

Advocacy dossier

Raed Fares

رائد فارس

Killed **Syria**

Raed Fares was a citizen journalist and civil society organiser who founded the Kafranbel Media Centre and the independent station Radio Fresh in Idlib province. He was shot dead in Kafranbel on 23 November 2018 with his colleague Hamoud al-Jnaid, and no one has been held to account.

01
The case at a glance

Raed Fares was a citizen journalist and civil society organiser who founded the Kafranbel Media Centre and the independent station Radio Fresh in Idlib province. He was shot dead in Kafranbel on 23 November 2018 with his colleague Hamoud al-Jnaid, and no one has been held to account.

Status	Arrested	Country
Killed	**10 Jan 2016**	**Syria**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Order a full, independent, and impartial investigation into the killing of Raed Fares, with timely public reporting on findings.

02 Identify and prosecute those responsible, both the direct perpetrators and any state officials who ordered, enabled, or covered up the killing.

03 Provide effective reparation to the family of Raed Fares.

04 Take immediate steps to protect other defenders working in the same field from similar attacks.

02

How the case unfolded

28 December 2013

Office raid

Islamic State militants attack the Kafranbel Media Centre

Militants of the Islamic State group attacked the Kafranbel Media Centre, which Raed Fares had founded in 2013 and whose work included the town's widely shared protest banners and the independent station Radio Fresh.

29 January 2014

Physical assault

Survives an assassination attempt

Raed Fares was shot and wounded in an attempt on his life in Kafranbel. Colleagues said he had received threats from local extremist armed groups, and he identified the attackers as members of the Islamic State group. Accounts of the date and of his wounds differ slightly between sources.

10 January 2016

Abduction

Seized by al-Nusra Front in a raid on Radio Fresh

Fighters of al-Nusra Front stormed the Radio Fresh studios in Kafranbel, seized broadcasting equipment and generators, and took Raed Fares and the journalist Hadi al-Abdallah. The group said it detained them because the station broadcast content it considered immoral. The opposition Syrian National Coalition said Fares had been detained by al-Nusra before.

10 January 2016

Release

Released after about 12 hours

Radio Fresh said Raed Fares and Hadi al-Abdallah were released about 12 hours after they were taken. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said al-Nusra Front freed them after interrogating them.

November 2018

Threats and intimidation

Radio Fresh receives threats from armed groups

According to Ali Dandoush, a Radio Fresh colleague, the station had received threats from armed groups, including al-Nusra Front, over the two months before the November 2018 attack. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the successor to al-Nusra Front, controlled Kafranbel and had demanded that the station stop playing music and change its female news readers.

23 November 2018

Killing

Shot dead in Kafranbel with Hamoud al-Jnaid

Gunmen in a van shot Raed Fares and his colleague Hamoud al-Jnaid, a Radio Fresh reporter and photographer, in Kafranbel. Hamoud al-Jnaid died at the scene and Raed Fares died shortly afterwards in hospital. GCHR said the attackers had waited outside the men's shared office and followed them before opening fire on their car. No group claimed responsibility.

24 November 2018

Other act

GCHR calls for the killers to be brought to justice

The Gulf Centre for Human Rights condemned the killing of Raed Fares and Hamoud al-Jnaid, called for those responsible to be brought to justice, and noted that killings of human rights defenders and journalists in Syria by all parties have gone unpunished. No arrests or prosecutions in the case have been reported.

03

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Raed Fares was shot dead in Kafranbel on 23 November 2018 together with his colleague Hamoud al-Jnaid. No arrests or prosecutions have been reported, and no group has claimed responsibility.

Background and Work

Raed Fares was a citizen journalist and civil society organiser from Kafranbel, in the south of Idlib province in north-western Syria. At the start of the 2011 uprising he took part in protests in the town and began photographing them. Kafranbel became widely known for satirical protest banners, many of them in English, that were shared online and addressed the Syrian government, its allies, Western governments and armed groups alike.

In 2013 he founded the Kafranbel Media Centre and the independent radio station Radio Fresh. The station reported news from Kafranbel and the surrounding area, satirised both the government of Bashar al-Assad and armed opposition groups, and trained local people, including women, in media work. The Gulf Centre for Human Rights describes him as a human rights defender who campaigned for education, democracy, the rights of women and children, and an end to the war. In June 2018 he wrote publicly urging the United States to restore funding for civil society work in Syria.

The Abduction

His work brought hostility from several sides. GCHR reports that Islamic State militants attacked the Kafranbel Media Centre on 28 December 2013, and that on 29 January 2014 he survived an assassination attempt in which he was shot and wounded; he identified the attackers as members of the Islamic State group. GCHR also records that government forces bombed the centre and that he was abducted and ill-treated by armed groups more than once.

On 10 January 2016, fighters of al-Nusra Front, the Syrian affiliate of al-Qaeda, stormed the Radio Fresh studios, seized equipment and generators, and took Raed Fares and the journalist Hadi al-Abdallah. Al-Nusra said the station broadcast content it considered immoral. Both men were released about 12 hours later. The Syrian National Coalition said at the time that al-Nusra had detained Fares before. In the following years Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which grew out of al-Nusra Front and controlled Kafranbel, pressed the station to stop playing music and to take its female presenters off air.

The Killing

According to his colleague Ali Dandoush, Radio Fresh received threats from armed groups, including al-Nusra Front, in the two months before November 2018. On 23 November 2018, gunmen in a van shot Raed Fares and Hamoud al-Jnaid, a Radio Fresh reporter and photographer, in Kafranbel. GCHR reported that the attackers had waited outside the men's shared office, followed them, and opened fire on their car. Hamoud al-Jnaid died at the scene; Raed Fares died shortly afterwards in hospital. He was 46 and the father of three sons. No group claimed responsibility. Middle East Eye reported that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham controlled the town and its checkpoints, and the Syrian Network for Human Rights later concluded that the group was most

probably responsible.

Legal Proceedings

No investigation by any authority, and no arrest or prosecution, has been reported. A December 2025 account of Radio Fresh's history published by SyriaUntold states that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham never investigated the killing. Since the change of government in Syria in December 2024, no reopening of the case has been reported in the sources reviewed.

International Response

The Committee to Protect Journalists and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights reported on the killing. GCHR condemned it, called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and noted that killings of human rights defenders and journalists in Syria by all parties had gone unpunished. Radio Fresh continued to broadcast after his death, although with fewer staff and reduced funding.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/raed-fares/

HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement is a non-governmental organisation documenting the situation of human rights defenders in the Middle East and North Africa. This file is based on the public record of the case in the defenders archive.Status as recorded on 2018-11-23. To report an error: archive@humena.org