at least limit casualties, injuries to civilians and damage to civilian objects. Regrettably, journalists have suffered war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Over the course of the past two years, several journalists have been suffered serious human rights violations ranging from assaults to arrests and murders.

## Human Rights Violations Against Journalists in Armed Conflicts Between 2020 and 2021

No.	Date	Name	Their Job	Violation	Condition
<b>Afghanistan</b>					
1	May 30, 2020	Mir Wahed Shah	An economics reporter at the privately-owned broadcaster Khurshid TV	Killed when a bomb targeted a Khurshid TV van	The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility as the station was “loyal to the Afghan apostate government”
2	Nov 12, 2020	Elyas Dayee	A reporter with Radio Azadi, the Afghan branch of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)	Killed in a car bomb attack	Covered Helmand province, the frontline of the war in Afghanistan.
3	Dec 10, 2020	Malala Maiwand	A TV presenter and journalist at Enikass TV and Radio	Attacked and shot dead by unidentified gunmen	A women’s rights activist who had spoken publicly about the challenges facing female journalists in Afghanistan
4	Dec 21, 2020	Rahmatullah Nikzad	A freelance photographer who contributed photos to The Associated Press and photos and reporting to Al-Jazeera	Shot and killed	Threatened from local Taliban members upset with his work for international outlets, as well as his work with the journalist union
5	Jan 1, 2021	Bismillah Adel Aimaq	The head of local broadcaster Radio Sada-e-Ghor and a human rights activist	Unidentified attackers shot and killed him in a car ambush	
6	March 2, 2021	Mursal Wahidi	A journalist from Enikass TV’s dubbing division	Shot dead by unknown gunmen	
7	March 2, 2021	Sadia Sadat	A journalist from Enikass TV’s dubbing division	Shot dead by unknown gunmen	
8	March 2, 2021	Shahnaz Roafi	A journalist from Enikass TV’s dubbing division	Shot dead by unknown gunmen	
9	June 3, 2021	Mina Khairi	An anchor at the local broadcaster Ariana News TV	Unidentified attackers detonated an improvised explosive device attached to her van	
10	July 16, 2021	Danish Siddiqui	Reuters photojournalist	Killed	Covering a clash between Afghan security forces and Taliban fighters in the town of Spin Boldak, near the border with Pakistan

11	July 26, 2021	Qudrat Soltani	A reporter with the Kandahar-based local radio station	Arrested by officials with Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, the country's national intelligence service	Investigated for spreading "propaganda to the enemy" after interviewing Taliban commanders
12	July 26, 2021	Sanaullah Siam	A camera operator with the Chinese state-run Xinhua News Agency	Arrested by officials with Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, the country's national intelligence service	Investigated for spreading "propaganda to the enemy" after interviewing Taliban commanders
13	July 26, 2021	Bismillah Watandoost	A Reporter with the Kandahar-based local radio station	Arrested by officials with Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, the country's national intelligence service	Investigated for spreading "propaganda to the enemy" after interviewing Taliban commanders
14	July 26, 2021	Moheb Obaidi	A Reporter with the Kandahar-based local radio station	Arrested by officials with Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, the country's national intelligence service	Investigated for spreading "propaganda to the enemy" after interviewing Taliban commanders
15	Aug 1, 2021	Shakib Shams	A correspondent with the national radio service Salam Wantadar	Taliban fighters fired shots at his car, abducted him for approximately 25 minutes, questioned about his reporting and looked through the contacts, recent calls on his phone, ordered to produce positive reports about the Taliban and to interview locals about the Taliban's presence in the area.	Had been reporting on the ongoing clashes between Afghan security forces and Taliban fighters
16	Aug 1, 2021	Storai Karimi	A reporter for the independent news agency Pajhwok Afghan News	Taliban fighters fired shots at her car, abducted her for 25 minutes, questioned her reporting and looked through the contacts, recent calls on her phone, ordered to produce positive reports about the Taliban and to interview locals about the Taliban's presence in the area.	Had been reporting on the ongoing clashes between Afghan security forces and Taliban fighters
17	Aug 8, 2021	Toofan Omar	A manager of the privately-owned radio station Paktia Ghag Radio	Shot and killed.	It is suspected that the attackers were of Taliban
18	Aug 8, 2021	Nematullah Hemat	A reporter for the privately-owned news channel Gharghasht TV	Kidnapped by Taliban fighters	
<b>Azerbaijan</b>					
19	May 14, 2020	Navid Seyed-Mohammadi	A reporter for the state-run Islamic Republic Radio and a television broadcaster	Arrested by agents of the IRGC who raided his home without showing a search warrant	
20	June 7, 2020	Jafar Osafi	Ran the religious discussion and commentary Telegram channel QandA with Sunnis	Arrested by agents of the IRGC who raided his home and confiscated electronic devices	

21	June 23, 2020	Zakaria Rasoulpour	Ran the Telegram channel Behind The Curtain	Arrested by IRGC intelligence agents. Agents later searched his home, office, and parents' house, and confiscated his laptop and phone	Covered alleged local corruption
22	June 4, 2021	Maharram Ibrahimov	A reporter working for state news agency AzerTag	Killed in a landmine explosion that authorities refused to provide maps for	Fulfilling his professional duties in the Kalbajar district
23	June 4, 2021	Siraj Abishov	A cameraman from the Azerbaijani Television station (AzTV)	Killed in a landmine explosion that authorities refused to provide maps for	Fulfilling his professional duties in the Kalbajar district
<b>Bangladesh</b>					
24	Oct 11, 2020	Iiyas Hossain	A correspondent for the local Bangla daily newspaper, <i>Dainik Bijoy</i>	Repeatedly stabbed and killed	In revenge for his articles in the <i>Dainik Bijoy</i>
25	Feb 19, 2021	Borhan Uddin Muzakkir	A reporter for the news website <i>Barta Bazar</i> and the newspaper <i>Bangladesh Samachar</i>	Shot in the throat	Covering clashes in the street between two factions of the ruling Awami League party
<b>Burkina Faso</b>					
26	April 26 - 27, 2021	Roberto Fraile	A seasoned war journalist, 93 Metros camera operator and worked for Spain's CyLTV	Kidnapped by unidentified attackers then killed	Shot a documentary on the government's fight against poachers and covering issues such as crime, human rights and war
27	April 26 - 27, 2021	David Beriain	The co-director of the Spain-based 93 Metros multimedia company, a war reporter who worked for a now-defunct Spanish branch of CNN and founded his own production house specialising in documentaries on illegal activities	Kidnapped by unidentified attackers then killed	Shot a documentary on the government's fight against poachers and covering issues such as crime, human rights and war
<b>Ethiopia</b>					
28	May 9, 2021	Sisay Fida	A coordinator and reporter for Oromia Broadcasting Network	Shot and killed by two unidentified attackers	Well known in the community and worked for the regional government. He was targeted for his work with the station
29	June 21, 2021	Abebe Bayu	A reporter and analyst at the YouTube-based news outlet Ethio Forum	Four unidentified men forced him into a car, handcuffed him, threatened him with a pistol, covered his eyes, stole his belongings and punched him all over his body. They also warned him not to criticize the government.	Recent coverage includes the country's elections, commentary comparing the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region to 1990s Yugoslavia, questioning whether NATO could intervene in Ethiopia
<b>Honduras</b>					
30	July 1, 2020	Vallecillo Jr.	A host for the local privately-owned TV station Canal 45	Killed by two unidentified individuals of criminal groups involved in drug trafficking	Due to covering drug-related issues

31	July 1, 2020	Jorge Posas	A camera operator for the local privately-owned TV station Canal 45	Killed by two unidentified individuals of criminal groups involved in drug trafficking	
<b>Iran</b>					
32	Nov 23, 2020	Dariush Moradi	An independent Kurdish journalist who writes political commentary for the Kurdish-language cultural and literary website <i>Hesareh</i>	IRGC forces raided his home, arrested him, searched his homes, confiscated his personal belongings and took him to an undisclosed location.	
33	Dec 12, 2020	Roohollah Zam	Founded and managed <i>Amad News</i> , a website and channel on Telegram that reported and shared anti-government news	Executed by Iranian authorities	Covering issues such as corruption, crime, human rights and politics
<b>Iraq</b>					
34	Jan 10, 2020	Ahmed Abdul Samad	Broadcast Reporter – Dijlah TV	Unidentified gunmen opened fire on the car	Covering protests in the southern Iraqi city of Basra
35	Jan 10, 2020	Safaa Ghali	Camera Operator – Dijlah TV	Unidentified gunmen opened fire on the car	Covering protests in the southern Iraqi city of Basra
36	May 10, 2021	Ahmed Hassan	A reporter for the broadcaster Al-Forat TV	Shot twice by an unidentified masked gunman in the head in front of his home	Covering local news in Al-Diwaniyah and the Iraqi Army's efforts to retake Iraq from the Islamic State militant group
<b>Mexico</b>					
37	March 30, 2020	Maria Elena Ferral Hernández	A correspondent for the <i>El Diario de Xalapa</i> newspaper, co-founded <i>El Quinto Poder</i> , a local news website and published columns on <i>La Polaca Totonaca</i> , a personal Facebook page	Two unidentified men on a motorcycle shot her	Mostly reported on local news, politics, and crime and received constant threats because of her journalistic work.
38	May 16, 2020	Jorge Miguel Armenta Ávalos	The founder and owner of the <i>Última Palabra</i> weekly news magazine and the <i>El Tiempo de Medios Obson</i> daily newspaper	Shot along with two police officers who accompanied him as bodyguards	Reporting on criminal gangs and murders in the area
39	Sept 9, 2020	Julio Valdivia	A reporter for the Córdoba-based <i>El Mundo</i> newspaper	Beheaded	Recently reporting on crime and security at the border region between Veracruz and Oaxaca which is a very complicated place with gangs involved in drug trafficking and oil theft criminal gangs' clashes
40	Nov 2, 2020	Jesús Alfonso Piñuelas	The founder of <i>Zarathustra Press</i> and <i>El Shock de la Noticia</i>	Shot dead	



41	Dec 9, 2020	Jaime Castaño	Photojournalist and founder of the news website Prensa Libre MX	Shot and killed by unidentified gunmen	After he photographed the bodies of two shooting victims on the side of a highway when an unidentified young man confronted him and demanded he deletes those photos. But he refused and left the scene
42	May 2, 2021	Benjamín Morales	Independent reporter and founded <u>Noticias Xonoidag</u> , a Facebook news page with about 14,000 followers, where he posted video reporting and commentary on current events in the Sonoyta area	His abandoned vehicle was found and then his body, which had several gunshot wounds	
43	June 17, 2021	Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera	A director of the news website Noticias Minuto a Minuto	Shot dead	Specializing in local politics
44	June 22, 2021	Saúl Tijerina Rentería	A drone camera operator at a local factory, and provided footage to the Facebook-based news outlets La Policiaca and Noticias en la Web	Killing	
45	July 22, 2021	Ricardo Domínguez López	The founder and editor of news website <u>InfoGuaymas</u>	Shot and killed by an unknown assassin	<i>InfoGuaymas</i> covers a broad range of topics including municipal, state, national, and international news as well as crime and security
46	Aug 2, 2020	Pablo Morrugares Parraguirre	The founder and editor of news website <i>PM Noticias</i>	Attacked by two heavily armed men with 50 rounds and died instantly	<i>PM Noticias</i> covers general news, politics, and crime and security, violence in the state, political events, and the effects of the COVID-19
<b>Myanmar</b>					
47	March 24, 2021	Nann Win Yi	<i>Kanbawza Tai News</i> reporter	Police raided the media outlet's office and two of its employees' homes and detained her	Covering the security forces' lethal crackdowns on anti-regime protests
48	March 24, 2021	Nann Nann Tai	<i>Kanbawza Tai News</i> editor-in-charge	Police raided the media outlet's office and two of its employees' homes and detained her	Covering the security forces' lethal crackdowns on anti-regime protests
49	April 18, 2021	Yuki Kitazumi	A freelance journalist who runs the Yangon Media Professionals media production company	Military authorities arrested him at his home	Arrested on the suspicion of spreading "fake news"

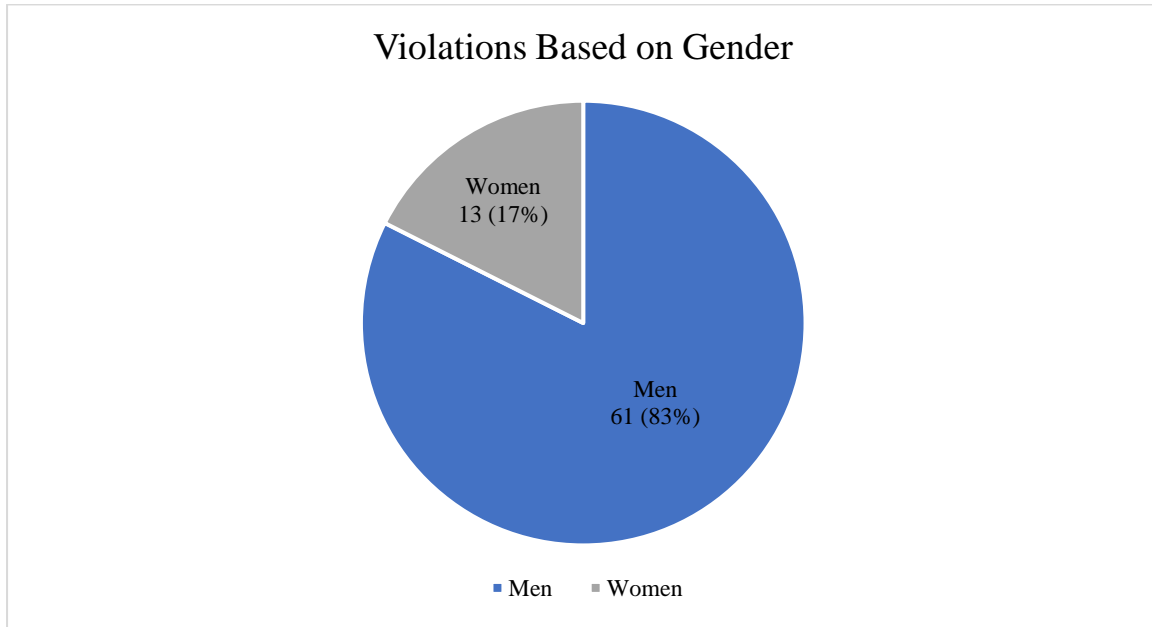
Nigeria					
50	Oct 30, 2020	Onifade Emmanuel Pelumi	A reporter and intern with the privately-owned Gboah TV broadcaster	Killed	Last seen alive on October 24 in the custody of police officers in the state capital, Ikeja, where he had gone to cover an attempted break-in at a government facility
Pakistan					
51	March 2021	Ajay Lalwani	A local general news correspondent for the privately-owned Urdu language Daily Puchano	Died after suffering three gunshots	
Palestine					
52	April 21, 2021	Alaa al-Rimawi	A reporter for the Qatari broadcaster Al-Jazeera Mubasher, the director of the local J-Media Network news agency and hosts J-Media's talk show Palestine Votes	A group of about 12 Israeli soldiers raided his home and arrested him	
53	May 2021	Mustafa Hassona	Anadolu Agency photojournalist	Injured by a rocket fired in an Israeli airstrike	
54	May 2021	Mohammad al-Aloul	A camera operator	Injured by a rocket fired in an Israeli airstrike	
55	May 12, 2021	Hazem Naser	A camera operator for the Amman-based broadcaster Al-Ghad	Arrested by Israeli forces	
56	May 12, 2021	Yousef Abu Hussein	a reporter and news anchor for the Hamas-affiliated radio station Voice of Al-Aqsa	Killed by an Israeli warplane that bombed the top floors of Al-Shorouk building in Gaza City, which housed several media outlets	Recent work included presenting news bulletins, interviewing the spokesperson for the Gaza Judicial Authority and the director of the traffic police and sharing pictures of the destruction from Israeli airstrikes
57	June 26, 2021	Fayhaa Khanfar	A reporter for the news website <i>JMedia</i> ,	Two security officers confronted and insulted her, pepper-sprayed her, demanded she hands over her phone, hit her in the shoulder and knocked her to the ground causing her to briefly lose consciousness	Covering protests after Nizar Banat, a Palestinian anti-corruption activist, died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority on June 24
58	June 26, 2021	Saja Alami	A reporter for the news websites <i>Ultra Palestine</i> and the <i>Palestine Post Network</i>	Two security officers confronted and insulted her, pepper-sprayed her and demanded she hands over her phone	Covering protests after Nizar Banat died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority
59	June 26, 2021	Najlaa Zaitoun	A reporter for the <i>Quds News Network</i> news website	A security officer snatched her phone and was hit in the chest and shoulder with a stick	Covering protests after Nizar Banat died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority

60	June 26, 2021	Shatha Hamad	A reporter for the news website <i>Middle East Eye</i>	Security officers in plainclothes attempted to grab her phone, and when they failed to do so, they broke it and a police officer fired a tear gas canister that hit her in the face, cutting the skin around her left eye with shrapnel	Covering protests after Nizar Banat died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority
61	June 27, 2021	Ahmad Talat Hasan	A freelance photojournalist	Five uniformed police officers attempted to confiscate his camera and hit him in the face and the head. He sustained lacerations on his head and right cheek, and a bruise on his left cheek	Covering protests after Nizar Banat died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority
<b>Somalia</b>					
62	Feb 16, 2020	Abdiwali Ali Hassan	A freelance correspondent for the London-based Universal TV and local Radio Kulmiye	Shot	Attacked by the militant group Al-Shabaab the conflict-ridden in the Lower Shabelle region
63	March 1, 2021	Jamal Farah Adan	A radio reporter who has freelanced for Radio Daljir, Radio Galkayo and Radio Garowe	Shot and killed by two unidentified men, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the killing	Criticized operations carried out by Al-Shabaab and urged residents of Galkayo to rise against the militant group Al-Shabaab and claimed that local officials had conspired to help some militants escape justice
<b>Syria</b>					
64	Feb 4, 2020	Amjad Anas Aktalati	Camera Operator, Photographer - freelancer	Killed in a Russian airstrike	Taking shelter while covering an airstrike
65	Feb 20, 2020	Abdul Nasser Haj Hamdan	a photographer working for the Media Office in Binnish	Killed in a Russian airstrike	
66	Oct 26, 2020	Rasheed Bakr	a Syrian reporter and camera operator who worked for the <i>Al-Mohrar Media Network</i> news website and the Syria 1 News Agency	Killed in an airstrike	Preparing a video report for Al-Mohrar. The strike targeted a training camp in Jabal al-Duwailah that was being used by the Turkish-backed National Front for Liberation, a group that is part of the opposition Syrian National Army, which the <i>Al-Mohrar Media Network</i> supports
67	Dec 12, 2020	Hussein Khattab	A reporter for the Turkish state-owned broadcaster TRT Arabic	Killed by two unidentified masked men on a motorcycle who fired more than 10 shots at him	Covered sensitive topics including interviews with victims of a chemical attack, posted footage of the conditions for internally displaced people at camps, and bomb attacks

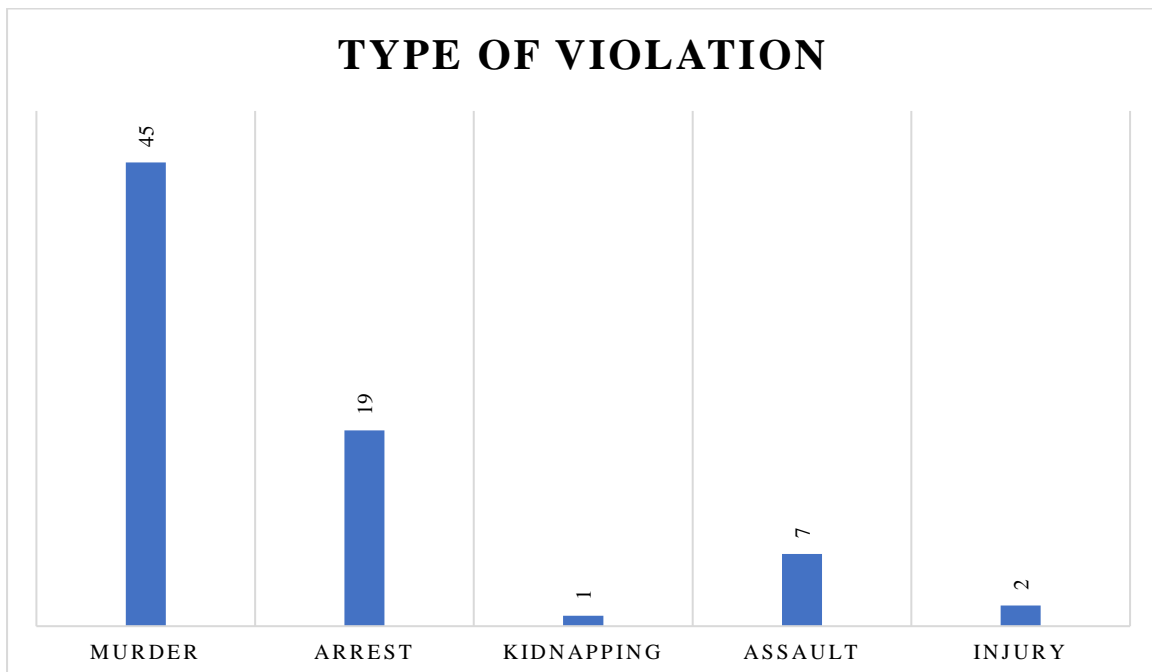
68	June 24, 2021	Bassam Safar	An editor on cultural topics for the <i>North Press Agency</i> , a news website supportive of the Syrian Democratic Forces opposition group	Arrested by Syrian government security forces	Recent work includes a series of interviews with human rights lawyers about documenting abuses in the country
69	July 17, 2021	Homam Al-Asi	Freelance Photographer	Killed during an artillery bombardment	Covering rescue operations by members of the White Helmets volunteer organisation in an area hit by an earlier bombardment
70	July 2021	Izzeddin Al-Mala	The editor of the newspaper <i>Kurdistan</i>	Arrested by security services	
71	July 2021	Barzan Layani	A reporter for <i>ARK TV</i> , a local station	Arrested by security services	
72	July 2021	Mohamed Saleh	A former <i>Kurdistan TV</i> reporter	Arrested by security services	
<b>Turkey</b>					
73	June 7, 2020	Nasrullah Lashani	an independent Kurdish political reporter and commentator	Arrested and detained by agents of the IRGC. The country's security services deported him to Iran	
<b>Yemen</b>					
74	June 2, 2020	Nabil Hasan al-Quaety	A freelance reporter, videographer, and photographer who had worked with French public broadcaster Agence France-Press	Killed	Covering clashes with Yemeni government forces and forces affiliated with the Al-Islah Party in Abyan governorate

## Findings

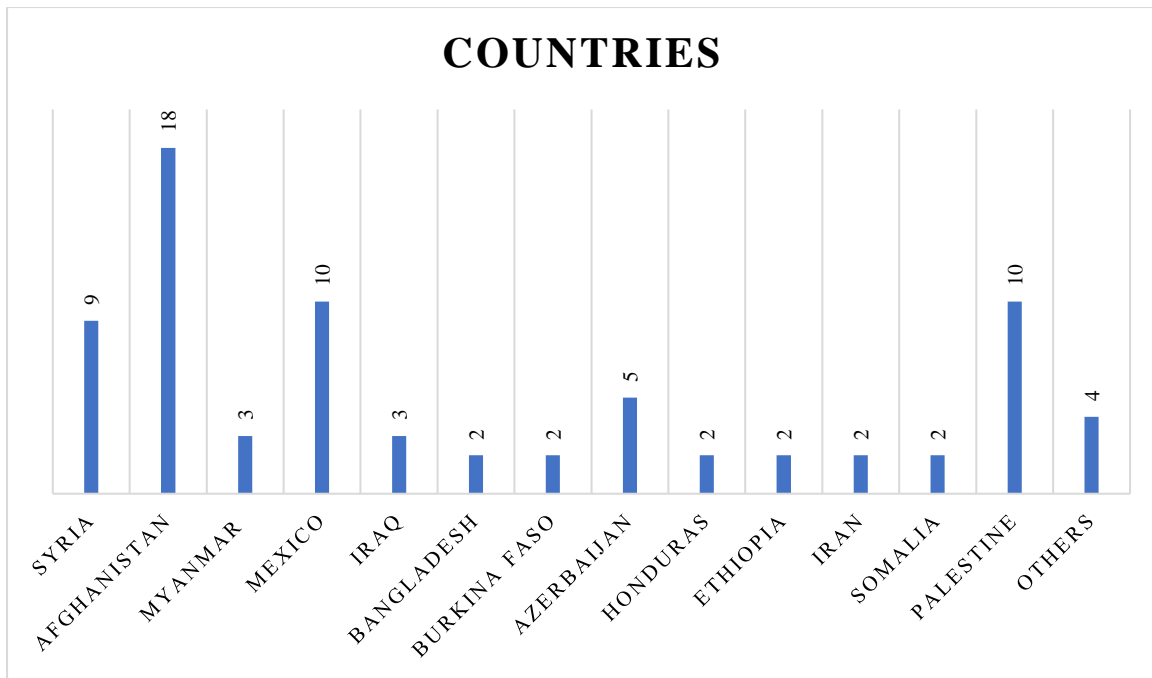
Based on the above-presented data presented, the following findings were concluded:



The report shows that out of the seventy-four reported cases, sixty-one of them were violations against men while the other thirteen was targeted towards women.



Five types of violations have been reported with murder taking the lead with forty-five cases followed by nineteen arrests, seven cases of assault, two injuries and a case of kidnapping.



As for the countries in which the violations occurred, Afghanistan takes the lead with eighteen cases followed by Mexico and Palestine with ten then Syria with nine reported cases.

### Conclusion

Today, many armed conflicts are occurring around the world, including warring parties within a single country and others involving armed forces from two countries or more. Armed conflicts have harmed millions of people in countless ways by killing both men and women and leaving survivors injured, tortured, raped or forcibly displaced. Seventy years after the approval of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, their Additional Protocols and International Humanitarian Law, journalists are still facing a lot of human rights violations while doing their jobs. International Humanitarian Law protects the rights of people affected by armed conflicts. However, just like international law, International Humanitarian Law requires countries to have the political will to treat the situation as an armed conflict, so that the law can take effect, because even fierce wars between enemies have limits.