

World Press Freedom Review January-September 2011



WAN-IFRA, based in Paris, France, and Darmstadt, Germany, with subsidiaries in Singapore, India, Spain, France and Sweden, is the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers. It represents more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries. Its core mission is to defend and promote press freedom, quality journalism and editorial integrity and the development of prosperous businesses.

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Summary

Media employees worldwide face physical violence and persecution of all kinds, whether from public officials, criminals or terrorists. Assaults are daily - and often deadly - for those who challenge governments, report on conflict or investigate corruption and crime.

44 journalists have been killed so far in 2011 and hundreds of media employees have been harassed, threatened or physically attacked. Impunity prevails in many parts of the world for the perpetrators as they seek to influence or mislead public opinion by targeting a free press.

The story of each journalist is different, but fundamentally the issue remains the same; they were sanctioned for pursuing the human right to inform and to express ideas freely - the condition necessary for achieving any other right.

- Media professionals across the **Americas** are increasingly exposed to the wave of violence resulting from the conflict between drug-trafficking syndicates and government authorities. Populist regimes' intolerance of dissent or scrutiny has led to increasing harassment of the critical and independent press through criminal defamation legislation. More than ever before, governments have become the biggest enemies of press freedom in the region.
- In **Asia**, established democracies have seen a rise in impunity, censorship and violence against journalists in the past year. In the Philippines, President Benigno Aquino III is yet to follow through with promises to end impunity after a year in office. In the ongoing court case dealing with the Maguindanao massacre (2009), allegations of bribery from a relative of one of the deceased were immediately met with spurious contempt of court charges. Additionally, reports of violence against journalists have risen in Indonesia while in Pakistan attacks against the media continue to make the country one of the world's deadliest for journalists.
- Press Freedom continues to suffer from a deep-rooted culture of impunity, intimidation and harassment in certain parts of Central and Eastern **Europe and Central Asia**. Violence against the media, the use of defamation legislation and ill-thought-out regulation seriously undermine the work of media professionals in the region.
- Despite the fall of dictatorships in across the **Middle East and North Africa**, little progress has been made in installing legislation that will protect the freedom of the press in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Governments in other Arab states have been obliged to make concessions to pro-reform demonstrators in order to remain in power, but promises of change have likewise brought little improvement in terms of media freedoms. A media blackout in Syria helped obscure the full extent of the regime's brutal crackdown, with protestors for a time providing the only footage from inside the country. In Yemen, journalists were deliberately targeted in March as state-orchestrated violence erupted in response to calls demanding President Saleh step down. Bahrain's authorities, with help from their Saudi neighbours have systematically hunted down, imprisoned and reportedly tortured bloggers and freedom of expression activists who participated in pro-reform demonstrations earlier in the year.
- Sweeping anti-terrorism laws, criminal defamation and treason charges are regularly used to detain local and foreign journalists who criticise or question authority in **Sub-Saharan Africa**. A culture of unrelenting violence, harassment and intimidation, particularly alongside elections, continues to stifle freedom of expression, however some gains have been made in countries such as Liberia and Nigeria where legislation protecting access to information has been tabled. The African Platform on Access to Information (APAI) Declaration made in Cape Town, South Africa, on 19 September states that access to information is a fundamental human right, laying out a set of key principles that are designed to promote universal accessibility to information in a new digital age. It is hoped this pan-African initiative will provide the basis upon which meaningful legislation can not only be formulated, but also effectively enacted.

All information relating to Journalists Killed has been sourced from
<http://www.wan-afra.org/journalists-killed>

Photo © Getty

**What
if her
words
had never
been heard?**

Silence kills democracy, but a free press talks.



World Association of Newspapers
and News Publishers

Americas

Journalists killed: Brazil (1) Colombia (1) Dominican Republic (1) Honduras (1) Mexico (4) Peru (1)

Total: 9

Media professionals in Mexico, Central and South America are increasingly exposed to the wave of violence resulting from the conflict between drug-trafficking syndicates and government authorities. Populist regimes' intolerance of dissent or scrutiny has led to increasing harassment of the critical and independent press through criminal defamation legislation. More than ever before, governments have become the biggest enemies of press freedom in the region.

Argentina

Since the Law on Audiovisual Communication Services came into force in September 2010, concerns remain as to how such legislation could restrict media houses through discrimination in the granting of licences and interference with content. The conflict between Clarín and La Nación and the government continues to polarise the media and to undermine independent reporting. On 27 March, unionised press workers prevented the distribution of the Sunday edition of Clarín and La Nación by blocking the exits of their printing facilities. It was the fifth time union workers had staged such an operation since November 2010. Concern exists over whether such demonstrations result from legitimate labour-related concerns or rather from politicised action led by pro-government union workers. Amongst the demonstrators were members of Teamsters, Argentina's largest and most influential trade union, who's leader, Hugo Moyano, has very close ties to President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner who continues to be at odds with Grupo Clarín and La Nación. Clarín and other newspapers had recently reported that the Swiss government had asked its Argentine counterparts to investigate certain financial transactions made by Moyano.

Bolivia

The government continues to propose new legislation that causes concern and controversy amongst the media. The adoption of Law 045 against racism and all forms of discrimination in October 2010 was highly criticised because of two articles (16 and 23); its terms are too vague and could pose a threat to freedom of expression if wrongly interpreted. On 27 May, the Electoral System Law was promulgated. Its Article 82 bans media from publishing any interviews or opinions of those judges who are candidates to senior judicial posts (article 82), and in so doing contradicts the Bolivian constitution and Inter-American case law. Furthermore, constant intimidation through physical harassment and threats continue to promote self-censorship amongst media professionals.

Brazil

Journalists killed: 1

Brazil continues to be a country where impunity and violence against media professionals prevail, spreading self-censorship amongst media professionals. On 15 June, unidentified men shot Edinaldo Filgueira, editor and founder of newspaper Jornal o Serrano, after the publication of a critical poll on the performance of the local government. He had received several death threats prior to his murder. In July, five suspects were arrested, although the mastermind of the killing remains at large.

Colombia

Journalists killed: 1

Despite a clear decline in violence since the end of the 1990s, Colombia remains one of the continent's most dangerous countries for journalists, particularly in rural areas. Freelance journalist Luis Eduardo Gómez was shot by two unidentified assailants on 30 June at his home in the city of Arboletes. He had been investigating the unsolved murder of his son, killed two years previously, and was also part of a government witness protection programme in an investigation into links between politicians and clandestine right-wing paramilitary groups.

Cuba

On 18 April, journalist Santiago Du Bouchet Hernández was released from prison and exiled to Spain, putting an end to the Cuban "Black Spring"; the massive wave of arrests led by the government in March 2003 that saw 75 dissidents, including 20 journalists, sentenced and imprisoned for up to 28 years for "acts against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state" or similar charges. However, Cuban authorities continue to stifle dissent by persecuting independent journalists through arbitrary arrests, beatings, and intimidation. On 7 September, 20-year veteran El País correspondent, Mauricio Vicent, saw renewal of his press credentials denied, therefore banning his reporting from the island.

Dominican Republic

Journalists killed: 1

The Dominican Republic continues to be a risky country for journalists. On 2 August, José Agustín Silvestre de los Santos, TV presenter and editor of La Voz de la Verdad magazine, was abducted and murdered. Police investigations were effective, revealing the mastermind to be a businessman who had contracted a hitman in reaction to an article written by Mr Silvestre that linked him to criminal activities and murders.

Ecuador

The media situation in Ecuador has rapidly deteriorated. The President's hate speeches against private media nourish an increasingly polarised climate of fear amongst the Ecuador press. The use of criminal defamation legislation and claims for utterly disproportionate damages by the president and government officials against critical journalists has had a chilling effect amongst the entire media community. Plans to establish a Regulatory Council empowered to regulate media content has raised concerns as to its independence: five of its seven members will be either directly appointed by the executive or chosen from institutions close to the government.

Honduras

Journalists killed: 1

On May 10, local TV journalist Héctor Francisco of Media Polanco was shot in the northern city of Morazán. His case is an example of how reporting on corruption amongst local authorities can have deadly consequences in Honduras. Mr Francisco had been threatened several times in the six months prior to his death. In recent years Honduras has seen worrying levels of violence against media professionals, with eight journalists killed in 2010 alone and most cases remaining unsolved.

Mexico

Journalists killed: 4

Violence and impunity remain Mexico's major challenges in terms of press freedom. The government's so-called "war on drugs" against powerful organised-crime syndicates and their internal fight for the control of commercial routes to the large US drug market continue to plunge the country into a seemingly endless spiral of violence. This has had devastating effects on the Mexican media. According to WAN-IFRA research, 30 media professionals have been killed since the start of the government's offensive in December 2006, with most of the perpetrators remaining at large. A total news blackout affects several regions in the north of the country, as drug cartels, the de facto authority in many cases, rarely hesitate in physically silencing investigative reporters.

On 25 March, photographer Luis Emanuel Ruiz was killed in the city of Monterrey. The 21 year-old had only eight-months on the job working for daily La Prensa and had been covering a story on a former drug-addict who had become a popular TV personality. On 31 May, the body of Noel López Olguín, a columnist for Veracruz-based daily La Verdad de Jáltipan kidnapped on 8 March, was found in the city of Chinameca. Mr López had been the author of a column in which he vigorously reported on drug-trafficking and government corruption. On 20 June, armed gunmen shot and killed Miguel Ángel López and his family at their home. A columnist at Veracruz-based Notiver daily, shortly before his death Mr López had written about drug trafficking in the region. 24 September, the decapitated body of María Macías, an editor at Primera Hora newspaper, was found in the city of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas state. A message left next to the body accused Ms Macías of denouncing drug violence on local social networks and websites.

Peru

Journalists killed: 1

Physical harassment against media professionals is common practice in Peru. On 3 May, Julio Castillo Narváez, a host at Radio Ollantay, was shot in the northwestern city of Virú. Journalists also face threats of archaic criminal defamation laws used by officials to punish critical voices with jail sentences. On 6 July, reporter Francisco Andrade Chávez was convicted of criminal defamation for a critical story about an official of the city of Chepén. Andrade appealed the conviction sentencing him to two years in jail and a 4,000 sols (EUR 990) fine and is yet to be imprisoned. Journalist Paul Segundo Garay Ramírez has been in jail since 19 April after being sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 20,000 sols (EUR 4,870) for allegedly defaming a colonel. Garay believes the conviction is a reprisal for his reporting on corruption. His 27 July appeal reduced his sentence to 18 months.

Venezuela

On 30 August, Leocenis García, publisher of the weekly Sexto Poder turned himself in to the police after a warrant was issued for his arrest on 21 August. On 20 August, the title had published a critical article accompanied by a satirical cartoon depicting high-ranking female officials of Hugo Chávez' administration. García and Dinorah Girón, one the weekly's top executives, were charged with inciting hatred, insulting a public official and publicly denigrating women, with a judge imposing a ban on the title the day after the article was published. Girón spent two days in jail before being released on 23 August; the ban on the weekly was lifted on 29 August. However, as of 20 September, García remained in the custody of Venezuela's intelligence agency, the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN). The systematic intimidation of journalists, the harassment of independent and critical media, and an increasingly restrictive media legislation characterises Hugo Chávez' government's poor press freedom record.

Asia

Journalists killed: Afghanistan (2) India (2) Pakistan (8) Philippines (1)
Thailand (1) Vietnam (1)

Total: 15

In Southeast Asia established democracies have seen a rise in impunity, censorship and violence against journalists in the past year. In the Philippines, President Benigno Aquino III is yet to follow through with promises to end impunity after a year in office. In the ongoing court case dealing with the Maguindanao massacre (2009), allegations of bribery from a relative of one of the deceased were immediately met with spurious contempt of court charges. Additionally, reports of violence against journalists have risen in Indonesia while in Pakistan attacks against the media continue to make the country one of the world's deadliest beats.

Afghanistan

Journalists killed: 2

There is growing concern that tight security surrounding the aftermath of terrorist attacks and suicide bombings threaten objective reporting. While public safety is of paramount concern, the danger of the public being misinformed in a way that suits the Afghan government and its allies poses a significant threat to the freedom of the press. A declaration by Afghanistan's Council of Religious Scholars on 1 June, criticising Hasht-e-Subh Daily newspaper and Tolo Television for what it reportedly called "immorality" and "animosity against Islam", has been interpreted as a significant threat against independent and open media in Afghanistan. It is hoped that the expectations of the country's religious leadership do not stifle free speech.

At the end of July, Ahmad Omaid Khpalwak, a reporter with the BBC World Service and Pajhwok Afghan News Agency, was among at least 22 people killed after gunmen and suicide bombers launched a combined attack on government buildings in Tarin Kot, capital of Uruzgan province. In a statement released on 8 September, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan said one of its soldiers had shot Mr Khpalwak, mistaking him for an armed insurgent reaching for a bomb under his vest. Farhad Taqaddosi, a cameraman for Iran's Press TV, died on 20 September from injuries sustained in the Taliban's 13 September attack on prominent international buildings in Kabul.

Burma

Conflicting messages continue to be emitted by the Burmese authorities regarding censorship, with a number of previously banned foreign news websites including YouTube, BBC, Reuters, The Bangkok Post, Straits Times, Radio Free Asia, Irrawaddy, Democratic Voice of Burma, and the Burmese version of Voice of America being unblocked just a few months after Internet café regulations were tightened. There is cause for cautious optimism, however, particularly after the government's announcement on 6 September that it is creating a National Human Rights Commission to which Burmese citizens can submit complaints. The local media also now carry frequent stories about opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and several state-owned media have stopped their regular attacks on the Western media. Censorship still heavily prevails against local media and bloggers, however, and 17 journalists, bloggers and artists remain detained in Burmese jails.

China

2011 has seen a particularly strong crackdown on Chinese media, with journalists, bloggers and websites targeted and blanket news bans on protests and demonstrations. A report by the International Federation of Journalists in February also revealed the government's direct interference in over 80 cases of censorship in 2010 that prevented public interest stories from reaching the presses. Online activists were targeted as authorities clamped down on coverage of the Arab Spring, with many citizen journalists and activists detained or charged by the Security Bureau. On 19 August two editors were suspended from their posts at newspaper Nanfeng Chuang (Window on the South) for citing a historian in an article that allegedly constituted criticism of the Communist Party. At least five other journalists have been silenced through dismissal or forced resignation this year.

Tashi Rabten, editor of banned Tibetan-language magazine Shar Dugri was sentenced to four years in prison on 2 June after having been held without charge since April 2010. Hada, editor of The Voice of the Southern Mongolia and a leading rights activist, completed a fifteen-year prison term for his dissident writings on 10 December 2010 but is yet to be released by Chinese authorities. His wife and son have also been held since May 2011 on politically motivated charges. Li Xiang, a journalist for the LuoyangCity television station, was killed on 19 September near his home in Xigong District, Luoyang, Henan Province. According to the China-based Southern Metropolis, Li was stabbed more than 10 times and his portable computer was stolen. Li had reported on the illegal recycling of waste oil into cooking oil. While food safety scandals are common in China, and journalists reporting on them frequently encounter harassment, murders occur less often.

India

Journalists killed: 2

While the Indian government's move to decriminalise defamation - laws that were used "to harass and censor journalists and political figures" – have been welcomed, attention has switched to the campaign to repeal colonial-era sedition laws which local authorities use to silence peaceful political dissent. The Right to Information (RTI) Act is also under scrutiny after the killing of activist and blogger Shehla Masood. The 2005 RTI Act provides access to certain public documents but those seeking them (especially material involving sensitive local matters) are often targeted by officials, with a dozen people apparently killed last year for doing so.

Violence and intimidation against journalists in Chhattisgarh state, central India, claimed the life of Umesh Rajput, a reporter for the Hindi-language daily newspaper Nai Dunia, who was shot and killed outside his home on 23 January. He had been receiving death threats, confirmed by a note found next to his body that read, "If you don't stop publishing news, you will die." Special security laws in force in the state, which has long been in the grip of an insurgency, risk being used to crackdown on free and fair reporting. In June, Jyotirmoy Dey, a senior journalist and special investigations editor with the Mumbai afternoon daily Middyay was gunned down in broad daylight as he rode home from work. Seven men were arrested in conjunction with his murder that has been linked back to a notorious mafia boss.

Malaysia

Malaysia's restrictive media laws are once more in the spotlight as media rights activists push the government to review its legislation. Aside from the Official Secrets Act, Sedition Act, Internal Security Act and Communications and Multimedia Act, the 1984 Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) allows the government to dictate to newspapers what they can or cannot report. The Act allows the Home Minister power to grant or renew licences to print media and states that the Minister's decision is final and not subject to judicial review. Strong opposition has also surfaced against the government's proposed Media Consultative Council, which is seen as yet another layer of control over the media. July protests for free and fair elections have fuelled a violent

government response: protestors and journalists reporting on the events were harassed and arrested, and the Communications and Multimedia Act was used to shut down websites deemed a threat to national security. On 20 July, a Kuala Lumpur court ordered political blogger Amizudin Ahmat to pay 300,000 ringgit (100,000 US dollars) in damages and 100,000 ringgit (33,000 US dollars) in costs in a defamation suit brought by the minister of information, communications and culture, Rais Yatim, over a blog entry suggesting that he raped his Indonesian maid. Despite an apology and the removal of the offending (third-party) content, the minister went ahead with both the court case and the damages claim.

Nepal

Politically motivated attacks against journalists and media organisations have continued in Nepal, with violent assaults and destruction of property a regular occurrence. Hired thugs, political cadres and even the police have been accused of targeting journalists, while inflammatory statements and death threats from public figures continue to polarise society against the media. On 24 May, activists from the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) vandalised a Kantipur Publications vehicle and beat three of its employees. The activists accused the company of not covering CPN-M news. Police arrested one suspect linked to the attack. In August, the chairman of Youth Association Nepal (YAN), a sister organisation of the ruling party CPN-UML, publicly threatened to close down Nagarik News, a sister publication of daily Republica, and imprison its editor-in-chief. On 4 September a motorbike gang entered the offices of the Naya Patrika national daily looking for the editor and began vandalising the premises in retaliation for a crime story the paper had published.

Pakistan

Journalists killed: 8

In the last 10 years, 36 journalists have been targeted and killed in Pakistan and none of their cases have been brought to court. In 2010, the country was the world's deadliest for the press, and 2011 has seen no let-up. While impunity prevails, the country's archaic blasphemy laws continue to polarise public opinion, with repeal activists and those who promote them subjected to brutal attacks and targeted for assassination. Journalist and National Assembly member Sherry Rehman, who worked for 10 years as editor-in-chief of The Herald newsmagazine, was publicly threatened by the leader of Karachi's Sultan Mosque, who said that Ms Rehman "deserved to be killed for her role in introducing the blasphemy bill in the National Assembly." Such statements from radical religious leaders have served to inflame public opinion and make reasoned debate impossible. The brutal killing in March of Shahbaz Bhatti, Pakistan's federal minister of minorities' affairs, who actively campaigned to protect the rights of religious minorities, made him the latest high-profile politician to pay the ultimate price for reform proposals.

Ilyas Nazar, a journalist with the Baloch-language magazine Darwanth, was abducted while travelling from Balochistan's capital, Quetta, to his home in Turbat in the south of the province. His bullet-ridden body was found on 3 January. Wali Khan Babar, a reporter with Geo TV, was gunned down in Karachi on 13 January shortly after covering an operation against drug-traffickers in the Pehalwan Goth area of the city. Pakistan's Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) called for a country-wide 'black day' on Friday 14, staging protest rallies and hoisting black flags in the offices of journalists' unions and press clubs to express their anger at the situation of impunity and the violence and lawlessness in which media personnel are forced to perform their professional assignments without security, insurance, or training.

Unidentified assailants shot Abdost Rind, a 27 year-old reporter with the Urdu-language Daily Eagle, as he returned home from work on the evening of 18 February. On 5 May, Syed Saleem Shahzad, the South Asia Correspondent for Italian news agency Adnkronos International (AKI) and Pakistan bureau chief of the Asia Times website, was tortured and killed in a targeted attack. Mr Shahzad was considered an expert on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. In 2006, the Taliban in Afghanistan held him for five days, and since October 2010 he had feared his life was in danger.

Nasrullah Khan Afridi, a correspondent for state-run Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV), the English-language daily Statesman and the Urdu-language daily Mashriq was killed when an explosive device ripped through his vehicle on the night of 10 May in Peshawar. Journalist Asfandiyar Abid Naveed, a reporter for the daily Akhbar-i-Khyber, was killed and eight other journalists were injured when two blasts ripped through the military cantonment's Khyber Supermarket in a commercial and residential area of Peshawar on 11 June. Shafiullah Khan, a trainee reporter at the daily The News, later died from injuries suffered during the blast.

Muneer Shakir, a journalist and correspondent for Online News Network and Sabzbaat TV, died from injuries sustained in an attack as he headed home from the press club in Khuzdar, central Balochistan, on 14 August.

Philippines

Journalists killed: 1

Impunity remains the biggest obstacle to freedom of expression in the Philippines. A report released on 5 September by the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) entitled 'Press freedom in [President] Aquino's first year: unfulfilled promises and fading hopes' warned that Sen. Benigno Aquino III's government has thus far failed to fulfil its election pledges of a free press. The report notes that resolutions from an August 2010 meeting between the government and the press have not been acted on.

Physical attacks and death threats continue to pursue Philippine journalists. Gerardo "Gerry" Ortega, a broadcaster with Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) dwAR in the country's far-western island province of Palawan, was shot dead shortly after his daily programme on 24 January. The gunman was arrested at the scene and reportedly told police that he and an accomplice had been promised 150,000 pesos (around 3370 US\$) to murder the broadcaster "to stop his criticism of unnamed powerful people." A Special Court to handle the trial of the Maguindanao massacre cases, where 58 people including 32 media personnel were brutally murdered in 2009, has been established amidst calls for the protection of witnesses and all those working on the proceedings after lawyers and court workers were reportedly threatened.

Thailand

Journalists killed: 1

In Thailand, it seems no media employee is safe. Thantawut Thaweewarodomkul, a web designer for Nor Por Chor USA, was sentenced on 23 March to 13 years in jail, 10 for lèse majesté (insulting the monarchy), and three for violating the country's rigid computer crime laws. However, his case is not unique in Thailand. Chiranuch Premchaiporn, executive director of the Thailand-based independent news website Prachatai, was accused of failing to remove anonymous comments posted on the website. The Thai government found the comments to be defamatory. The case highlights the blurry line between Thailand's Computer Crime act and the regional trend of targeting online developers in attempts to control information access on the Internet. To date, the Thai government has taken down 44,000 websites it deems unsupportive of the monarchy.

Controversy surrounded the official investigation into Japanese cameraman Hiro Muramoto's death during clashes between government forces and anti-government "Red Shirts" in Bangkok on 10 April 2010. The provisional conclusion one year after the event that the security forces did not fire the shot that killed Muramoto, who worked for Reuters, was suspected of being a whitewash of the events and a deliberate attempt to protect the identities of those responsible. On 24 September, Phamon Phonphanit, a reporter with Sue Samut Atyakam newspaper died from the result of injuries sustained in a series of bomb blasts in the insurgency-plagued southern region.

Vietnam

Journalists killed: 1

A new executive decree issued on 6 January gives authorities greater powers to penalise journalists, editors, and bloggers who report on issues deemed sensitive to national security. The new media regulations were issued amid a mounting clampdown on dissent before the 2011 Communist Party Congress. In a further blow to freedom of expression, Decree No. 2: Sanctions for Administrative Violations in Journalism and Publishing went into effect on 25 February that looks to fine journalists for vague infractions and require them to publish sources. The Decree stipulates fines from one million to 40 million dong (US\$50–2,000) for journalists and newspapers that violate its overly broad and vague provisions, such as failing to abide by the requirements of the 1990 Press Law (as amended in 1999) to “provide honest domestic and international news in accordance with the interests of the country and the people.” Local press and international watchdogs fear the decree will lead to widespread self-censorship.

Vietnamese authorities harassed journalists reporting on public anti-China demonstrations. On 10 July, police detained and interrogated Hau Dinh, a news assistant with Associated Press Television, a cameraman with Japanese television broadcaster NHK and a news assistant with the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun. Le Hoang Hung, a reporter with the Nguoi Lao Dong (Laborer) newspaper, died on 31 January from severe injuries sustained after an unknown assailant entered his house in Tan An town, dousing the reporter in chemicals and setting him ablaze.

Europe & Central Asia

Journalists killed: 0

Press Freedom continues to suffer from a deep-rooted culture of impunity, intimidation and harassment in certain parts of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Violence against the media, the use of defamation legislation and ill-thought-out regulation seriously undermine the work of media professionals in the region.

Azerbaijan

On 26 May, prominent Azerbaijani journalist Eynulla Fatullayev was freed from jail after serving more than four years on unsubstantiated charges of criminal defamation, terrorism, ethnic hatred, tax evasion and drug-possession. His case epitomised the Azerbaijani authorities' determination to stifle critical voices through different intimidation and harassment tactics. Despite his release, violence directed against journalists and human rights activists continues to be a common occurrence throughout the country.

Belarus

Belarus is one of Europe's worst pupils in terms of freedom of expression. In December 2010, President Lukashenko's controversial electoral victory was followed by massive street protests. Authorities led a crackdown against journalists and demonstrators who were beaten and arrested during and after the protests. KGB agents raided the homes and offices of independent and critical media professionals in an attempt to seize footage of the election protests. On 16 May, journalist Irina Khalip, the Minsk-based correspondent for Russian paper Novaya Gazetta, was given a two-year suspended sentence for "organising and participating" in the December protests. On 3 July, Belarus' Independence Day, the authorities arrested more than 15 journalists and 300 anti-government protesters, and cancelled the visas of several foreign journalists who had planned to cover the festivities.

Cyprus

Cyprus is considered "Free" by Freedom House, however there has been increasing violence this year, particularly in the northern region of Nicosia. In July 2011, newspaper Afrika, which opposes the Turkish presence in northern Cyprus, had its offices stormed by a Turkish citizen shooting wildly with a gun. This follows attacks and threats against TV journalist Mutlu Esendemir and newspaper editor Cenk Mutluyakali in April. Violence against journalists seems to be a growing trend in the self-proclaimed Republic of Northern Cyprus. After the car bombing in April, Esendemir was the target of a second car bomb 12 May. In January, Necmettin Çapa, who had worked for years in northern Cyprus for publications including Afrika, Ortam and Yeniçağ, was expelled from the island by the Turkish military. Citing the expiry of his visa, they forced him onto a boat after raiding his home. Mr Çapa believes he was being made to pay for the many articles he had written about the rights of the Kurdish population in Turkey and Cyprus.

Hungary

Concern has been raised on how a new press law in Hungary could seriously endanger press freedom. Amendments passed in March did not defuse criticism from the European Union and international freedom of expression groups. The new law came fully into force on 1 July. Most of the concern focuses on the creation of a Media Council composed of five members directly appointed by the government, who will have the authority to impose heavy fines for content deemed "unbalanced" or that violates "human dignity". The Council also has the authority to demand confidential documents from media organisations with the power to impose fines if they

refuse, a development that poses a serious threat to the protection of sources.

Montenegro

In December 2010, Prime Minister Igor Luksic took office as his country acquired formal EU candidate status. Mr Luksic sent a wave of hope throughout Montenegrin media as he took the necessary steps to move away from the tumultuous relationship between his predecessor, Milo Djukanovic, and critical civil society. On 9 July, Montenegro fully decriminalised its libel and insult laws, with plaintiffs now encouraged to rely on civil litigation. However, remnants of the country's dark past remain: the 2004 murder of publisher Dusko Jovanovic remains unsolved, while throughout the summer vehicles owned by private independent daily Vijesti were set ablaze sending a clear message in response to the newspaper's critical reporting of certain government figures close to Milo Djukanovic.

Russia

Impunity for the killers of investigative and critical journalists in Russia has always been one of the country's major challenges in the field of press freedom. On 28 April, after a transparent and convincing investigation, radical nationalists Nikita Tikhonov and his wife Yevgeniya Khasis were found guilty for the 2009 double murder of Novaya Gazeta reporter Anastasia Baburova and human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov. Tikhonov was sentenced to life imprisonment for the killing, while Khasis faces an 18-year jail sentence as his accomplice.

On 2 September, retired police officer Lt. Col. Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov was charged in connection to the 2006 murder of Novaya Gazeta investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya. Pavlyuchenkov, then head of surveillance at Moscow's Main Internal Affairs Directorate, coordinated surveillance on the journalist and passed the murder weapon to Rustam Makhmudov, the suspected gunman indicted in June. Although the organisers and the gunmen are on trail, the masterminds who ordered the killing remain unknown.

Turkey

Turkish media professionals have seen numerous red lines evolve during Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's mandate. Although it is now possible to criticise army officials more freely and write openly about the Kurdish minority, Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) continue to use vague defamation and anti-terrorism legislation to stifle critics and attack leftist and Kurdish journalists. On 3 March, two prominent investigative journalists, Ahmed Şık and Nedim Şener, were arrested along with 10 other journalists, writers and academics by the anti-terrorist police in Istanbul. The authorities seized the unpublished manuscript of a book Mr Şık was writing concerning an Islamic movement close to the AKP. Prime Minister Erdogan compared the book to a bomb. The journalists were held on evidence that cannot be revealed for confidentiality reasons that is linked to the "Ergenekon" conspiracy, an alleged military plot to overthrow the government.

Ukraine

Impunity continues to tarnish Ukraine's press freedom record, despite recent progress in the investigation into the brutal murder of prominent journalist Georgy Gongadze. On 30 August, Aleksei Pukach, a former General at the Interior Ministry, testified to having killed the Ukrainska Pravda editor in 2000. He also testified that Ukraine's former president, Leonid Kuchma, along with other top officials, had plotted the killing, with the direct order issued by Yuri Kravchenko, Interior Minister at the time, who was killed in 2005 just hours before questioning was due to begin on his role in the Gongadze case. Prior to his death, Mr Gongadze had been investigating corruption and vote-rigging in the Kuchma administration.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom was shocked by the revelation of widespread telephone hacking by journalists at tabloid newspaper The News of the World. The newspaper stopped publishing on 10 July after 168 years. The scandal raised the question of the importance of media ethics in journalism and the role of press regulation mechanisms.

Middle East and North Africa

Journalists killed: Bahrain (1) Egypt (1) Iraq (6) Libya (5) Tunisia (1) Yemen (2)
TOTAL: 16

Despite the fall of dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, little progress has been made in installing legislation that will protect the freedom of the press. Governments in other Arab states have been obliged to make concessions to pro-reform demonstrators in order to remain in power, but promises of change have likewise brought little improvement in terms of media freedoms. A media blackout in Syria helped obscure the full extent of the regime's brutal crackdown, with protestors for a time providing the only footage from inside the country. In Yemen journalists were deliberately targeted in March as state-orchestrated violence erupted in response to calls demanding President Saleh step down. Bahrain's authorities, with help from their Saudi neighbours have systematically hunted down, imprisoned and reportedly tortured bloggers and freedom of expression activists who participated in pro-reform demonstrations earlier in the year.

Bahrain

Journalists killed: 1

In Bahrain, critical journalists have been intimidated, interrogated, smeared in government-owned and -aligned publications, and harassed and sued by government supporters since the beginning of pro-reform demonstrations in February. On 12 April Karim Fakhrawi, founder and board member at Al-Wasat, the country's premier independent daily, died in state custody a week after he was detained. In early April, the government had accused Al-Wasat of "deliberate news fabrication and falsification," said it would file criminal charges against three of the paper's senior editors, and deported two other senior staffers. In late May, Nazeeha Saeed, a correspondent for France 24 and Radio Monte Carlo Doualiya, was tortured by police for covering pro-democracy demonstrations. Saeed was accused of lying and of "harming Bahrain's image." She is suffering physical and psychological after-effects and is receiving care in France. 21 bloggers, human rights activists, and members of the political opposition were found guilty of plotting to topple the monarchy in an extraordinary tribunal held in June. Many received life sentences in what observers are dismissing as highly politicised trials.

Egypt

Journalists killed: 1

Local and international journalists were widely targeted while covering pro-reform demonstrations that began on 25 January. Many were arrested and detained by Egyptian police and security forces, while pro-regime supporters and security personnel physically attacked others. Al-Arabiya correspondent Ahmed Bajano and his camera crew were beaten in Mustafa Mahmoud Square. Two other Al-Arabiya journalists also reported being assaulted in separate incidents and the station's Cairo office was attacked and its windows broken. Belgian journalist Maurice Sarfatti, Middle East correspondent for the Brussels-based Le Soir, Geneva-based LeTemps, and French newspaper La Voix du Nord, was beaten and arrested. He was taken to military barracks and accused of being a spy. Three France 24 journalists were detained while covering protests and were held for questioning by military intelligence services.

Police arrested four Israeli journalists for allegedly violating the curfew in Cairo and for entering the country on tourist visas. CNN's Anderson Cooper and his crew were attacked by pro-government supporters, as were two unnamed Associated Press correspondents and Danish journalist Steffen Jensen. Icelandic journalist Jon Bjorgvinsson and his crew were also attacked and accused of being foreign spies. BBC correspondent Rupert Wingfield-Hayes was handcuffed and blindfolded by security agents and detained for three hours. A group of men attacked the headquarters of the independent daily Al-Shorouk in Cairo. Two journalists were injured and equipment damaged. Egyptian authorities also blocked access to websites of local online newspapers and barred domestic access to social networking sites Twitter and Facebook. Violence turned deadly on 29 January when Ahmad Mohamed Mahmoud, a reporter with Al-Ta'awun, was shot on his office balcony as he filmed a confrontation between security forces and demonstrators in the street below.

Despite the fall of President Hosni Mubarak, the military and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces continue to censor the Egyptian media. Sayyid Abdel Ati, editor-in-chief of Al-Wafd, was charged with publishing false information likely to disturb the peace after he wrote an article about an alleged political deal between the Egyptian military and the Muslim Brotherhood. Blogger Hossam el-Hamalawy, television presenter Reem Maged, journalist Nabil Sharaf Eddin and journalist Shahira Amin were all summoned for questioning by the military with regards to their reporting. On 10 May, journalist and talk show host Mahmoud Sharaf cut his programme short when the executives on Nile TV, a state-owned channel, asked Sharaf's guests to be "reigned in" after they criticised the military on-air.

The Akhbar-Al-Youm newspaper website was hacked in early June, while journalist Ahmed Ragab and cartoonist Mustafa Hussein were targeted by a group of young Salafists who accused them of "defaming Islam". Observers have questioned the role of the military in the new National Media Council, formed as a replacement for the Egyptian Radio and Television Union, following the suspension in early June of television programme Cairo Time, hosted by the respected journalist Hafez Al-Mirazi. Blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad, who was tried in a military court for "insulting the military" and is now serving a three-year sentence in prison, began a hunger strike in prison on 22 August. He was transferred to solitary confinement two days later. Police raided and shut down the bureau of Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr at the start of September under the pretext of a licensing dispute: suspicion remains that it was in fact due to the channel's critical reporting of the military. In mid-September, the military announced that it would actively enforce the Hosni Mubarak-era Emergency Law, which allows civilians, including journalists, to be tried in state security courts.

Iran

Iran continues to be among the world's worst jailers of journalists. In its last census, completed in December 2010, CPJ recorded 34 imprisoned journalists while media reports and testimonies indicate that Iran's prison and judicial authorities continue to engage in abusive and retaliatory tactics against those detained. Intelligence services regularly harass journalists and intellectuals in an attempt to force them to collaborate with the regime and betray colleagues. On 14 March 2011, the UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon stated he was "deeply troubled by reports of increased executions, detentions, arbitrary arrests, unfair trials and possible torture and ill-treatment of human rights activists, lawyers, journalists and opposition activists." He regretted that no UN human rights investigators had been allowed to visit Iran since 2005.

An eleven-year sentence was handed down on 9 January to prominent writer, journalist and lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh. She was also banned from practicing law and from leaving the country for 20 years. Ms Sotoudeh is believed to have been charged for critical interviews she gave to overseas media following the disputed June 2009 presidential election. Journalist Narges Mohammadi has been sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges of collaborating with the Human Rights Defenders Centre, "meeting and conspiring against the Islamic Republic" and anti-government propaganda. In July, veteran journalist Mashallah Shamsolvaezin was ordered to serve a 16-month prison sentence, dating from a trial in 2010, on charges of "insulting the

president” and “weakening the Islamic Republic regime.” Journalist and critic Siamak Pourzand reportedly committed suicide at the beginning of May following years of house arrest in his apartment in Tehran. PEN American Center President Kwame Anthony Appiah called his death “devastating evidence of the human toll of years of inhuman repression.”

Journalist and activist Ahmad Zeidabadi, WAN-IFRA’s 2010 Golden Pen of Freedom laureate, won the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2011. Mr Zeidabadi continues to serve a six-year prison sentence following Iran’s disputed 2009 presidential election.

Iraq

Journalists killed: 6

Authorities in Iraq have not seriously investigated the murder of a journalist since 2003, while not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice. Thus the country has the dubious distinction of being ranked number-one on the Committee to Protect Journalist’s ‘Global Impunity Index’.

Hilal al-Ahmadi, a freelance journalist of over 30 years who was known for his work on financial and administrative corruption, was shot to death outside his home on 17 February as he was leaving for work. On the 24 February, Mohamed al-Hamdani, a correspondent for Al-Itijah satellite TV in Al-Anbar province, was killed when a young suicide bomber blew himself up during a religious celebration. Ahmad Abd al-Salam, a correspondent for Al-Aan satellite TV station, and Ahmad al-Hayti, a radio reporter for Iraq Hurr, were both injured in the attack.

On 29 March, Al-Ayn news agency reporter Muammar Khadir Abdelwahad and Sabah al-Bazi, a correspondent for Al-Arabiya and contributor to Reuters, CNN, and other international news outlets, were both killed when gunmen wearing military uniforms seized control of a provincial government building in Tikrit. The journalists were covering a provincial council meeting when the assailants - using car bombs, explosive vests, and grenades - mounted an assault. The ensuing siege lasted many hours and claimed at least 58 victims. Prominent journalist Hashem Hassan faces a 1.2 million Euro libel suit brought by the president of Iraq’s electoral commission for an article he wrote for the 4 May issue of Al-Mashreq that questioned the commission’s legitimacy and professionalism, referred to corruption allegations and accused it of wasting public funds. In June, cameraman Alwan al-Ghorabi who worked for the Afaq satellite channel died in the southern city of Diwaniyya when a car bomb exploded in the city centre, while Hadi al-Mahdi, a popular radio journalist often critical of the government, was killed at his home in Baghdad at the beginning of September.

Libya

Journalists killed: 5

At the beginning of the conflict in Libya, pro-Muammar Qaddafi forces attempted to impose a news blackout by inviting, then confining foreign journalists to their hotels, while loyalists also assaulted and detained those who attempted to report on anti-regime protests and violence against civilians. Deadly attacks on journalists continued as Qaddafi loyalists’ struggled to battle the rebels. Al-Jazeera cameraman Ali Hassan al-Jaber was attacked and killed by gunmen on his way home from covering a 12 March opposition demonstration. Several journalists, including The Guardian’s Ghaith Abdul-Ahad and O Estado de Sao Paulo reporter Andrei Netto were detained and tortured. On 19 March, Mohamed Al-Nabbous, the ‘Benghazi blogger’ and online TV broadcaster for Libya Al-Hurra TV, was killed by a sniper while covering Libyan army attacks. On 5 April, Libyan government forces killed South African-Austrian photojournalist Anton Hammerl. Three journalists travelling with Hammerl were detained and weren’t released until 18 May, when news of Hammerl’s death was disclosed. Freelance photojournalists Chris Hondros and Tim Hetherington were fatally wounded in an RPG attack by government forces in Misrata on 20 April.

Three journalists were killed and 21 others injured in Tripoli on 30 July after NATO warplanes bombed transmission towers in an effort to take Libyan state television off the air. In August,

Tracey Shelton, a freelance Australian journalist was brutally attacked by two armed men in her Benghazi hotel room. She escaped by jumping to a nearby balcony. Four Italian journalists were captured by forces loyal to Qaddafi on 24 August only to be released a day later after a raid on the apartment where they were being held. Many journalists who disappeared during the conflict remain unaccounted for: two Tripoli-based journalists - Salma al-Shaab, head of the Libyan Journalists Syndicate, and Suad al-Turabouls, a correspondent for the pro-government Al-Jamahiriya - were detained in late February, but have not been heard from since. Atef al-Atrash, a contributor to local news outlets in Benghazi; Mohamed al-Sahim, a blogger and critical political writer; cartoonist Mohamed al-Amin; and Idris al-Mismar, a writer and the former editor-in-chief of Arajin, a monthly culture magazine, have all been reported missing.

Syria

Journalists killed: 1

In February, Taj al-Mallohi, a 20-year-old Syrian woman, was sentenced to five years in prison on state security charges concerning her blog. She was accused of "divulging information to a foreign state" by the High State Security Court in Damascus, which prosecutes those considered a threat to the state. The verdict is final and there is no possibility for an appeal. In May, Syrian forces continued to use arbitrary arrest, harassment and physical violence against political and human rights activists. Najati Tayara, a writer for Tayyarat magazine and editor-in-chief of the online publication Almarsad was arrested after he gave an interview to Al Jazeera. Numerous reporters and online journalists were arrested or secretly detained for covering the state's initial reprisals, including Ammar Mashour Dayoub, Malak Al-Shanawani, Al Jazeera English online reporter Dorothy Parvaz, Libyan journalist Ghadi Frances who covered the demonstrations for the Lebanese daily Al-Safir, and Fayiz Sara, a contributor to Al-Hayat and As-Safir.

Blogger Kamal Sheikhou was freed on bail on 13 March and was due to appear in court 30 May. He was charged with "publishing information liable to defame the nation." His whereabouts are unknown. Jihad Jamal, a journalist and blogger known as 'Milan', is still in detention after being arrested on 5 May after the police hacked into his Facebook account. Arbitrary arrests continued throughout the summer, with the regime attempting to silence anyone who spoke out against its security clampdown. Journalist Omar al-Assad, who has contributed to pan-Arab daily Al-Hayat and the Lebanese daily As-Safir, was arrested by Syrian security forces on 4 August. Security forces in Damascus arrested Amer Matar, another Al-Hayat contributor, at the beginning of September.

Proposals for the reform of media laws have been met with heavy scepticism, with observers predicting the new legislation is designed to offer only the "illusion" of greater freedoms. Article 12 calls vaguely for "responsible freedom of expression" and bans any reporting that incites violence, sectarian divisions, or threatens national unity. Despite calls for "respect for the fundamental freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international conventions", the regime continues its deadly crackdown. Syria was listed as one of the "Enemies of the Internet" released by Reporters Without Borders on 12 March, while in June Syria was also named one of the most repressive societies in the world for political rights and civil liberties by US-based Freedom House.

Tunisia

Journalists killed: 1

Scars left by the former regime of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali remain apparent across the media industry, while the legislative framework left behind fails to adequately respond to the requirements of the emerging media stakeholders. Freedom of expression groups are now vying for a place in discussions that will define the new society and must ensure their own internal democratic structures are in place so that all interests can be taken into consideration. Support for the independent press and broadcasting sectors, along with the promotion of professional journalism practices and a thorough revision of the media-legal framework are seen as crucial to the success of the transition process ahead of the Constituent Assembly elections, now scheduled

for 23 October 2011.

In April, WAN-IFRA led an IFEX-Tunisia Monitoring Group international mission to Tunisia and authored the first report on the Tunisian media since the fall of Ben Ali. The report made a number of recommendations to civil society groups, the government and private media, concluding "that if Tunisians are to play an informed part in the country's democratic transition, they need a free and independent media and a strong, democratic and open civil society."

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/644rewa> to download the report.

French photographer Lucas Mebrouk Dolega, who was on assignment for the European Press Photo Agency, died as a result of injuries sustained on 14 January following a tear gas attack by Tunisian police. He had been covering demonstrations in front of the Interior Ministry building when the attack occurred.

Yemen

Journalists killed: 2

In March, at least six foreign journalists were arrested and deported from Yemen by authorities after coverage of government attacks that killed seven protesters in Sana'a. Thousands of people demanded the immediate resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Foreign media employees from the UK, the US and Italy were deported under suspicion that they were covering the protests, while local Yemeni journalists were also harassed, beaten, detained and abducted while covering clashes. Armed gangs have carried out attacks on anti-government protesters that are often overlooked and go un-prosecuted by the government.

Harassment and physical violence continues against the Yemeni press, even while President Saleh was out of the country receiving medical treatment. In May, armed men dressed as civilians tried to storm the Sana'a offices of independent daily Al-Oula, with the possible goal of assassinating editor-in-chief Mohammed Ayash. Because of his unwillingness to cooperate with the armed men, editorial trainee Hasaan Saeed Hasaan was beaten and stabbed multiple times during the early morning attack. Al-Sahwa.net correspondent Yahia Al-Thanya was abducted at a checkpoint near the Al-Dailami air-base, a few kilometres outside Sanaa, on the night of 19 June, just a few days after reporting that the government was illegally holding activists at a secret detention centre within the base. Copies of the newspaper Al-Oula were seized on the outskirts of Sana'a on 25 June for the 19th time since pro-democracy demonstrations began in mid-February. Five days later, 2,000 copies of the newspaper Al-Umma were confiscated at a checkpoint in the southern city of Aden.

On 28 August, BBC reporter Abdallah Ghoraib and cameraman Zein al-Saqaaf were attacked by armed thugs while they covered a protest against oil and electricity outages in Sana'a. Abdul al-Hafeez al-Hatami, correspondent for the news website Al-Sahwa Net, and Raafat al-Amiri, cameraman for Suhail TV - the opposition pro-revolution news station - were attacked at the beginning of September while covering the rising oil prices in the Al-Duha district in the western province of Hobeidah. On 24 September Hassan al-Wadhaf, a cameraman with the Arabic Media Agency, was killed by a sniper in the capital Sana'a.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Journalists killed: Democratic Republic of Congo (1) Sierra Leone (1) Somalia (2)
TOTAL: 4

Sweeping anti-terrorism laws, criminal defamation and treason charges are regularly used to detain local and foreign journalists who criticise or question authority in Sub-Saharan Africa. A culture of unrelenting violence, harassment and intimidation, particularly alongside elections continues to stifle freedom of expression, however some gains have been made in countries such as Liberia and Nigeria where legislation protecting access to information has been tabled. The African Platform on Access to Information (APAI) Declaration made in Cape Town, South Africa on 19 September states that access to information is a fundamental human right, laying out a set of key principles that are designed to promote universal accessibility to information in a new digital age. It is hoped this pan-African initiative will provide the basis upon which meaningful legislation can not only be formulated, but also effectively enacted.

Burundi

The National Council for Communication (CNC) has been accused of harassing private media, particularly radio stations critical of the government. RPA news editor Bob Rugurika was summonsed to appear before the Bujumbura main court prosecutor's office for the third time on 1 August, accused with "inciting a popular revolt" after featuring quoted passages from a speech by US secretary of state Hillary Clinton in a 13 June report in which she referred to the Arab Spring. Online newspaper editor Jean Claude Kavumbagu was released on 16 May after being acquitted on a charge of treason for questioning in an article whether Burundi would be able to protect itself against a terrorist attack by Somalia's Islamist militia Al-Shabaab. Prosecutors had requested a life sentence on 13 April. In September, authorities imposed a news blackout on the media following the massacre of 36 people at a bar in Gatumba near the border with the DRC. In an alarming move, the authorities banned all live broadcasts of a political nature for one month and forbid the media from covering the official enquiry that has been launched into the massacre.

Cameroon

Cameroon's government obstructs journalists from reporting on issues of public interest, with security forces detaining journalists without charge and seizing footage. The arbitrary arrest of political and civil society activists continues to undermine democracy in the country, while the use of punitive legislation stifles a free press. Editor Jean-Marie Tchatchouang of the weekly *Paroles* was charged with criminal defamation on 4 February following accusations made in an article about a local official embezzling public subsidies and employing abusive labour practices. Mr Tchatchouang was handed a suspended prison sentence and the newspaper was banned. In March, the government blocked Twitter via SMS services through the MTN network in an apparent attempt to prevent microblogging. While few people rely on the service, nonetheless it was interpreted as a blatant attempt to prevent open discussion following demonstrations against President Paul Biya at the end of February. Authorities detained Editor François Fogno Fotso of the private bi-monthly *Génération Libre* and pressed him to reveal the sources for a story detailing alleged corruption by a tax official. Mr Fotso was interrogated without the presence of a lawyer and pressured to identify the sources for a story dating back to August 2010.

Côte d'Ivoire

Media freedoms came under heavy attack during the protracted conflict over disputed election results. Armed groups and hired assassins threatened partisan media with reprisals for their coverage, while numerous reports of beatings, death threats, detention and torture surfaced.

Media freedoms suffered a major setback in February as Laurent Gbagbo's government replaced the leadership of the National Press Council, a formerly fiercely independent and effective body, in an increasingly desperate attempt to cling to power. As the conflict continued pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara newspapers were increasingly targeted by rival militias, while publishing bans and attacks on newspaper premises were used to discourage journalists from covering the events. Once President Alassane Ouattara had assumed power, reprisal attacks against former Gbagbo-aligned media continued. Since the beginning of May, however, the media has begun a slow reconstruction after the devastation of nearly six months of effective civil war, and in August state television finally returned to the air.

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Journalists killed: 1

As the DRC approaches its latest round of elections, attacks on the independent press have intensified as rival political parties seek to exert influence over their voters. Journalists have been arbitrarily arrested and detained on spurious charges of enflaming public opinion as political authorities and their violent cronies (often security officials) attempt to intimidate the independent press. On 21 June, 29-year-old Kambale Musonia, a journalist at Radio Communautaire de Lubero Sud, was gunned down a few metres from his home. Four days prior to his murder, Mr Musonia had hosted a live broadcast during which guests had denounced a local armed gang made up of civilians operating in complicity with the police. Dédé Ilunga, a reporter for Radio Océan, a community radio station based in Fungurume, Katanga province, southeastern DRC was held for 17 days in a police cell before being released on 22 September. The journalist was accused of "inciting rebellion" and working for the opposition after allegedly criticising President Joseph Kabila's five-point public works programme in a radio programme.

Eritrea

2011 marks the 10th anniversary of the round-up of journalists and the closure of all privately-owned print media in Eritrea. Sadly, many of the journalists incarcerated in 2001 remain in jail. Eritrea's working journalists and publishers continue to live in fear of reprisal for critical reporting. Four journalists have been arrested this year and taken to notorious prison camps while others have lost their lives, including Lidya Mengesteab, a reporter for Eri-TV who fled Eritrea into exile, only to perish on a boat crossing the Mediterranean in April. The whereabouts of 2011 WAN-IFRA Golden Pen of Freedom laureate Dawit Isaak, co-founder of the country's first independent newspaper Setit, remain unknown.

Ethiopia

According to reports, six local and international journalists have been incarcerated in Ethiopia this year on vague terrorism offences in a bid to prevent reporting critical of the regime. Reeyot Alemu, a writer for the independent weekly Fetehe and Woubshet Taye, deputy editor of the weekly Awramba Times both fell victim to these laws in June. Ethiopia's sweeping 2009 terrorism law allows for preventive detention of a minimum of 28 days, ensuring that journalists, bloggers and activists remain silent. Showing their true colours, the government on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, hijacked a UNESCO sponsored conference on press freedom and exchanged international speakers for government officials, ensuring voices of dissent were not heard.

Gambia

In efforts to strengthen his 17-year dictatorship, President Yahya Jammeh has continued to prey on the independent press, resorting to undemocratic laws to punish journalists and government critics and repress free speech in the country. Most victims of enforced disappearances in The Gambia are journalists, opposition party members, or security force personnel who have turned against the government. The regime's horrendous human rights record and its recent crackdown on independent reporting does not auger well for November's forthcoming elections. Ndey Tapha

Sosseh, the immediate past president of the Gambian Press Union was charged on 19 July for allegedly distributing materials demanding an end to the president's authoritarian rule. A total of seven activists and journalists were charged with treason and sedition for distributing T-shirts with the slogan "Coalition for Change - The Gambia: End Dictatorship Now."

Namibia

A decade-long ban on government advertising in independent newspaper The Namibian was lifted in September, with offices, agencies and ministries being directed to advertise in all of Namibia's press.

Niger

After peaceful elections, President Issoufou's government agreed to greater media freedoms after the caretaker military government decriminalised defamation in 2010. However, there is still some confusion on the part of authorities after a journalist with the weekly *Le Canard Déchaîné* was briefly detained in July on criminal defamation charges.

Rwanda

In February, editor Agnes Uwimana and reporter Saidati Mukakibibi of Umurabyo were jailed under defamation laws for articles criticising Rwanda's President Paul Kagame. The international community was outraged at the lengthy sentences, totaling 17 and seven years respectively. While press freedom organisations, publishers and the local community welcomed the government's Access to Information Bill adopted in July, reporting the news remains a clear and present danger with criminal defamation and insult laws regularly used to silence critics. Exiled independent journalist Jean Bosco Gasasira was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison in June for allegedly calling for civil disobedience and insulting the president.

Sierra Leone

Journalists killed: 1

In June, violent clashes between neighbouring villages of Kossoh and Grafton in Sierra Leone saw journalist Ibrahim Foday of The Exclusive stabbed to death for reporting on the disturbances. September saw four journalists assaulted by two members of the presidential guards at the National Stadium in Freetown when they tried to enter with their press passes after an international football match.

Somalia

Journalists killed: 2

Somalia continues to be one of the most dangerous countries for media employees in Africa. In August, Radio Simba staff member Farah Hassan Sahal, was killed by a sniper after moving radio equipment to a safer place during an insurgent attack while in September, Noramfaizul Mohd, a cameraman with Bernama TV Malaysia was killed and another wounded after African Union forces fired on a humanitarian convoy. Both attacks occurred in Mogadishu.

South Africa

The ruling African National Congress party of South Africa proposed legislation that would criminalise investigative journalism by allowing officials to classify information in the name of "national interest". The Protection of Information Bill, which included prison sentences of three to 25 years for anyone who disclosed classified information on public interest grounds, was withdrawn in September after an intense global campaign. However, there are still blatant moves by South Africa's ruling party to influence the press. In July, a Cabinet spokesperson announced that lucrative government advertising contracts would favour media that "assist the government

in getting its message across” and “tell the truth about service delivery”.

South Sudan

Reports of journalists being attacked by the government’s security forces provided worrying early indications of the direction of freedom of expression in Africa’s newest nation. A number of media bills are currently being refined, however, and the government has shown willingness to look beyond its northern neighbour for inspiration in constructing effective legislation, raising hopes that press freedom in South Sudan will be constitutionally enshrined.

Sudan

In July, a Sudanese court sentenced journalist Fatimah Ghazali to one month in prison for reporting on the alleged rape of a female opposition activist by members of the country’s security forces. In a surprise statement in August, President Omar Al-Bashir announced that he would free all imprisoned journalists, although some media employees still remain in prison. However, criticising the military is still costly - around 10 journalists are either under investigation or have been summonsed after complaints by the military this year.

Uganda

A “walk to work” protest in Uganda in April saw eight journalists injured after government forces fired tear gas on the demonstrators, with two media employees, Francis Mukasa and Ssalongo Erias Lukwago beaten so badly they required hospitalisation. A further 10 local and foreign journalists were again targeted at an opposition rally in May, continuing the clampdown on media freedoms since the reelection of President Yoweri Museveni.

Zimbabwe

A culture of arrests, harassment and intimidation is the norm for journalists and the independent press in Zimbabwe. In September, former information minister Jonathan Moyo filed a lawsuit against The Daily News editor Stanley Gama and reporter Thelma for quoting diplomatic cables made available through Wikileaks. The Daily News returned to newsstands in April after a seven-year ban, but since its reappearance has faced continual threats, including its vendors being beaten. Another independent newspaper, NewsDay was raided in April by members of the Central Intelligence Organisation who confiscated hard discs and computers.



FREE DAWIT ISAAK

SWEDISH-ERITREAN JOURNALIST, WRITER & PLAYWRIGHT
2011 GOLDEN PEN OF FREEDOM LAUREATE

This report was compiled using information from International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) member organisations and research by the WAN-IFRA Press Freedom department

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