Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

Venezuela and Georgia Lead in Press Freedom Violations for June 2024
Objective of report

Every day worldwide, women and LGBTQI 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.

Women Press Freedom’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, the newsroom registers 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 Women Press Freedom 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.

Women Press Freedom is an initiative by the Coalition For Women In Journalism.

This report was developed with the support of Craig Newmark Philanthropies.

Executive Editor: Kiran Nazish
Editor: Inge Snip
Research: Sonila Sota, Máire Rowland, Rabia Mushtaq
Design: Weilee Yap
June 2024 has been a challenging month for journalists around the world, marked by a series of threats, arrests, and physical assaults.

In Iran, Saba Azarpeik’s tragic miscarriage while imprisoned is a stark reminder of the severe conditions journalists endure. The imprisonment of journalists like Alena Timashchuk in Belarus, Hiba Abu Taha in Jordan, and Sophia Huang Xueqin in China highlights the ongoing global crackdown on press freedom.

In Georgia, the introduction of the controversial foreign agent law has sparked widespread protests, with journalists at the forefront of the coverage facing significant backlash. The law, seen as a tool to suppress independent media and civil society, has led to increased arbitrary denial of access and threats against journalists. The protests have been marked by a heavy-handed response from authorities, further endangering journalists reporting on the ground.

Arrests such as the detention of a Blast reporter in France and the persecution of Tatyana Lazareva in Russia show the widespread and arbitrary nature of state repression. Detentions in Macau, Israel, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Ukraine further illustrate the global threats faced by journalists.

Despite these challenges, there are moments of accountability and justice, such as the Fair Work Commission’s ruling in favor of Antoinette Lattouf in Australia and Elif Akgül’s acquittal in Turkey.

Each incident in this report represents a journalist’s struggle and dedication to the truth. It is a call to action to protect and support journalists, who play a crucial role in safeguarding our right to know.

Inge Snip
Senior Editor, Women Press Freedom
Top Press Freedom Violators in June 2024

- Russia: 6
- Venezuela: 10
- Georgia: 7
- Bolivia: 6
Top Press Freedom Violations in June 2024

- Threats/Intimidation
- Arbitrary Denial of Access
- Physical Assault Resulting in Injury
Cruel and Unusual Punishment Behind Bars

Iran

Unjustly imprisoned journalist Saba Azarpeik lost her unborn child due to a miscarriage on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. Azarpeik had faced a grueling 9-hour court session the day before the tragic event. On February 26, 2024, the journalist was convicted by a Tehran court on bogus charges of “spreading false information, defamation, and threats” after Iranian parliament speaker and presidential candidate Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, along with MP Mohsen Dehnavi, lodged complaints against her. She received a two-year prison sentence, with the possibility of an extension for any similar conduct and a social media ban.
On June 3, 2024, the Brest Regional Court sentenced journalist Alena Timashchuk to 5 years in prison. Timashchuk was falsely accused of tarnishing Belarus’ reputation, inciting hatred, and alleged involvement in an “extremist formation.” In addition to the prison sentence, the journalist was fined 46,000 rubles. There are currently ten women journalists behind bars in Belarus.

Hiba Abu Taha, a prominent Jordanian journalist, was sentenced to one year in prison under Jordan’s contentious cybercrime law. The ruling came in response to her investigative report that alleged Jordan’s involvement in exporting goods to Israel via a land corridor, a claim fervently denied by Jordanian authorities.

Prominent Chinese journalist Sophia Huang Xueqin was sentenced to five years in prison, nearly three years after their detention on bogus charges of inciting subversion of state power. Huang, a leading figure in China’s #MeToo movement and a reporter on the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, was arrested in September 2021 along with Wang, a known labor activist. The court handed down the maximum sentence to Huang. Huang has indicated plans to appeal.
Russia
The Zamoskvoretsky District Court of Moscow arrested exiled television host Tatyana Lazareva in absentia on July 10, 2024, following a search warrant issued by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs on June 13, 2024. The renowned journalist is unjustly accused of justifying terrorism. Lazareva, a vocal critic of President Vladimir Putin’s regime, was labeled a “foreign agent” in July 2022. In June 2023, the Presnensky District Court in Moscow fined Lazareva 30,000 rubles for failing to label her social media posts with the “foreign agent” disclaimer.

Tanzania
On June 13, 2024, Dinna Maningo, a writer and owner of the website Dima Online, was arrested at her home in Tarime, Tanzania. She stands falsely accused of publishing classified intelligence information. Police have repeatedly interrogated Maningo and confiscated her work equipment. To date, ongoing efforts to secure bail have been unsuccessful. Maningo’s detention followed her reporting on allegations against the Simiyu Regional Governor, Dr. Yahya Nawanda, who was accused of sexual misconduct involving a university student in Mwanza City. Maningo’s investigation led to the Governor’s removal from office on June 11, 2024.
On June 18, 2024, a woman journalist from the independent French news portal Blast was arrested without justification by police while reporting on a protest at the premises of arms company Exxelia in Paris. The journalist had been investigating French arms sales to Israel for several weeks and was present at the protest as part of her ongoing research. Despite presenting her press credentials to police, she was detained under accusations of "participation in a group with the aim of committing damage" and "voluntary damage during a meeting."
Detention
West Bank
On June 2, 2024, Israeli forces detained Rasha Herzallah, a Palestinian journalist, from Nablus in the West Bank. She was summoned by Israeli intelligence agents and taken to a detention center in the Ariel settlement, where she was handed a 72-hour detention order. An Israeli military court extended the detention of Hirzallah by five days on June 6, 2024, to prepare a “charge sheet” under the accusation of “incitement.” On June 10, her detention was extended with yet another two weeks. On June 24, Harzallah’s detention was extended yet again to August 11, 2024.

Mozambique
On the night of June 4, 2024, police intervened in a protest by former officers from Mozambique’s defense and security forces in Maputo. Sheila Wilson, a journalist and activist was forcibly taken into custody while live-streaming the protest. In a distressing video captured by Wilson and analyzed by Women Press Freedom, the journalist is seen shouting for help and denouncing police for attacking her as they violently take her away. Wilson was taken into custody by police officers without any legal justification or due process.
On June 15, 2024, Vivian Tam, a journalism lecturer from Hong Kong, was detained upon her arrival at the Macau Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal. Immigration officers refused her entry, citing “strong indications” that her activities posed a threat to public safety or order. After 30 minutes in custody, Tam was sent back to Hong Kong on a ferry.

Russian military forces detained Zhanna Kyseliova, editor of the Kakhovska Zoria newspaper, on June 27, 2024, in Kherson, Ukraine, following a raid on her apartment. This marks the second time Kyseliova has been detained by Russian military personnel. Previously, she was detained in September 2022 and held in a basement for nearly a month, although details about her detention during that period remain unclear. Her current whereabouts are unknown.
United States
Freelance photojournalist Linda Tirado, who was severely injured by Minneapolis police while covering the George Floyd protests in 2020 in the United States, may have to enter hospice care due to the progressive deterioration of her health. Tirado, now 42, was struck in the eye by a foam bullet fired by police on the night of May 29, 2020, while documenting protests over the murder of George Floyd. Despite wearing protective goggles and displaying her press credentials, she lost vision in her left eye, resulting in additional complications, including a traumatic brain injury and subsequent dementia.

Brazil
On June 11, reporter Monique Bittencourt and cameraman Thiago Bessa were inside their press-marked vehicle in Brazil when criminals opened fire, injuring both journalists with non-serious shrapnel wounds. The same day as the attack, law enforcement agencies apprehended the suspect responsible for the shooting. Three others were arrested during the operation, which involved gunfire directed at the police during the arrest.

Armenia
On June 12, 2024, violent clashes erupted in Armenia in front of Yerevan’s Parliament as ultra-nationalist protesters demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The clashes resulted in injuries to at least 10 journalists and camera operators who were on the scene to cover the protests. Among the injured were ABC’s Nane Hayrapetian and her cameraman Arman Gharibyan. MediaHub.am journalist Nare Gevorgyan sustained an abdominal contusion.
Physical Assault Resulting in Injury

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tatiana Osango, a journalist with Réaco News, was violently attacked in the DRC. The attack was coordinated by a faction allegedly associated with the ruling party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), following Osango’s interview with opposition figure India Omari. Following the attack, Osango underwent treatment at a hospital in Kinshasa for a broken tooth that required extraction and injuries to her leg.

Kenya

On June 18, 2024, Maureen Mureithi, a cameraperson for NTV, was injured while covering protests in Nairobi, Kenya. Mureithi was struck by a police water cannon along Cardinal Otunda Street. A video of the incident, analyzed by Women Press Freedom, shows the journalist being carried by her colleagues, unable to walk after she was hit. The camerawoman required hospitalization for her injuries.

Bolivia

On June 26, journalists encountered obstruction, harassment, and endangerment during the military takeover of Plaza Murillo in La Paz, Bolivia. Claudia Morales, a photojournalist for Reuters, was prevented from entering Plaza Murillo, the heart of La Paz’s political scene, due to a blockade by Military Police soldiers. The deployment of tear gas and aggressive actions by soldiers obstructed the efforts of, among others, Andrea Rojas, Claudia Morales, Daniela Tacachira, Fabiola Chambi, Magaly Chuquimia, and Yolanda Mamani. Veteran Bolivisión TV journalist Federico Camacho noted that several women journalists were overwhelmed by the gas, causing some to vomit from the asphyxiation.
Physical Assault Resulting In No Injury

Italy
On June 3, 2024, journalist **Costanza Castiglioni** and her camera operators were threatened and **physically attacked** by a father, mother, and son while reporting in Florence, France. The assault occurred in the early afternoon in the Piagge area, located in the northwest of the city, while the journalists were working on a story on the illegal occupation of public housing.

India
On June 26, 2024, journalist **Chinmayee Sahoo** was **attacked by the dog** of former minister Das Raghunandan in the city of Bhubaneswar, India, on his order. She was at his home to cover unauthorized construction near his property. The attack occurred live on television. When Sahoo’s cameraperson protested the incident, Raghunandan’s staff physically confronted him.
On June 15, 2024, Bayan Jumagulova, a 65-year-old retired journalist and former Azattyk (Radio Free Europe) correspondent, was summoned for interrogation at the Sverdlovsk District Police Department in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Jumagulova, who resides in Germany but had recently flown to Kyrgyzstan, faced questioning related to a criminal case initiated about her Facebook posts. At the police station, her phone was confiscated and its contents copied. Insisting on legal representation before making any statements, she was released.

On June 17, 2024, the Dorogomilovsky District Court of Moscow, Russia, issued an arrest warrant for journalists Ekaterina Fomina and Roman Anin in absentia, accusing them of disseminating “fake news” about the Russian army driven by political hatred.

On June 26, 2024, the Zamoskvoretsky District Court of Moscow, Russia, issued an arrest warrant for exiled journalist Farida Korbangalieva. Currently residing in Czechia, Korbangalieva was arrested in absentia for alleged involvement in justifying terrorism on the Internet. Earlier in the month, on June 19, 2024, Korbangalieva was added to Rosfinmonitoring’s list of terrorists and extremists.
Threats and Intimidation

Ecuador
On June 3, 2024, Diana Jácome, advisor to Ecuadorean President Daniel Noboa, launched an attack on journalist María Sol Borja on X. This was in response to Borja's analysis of an interview Jácome gave on a local radio station. Jácome’s response implied that Borja harbored "hatred in [her] heart" and mentioned a mutual acquaintance in a manner that Borja interpreted as potentially threatening.

On June 7, 2024, the journalistic team from Supercable TV Cariamanga were aggressively confronted by Svetlana Montero at the People’s Hall of the Municipality of Calvas canton in Loja province. While covering a meeting between the Cabildo Workers Union and Mayor Jorge Montero, Svetlana Montero, the district director of the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and daughter of Mayor Montero, launched a verbal attack on the team, preventing them from documenting the event.

Honduras
On June 6, 2024, Women Press Freedom confirmed Thelma Mejía received threats for her work by activists linked to the ruling party, Libertad y Refundación. Mejía, known for her critical stance on various issues, believes the threats targeting her do not reflect an official government policy, but believes they are actions of individuals seeking to curry favor with the ruling party. While the government has publicly condemned the threats against Mejía, the effectiveness of its response is in question.
Threats and Intimidation

Mexico
On June 11, Yessica Ayala and Joselyn Meneses faced intimidation and obstruction at the hands of fifteen residents in San Jerónimo Coyula, Mexico. Ayala and Meneses arrived to cover an alleged lynching incident involving four individuals accused of robbery. During their reporting, residents detained Ayala and Meneses for over thirty minutes and forced them to delete their footage.

Colombia
Renowned journalist María Jimena Duzán received threats following her investigation into alleged corruption involving Laura Sarabia, the director of the Administrative Department of the Presidency of the Republic (Dapre), and her brother, Andrés Sarabia, in Colombia. The threats against Duzán escalated after President Gustavo Petro accused her of being a Mossad agent, a claim that has put her safety at significant risk.

United States
On June 12, 2024, journalist Olivia Reingold faced hostility while covering a protest against the war in Gaza in New York City’s Union Square. Reingold was identified and targeted by a man wearing a neck gaiter and sunglasses, who accused her of being a Zionist. According to Reingold, protesters boxed her in, shouted at her, and used air horns close to her ears. A protester grabbed her notebook, destroyed it, and scattered the pages. The reporter says that protesters yelled profanities and demanded she leave the scene.
Threats and Intimidation

Ukraine
On June 19, 2024, Anna Kalyuzhna shared she had received dozens of threatening phone calls and messages within a few hours. One call contained a rape threat and threats against her parents. A day earlier, Commander Dmytro Kukharchuk — an army commander of Ukraine’s Assault Brigade No. 3 — posted on Facebook, listing journalists, including Kalyuzhna, advising military personnel not to engage with them. He stated, “I do not have direct evidence, so I will not accuse them of treason, but I can confidently say that they are not decent people.” Kalyuzhna suspects the threats she has received are linked to Kukharchuk and his subordinates.

Germany
On June 29, 2024, several journalists faced aggressive behavior from demonstrators while covering the Alternative for Germany (AfD) federal party conference in Essen. Mariam Lau, a political journalist for Die Zeit, and three colleagues from Deutschlandfunk were attacked. Adding to the tension surrounding the AfD’s conference was the denial of accreditation to Ann-Katrin Müller, a journalist for DER SPIEGEL, to a background event the evening before the conference. Days before, Müller published an article about the AfD leader Tino Chrupallas’ chances at the party convention.
Australia

Chinese officials obstructed Sky News Australia reporter Cheng Lei, recently freed from imprisonment, preventing her from being seen by cameras during an event featuring Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Canberra, Australia, on June 17, 2024.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On June 17, 2024, Yvonne Kapinga, a correspondent for ACTUALITE.CD based in Goma, the DRC, was threatened while covering the aftermath of a school wall collapse in Goma’s Mapendo district. Kapinga was approached by three individuals posing as agents of the General Directorate of Migration (DGM), who demanded that she delete all images and videos she had captured at the scene. Despite presenting her professional credentials, the individuals persisted in their demands, accusing her of being an undercover agent sent to Rwanda. The situation escalated, creating a dangerous mob mentality that endangered her safety.
Online Harassment

North Macedonia

Lepa Djunđeva received misogynistic and explicit threats of sexual and physical violence, Women Press Freedom revealed on June 3, 2024. The threats followed an eight-second clip on Facebook from an interview with Greek MP Angelos Sirigos, where journalist Djunđeva mentioned “here in Skopje, North Macedonia,” by Bogdan Ilievski, a male journalist with a significant online following.

Ethiopia

Ximena Borrazás, a freelance photojournalist published in CNN, the Guardian, and Deutsche Welle, told Women Press Freedom on June 14, 2024, that she is facing a wave of online troll campaigns following her coverage of the stories of women who have been victims of rape and torture in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia. Our analysis revealed that many abusive messages came from bots — automated accounts capable of generating thousands of messages daily — and potentially paid trolls, real individuals hired to post offensive and disruptive content online.

Pakistan

Pakistani journalist Benazir Shah told Women Press Freedom on June 26, 2024, that she faced a barrage of online harassment and a hacking incident following her comments on a recent blasphemy case in Pakistan. The trolling campaign continued for several days, during which Shah’s Twitter account was compromised.
On June 25, 2024, Arrêt sur Images journalist Nassira El Moaddem reported receiving a racist letter sent to her mother’s address. The letter addressed to El Moaddem’s mother stated: “You should tell Nassira to sh**t up or go abroad.” Women Press Freedom analyzed the letter, which shares characteristics with one French journalist Karim Rissouli received on the same day. Both letters are written on identical envelopes, suggesting they originate from the same person.
Several journalists, including Fanpage.it’s Chiara Daffini, were sexually harassed during the 2024 Milan Pride parade by a man who claimed to be a security personnel. The incidents occurred while journalists were attempting to interview Democratic Party (PD) guest Elly Schlein.
Loss of Employment

Georgia

Tamar Sharikadze, reporter with news program Kronika, publicly announced her resignation from Georgian Imedi TV on June 17, 2024, after five years working for the broadcaster. The journalist accused an unnamed “immediate” supervisor of asking her to prepare a TV story “which would definitely encourage violence. Her decision was met with support from unnamed colleagues at Kronika, evidencing internal dissent within Imedi TV.
Arbitrary Denial of Access

Georgia
On June 3, 2024, Nini Balanchivadze from Mtavari TV was issued a one-month ban from Georgia’s legislative building. The incident followed Balanchivadze pressing MP Nino Tsilosani for comments regarding anticipated U.S. sanctions following the adoption of the foreign agent law.

On June 4, 2024, Sopho Gozalishvili, a journalist with Formula TV, was prohibited from working in the Georgian parliament for six months. The ban came after Gozalishvili attempted to interview MP Nino Tsilosani, who refused to answer her questions.

Somalia
On June 11, 2024, a group of journalists from various independent media outlets were impeded by police at the School Polizia cemetery in Mogadishu, Somalia. After arriving at the cemetery, Arlaadi Media Network journalist Amina Ibrahim and her colleagues encountered resistance from a police officer, who verbally harassed them and denied them access to the site.

United Kingdom
A trade union representing journalists in the United Kingdom has criticized political parties for making media events inaccessible to journalists with disabilities during the current election campaign.
Arbitrary Denial of Access

**United States**

Journalists, including Laura Guido from The Idaho Press, were denied entry to report on committee meetings and events at the commencement of the Idaho Republican State Convention at Coeur d’Alene Resort on June 13, 2024.

**Venezuela**

On June 5, 2024, during the rally in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela, which featured opposition leader María Corina Machado, Cipriano Díaz, the municipal coordinator of Vente Venezuela in Caroní, Bolívar state, barred nine media workers from boarding a platform truck to capture photos of attendees, citing the absence of a designated press area. The reporters include Pableysa Osto (La Patilla), Jhoalys Siverio (Crónica Uno, Correo del Caroní), Francesca Díaz (Radio Fe y Alegría Noticias), Karla Ávila (What Happens In Venezuela), Stephane Hernández (New Guayana Press), and Rosangely Bruces (Diario de Guayana).

On June 14, 2024, at the Central Hospital of San Cristóbal in Táchira state, journalists Luzfrandy Contreras (Televisora del Táchira), Luz Dary Depablos (La Patilla), Tatiana Ortiz (Táchira News), and Zulma López (Centro de Noticias Táchira) were prevented from filming an informational bulletin in the hospital’s parking lot. While conducting an interview with two Health Union representatives, an unidentified man, likely a hospital employee, approached them and informed them that filming in the area was prohibited.
Arbitrary Denial of Access

Ecuador

Cuban journalist Alondra Santiago had her Ecuadorian visa revoked by the Foreign Ministry following a request from the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry falsely accuses the journalist of engaging in actions that are a “risk to public security and the State’s stability” due to her criticism of President Daniel Noboa’s government.

On the morning of June 28, journalist Vanessa Robles and her cameraman were unjustly barred from entering the Montebello market despite receiving an official media invitation from the Guayas Governor’s Office. This denial of access followed their outlet’s reports on alleged extortion by municipal officials.
On June 5, 2024, TV Pirveli’s reporter Nata Kajaia had her parliamentary accreditation revoked. Reportedly at the request of Sozar Subari, politician of political party People’s Power. Fellow TV Pirveli journalist Maka Chikhradze’s accreditation was also suspended, following a demand from MP Guram Matcharashvili, also of People’s Power. Despite being a separate party, People’s Power is part of the Georgian Dream-led government. As the accredited journalists cannot be replaced, the channel is fully banned from covering parliament.

On June 26, 2024, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs revoked the accreditation of Carola Schneider, head of Austria’s public broadcaster ORF’s Moscow bureau. Schneider’s expulsion follows the removal of Maria Knips-Witting, another ORF correspondent, two weeks earlier.
On the morning of June 1, the communications manager for the Media Development Foundation (MDF) Mariam Akhalkatsi revealed that the offices of MDF and Myth Detector were once again vandalized. Masked men, once again, scrawled offensive comments ("pseudo-liberals work here"; "agents"; "slaves"; "traitors") on the walls of the outlets.

Vandalization

Georgia

On the morning of June 1, the communications manager for the Media Development Foundation (MDF) Mariam Akhalkatsi revealed that the offices of MDF and Myth Detector were once again vandalized. Masked men, once again, scrawled offensive comments ("pseudo-liberals work here"; "agents"; "slaves"; "traitors") on the walls of the outlets.
On June 19, 2024, the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) announced it had revoked the 2024 Courage in Journalism Award granted to Palestinian journalist Maha Hussaini. In a statement published on its website, the organization that supports women and non-binary journalists worldwide stated, “Within the last 24 hours, the IWMF learned of comments made by Maha Hussaini in past years that contradict the values of our organization.” Taking these revelations into consideration, the association rescinded Hussaini’s award.
On June 3, 2024, the Fair Work Commission (FWC), Australia’s workplace tribunal, ruled that Antoinette Lattouf was unfairly terminated by the ABC. This judgment followed the ABC’s challenge to the jurisdiction of her unfair dismissal lawsuit filed in February. With the ruling, Lattouf can proceed with her case, which alleges she was fired due to her political opinions and race.

On June 27, 2024, Elif Akgül stood trial on bogus terrorism charges at Istanbul’s 13th Heavy Penal Court. The charges stemmed from two tweets she posted in 2018 and 2022, which the prosecution claimed constituted “terrorist organization propaganda.” After a brief recess, the court acquitted Akgül, stating that the legal elements of the crime were not present and her comments fell within the bounds of freedom of expression.
CFWIJ and WPF is working hard to change these circumstances everyday. Join us in this mission

Contact Email: info@womeninjournalism.org
Website: www.womeninjournalism.org
Twitter: @CFWIJ
Facebook: @coalitionforwomeninjournalism
Instagram: @womeninjournalism