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# 2025 ROUND-UP

of journalists killed,  
detained, missing and held  
hostage worldwide



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# FOREWORD

## This is where hatred and impunity lead

How is it that, year after year, so many journalists meet such tragic fates? We need to be frank about something Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn addressed in a speech at Harvard in 1978: the decline in courage. Not the bravery of journalists – they have plenty – but the lack of courage within the international community.

It is common to blame citizens living in democracies for their indifference, despite the fact they bear no responsibility for the crimes committed. Their apathy is an echo, and stems from the failures of international institutions, which are no longer capable of protecting journalists or upholding the law – particularly the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2222 concerning the protection of journalists in armed conflict. This is the consequence of a global decline in the courage of governments, which now do little more than issue statements when they ought to be implementing protective public policies. This is what gives rise to the fatalism and pessimism that ripple through society.

There is also another cause: journalists targeted by smear campaigns. When a journalist dies, some people think to themselves, “What were they doing there? They took too many risks.” Many others say, “They were a nuisance. They got what they deserved.” Or, “They are a traitor to their country, a threat to national security. It serves him right to be in prison,” or even, “They are servants of the elites. They had it coming.” Today, journalists are even accused of colluding with terrorists so that their targeted assassinations can be justified.

This is where hatred of journalists leads. It led to the death of 67 journalists this year – not by accident, not as unintended casualties. Criticism of the media is legitimate and should act as a catalyst for change to ensure the survival of the free press, a pillar of democracy. But it must never descend into a hatred for journalists, which is largely born out of – or deliberately stoked by – the tactics of armed forces and criminal groups.

What is at stake here is not just the principles of journalism and trust in reliable information, but quite literally the lives of these reporters. Hate for news professionals fuels the fury of protestors and the violence of armed forces, and culminates in the physical elimination of journalists. Discrediting the media breeds the worst kind of behaviour, and sometimes results in an intolerable licence to kill. It is our responsibility to stand alongside those who uphold our collective right to reliable information. We owe them that.

As key witnesses to history, journalists have gradually become collateral victims, inconvenient observers, bargaining chips, pawns in diplomatic games, men and women to be eliminated. Let us be wary of false notions about reporters: no one gives their life for journalism – it is taken from them. Journalists do not just die – they are killed.

**Thibaut Bruttin,**  
*RSF Director General*

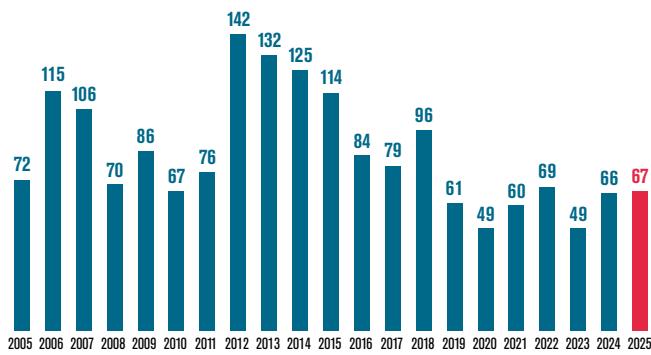
Of the 67 media professionals killed over the last year, nearly half (43%) were killed in Gaza by the Israeli armed forces, and 79% (53) were victims of war or organised crime. In the cartel-ridden country of Mexico, for example, 2025 was the deadliest of the past three years for journalists. Meanwhile, 503 journalists are behind bars worldwide. Moreover, a year on from the fall of dictator Bashar al-Assad, many of the reporters arrested or captured under his regime remain nowhere to be found, making Syria the country with the highest number of missing media professionals worldwide.

## 67 JOURNALISTS KILLED\*

OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS



3 WOMEN  
64 MEN



(\*) Data collected between 1 December (N-1) and 1 December (N) of each year.

### The three most dangerous countries and territories

Palestine (43%), Mexico (13%) and Sudan (6%)

### Main perpetrators

The Israeli army (43%), cartels and organised crime groups (24%) and the Russian army (4%)

## 20 JOURNALISTS HELD HOSTAGE

AS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS REPORT



0 WOMEN  
20 MEN



### The three countries with the highest risk

Yemen (9), Syria (8) and Mali (2)

### Main hostage-takers

Houthi rebels (9)



Our figures are regularly updated on the RSF barometer.

The list only includes journalists that RSF has been able to conclusively establish were killed or detained due to their work. It does not include those targeted for reasons unrelated to their profession, or cases where a link to their work has not yet been confirmed.

## 503 JOURNALISTS DETAINED

AS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS REPORT



At least\*  
77 WOMEN  
422 MEN

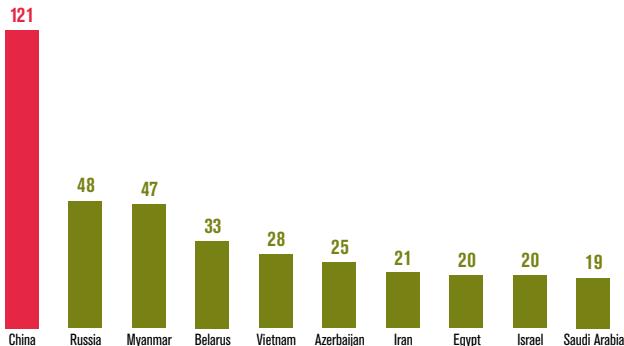


(\*) The gender of anonymous detainees is not disclosed

### The three largest prisons for journalists

China (121), Russia (48) and Myanmar (47)

### The world's ten largest prisons for journalists



## 135 JOURNALISTS MISSING

AS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS REPORT



9 WOMEN  
126 MEN



### The three countries with the highest risk

Syria (37), Mexico (28) and Iraq (12)



# SPOTLIGHT ON...

## THE PRESS FREEDOM PREDATORS OF 2025

Impunity is not inevitable, so RSF has singled out the leaders, institutions and organisations that have most severely repressed or obstructed press freedom this year. Some kill journalists or lock them up. Others bankrupt, muzzle or discredit news outlets. All are digging the grave for the right to reliable information. Below is an excerpt from the 2025 list of Press Freedom Predators, a series of 34 portraits published by RSF to mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

### POLITICAL PREDATORS

#### **They're stifling the news in their countries**

##### **Vladimir Putin (Russia)**

In 2025, Russia experienced its worst crackdown on the press since the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), reaching its lowest-ever position on the RSF World Press Freedom Index (171). Since Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, journalists have been threatened, locked up, attacked and killed. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, 16 media professionals have been killed by the Russian army, including three in 2025. Forty-eight remain behind bars, among them 26 Ukrainian reporters.

##### **Haibatullah Akhundzada (Afghanistan)**

Under Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada, Afghan journalism has been choked by relentless censorship, marked by a succession of restrictive directives and bans. Since the Taliban regained power in August 2021, more than 165 media professionals have been arrested – including 25 in 2025.



### SECURITY PREDATORS

#### **They detain and kill journalists**

##### **The Israeli armed forces (Israel)**

Under Benjamin Netanyahu's government, the Israeli army has carried out a massacre – unprecedented in recent history – of the Palestinian press. To justify its crimes, the Israeli military has mounted a global propaganda campaign to spread baseless accusations that portray Palestinian journalists as terrorists. Since October 2023, nearly 220 journalists have been killed by the Israeli army in Gaza, 65 of whom were murdered due to their profession, according to RSF information. In 2025, after more than two years of a blockade on the Gaza Strip, this repression of the press continued with impunity.

##### **State Security and Peace Commission (Myanmar)**

In 2025, junta chief Min Aung Hlaing created the State Security and Peace Commission, Myanmar's new de facto military government. At the same time, he intensified his crackdown on press freedom and passed legislation that made it a criminal act to share content deemed "prejudicial to the electoral process." Since February 2021, seven journalists have been executed, at least 200 have been arrested and 47 are currently detained in inhumane conditions – and are often tortured.

##### **Jalisco New Generation Cartel (Mexico)**

In 2025, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) established itself as Mexico's most violent criminal organisation and one of journalism's most dangerous predators. Led by Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, aka "El Mencho," the CJNG extends its influence over more than 20 Mexican states. In 2025, three journalists – **José Carlos Gonzalez Herrera, Kristian Zavala and Calletano de Jesus Guerrero** – were killed in areas where the cartel is influential while they were covering stories related to drug trafficking, public safety and local corruption. Persistent impunity allows criminal groups to silence independent voices and tighten their control over news and information.



# 67 JOURNALISTS KILLED DUE TO THEIR WORK IN 22 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE

Nearly half (43%) of the journalists killed over the last 12 months were murdered in Gaza by the Israeli armed forces. On the other side of the world, the Russian army continues to target reporters in Ukraine. In Mexico, organised crime groups are responsible for an alarming surge in journalist killings. Journalists reporting on their own country are paying the highest price: only two foreign reporters were killed abroad, the rest were killed while covering the news in their home state. In total, 67 journalists were killed worldwide over the last 12 months because of their work, across 22 countries.

## Journalists killed worldwide between 1 December 2024 and 1 December 2025



### GAZA (29)

#### The Israeli army is the worst enemy of journalists

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli army has killed nearly 220 journalists in the Gaza Strip, at least 65 of whom were slain due to their work. Over the last 12 months, the Israeli army has been responsible for nearly half (43%) of all journalists killed worldwide. Between December 2024 and December 2025, at least 29 Palestinian journalists were killed in the Gaza Strip because of their profession. In one particularly harrowing case, on 25 August 2025, an Israeli strike targeting a building within the al-Nasser medical complex – known to house a workspace for journalists – killed Reuters photographer **Hossam al-Masri**. Journalist **Mariam Abu Dagga** – who worked for several outlets, including *The Independent Arabia* and *Associated Press* – visited the scene to report on the rescue operations. Eight minutes after the first strike, she was killed by a second attack along with two other journalists, freelancer **Moaz Abu Taha** and photographer for *Al Jazeera* **Mohamad Salama**.



## MEXICO (9)

### A clear failure to protect journalists

2025 was the first year of Claudia Sheinbaum's presidency and, despite the commitments she made to RSF, it was also the deadliest of the past three years for journalists in Mexico. It is also the second most dangerous country in the world for journalists. Nine media professionals were killed in 2025: **Salomon Ordonez Miranda**, Calletano de Jesus Guerrero, Kristian Zavala, **Raul Iran Villarreal Belmont**, **Melvin Garcia**, José Carlos Gonzalez Herrera, **Angel Sevilla**, **Ronald Paz Pedro**, and **Miguel Angel Beltran Martinez**. They covered local news, exposed organised crime and its links to politicians, and had received explicit death threats. One of them, Calletano de Jesus Guerrero, was even under government protection when he was murdered.

## UKRAINE (3)

### Three journalists killed by Russian drone attacks in one month

Freelance photojournalists **Antoni Lallican** and **Georgiy Ivanchenko** were targeted by an FPV (first-person view) drone – a small device equipped with explosives and a camera that transmits live images back to the operator. On 3 October, at the time of the attack, both journalists were wearing helmets and bulletproof vests marked “press” and carrying cameras. They were in an area near Komychouvakha, a town in eastern Ukraine. Antoni Lallican was killed instantly, while Georgiy Ivanchenko survived but had his leg amputated. Twenty days later, on 23 October, in the eastern city of Kramatorsk, Ukrainian journalists **Alyona Hramova** and **Yevhen Karmazine** were killed by a Russian drone strike that gravely injured their fellow reporter **Oleksandr Kolytchev**.

## SAUDI ARABIA (1)

### Journalist executed under Mohammed bin Salman

On 14 June 2025, **Turki al-Jasser** was executed by the Saudi Interior Ministry following a seven-year prison sentence. The journalist had been convicted on false charges of terrorism and high treason due to his online publications. Turki al-Jasser is the first journalist to be officially executed in Saudi Arabia since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman came to power in 2017, and the second in the world to be subjected to the death sentence since 2020, when **Rouhollah Zam** was executed in Iran.

## INDIA (1)

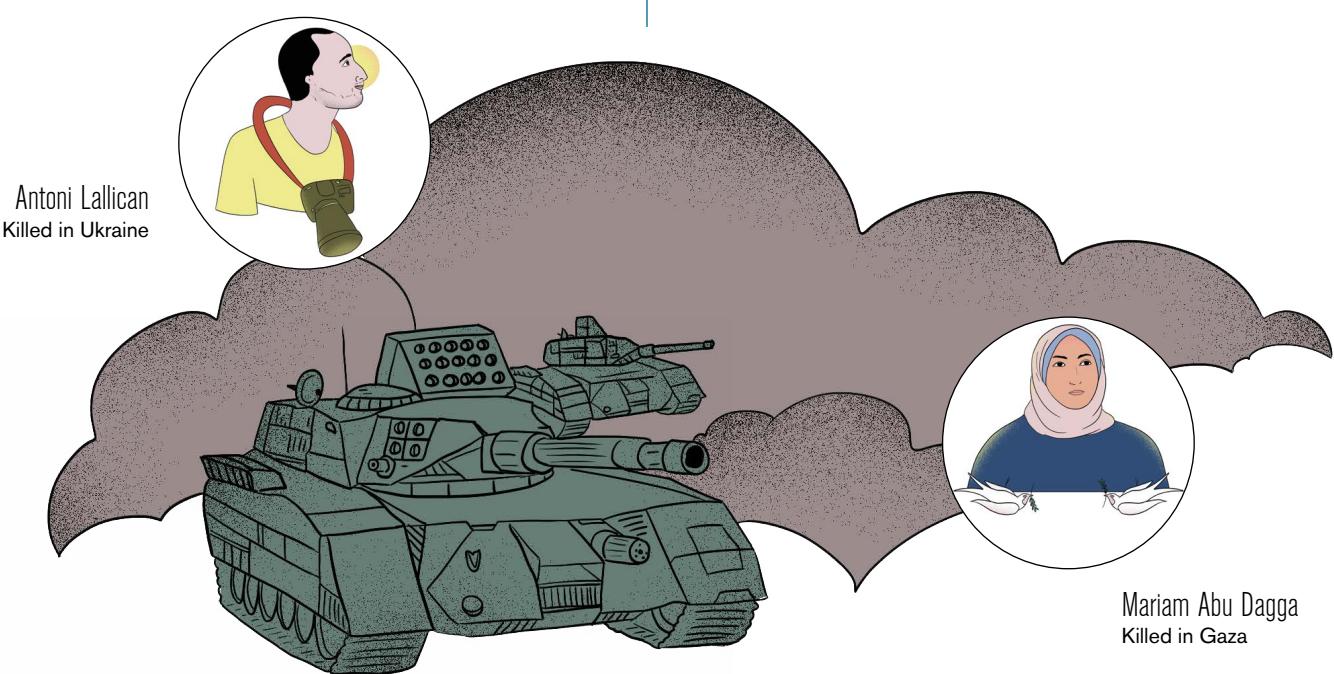
### Killed for reporting the facts

The battered body of freelance journalist **Mukesh Chandrakar**, was found in a septic tank in Bijapur, a town in the central state of Chhattisgarh on 3 January 2025. He had just produced a report on the poor condition of a road built by a local entrepreneur who had a government contract.

## BANGLADESH (2)

### Deadly payback for their investigations

On 25 June 2025, **Khandaker Shah Alam**, a correspondent for the daily *Matrujagat* and Deputy Secretary General of the Nabinagar Press Club, died from his injuries after he was violently attacked by a released prisoner in retaliation for his reporting on the case that landed the offender in jail. A few weeks later, on 7 August, 38-year-old reporter **Asaduzzaman Tuhin** for the newspaper *Dainik Pratidiner Kagoj*, was hacked to death in a machete attack by members of a gang he had filmed while they were chasing a young man in a market. Retaliation from criminals was the leading cause of death for journalists in Bangladesh in 2025.



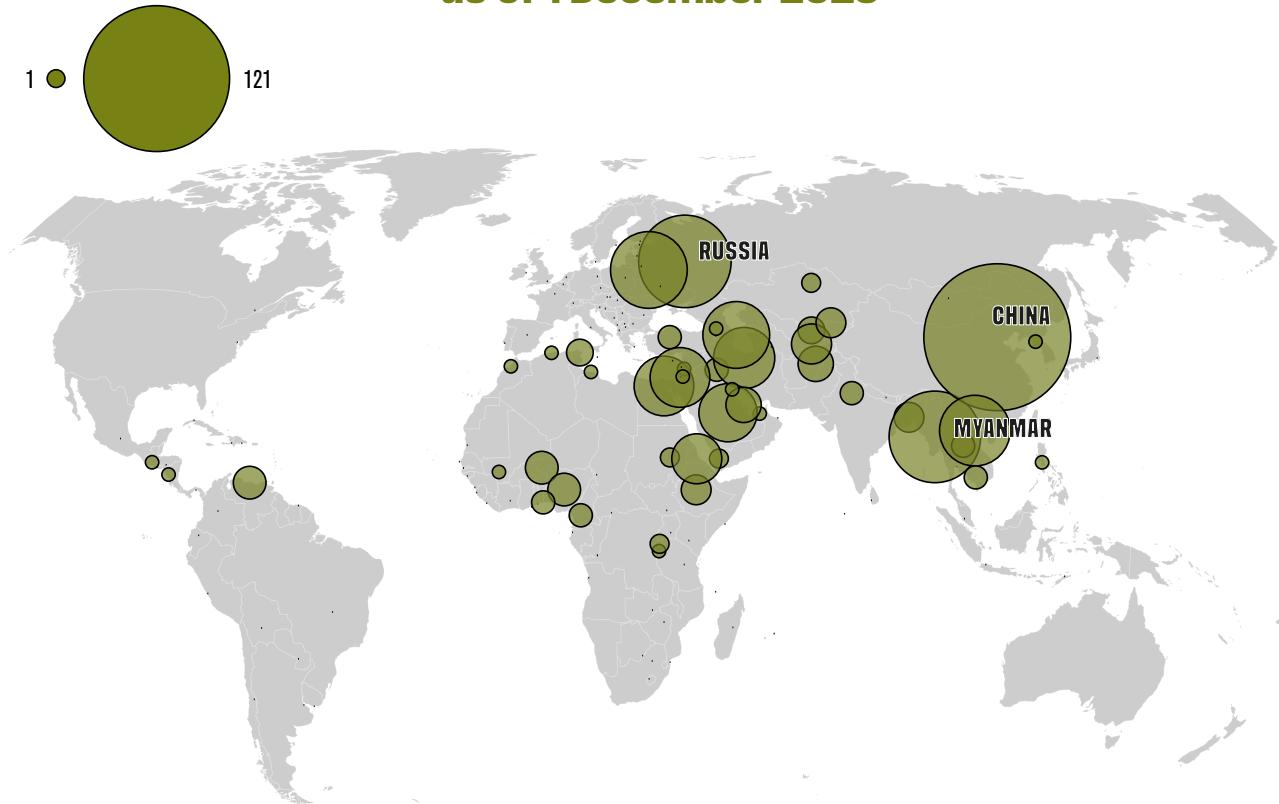


# 503 DETAINED JOURNALISTS

## RUSSIA HOLDS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN THE WORLD

As of 1 December 2025, 503 journalists are being detained across 47 countries. China (121) and Myanmar (47) remain among the world's three largest prisons for journalists, now joined by Russia (48), which has moved into second place. Vladimir Putin's country also locks up more foreign journalists than any other state (26), followed by Israel (20).

### Journalists detained worldwide as of 1 December 2025



#### CHINA (121)

##### Journalists persecuted by the state

On 17 February 2025, Li Yanhe, a presenter on public broadcaster *Radio Taiwan International*, was sentenced by a Shanghai court to 3 years in prison and one year of deprivation of his political rights – including the right to vote and of freedom of expression. A few months later, journalist **Zhang Zhan**, detained since 28 August 2024, was sentenced to four years in prison. She is now incarcerated for the second time, having already been jailed in 2020 for covering the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan. As of 1 December 2025, a total of 113 media professionals are behind bars in China and eight in Hong Kong. The People's Republic of China remains the world's largest prison for journalists.

#### ISRAEL (20)

##### Once again among the world's biggest jails for journalists

As of 1 December 2025, 20 Palestinian journalists were detained by Israel, placing the country once again among the world's 10 largest prisons for journalists. Sixteen of them were arrested over the past two years in Gaza and the West Bank. Only three journalists were released on 13 October as part of the ceasefire agreement: **Alaa al-Sarraj**, **Emad Zakaria Badr al-Ifranji** and **Shady Abu Sedo**, all of whom were unlawfully arrested by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip.

## ALGERIA (1)

### Christophe Gleizes, the only French journalist currently imprisoned anywhere in the world

Christophe Gleizes, a French sports journalist who specialises in soccer and works with the *So Press* media group, was unjustly sentenced to seven years in prison in June 2025 for simply doing his job. He was arrested in May 2024, held under a judicial control order that banned him from leaving Algeria for more than a year, and has been imprisoned for more than five months. His sentence was upheld on appeal on December 3. The charges against him – “glorifying terrorism” and “possessing publications for propaganda purposes harmful to national interests” – are unfounded. RSF and his family continue to call for his immediate release.



## AFGHANISTAN (7)

### Jailed journalists and filmed forced confessions

On 23 July 2025, three media professionals were arrested and detained in Kabul. Two of them, **Abuzar Sarem Sarepuli**, director of *Tawana News Agency* and president of the Federation of Journalists and Media Organisations, and **Shakib Nazari**, correspondent for the Japanese channel *Nippon Television* (NTV), were forced to give staged “confessions” in videos that were then circulated on social media. After being arrested in October 2024 by the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) and sentenced to a year and a half in prison for producing “propaganda against the Islamic Emirate”, **Mahdi Ansary** of *AFKA News* was also coerced into making a “confession” which was posted on Facebook.

## GEORGIA (1)

### The relentless shift towards authoritarianism

Arrested in January 2025 on charges that are clearly baseless and disproportionate, Georgian journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli, co-founder of the independent media outlets *Batumelbi* and *Netgazeti*, was sentenced on 6 August 2025 to two years in prison after an unfair trial characterised by numerous procedural irregularities. She is the first woman journalist to be imprisoned due to political motives since the country gained independence – a symptom of the serious shift towards authoritarianism in this former Soviet republic in the Caucasus.

## BURUNDI (1)

### The arbitrary detention of Sandra Muhoza

On 14 October, a high court in the northern town of Ngozi rejected the request for the release of **Sandra Muhoza**, a reporter for the online outlet *La Nova Burundi*, despite procedural irregularities and the deterioration of her health. Accused of “racial aversion” and “undermining the integrity of the national territory” after sharing in a message about an alleged distribution of weapons by the government in a WhatsApp group for news professionals, Sandra Muhoza has been arbitrarily detained since April 2024.



## AZERBAIJAN (25)

### The unwavering courage of Sevinj Vagifgizi

“Our arrest is meant to remove us [from journalism] because we exposed the corruption crimes of Ilham Aliyev and his inner circle.” These were the last words uttered by the editor-in-chief of *Abzas Media*, **Sevinj Vagifgizi**, on 11 March 2025 before the court sentenced her – and six of her colleagues – to nine years in prison, after an unfair and politically motivated trial based on trumped-up charges of “smuggling foreign currency”. 25 journalists are currently behind bars in Azerbaijan, 20 of whom have been arrested since 1 December 2024.

## RUSSIA (48)

### Yet another sham trial

On 15 April 2025, journalists **Konstantin Gabov**, **Sergei Karelín**, **Antonina Kravtsova** (also known as *Favorskáia*) and **Artyom Kriger** were all sentenced to five and a half years in prison for “collaborating with an extremist organisation” due to their coverage of the opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who died in a Russian prison on 16 February 2024. It was the first collective trial of journalists in Vladimir Putin’s Russia, which currently holds 48 journalists behind bars, including 26 foreigners – all Ukrainian.



# KEY RELEASES

Notable releases of detained journalists include the nine Belarusian news professionals who were finally able to reunite with their loved ones, blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah in Egypt this September and Ukrainian journalist Dmytro Khyliuk, freed in August after being held in several Russian prisons. Seven journalists from Burkina Faso who had been forcibly conscripted into the army were also released between July and September.



30  
July

## AFGHANISTAN

### **Islam Gul Totakhil and Ahmad Zia Amanyar released**

After serving a six-month prison sentence, **Islam Gul Totakhil**, deputy director of *Radio Jawanan*, and **Ahmad Zia Amanyar**, a journalist for *Radio Begum*, were released on 30 July 2025. *Radio Begum*, an iconic radio station for Afghan women, announced on 4 February that agents from the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) and members of the Ministry of Information and Culture, had raided their premises that same day. After being suspended, the two radio stations were able to resume broadcasting on 16 March.

24  
August



## UKRAINE

### **Dmytro Khyliuk released from Russia**

Ukrainian journalist **Dmytro Khyliuk** was released on 24 August 2025 as part of a prisoner exchange between Ukraine and Russia, alongside another Ukrainian media professional, **Mark Kaliush**. Dmytro Khyliuk had been arbitrarily detained for over three years. He was kidnapped by Russian forces on 3 March 2022, in Kozarivchi, a town north of Kyiv that was occupied by Russia. He was held in Hostomel, a rural settlement northwest of Kyiv, then transferred to Novozybkov, a town in southwestern Russia, before being transferred in March 2023 to the IK-7 penal colony in Pakino, in the Vladimir region of Russia. While jailed, he was beaten, humiliated, and deprived of food. A third Ukrainian reporter was released in 2025: **Vladyslav Yesypenko** from *RFE/RL*.



11  
September

## BELARUS

### Diplomacy in action as nine journalists freed

On 11 September 2025, nine Belarusian journalists – including **Ihar Losik**, of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)* – who had been detained for more than five years, were released after spending months or, in some cases, years behind bars simply for doing their jobs. These journalists were released and then deported as part of negotiations with the US government, leading to the release of 52 political prisoners on 11 September. However, 33 journalists are still in custody in this country where, since the fraudulent 2020 presidential election and subsequent crackdown on peaceful protests, almost all independent media outlets have been silenced and their journalists detained or forced into exile.

## EGYPT

### Alaa Abdel Fattah released after a decade-long fight

After nearly a decade in prison, British-Egyptian blogger **Alaa Abdel Fattah** was finally released after a presidential pardon. Although he was sentenced to five years in prison, he spent almost six years behind bars on an arbitrary charge of “spreading false news” following his Facebook post condemning the torture taking place in Egyptian prisons. Prior to this lengthy incarceration, he had spent over four years in jail for protesting against ongoing repression. Egypt remains one of the world’s largest prisons for journalists: 20 media professionals were behind bars in the country as of 1 December 2025.



23  
September



16  
September



## BURKINA FASO

### Journalists liberated from forced conscription

Seven journalists who had been abducted by the authorities and forcibly conscripted into the army and were reunited with their families in 2025. Among them were **Adama Bayala**, a columnist for the privately-owned television station *BF1* and **Alain Traoré**, author of the satirical column *Le Défouloir*, who returned home on the night of 16 September 2025. Their liberation followed five other releases followed five others that had taken place between 11 and 21 July. However, Serge Oulon, winner of the 2025 RSF-Mohamed Maïga Prize for African Investigative Journalism, remains the last journalist believed to be forcibly conscripted.

### An investigative report to free Frenchie Mae Cumpio

After years of tirelessly campaigning for the release of Filipino journalist **Frenchie Mae Cumpio**, a significant step forward was made on 6 November 2025, when a regional Philippine court dismissed the baseless murder charges brought against her. In August of the same year, RSF published an exclusive investigation revealing that the case against her – allegations that she took part in an ambush that killed soldiers – was entirely fabricated. Frenchie Mae Cumpio is currently being held in pre-trial detention in connection with two other cases based on equally implausible accusations, for which she could face up to 40 years in prison.

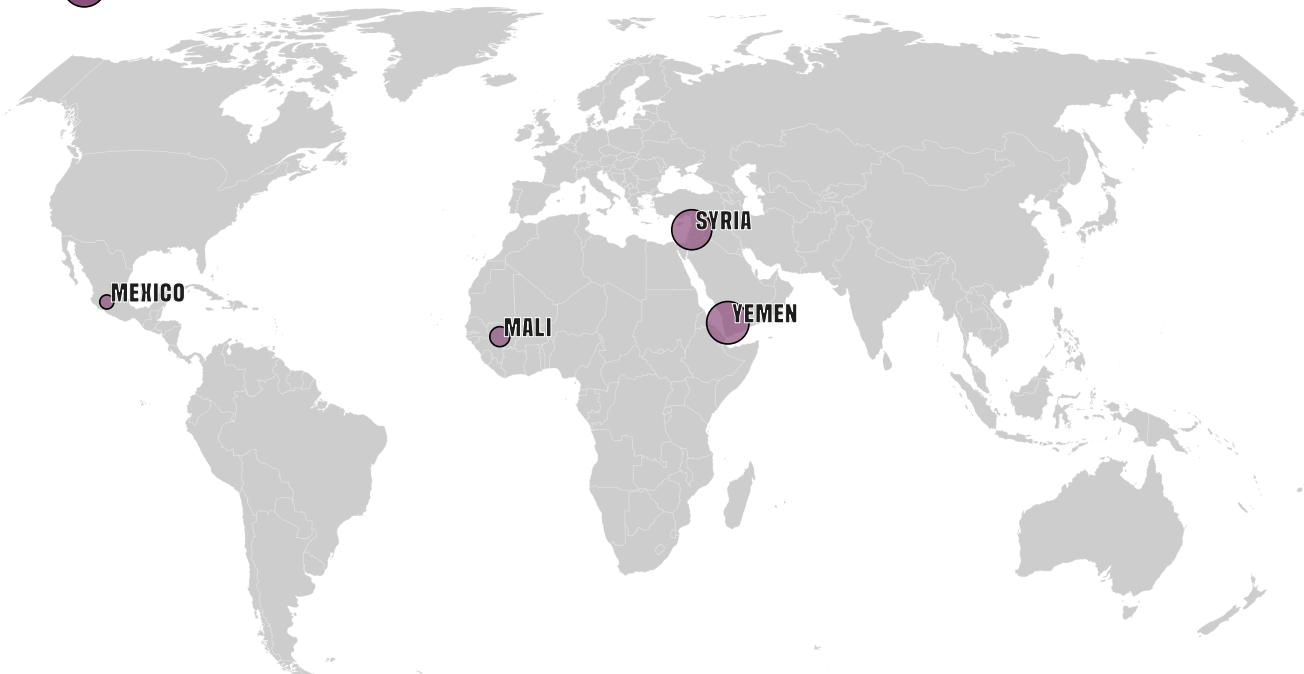


# 20 JOURNALISTS HELD HOSTAGE IN FOUR COUNTRIES

Twenty journalists are currently being held hostage in different parts of the globe. Seven were kidnapped by Houthi rebels in 2025, making Yemen the country with the highest number of journalist kidnappings over the last 12 months. In Syria, many journalists captured by armed groups before the fall of dictator Bashar al-Assad in December 2024 are still missing.

## Journalists held hostage worldwide as of 1 December 2025

1 • 9



### SYRIA (8)

#### Where are the jihadists' hostages?

Between 2012 and 2018, dozens of journalists were taken hostage by jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq. While many of them disappeared with the fall of the Islamic State, eight are still being held by rebel or jihadist groups in Syria, including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which is involved in the new government, and the Sultan Mourad Division, backed by Türkiye.

### YEMEN (9)

#### Seven journalists taken hostage by the Houthis in 2025

On 22 May 2025, Houthi rebels carried out one of their largest raids against journalists in areas under their control since the UN-brokered truce with Saudi Arabia in 2022. Seven journalists were abducted from their homes near Sanaa – the Yemeni capital seized by the Houthis in 2014 – and taken to Houthi detention centres. This brings the number of journalists held hostage by the Houthis in Yemen to nine, making the paramilitary group the world's leading captor of journalists.

### MALI (2)

#### Community radio journalists still held hostage

It has now been two years since journalist and director of *Radio Coton d'Ansongo* **Saleck Ag Jiddou**, and **Moustapha Koné**, a presenter from the same local station, were abducted by members of an unidentified armed group on 7 November 2023, while travelling to Gao, a city in northern Mali, with two other journalists. During the attack, journalist **Abdoul Aziz Djibrilla** was shot dead. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of four million CFA francs (around 6,000 EUR) for each journalist.

### INDIA

#### Yambem Laba abducted for criticising a militia

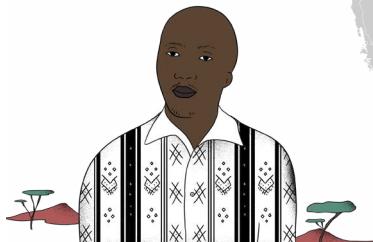
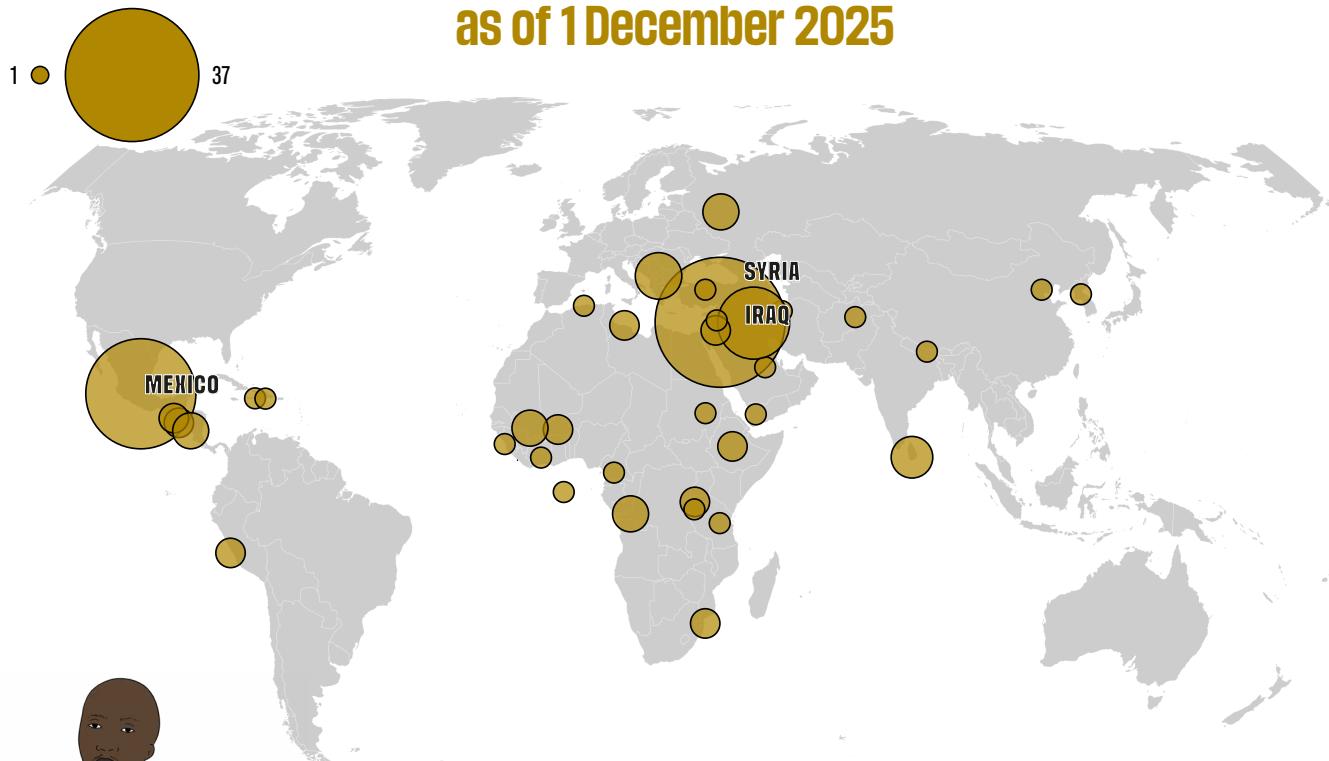
During the night of 10 February 2025, in the northeastern state of Manipur, **Yambem Laba**, a correspondent for *The Statesman*, was abducted from his home by around 20 members of an armed group after he criticised the activities of the Meitei militia, run by the majority Hindu ethnic group in the state. He was eventually released the following morning, after being forced to record an apology video.



# 135 MISSING JOURNALISTS IN 37 COUNTRIES

By the end of 2025, 135 journalists were still missing around the world. Some have been missing for more than 30 years. Although journalists are held hostage worldwide, the trend spikes sharply in Syria (37) and Mexico (28).

## Journalists missing worldwide as of 1 December 2025



### BURKINA FASO (2)

#### Serge Oulon forcibly conscripted

Serge Oulon, editor of the investigative newspaper *L'Événement*, has been missing since he was abducted from his home on 24 June 2024 by a dozen armed men claiming to belong to the National Intelligence Agency (ANR). Although the Burkinabe authorities acknowledged his conscription into the army in October 2024, they have since refused to reveal his whereabouts or provide proof of life. According to RSF information, seven other journalists were also forcibly conscripted or disappeared, but all have since been released. Moreover, **Moussa Sareba**, a journalist with the private media outlet *Fil Infos* and administrator of the *Radio Oméga* Facebook page, was reportedly abducted on 10 August at his workplace. Nearly four months on from his disappearance, neither his relatives nor his colleagues have received any news of him.

### GUINEA (1)

#### Where is Habib Marouane Camara?

The owner and general administrator of the news website *Le Révélateur 224*, **Habib Marouane Camara**, was abducted on 3 December 2024, in Lambanyi, a neighbourhood in Conakry, the capital of Guinea. Armed men in military uniforms smashed the windshield of his car, dragged him out, beat him unconscious with batons and then took him to an unknown destination. He has been missing ever since. In July 2025, RSF referred the case to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances with the hope of obtaining information on the whereabouts of this journalist, who suffers from an illness that requires daily medication.

### MISSING JOURNALISTS IN SYRIA (37)

On 1 August 2011, **Qutaiba Merei** and **Thabet Muhsisen** were arrested at a checkpoint at Dahiyat Qudsaya, near Damascus. The two reporters from *Syria News* were taken into detention, and no one had any news of them again until 2019, when a former detainee claimed to have seen someone matching Thabet Muhsisen's description. Since then, no further trace of either journalist has emerged. They were not among the prisoners released on 8 December 2024. A total of 37 journalists are still missing in Syria.



# SPOTLIGHT ON...



## CRACKDOWNS ON JOURNALISTS COVERING PROTESTS

From Nepal to Serbia, Indonesia to France and even Madagascar, journalists covering protests were particularly obstructed from doing their work in 2025, mainly by law enforcement officers.

### SERBIA

#### A year of violence against journalists

Since the start of the anti-corruption protests triggered by the deadly collapse of a train station canopy in November 2024, Serbian media professionals covering demonstrations have been subjected to at least 98 physical assaults, according to the RSF tally, 91 of which took place from 1 January 2025 onwards. Around half of these attacks were carried out by the police with complete impunity, in a climate shaped by President Aleksandar Vučić's verbal attacks against the press. He is on the RSF list of press freedom predators for 2025.

### NEPAL

#### Ransacked newsrooms, assaulted journalists and a slain cameraman

On 28 March 2025, **Suresh Rajak**, a cameraman for the Nepali channel *Avenues TV*, died of an arson attack while covering a royalist demonstration. An investigation into his death is ongoing. That same day, supporters of the former monarch, who was deposed in 2008, violently attacked **Dinesh Gautam**, a journalist for the online news outlet *Onlinekhabar*. Six months later – during a new wave of protests led by Nepalese youth to denounce political corruption and the blocking of 26 social media platforms – several journalists were injured by police violence. In the ensuing riots, the offices of around 10 media outlets and three journalists' associations were set on fire and vandalised.

### ECUADOR

#### Journalists caught in the crossfire

At least 55 journalists have been attacked since 22 September, by both police and unidentified individuals, while covering protests against rising diesel prices. The most recent shooting left Edison Muenala, a journalist and producer for *Apak TV*, seriously injured.

### INDONESIA

#### Dozens of journalists attacked during protests

At least 14 journalists were attacked while covering the March 2025 protests against a new law increasing the military's role in civil affairs. Barely six months later, from 25 August onwards, at least 16 journalists were attacked and/or intimidated while reporting on a new wave of protests that shook Indonesia.



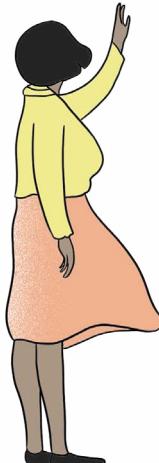
### UNITED STATES

#### Systematic violence against journalists during protests

In June 2025 alone, RSF recorded 27 attacks against media professionals in Los Angeles during protests against federal raids targeting undocumented immigrants. These attacks were carried out by both police and demonstrators. Similar incidents were also reported in the cities of Cincinnati and Chicago.

# JOURNALISTS FORCE INTO EXILE

Because of wars and repressive policies targeting journalists, an increasing number of media professionals have been forced into exile. Countries like Afghanistan, Russia and Belarus continue to purge their territory of all independent media outlets, while other places, such as El Salvador, have turned particularly hostile over the last 12 months.



## EL SALVADOR

### Nayib Bukele drowns the press

Legal persecution, police surveillance, hate campaigns, cyber-attacks... These are the repressive measures that have been sweeping through El Salvador since May 2025, forcing at least 53 journalists to flee between January and October. Even the Salvadoran Association of Participatory Broadcasting (ARPAS), an RSF partner and leading force in the fight for press freedom in the country, was compelled to leave El Salvador in May 2025.

## AFGHANISTAN

### Journalists sent back and abandoned

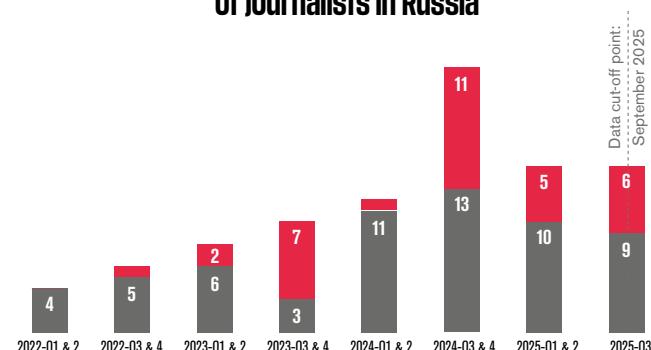
Since the Taliban intensified its repression of the press following the fall of Kabul in 2021, journalists forced into exile increasingly face visa refusals from the states where they seek asylum. In Pakistan, the authorities have not only stopped renewing residency visas but have also introduced an expulsion policy. Among the Afghan journalists in Pakistan supported by RSF, more than 20 were sent back to Afghanistan in 2025, where they face the risk of prosecution, imprisonment and even torture.

## RUSSIA

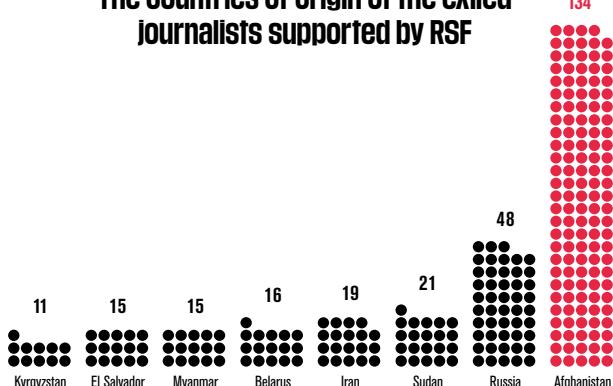
### Exiled journalists confronted by transnational repression

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, growing numbers of Russian journalists have had no choice but to flee their country in order to continue doing their work. However, even in exile, they continue to be persecuted by the Kremlin, which is pursuing them well beyond Russia's borders. Since 2022, nearly 70 journalists have been targeted by arrests or convictions in absentia, and 30 of these cases occurred in the first three quarters of 2025 alone.

### Number of in absentia arrests and convictions of journalists in Russia



### The countries of origin of the exiled journalists supported by RSF



### 2025: RSF AID FOR JOURNALISTS FORCED INTO EXILE

More than half (51%) of the journalists who applied for RSF emergency assistance in 2025 had been forced into exile, coming from 44 different countries. The three most represented countries of origin were: Afghanistan – by far the largest, with 134 new cases – followed by Russia (48) and Sudan (21). Despite the immense challenges they face, 55% of these journalists have continued their reporting work while in exile. What's more, out of over 40 media outlets supported by the RSF Assistance Office over the last 12 months, 19 were newsrooms that continued to produce journalism in exile.

# I DEFINITIONS



## Killed journalist

RSF logs a journalist's death on its press freedom barometer when they are killed on the job or in connection with their status as a journalist.



## Detained journalist

RSF distinguishes between three categories for journalists thrown behind bars while working or because of their work:

- **Provisional detention:** any deprivation of liberty lasting more than 48 hours involving a person who has not yet been tried.
- **Imprisonment:** deprivation of a journalist's liberty after a conviction.
- **House arrest:** obliging a journalist to remain in a designated location determined by the authority ordering the decision, which is often the journalists' home. This punishment may also include electronic surveillance and the journalist may be required to report regularly to the police and/or to remain in the designated place at specific times. House arrest can be imposed as an alternative to imprisonment for those convicted, or as a surveillance measure for those being prosecuted.



## Journalist held hostage

RSF considers that a journalist is a hostage from the moment they are deprived of their freedom by a non-state actor who combines this deprivation of liberty with threats to kill or injure the journalist, or who continues to detain them with the aim of coercing a third party to perform or refrain from performing an act as an explicit or implicit condition for the hostage's release, safety or well-being.



## Missing journalist

RSF classifies journalists as missing when there is not enough evidence to determine if they were victims of a homicide or abduction, and no credible claim of responsibility has been made.

- **Reported missing:** this is the default status when a journalist or media worker is missing and it is not known whether they were taken hostage, in state custody or were killed, when evidence of death or abduction is non-existent or insufficient, and when no credible claim of responsibility has been made.
- **Enforced disappearance:** under international law, this is characterised by three essential criteria: deprivation of freedom by an official authority (or a group acting in the authority's name, with its support or consent) combined with the refusal to either recognise this deprivation or reveal the fate and whereabouts of the person concerned.



# WHAT ARE OUR STATISTICS USED FOR?

Our statistics, updated daily on our website, are used in the annual **World Press Freedom Index** and help fuel our legal and political advocacy, as well as our actions on the ground.

## > Taking action in crisis zones

RSF has opened press freedom centres in Ukraine and Beirut, and launched a support project in Thailand for Myanmar journalists to continue protecting journalists in conflict zones, where attacks against press freedom are the most prevalent.

## > Creating our **World Press Freedom Index**

These statistics play an important role in compiling the World Press Freedom Index. The number of these violations committed in a single country or territory (known as the “abuses score”) represents a third of the “safety score,” one of five indicators used in the Index.

### Updating our barometer in real-time

The RSF online barometer is constantly updated by our zone managers and correspondents with the names of journalists who have been subject to abuse (killed, detained, held hostage, missing).

## > Fighting impunity

The rigorous methodology employed by RSF gives its data credibility. As our statistics are based on explicit, detailed rules, various institutions recognise and use our data. Our statistics are also regularly used to engage with governments or to fuel legal complaints, such as the complaints RSF brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the crimes committed against journalists in Gaza by the Israeli army.

## > Paying homage to journalists

Every year, the new names of fallen journalists added to our barometer are engraved on a memorial stone at the War Reporters' Memorial in Bayeux during the ceremony for the Bayeux Calvados-Normandy Award for war correspondents.



# I METHODOLOGY

Compiled by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) every year since 1995, the annual round-up of cases of violence and abuse against journalists is based on data collected throughout the year. We gather detailed information that allows us to affirm with certainty or a great deal of confidence that the death, detention or abduction of each journalist was a direct result of their journalistic work. RSF only counts journalists who fall within the scope of its mandate, that is to say, anyone who – by any means of communication and on a regular or professional basis – collects, prepares and disseminates news, information and ideas in a way that serves the general interest and the public's fundamental rights, while respecting the principles of freedom of expression and journalistic ethics. The 2025 round-up figures compiled by RSF include both professional and non-professional journalists as well as those who collaborate with media workers.

The analysis covers the period between each RSF annual report and therefore concerns abuses committed between 1 December 2024 and 1 December 2025. This change in methodology, introduced with the 2025 report, is intended to ensure that violations occurring in December – previously excluded from the annual report – are now taken into account. As a result, our data does not include releases or attacks on journalism that took place after 1 December 2025. However, these do appear on the RSF Press Freedom Barometer, which is updated regularly.



### Stay safe

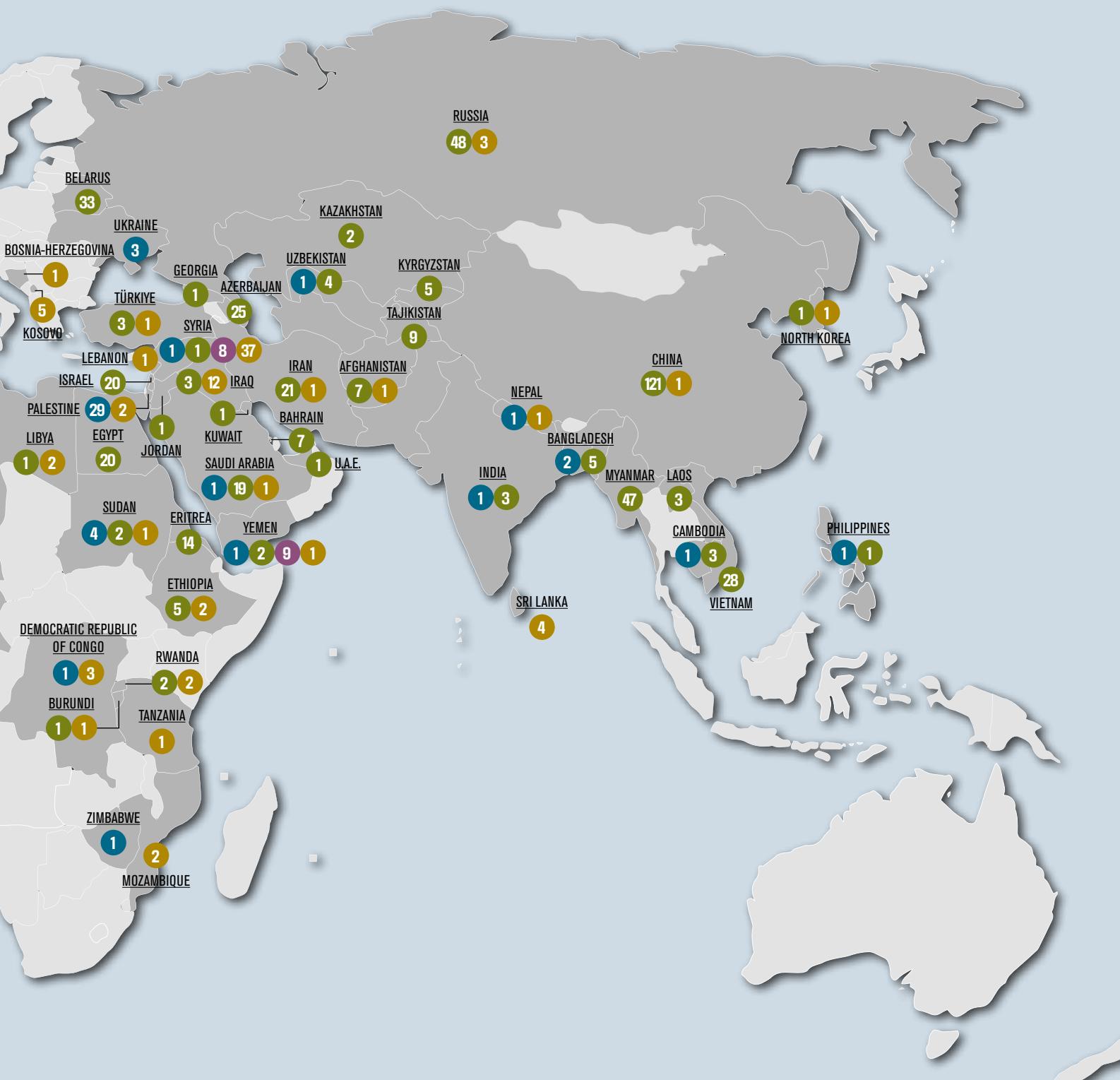
Take a look at the RSF resource kit to help journalists and media outlets protect their work, their data, their sources, and themselves.



[resources.rsf.org](https://resources.rsf.org)



■ PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS IN 2025 ■



- Number of journalists killed (67)
- Number of journalists detained (503)
- Number of journalists taken hostage (20)
- Number of journalists missing (135)



For 40 years, **REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF)** has defended media freedom, independence and pluralism all over the world. Headquartered in Paris with 15 bureaus and sections and more than 150 correspondents worldwide, it has consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO.