Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

The month in which the number of arrested women journalists increased by 19.1%

September 2022
Objective of report

Every day, worldwide, women journalists face severe threats to their safety. These threats exist online and offline, from misinformation and discrediting campaigns rooted in misogyny and sexism to more serious problems such as harassment from the state. The problems women journalists contend with are not broadly recognized. Newsrooms are often tight-lipped about them; governments take little action to counter violations against women journalists.

CFWIJ’s monthly reports are drawn from our daily and feature research that offers a landscape view of what press freedom looks like from a gender angle. Each morning CFWIJ team register new violations against them, marshaling ever more evidence of the severity of the threats they face and the urgent need to raise awareness about these issues. Many of these cases are documented internally by The Coalition, to maintain anonymity and ensure the safety of targeted journalists. Our work shows the incredible courage and conviction women journalists work with in spite of the hurdles they face. Our job is to ensure their circumstances are made visible so accurate resources can be directed for their safety and growth.

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Iran: At least 11 women journalists were arrested while covering protests over Mahsa Amini’s death. Yalda Moaiery, Nilufar Hamidi, Elahe Mohammadi, Elnaz Mohammadi, Batol Balali, Samira Alinejad, Fatemeh Rajabi, Vida Rabbani, Zahra Tohidi, Elmira Bahmani and Sarvenaz Ahmadi are the women journalists who were arrested by the Iranian government in September. After their arrests, Batol and Sarvanez were released on bail. CFWIJ has been following the protests in the country closely. Read more to learn details about arrests.

Republic of Dagestan: Yulia Vishnevetskaya, a correspondent for Radio Liberty, was detained on 26 September 2022 in Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan, as she covered a protest against mobilisation for the war in Ukraine. On the next day, she was ordered five days of administrative arrest.
Turkey: Between September 16-23, journalists Nurcan Yalçın, Hatice Şahin, Rabia Önver and Rojda Oğuz were sentenced to prison on terrorism charges. In 2021, 25.6% of the cases of violence against women and LGBTQ+ journalists recorded in 128 countries belonged to Turkey. From the beginning of 2022 to September 23, this rate increased to 43.9%. Read our detailed report to read what happened to Turkish journalists in September.

Journalist Sadiye Eser and her colleague Sadık Topaloğlu were sentenced to six years and three months in prison on allegations of being “members of an illegal organization” based on the statements of an absent witness. Read the whole period of their legal trial.

Rojda Oğuz was also sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days in prison in a lawsuit filed on charges of “membership in an armed terrorist organization” and “propagandizing for a terrorist organization”. The protests and marches that the journalist reported, as well as her social media post, and secret witnesses’ claims, were considered criminal elements in the lawsuit. Read more about her case here.

In the final hearing of the lawsuit filed against editor Hatice Şahin on the charge of “membership in an armed organization”, she was sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison with the allegation that she “participated in terrorism activities within the scope of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) protests”.

Journalist Nurcan Yalçın was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in prison in the trial where she was tried on the charge of “willingly aiding a terrorist organization”. She has been targeted by the state constantly in recent years. Read our full report here.

Myanmar: Journalist Htet Htet Khine has been sentenced to three years in prison on incitement and illegal association charges as the military regime continues its onslaught against the press. She is the second jailed female media worker convicted in five weeks. Read the full report for details.

Belarus: A court in Belarus on September 28 convicted and sentenced journalist Ksenia Lutskina to eight years in prison for conspiring to seize state power. CFWIJ condemns the wrong verdict against Ksenia.

Six women journalists were sentenced to prison
Ethiopia: Journalist Meaza Mohammed has been detained for the third time in nine months in connection with her journalistic work. On September 7, police officers arrested Meaza, co-founder of YouTube-based news channel Roha Media, while she was shopping in Shiro Meda Market in Addis Ababa. The authorities did not file any formal charges against the journalist but claimed they were holding her in connection with an ongoing crackdown against the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, a left-wing ethnic nationalist political party banned in January 2021 as a terrorist organization by the Ethiopian government. Read our full report to learn more about her detention.

Palestine: Palestinian journalist and activist Lama Ghosheh was detained being accused of identification with a terrorist organization because of Facebook posts. The Israeli authorities raided her home, confiscated her electronic devices, and proceeded to arrest her in front of her two children—aged 3 and 5. During her detainment in Israeli jails, Lama faced harassment and intimidation tactics, being subjected to random “naked inspections”. Learn more about her detention.

Russia: Police detained Bella Nasibyan, Yulia Glazova and three other journalists after conducting raids in connection with an investigation against Ilya Ponomarev, a former Duma member, charged with spreading “fake” information about the army.

Russian police also detained hundreds of people and at least 18 journalists, including five women journalists, following opposition protests on September 21, 2022, against military mobilization order to recruit and send more Russians to fight the Ukrainian war. Yekaterina Parfenova, Natalia Baranova, Nailya Mullayeva, Kseniya Khabibulina and Viktoria Arefyeva were detained while covering the protests in different cities across the country.
Turkey: In Kadıköy, following the World Peace Day statement by Human Rights Association (IHD), journalist Zilan Azad was subjected to physical assault by the police. She spoke to the CFWIJ and described the torture she was subjected to.

“While I was being put into the police vehicle, I was pulled in different directions by 6-7 people. They pulled me from my arm, leg, and hair. They were detained in handcuffs. When we got into the vehicle, they continued to beat me,” Zilan said.

On September 21, three police officers put their nails on the arm of Artı TV reporter Meral Danyıldız and twisted her arm. She was prevented from filming and subjected to physical attack.

In Van, Mesopotamia Agency correspondent Berivan Kutlu was threatened with death by the police, while Jinnews reporter Zelal Tunç was also battered by the police. Journalist Berivan Kutlu, speaking to CFWIJ, stated that this violence will never intimidate journalists.

“We know that this is a systematic attack against journalists to silence them. The police attack us because we cover police violence against the public, but no journalist will stop reporting the truth,” Berivan said.

At least seven women journalists were physically assaulted
Turkey ranks first in 2022 in cases of violence against women and LGBTQ+ journalists. 63% of the physical violence we record all over the world is perpetrated by the police only in Turkey.

**Germany:** On September 2, Moritz Gathmann, Cicero reporter, and his female camera operator were physically assaulted by attendees while they covered a public political discussion.

**Zimbabwe:** On September 11, NewsHawks reporter Ruvimbo Muchenje was denied access to Gadzema stadium to cover a rally. When she tried to enter the stadium, an agent grabbed and pulled her hair, and threw her to the ground.

**Chad:** Journalist Aristide Djimaldé was physically assaulted by Chadian Police while covering an opposition political protest in the capital N'Djamena, on September 3, 2022. She was obstructed by police, beaten, and had her press card and phone confiscated while reporting. Learn more about her case.

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Egypt: Egypt’s leading Nation’s Future Party members launched a purge against three women journalists Rana Mamdouh, Beesan Kassab and Sara Seif Eddin working at Mada Masr, an independent Egypt online newspaper. Journalists received legal complaints from Nation’s Future Party members, in an effort to censor the press and control the narrative. State-controlled media in Egypt are used to launch and then amplify smear campaigns against journalists critical of the government. Learn more about wrongful charges against them.
Nigeria: Kiki Mordi is a Nigerian investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker who is being targeted with online violence and misogynistic attacks aimed at discrediting her professional conduct and silencing her. She has been reporting on sexual harassment and abuse of women in Nigeria in recent years. Due to her investigative work and awards received she has been subjected to a flood of sexist slurs and threats to belittle her chilling reporting. Read more about troll attacks.
Netherlands: Investigative journalist Stella Braam has disclosed that Dutch intelligence agencies surveilled her for 31 years. Stella resigned from her post at The Investigative Desk, an independent cooperative of specialized investigative journalists, after learning that she was under surveillance from 1986 to 2017, and quite possibly till this day, out of concern for her sources. Read more about surveillance.
Paraguay: The editor of Paraguayan newspaper ABC Color, Natalia Zuccolillo, and her colleague were sued for defamation after exposing alleged corruption by a state official having appropriated state land in Mbatovi ecological reserve. Announcing the verdict, the magistrate pointed out that there were no acts of defamation and slander on the part of the media adding that Natalia and her colleague are not guilty of any punishable act. Read details of the case.
CFWIJ is working hard to change these circumstances everyday.

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