
Du 13 au 15 mai 2019

The Media Landscape during Syria's Uprising | Le Paysage médiatique pendant le soulèvement de la Syrie

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Abstract (Proposal to present in English)

At time of writing in 2018, what was once the Syrian Uprising, has long since developed into a fully-fledged war, metamorphosing into a country that has plunged its civilians and journalists in one tragic crisis too many. In Syria, up to 123 journalist murders have been recorded by the Committee to Protect Journalists since 1992, with most of the murders taking place between 2012 and 2013 and a notable dip in journalist murders noted in 2018. This dip in numbers can fool some into believing that the media landscape in Syria has improved. I propose to scrutinise various factors that, according to Freedom House, have made Syria emerge as one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists, citizen journalists and bloggers.

As part of my doctoral thesis on international news production during the Arab Spring, I have already gathered much research on Syria's media landscape. I am able to highlight the information and communication context in Syria during the years of the uprising by presenting both the state of the infrastructure and the government's role with regards to

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accessing and broadcasting information. I propose to present detailed examples on how the government deliberately blocked information publication and access, ranging from electricity cuts to internet blockades as well as notable forms of censorship including the use of surveillance software and the spread of malware. The actions of the Syrian Electronic Army for example, will be of interest to many, specifically in reference to how they manipulated online information on a global scale leading to global misinformation as early as 2011.

The Syrian constitution as well as the State of Emergency Law and the Press Law of Syria, will also be of interest to those interested in how laws can be contradictory by allowing for freedom of expression, while also incorporating strict fines and sentences to those who freely express themselves.

Having studied how specific events from the Syrian Uprising were covered by Al Jazeera English, Iran's Press TV, France 24 English and euronews English, I propose to also present my findings. I propose to focus specifically on the location of the journalists during the broadcasts as well as the footage featured for the events and the use of interviews by the press to report events of the Syrian Uprising.

Due to the dangers in Syria, news organisations are unable to continually send their staff to Syria and some, such as AFP have clearly stated that they refuse any material coming in from Syria, so as to discourage independent journalists from entering Syria to get exclusive material. But Syria's war continues to rage and mainstream media have to find other media of reporting the events to the rest of the world. Participants may be interested in learning through my presentation, based on an interview with AFP's editor-in-chief for Beirut, the ways in which AFP has been gathering their news from Syria to disseminate to the world.