

**2024 MONTHLY REPORT: MARCH**



**WOMEN  
PRESS  
FREEDOM**

# Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

**Over 70 Cases of Press Freedom Challenges for Women  
Journalists in March 2024**

Photo Credit: Harmonie Pacione FTV

# 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.

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# Editor's Note

In our March 2024 report on the press freedom status for women journalists, we spotlight the diverse challenges faced by women in media, with a focus on **physical violence, legal harassment, and online threats**.

The report documents **71 incidents across 21 countries**, with Russia leading with eight cases and Azerbaijan, Mexico, and Turkiye following with six each. These cases span a range of violations, including 12 detentions, 10 instances of threats and intimidation, and 7 online harassment cases.

In Russia, SotaVision journalist Antonina Favorskaya's ordeal emphasizes the increased legal harassment faced by journalists. After a ten-day detention for allegedly not complying with law enforcement, Favorskaya's home was raided by officers, and she was placed under investigation.

Turkiye's tension between freedom of the press and government actions is yet again starkly visible. Journalist Pınar Gayıp's recent conviction to a six-month suspended sentence for "publicly degrading the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey, and its institutions and organs" exemplifies the ongoing legal challenges faced by media professionals in the country. Meanwhile, the case of Eylül Deniz Yaşar, who was detained and mistreated during the Kurdish New Year celebrations, highlights the physical risks these journalists encounter.

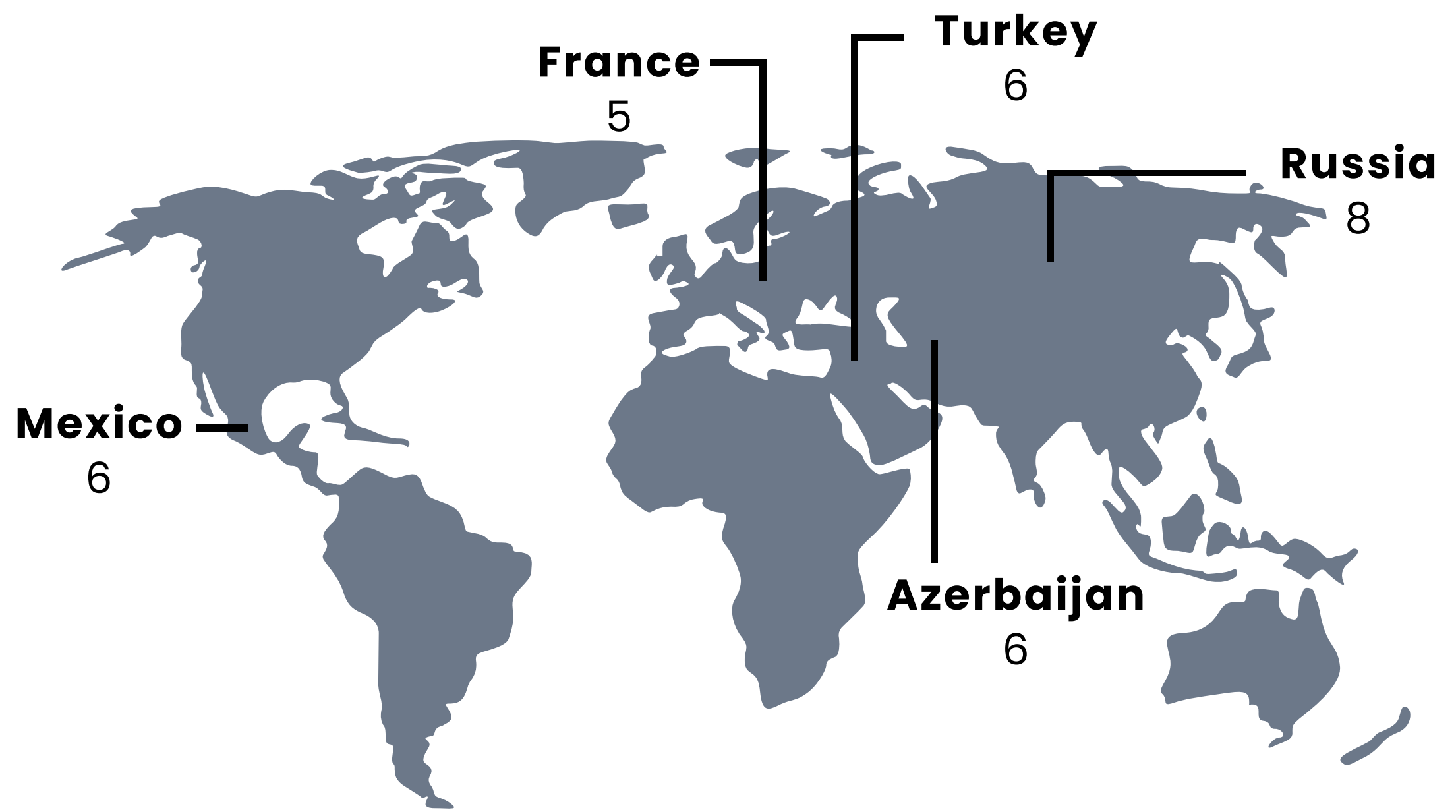
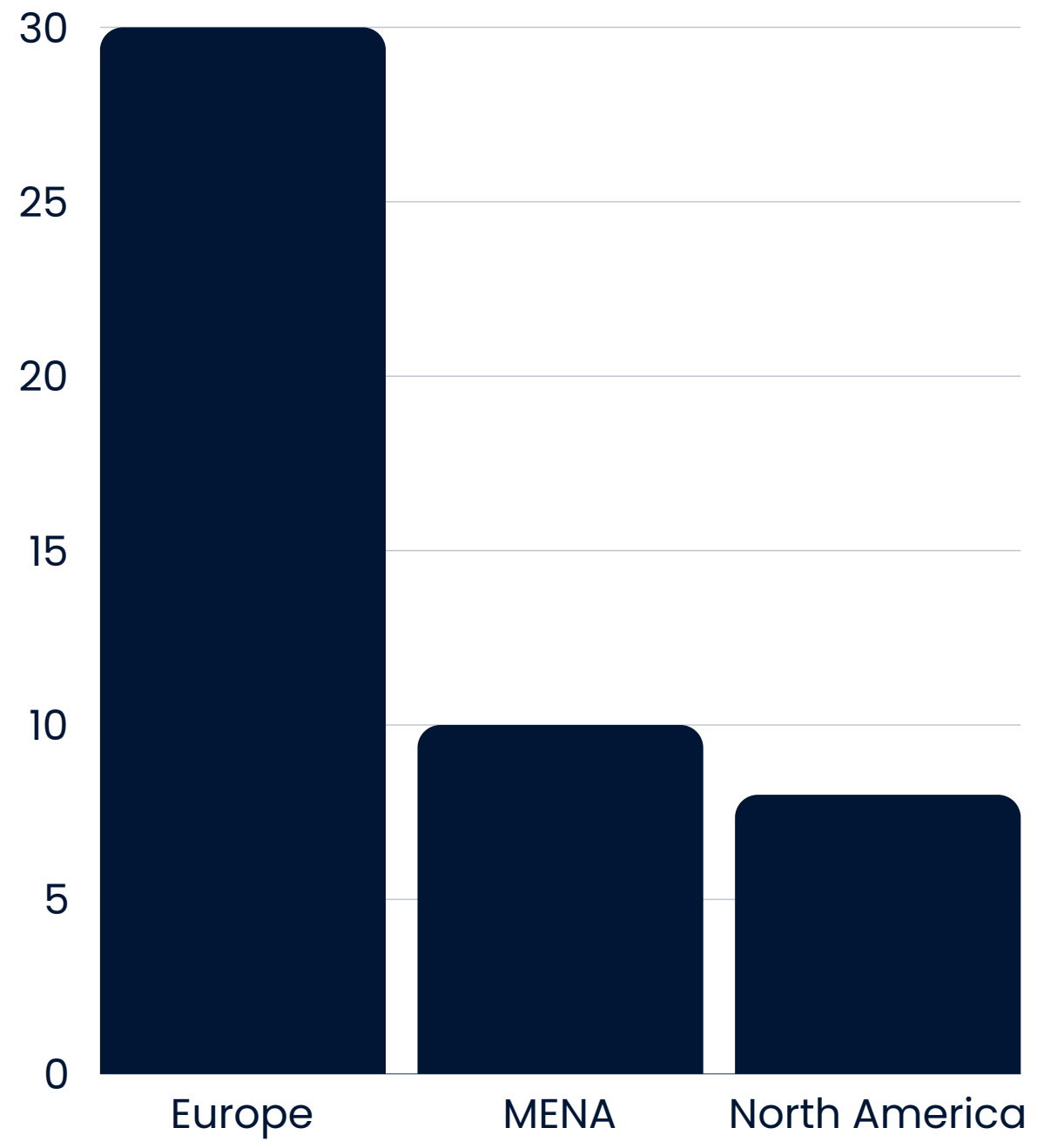
Despite this, there are glimpses of hope and vindication, such as in Canada, where criminal charges against Indigenous journalist Brandi Morin were dropped after advocacy by the Coalition For Women In Journalism and Women Press Freedom.



**Inge Snip**

Senior Editor, Women Press Freedom

# Top Press Freedom Violators in March 2024



# Top Press Freedom Violations in March 2024

**Online Harassment**



**Physical Assault  
Resulting in No Injury**



**Detentions**



## A journalist was abducted/unaccounted for

### Israel

On March 29, Palestinian journalist **Bayan Abusultan** reassured her followers on social media about her safety and survival, ending a ten-day period of being unaccounted for. The last communication from Abusultan, where she reported the tragic loss of her only brother at the hands of Israeli forces, had raised concerns for her well-being as she had not been in touch since March 19. Abusultan, known for her in-depth reporting on the conflict in Gaza, had shared her heartbreaking story on social media before going silent.



A journalist abducted

## Two journalists were sentenced

### Russia

On March 18, 2024, **Antonina Favorskaia**, a journalist working with SotaVision, was handed a ten-day sentence by the Nagatinsky District Court of Moscow for allegedly failing to comply with the instructions of law enforcement officers.


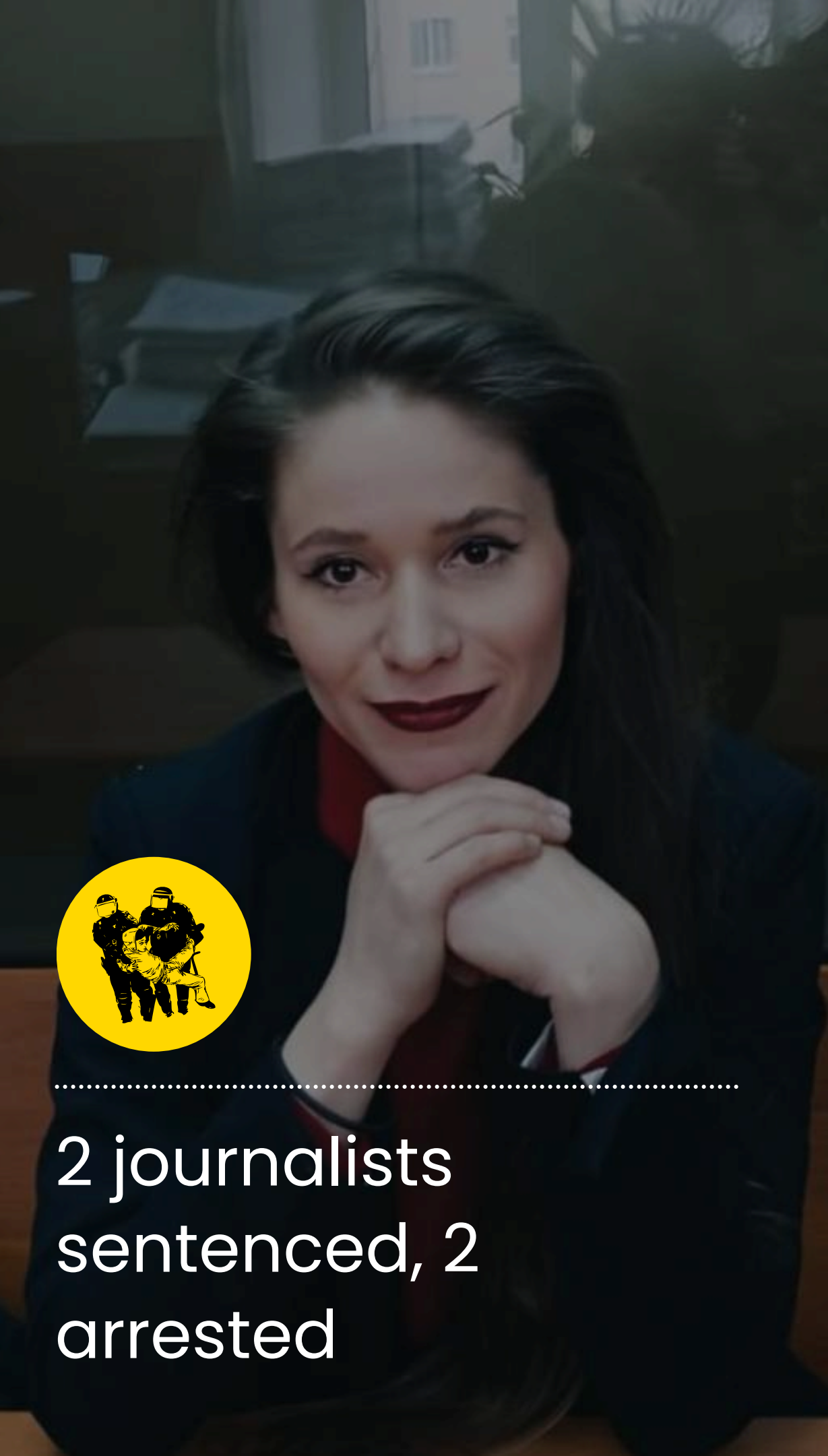
### Turkiye

On March 28, 2024, the Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance convicted journalist **Pinar Gayip** to a six-month suspended sentence for "publicly degrading the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey, and its institutions and organs."

## Two journalists were arrested

### Russia

On March 27, 2024, **Antonina Favorskaya**, who had spent 10 days in a Moscow jail on a baseless administrative charge, received news that her home was being raided by officers and that she was under investigation. On that same day, Rus News reporter **Olga Komleva** was arrested in the republic of Bashkortostan on comparable charges.



2 journalists  
sentenced, 2  
arrested

## 12 journalists were detained

### Azerbaijan

On March 6, 2024, Azerbaijan authorities conducted a forceful raid on Toplum TV, detaining its journalists. The extensive police operation, lasting over two hours, involved blocking all access points to the media office and forcibly taking staff members into custody. Notably, among those detained were women journalists **Parvana Gurbanli, Jamila Azimova, Gülyetər Mahmudova, Fidan Alijanova,** and **Alya Agayeva.**

### Egypt

On March 10, 2024, **Rana Mamdouh** and her driver were traveling to Ras al-Hikma on assignment when they were stopped at a checkpoint at the Alamein toll station. Despite identifying herself as a journalist, police detained Mamdouh under the pretext of “conducting a press interview without a permit” and took her to the Alamein police station.

### Turkiye

On March 17, 2024, during the Nowruz celebration in Istanbul's Yenikapı Rally Area, police assaulted multiple journalists. AFP journalist **Eylül Deniz Yaşar** was unlawfully detained at a checkpoint.



12 journalists  
detained



## 12 journalists were detained

### Israel

On March 7, 2024, **Bushra Al-Taweel**, a prominent Palestinian journalist, was physically assaulted at the hands of Israeli soldiers shortly before her detention.

On March 19, 2024, the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) raided the home of Palestinian journalist **Rula Hassanein** in Bethlehem. Hassanein, known for reporting on the Israeli occupation and human rights violations, was detained and had her belongings confiscated. Al-Jazeera reported that she was separated from her nine-month-old baby, whom she was nursing, leaving the infant with her husband.

### Russia

On March 27, 2024, while covering the scheduled release of Antonina Favorskaya from a Moscow jail, **Alexandra Astakhova** and **Anastasia Musatova** were detained by officers. Additionally, SOTAVision journalist **Ekaterina Anikievich** was also detained while reporting on the raid of Favorskaya's home.



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12 journalists  
detained

## Six journalists faced legal harassment

### Ukraine

On March 12, 2024, in the defamation case filed by the mayor of Ostroh, Yuri Yagodka, against local journalist **Tetyana Klymchuk**, Yagodka failed to appear for the second time. The court chose not to proceed with the lawsuit, leaving the case unresolved.

### Azerbaijan

On March 14, 2024, **Khadija Ismayilova** was called in for questioning by Baku police regarding the Toplum TV investigation. The editor of the outlet declined to provide testimony and was released after a three-hour interrogation.

### Russia

On March 15, 2024, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced personal sanctions on American citizens for allegedly conducting "hostile attacks" against Russia and spreading what the Kremlin views as fabrications and slander regarding Russia's foreign and domestic policies. Among the 227 people sanctioned, the list includes government employees, academics, and journalists – such as **Ellen Nakshima**, a national security reporter for the Washington Post.

On March 17, 2024, Roskomnadzor (RKN), the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media, initiated a new criminal case against Buryat journalist **Yevgenia Baltatarova**. The regulatory body responsible for overseeing and implementing censorship in the Russian media has accused the journalist of shirking the obligations of a "foreign agent."



6 journalists faced  
legal harassment

## Six journalists faced legal harassment

### Turkiye

On March 22, 2024, journalist **Zeynep Durgut** from Mezopotamya News Agency appeared in the Şırnak Criminal Court of First Instance for the first hearing of her case. Durgut had been detained while covering a scheduled press conference in Şırnak on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in November 2023.

On March 26, 2024, during the 5th hearing of her case in Istanbul, BirGün reporter **Dilan Esen** was issued a judicial fine of 7080 Turkish Lira (\$220). Esen was convicted of "publicly insulting a public official due to his duty," following a complaint by Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy.



6 journalists faced  
legal harassment

## Two journalists faced physical assault resulting in injury

### Argentina

On March 3, 2024, in a room at the Hilton Hotel in Tucumán, a young sports journalist accused a group of players from the Velez Sarsfield soccer club of raping her. The case has been classified as "sexual assault with aggravated intercourse by two or more persons" by the woman's legal defense team. The prosecutor is bringing rape charges against players Braian Cufre and Jose Florentin, while Abiel Osario is accused of sexual abuse. A judge has ordered a 90-day house arrest for the three players. The fourth, Sebastian Sosa, was granted \$57,000 bail and banned from leaving the country for 90 days. He is being charged as a secondary participant.

### Turkiye

On March 17, Bianet reporter **Tuğçe Yılmaz**, who was trying to film police clearing the area, was obstructed by officers and instructed to cease recording. Despite identifying herself as a journalist, Yılmaz persisted in filming. In retaliation, a police officer allegedly threw Yılmaz to the ground and forcefully pressed against her throat.



2 journalists faced  
physical assault  
resulting in injury

## Eight journalists faced physical assault resulting in no injury

### Turkiye

**Eylül Deniz Yaşar**, along with approximately 50 others, was detained by Turkish police during the Kurdish New Year celebrations in Istanbul. Despite presenting her press card, she was met with aggression as officers attempted to confiscate her camera and detain her without justification. Throughout her six-hour ordeal, Yaşar experienced a harrowing combination of physical, verbal, and psychological violence.

### Mexico


On March 8, during International Women's Day protests in various Mexican cities, a minimum of 19 journalists, with at least 7 being women, encountered violence while attempting to report on the events. Of these incidents, eleven involved assaults by authorities, such as arbitrary detentions, physical violence, and the deployment of irritant gases. In Zacatecas, **at least five women journalists and human rights advocates** were among those detained.

### France

On March 24, 2024, journalist **Miryam Brisse**, captured on video by her France 3 colleague Harmonie Pacione, was forcefully thrown to the ground by a gendarme officer as she pleaded, "Let me do my job." The journalists were covering a protest against the construction of the A69 highway near Castres.

### Serbia

On March 4, 2024, security officers forcibly removed IN Media reporter **Verica Mariničić** from the Indjija municipal building as she sought to cover a meeting regarding local protests against the closure of a railway station in the village of Cortanovci.



8 journalists faced  
physical assault  
resulting in no injury

## Three journalists were arbitrarily denied access

### Montenegro

On March 14, 2024, journalist **Marija Radović** and her cameraman from TV Vijesti were obstructed while attempting to broadcast live from the Tološka Šume forest in Podgorica. The TV crew intended to report on the new track and outdoor gym in the forest, which was funded by the women's basketball club Budućnost Bemax.

### France

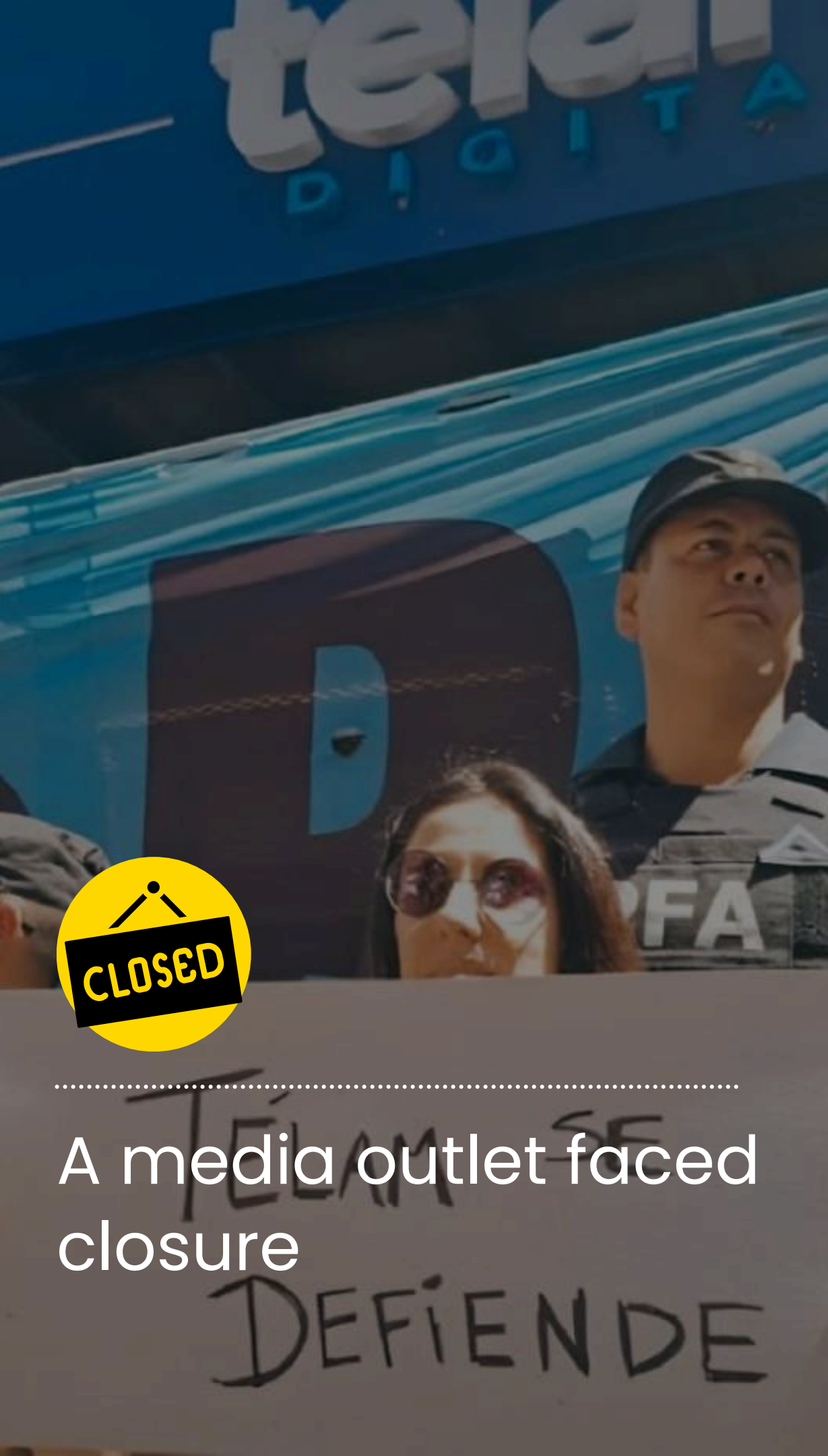
On March 24, 2024, France 3 journalist **Harmonie Pacione** was prevented by gendarme officers from reporting on a demonstration opposing the construction of the A69 highway close to Castres.

### United States

On March 4, 2024, **Caroline Haskins** was forcibly removed from the MindTheTech conference in New York City for covering a Google software engineer's protest against Project Nimbus. The project, a \$1.2 billion cloud computing initiative involving Google, Amazon, and the Israeli government, sparked controversy leading to Haskins' removal.



3 journalists  
arbitrarily denied  
access



## A media outlet faced closure

### Argentina

On March 4, 2024, during a press briefing, Presidential spokesperson Manuel Adorni revealed that **Telam**, the state news agency with an eight-decade history, would be suspended for seven days with continued payment for staff. This action is part of the government's endeavor to conclude the shutdown of the agency, following President Milei's announcement of Telam's closure during his address at the opening of Congress on Friday, March 1.

A media outlet faced  
closure

TELAM SE  
DEFIENDE

## A journalist faced defamation

### Albania

On March 7, 2024, investigative journalist **Ola Xama** faced personal attacks and derogatory labels like 'contracted killer' following BIRN's report on a waste management project involving Mayor Veliaj in Tirana. Subsequent articles, including from Prapaskena, intensified the attacks by suggesting nefarious motives in Xama's legal actions against the portals, endangering her and her family by disclosing sensitive information like her address.

## Three journalists were discredited


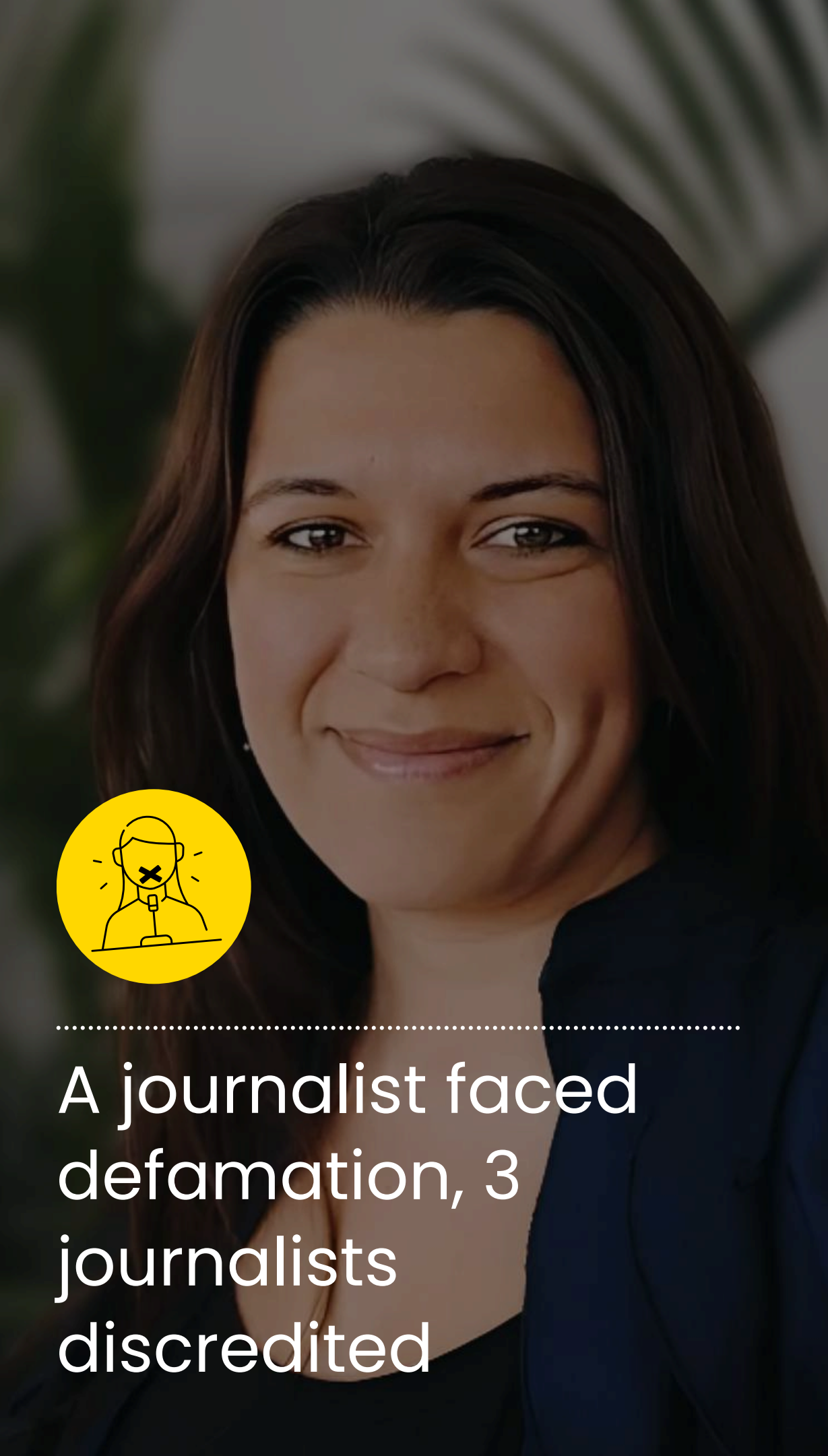
### Slovakia

The vice-chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic from the ruling party SMER, Ľuboš Blaha, insulted and discredited Television JOJ presenter **Jana Krescanko Dibáková** on March 8, 2024.

On March 9, 2024, SMER MP Richard Glück launched a discrediting attack on Denník N journalist **Mária Benedikovičová** through social media platforms.

### Argentina

On March 18, 2024, journalist Luis Majul made false allegations against journalist **Cynthia García** and several prominent Argentine institutions, including the National Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts (INCAA), Télam (the national news agency), and INADI (the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Racism).



A journalist faced  
defamation, 3  
journalists  
discredited



## Two journalists faced loss of employment

### Spain

On March 24, 2024, veteran journalist **Marta Riesco** filed a lawsuit against her former employer, Telecinco, and its production company, Unicorn Content, citing unfair dismissal. Riesco, a well-known figure on Spanish television, made headlines after her exit from Telecinco, which she alleges was unjust and stemmed from conflicts with prominent personalities within the network, such as Jorge Javier Vázquez.

### Mexico

On March 20, 2024, **Laura Brugés** was suddenly terminated from Radio Formula. The decision to end her employment came shortly after President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) mentioned her name during a morning press conference in a segment titled 'Who is who in the lies,' hosted by Elizabeth García Vilchis. Vilchis, a press officer, accused Brugés of conducting a media campaign against the AMLO administration during the conference without offering any evidence to support the allegations.



2 journalists faced  
loss of employment

## Seven journalists faced online harassment

### United Kingdom

On March 4, 2024, broadcaster **India Willoughby** asserted in an interview with Byline TV that J.K. Rowling had committed a crime by repeatedly misgendering her on Twitter. Willoughby claimed she is legally a woman and accused Rowling of calling her a man. The conflict between the two escalated when Rowling dismissed a video of Willoughby on Twitter, describing her as a man engaging in a misogynistic portrayal of womanhood.

### Northern Ireland

On March 11, 2024, a former journalist was granted permission to serve papers to social media giant Twitter during a preliminary hearing at the High Court in Belfast. The journalist's legal team stated that she had been enduring a persistent campaign of online harassment, cyberstalking, abuse, and defamation orchestrated through a pseudonymous account on the platform.

### Peru

On March 17, 2024, Perú21TV disclosed that an AI-manipulated video promoting an investment scheme, which featured its reporter **Jomayvit Gálaga** and other Peruvian celebrities like América TV's **Verónica Linares**, was circulating on the internet.



7 journalists faced  
online harassment

## Seven journalists faced online harassment

### Australia

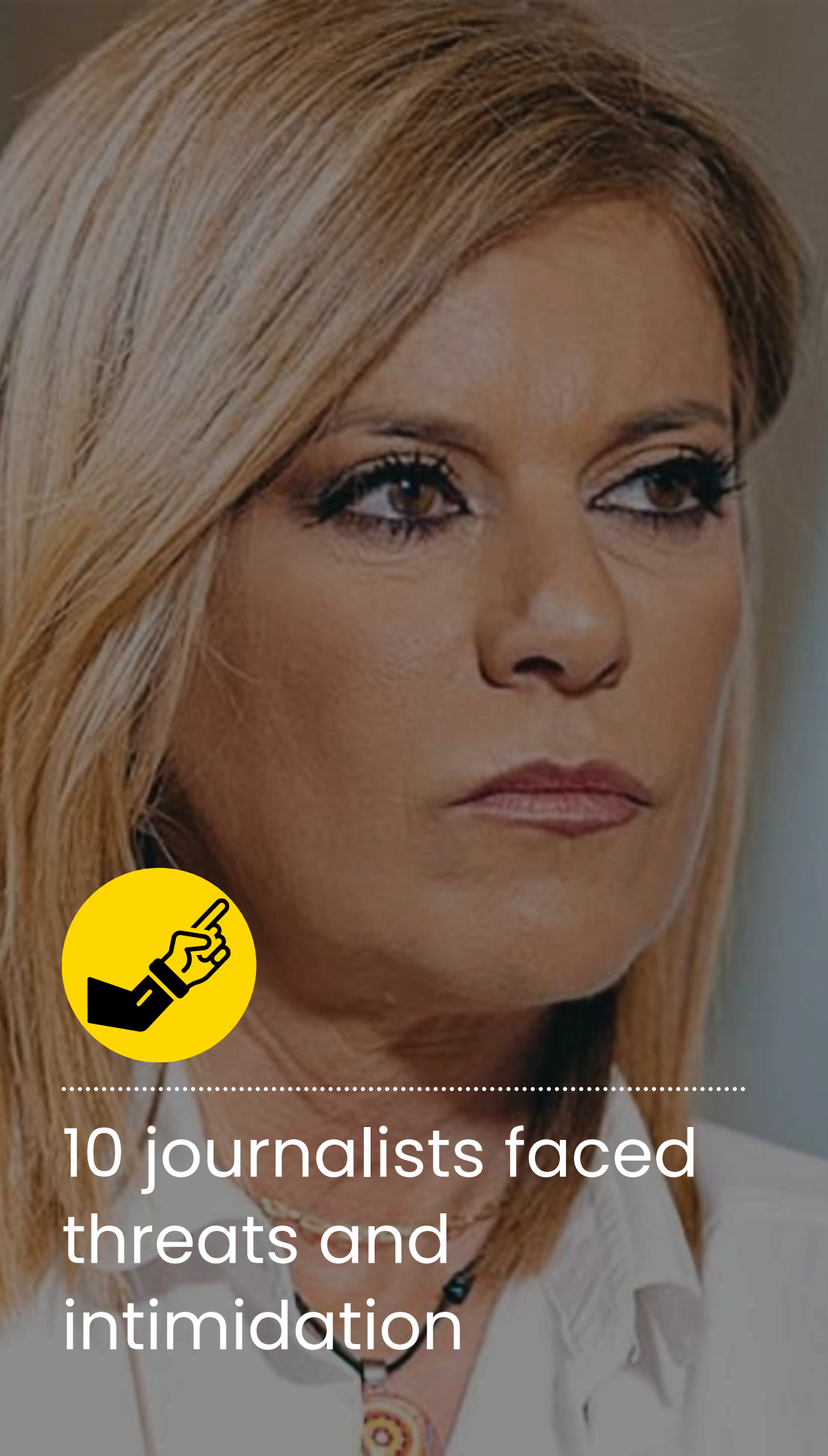
On March 23, 2024, Daily Telegraph reporter **Eliza Barr** shared her dismay at the use of vile homophobic and misogynistic language by fans during a rugby league game between Wests Tigers and Cronulla Sharks at Leichhardt Oval stadium. Barr, a devoted rugby fan, emphasized in her piece that sporting events should not serve as venues where men are exempt from behaving like decent human beings. Following her remarks, Barr became a target for harassment from individuals claiming to be sports fans.

### France

On March 22, **Céline Martelet** and **Édith Bouvier** were sentenced for reportedly transferring funds to jihadists. The journalists, known for their investigative work on French women involved with ISIS, were found guilty of providing financial support for the extraction of French women linked to ISIS in Syria or Iraq, as well as their participation in a botched operation to rescue jihadist Maximilien Thibaut. Subsequent to the court's ruling, Martelet and Bouvier have been targeted with online harassment, including insults and death threats across multiple social media platforms.



7 journalists faced  
online harassment



10 journalists faced threats and intimidation

## Ten journalists face threats and intimidation



### Serbia

On March 9, 2024, during a forum in Dubrovnik, Croatia, **Ana Lalić**, President of the Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina (NDNV), revealed receiving death threats on social media. The threats, filled with vulgarities and chauvinistic insults, included statements like "slaughtering her in Novi Sad," reminiscent of the Novi Sad massacre during World War II. **Ksenija Pavkov**, a journalist from the N1 television station in Novi Sad, also received a barrage of threats and insults online for covering the protest outside the Center for Social Work in Novi Sad.

### Ecuador

On March 11, **Alexandra Moyano** of Radio Novedades in Cotopaxi was targeted with severe death threats. Threatening phone calls delivered messages like "You were warned that individuals would come for you. This is your final opportunity to criticize the government." Moyano was also warned that she would "wake up with flies in her mouth."

### Philippines

On March 12, 2024, reporters **Joann Manabat** and **Rowena Quejada** encountered harrowing threats while reporting on a violent home demolition in Sitio Balubad, Barangay Anunas, Angeles City, Pampanga, amid clashes involving residents and Clark Hills Properties Corporation.

### Spain

On March 12, 2024, **Esther Palomera**, the deputy director of elDiario.es, was threatened by Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, chief of staff for Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the regional president of Madrid. The message, "We are going to crush you. You are going to have to close," was sent via WhatsApp in retaliation to the outlet's reporting on alleged tax fraud linked to Ayuso's partner.

## Ten journalists face threats and intimidation

### Peru

On March 15, as she made her way home, **Rosa Maria Palacios** was confronted by six people linked to the far-right organization La Pestilencia. Because she needed a cane to walk, the journalist had to navigate cautiously and eventually backtrack to ensure her safety.

### France

On March 11, 2024, cartoonist **Corinne Rey** faced death threats after publishing a cartoon in Libération depicting a family in Gaza during Ramadan. Threats included "Run, run whore... You'll soon be shot," and references to the Charlie Hebdo attack.

### Albania

On March 19, 2024, Syri TV journalist **Ambrozia Meta** experienced deep humiliation and degradation when Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama patted her cheek during a conference in an attempt to intimidate her, following a line of questioning from the journalist.

### Iran

On March 29, 2024, British-Iranian reporter **Sima Sabet** was informed to relocate to a different location as a precautionary measure in response to security threats. The Metropolitan Police identified Sabet as a target of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and advised her to avoid her residence. This decision follows the non-fatal stabbing of journalist Pouria Zeraati outside his Wimbledon home.



10 journalists faced  
threats and  
intimidation

## Positive outcomes

### Turkiye

On March 5, 2024, at the Ankara 26th High Criminal Court, journalist **Sibel Tekin** was finally cleared of all charges against her stemming from her work. Tekin had been arrested on December 17, 2022, after filming a police car for her documentary project in Ankara's Tuzluçayır neighborhood. She had been detained for 43 days over allegations of being a member of an "armed terrorist organization."

On March 5, 2024, **Nurcan Kaya** and her legal team from the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) achieved a significant victory in Türkiye's Constitutional Court in Ankara. The judge had determined that a travel ban issued to Kaya in 2019 for a tweet she had posted was unconstitutional.

On March 19, 2024, at the Istanbul 29th High Criminal Court, journalist **Ayça Söylemez** was acquitted of charges stemming from an article published in 2020. The journalist had been prosecuted under Article 6/1 of the Anti-Terror Law for allegedly designating counterterrorism officials as targets for terrorist organizations. The court had ruled that the legal elements of the crime were not met.

On March 19, 2024, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that Turkish authorities had unlawfully detained journalist **Ayşenur Parıldak**. Parıldak, who had worked as a judicial correspondent for the Zaman newspaper, had been arrested on August 11, 2016. She had been convicted of being a member of a terrorist organization over alleged ties with the Fethullah Gülen network, which the Turkish government had accused of plotting the July 2016 coup attempt. After spending 5 years and 7 months behind bars, Parıldak had been released from prison in March 2022 after serving her full sentence.



Accountability

## Positive outcomes

### Turkiye

On March 12, 2024, the Istanbul 35th Criminal Court of First Instance found three police officers, identified as KA, ND, and Y.Ş., guilty of "violating the freedom of work and work" in connection with their actions against **Beyza Kural**, who was violently apprehended by police officers during a protest in 2015. The court had imposed a fine of 9,000 lira (approximately \$280) on each officer, to be paid in 10 monthly installments. Additionally, the court had postponed the implementation of this sentence.

### Canada

Following campaigns by the Coalition For Women In Journalism and Women Press Freedom, Edmonton prosecutor finally drops its criminal charge case against journalist **Brandi Morin** two months after police arrested the revered Indigenous journalis for reporting on a police raid on a homeless camp in January 2024.

### Romania

On March 8, 2024, a Bucharest court made a landmark decision in favor of journalist **Emilia Şercan**, ordering the Romanian Police Academy to grant her access to its archives. This ruling is a major victory for advancing open access to information that serves the public interest.



Accountability

## Positive outcomes

### Slovakia

On March 6, 2024, **Monika Tódová** testified, marking a welcome step forward in the case regarding an AI-generated audio clip which spread on social media two days before the country's general election on September 28, 2023. The audio details a fictitious phone conversation between Tódová and Michal Šimečka, the chairman of Progressive Slovakia. In the clip, manipulated voices discuss strategies to rig the election, including purchasing votes from the Roma community.

### Thailand

On March 6, 2024, **Chutima Sidasathian** was acquitted of three criminal defamation charges linked to her investigation. In 2021, she looked into a bank's controversial actions in Nakhon Ratchasima, where villagers faced legal action over disputed loans. Some villagers suffered tragic consequences, leading to financial hardship and even loss of life. Sidasathian's probe uncovered allegations of corruption involving bank officials and public figures, including the mayor of Banlang sub-district.

### Ecuador

On March 27, 2024, at the Florida Norte judicial complex in Guayaquil, the judge imposed the maximum punishment allowed for minors under the Organic Code of Children and Adolescence. The prosecution, led by César Peña, presented a strong case with over 40 pieces of evidence. The 11 adults linked to the incident await their hearings. On January 10, an armed attack occurred at the Ecuadorian TV Station TC Televisión during a live broadcast, involving armed assailants amid rising gang violence in the region.



Accountability



**CFWIJ and WPF is working hard to  
change these circumstances everyday.**

**Join us in this mission**



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