



2022 Annual Press Freedom Review

The year of courage and revolution

Yalda Moaiery,
Arrested Iranian journalist



CFWIJ Annual Impact

2022: The year of courage and revolution

The Coalition For Women In Journalism is a global non-profit organization that supports and advocates women and LGBTQ+ journalists around the world. Our Press Freedom Newsroom covers violations from 128 countries. These violations include professional and work related harassment, violence encountered during an assignment, imprisonments, detentions, SLAPP cases, police violence, assaults and murders. Alongside the global monitoring and reporting, we are also involved in exploring ways to support, safety and equity related issues. Since 2019, the CFWIJ has supported and advocated for more than 2,000 women journalists who encountered such circumstances. *CFWIJ's work has led to more than 600 evacuations and relocations of women and LGBTQ+ journalists from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Iran, Mexico, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, and Turkey.*

600+

women journalists and
leaders evacuated and
relocated

105

legal support
provided

50

female reporters
benefit from mental
health therapy

197

organization, media
and general
partnerships

160

global mentors

128

countries where
we monitor press
freedom

1500+

top women
journalists within
our network

2022: Highest Number of Murdered and Imprisoned Women Journalists in A Single Year



2022 took its toll on the full range of women journalists' rights. In 2022, we witnessed a war, the uprising of women in a country, the arrest of women journalists, and the deprivation of a vast number of women's rights, including education, and much more. Among all of these major events, an unprecedented number of female journalists were killed while doing their jobs. Many were arrested for exposing facts while numerous others were targeted by online troll campaigns, a form of harassment that is experienced exclusively by women in the profession. In 2022, the safety of women in the media industry diminished significantly.

Highest Number of Murdered and Imprisoned Women Journalists in A Single Year

In 2022, the CFWIJ has documented the murders of 12 women journalists, the highest number killed in a single year since the CFWIJ began documenting violence against women journalists around the world in 2017. Four murders occurred in Mexico, making it the country with the highest number of female journalists killed in 2022, followed by three murders in Ukraine, two in Palestine, and one in each Iraq, Chile and Afghanistan.

Following the eruption of protests in Iran over the death of Mahsa Amini, the number of imprisoned female journalists in the world increased by 64%. Although some journalists have been released, at least 104 still await liberation, 64 of whom were arrested in 2022 alone. In the five years since the CFWIJ began documenting incidents of violence against women journalists, this is the highest number of imprisonments recorded in a single year.



12 women journalists murdered

The highest number of women journalists killed in a single year



104 women reporters behind bars

The highest number of women journalists imprisoned in a single year

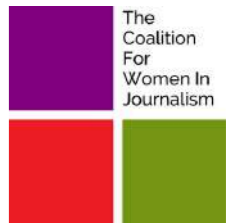


49 cases of online trolling campaigns

Campaigns that target, attack and threaten women journalists

Murdered Women Journalists

Jan 1-Dec 31, 2022



Mexico



On May 9, **Yessenia Mollinedo Falconi** and **Sheila Johana García Olivera** were sitting in a parked car, when unidentified assassins gunned them down. On Jan 23, **Lourdes Maldonado López** was shot dead in her car. On Feb 22, **Michelle Perez Tadeo's** body was found wrapped in sheets in the south of the capital, Mexico City.

Ukraine



On March 15, **Oleksandra (Alexandra) Kuvshynova** was killed by incoming fire by Russian troops. On March 24, **Oksana Baulina** was killed during shelling by Russian forces in Kyiv. On April 29, Vira Hyrych was found dead one day after Russian forces attacked residential building where she was living.

Chile



On May 12, **Francisca Sandoval** was shot in the head by a street vendor while reporting in Barrio Meiggs.

Afghanistan



Radio journalist **Maryam Madadi** was killed in back-to-back explosions targetting passenger vehicles in northern Mazar-e-Sharif city on May 25.

Iraq



On Oct 4, journalist, activist & academic Nagihan Akarsel was brutally killed by gunfire in broad daylight Sulaymaniyah city.

Palestine



On May 11, veteran journalist **Shireen Abu Akleh** was shot in head by Israeli forces while covering an IDF raid. On June 11, **Ghufraan Harun Warasneh** was fatally shot dead near Arroub refugee camp.

Russia-Ukraine: Reporting A War From Frontlines

On February 24th, 2022, following weeks of escalating tensions, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukrainian territory. The military operation came amid growing NATO influence in the Eastern European region and increasing Western sanctions imposed on Russia to deter its state from escalating against Ukraine. After several months of diplomatic engagements failed, President Vladimir Putin announced an “operation” to “protect people who have been subjected to abuse and genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years.”

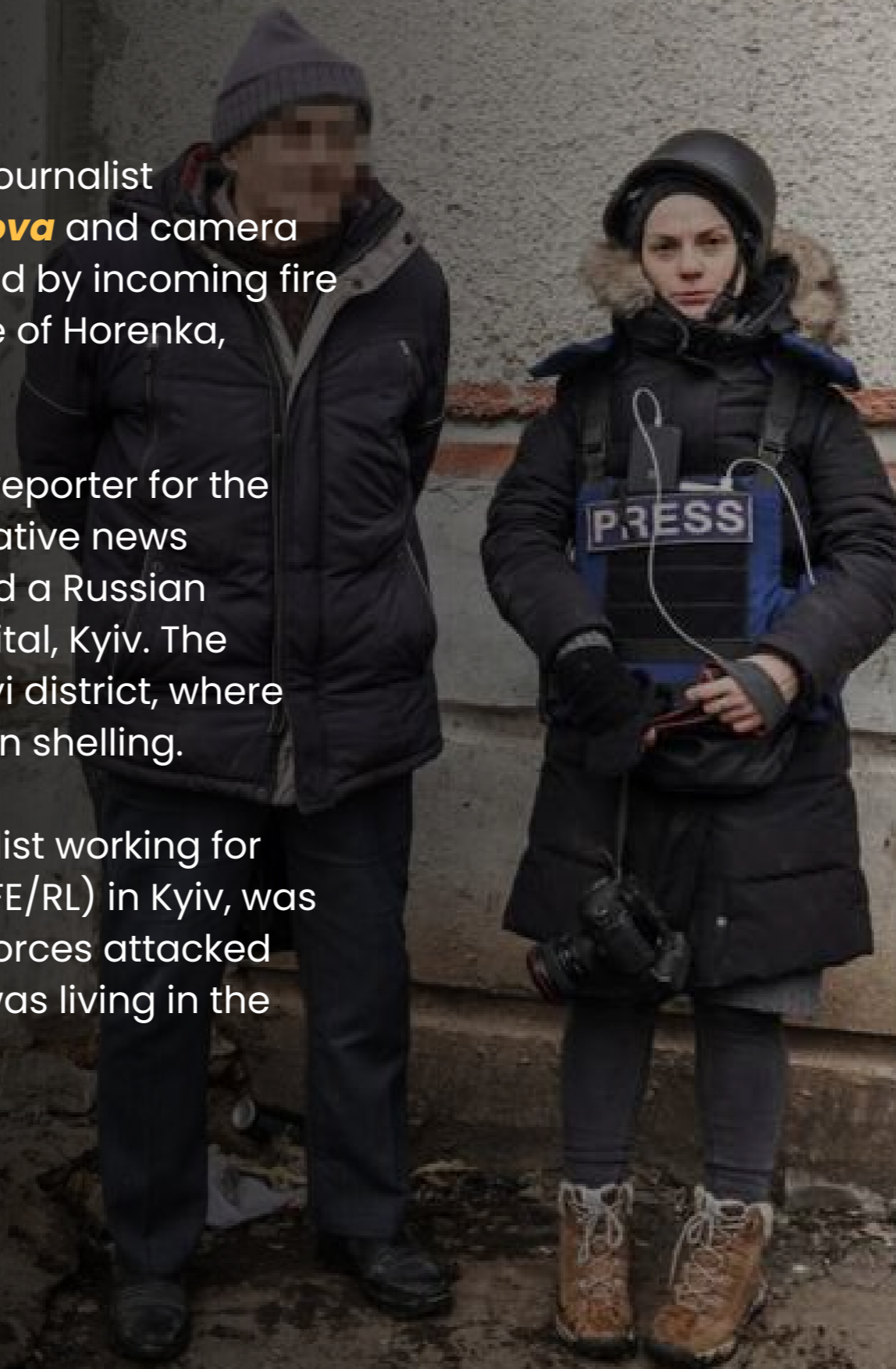
As the Russian invasion forces continued to make advances in Ukraine, several media workers in the country, local and foreign, came under attack, and three women journalists were killed.

Russia-Ukraine: Reporting A War From Frontlines

On March 14th, Fox News Ukrainian journalist **Oleksandra (Alexandra) Kuvshynova** and camera operator Pierre Zakrzewski were killed by incoming fire from Russian troops near the village of Horenka, outside Kyiv.

On March 24th, **Oksana Baulina**, a reporter for the independent Latvia-based investigative news website The Insider, lost her life amid a Russian offensive against the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. The incident took place in Kyiv's Podilskyi district, where she was present to report on Russian shelling.

On April 29th, **Vira Hyrych**, a journalist working for Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) in Kyiv, was found dead one day after Russian forces attacked the residential building where she was living in the Ukrainian capital.



Russia-Ukraine: Reporting A War From Frontlines

In Russia, at least 35 female reporters were subjected to violations such as detention, legal harassment and abduction. 20 were detained for covering anti-war rallies against Russia's invasion of Ukraine across the country, and at least five women journalists were targeted by the state through legislation.

On June 17th, *Russia banned six women journalists from the United Kingdom from entering the country*, claiming they were "involved in the deliberate dissemination of false and one-sided information". The complete list issued by Kremlin authorities names 49 prominent figures from the UK, including 29 journalists, were blacklisted.

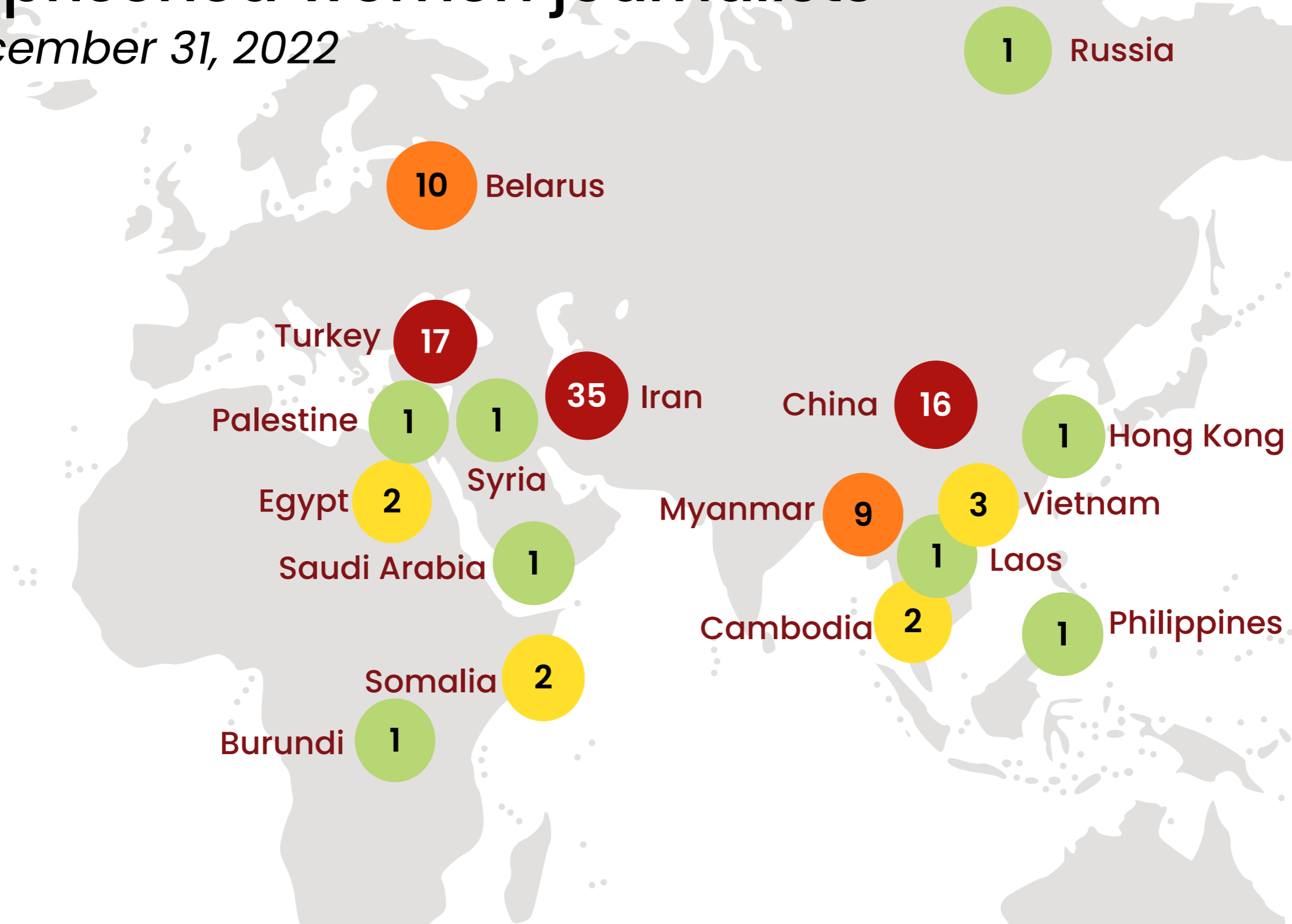
Iran: Top Jailer of Women Journalists

In 2022, after years of fighting for their rights, women ignited the first spark of a revolution in Iran. Protests broke out all over the country following the murder of Mahsa Amini on September 16, 2022, and women journalists who have been following the protests are being targeted by authorities who wish to silence them.

At least 25 women have been arrested for reporting on the situation since the protests began on September 16, increasing the total number of female journalists incarcerated in Iran from 10 to 35 in 2022. While there have been at least five releases, Iran is the top jailer of women journalists around the world in 2022. The CFWIJ has been closely monitoring the situation on the ground, as well as the threats and abuse aimed at journalists in Iran that come from outside of the country. Our sources have informed us that numerous journalists were arrested by the Islamic Republic immediately after Mahsa Amini was killed, and this procedure continues until today. Journalists in Iran have told us that they are followed by unidentified men, often before being detained and interrogated.

Imprisoned women journalists

December 31, 2022



Iran: Top Jailer of Women Journalists

Organized internet trolling is also being used as a weapon to spread misinformation and attack female journalists, even those who are not reporting from Iran. In 2022, the CFWIJ noted at least 12 cases of organized online trolling campaigns targeting women who are exposing the situation in Iran from outside of the country, through their sources on the ground. New York Times reporter **Faranah Fassihi** and Executive director of Gender Equality Org **Sherry Hakimif** faced some of the most vicious trolling campaigns, which, in some cases, were so aggressive that they became a Twitter Trend.

***Negar Mortazavi**, another journalist who faced online trolling, was also the target of threats in the physical world.* The day that Negar was scheduled to attend a panel discussion focused on the current situation in Iran at the University of Chicago, the campus received bomb threats.

Iran: Top Jailer of Women Journalists

It is currently very difficult to gain access to clear communication in Iran. Following their arrest, many journalists are not allowed to make phone calls to either their lawyers or their families, and authorities often provide incorrect information to relatives and legal representatives who inquire about their location. To make matters worse, the internet is blocked in many areas of the country, which has severely limited the ability of many journalists and activists to request aid. Many female journalists across different cities in Iran have gone into hiding, but the CFWIJ recognizes that not all journalists have the option of seeking shelter with family or friends. The well-being of female journalists in Iran, especially those who have nowhere to hide, is at great risk.

Afghanistan: Amidst Escalating Threats and Growing Fear, Women Prove Resilient

Since Kabul fell to the Taliban in 2021, the CFWIJ received an influx of pleas for help from Afghan journalists and activists.

The majority of these requests for aid came from women, many of whom are at high risk under the new Taliban regime. The threatened, yet resilient, Afghan women journalists shared stories of despair, fear, and silence. The Afghan media, which once thrived even amidst the worst of threats such as murder and imprisonment, is now struggling to survive under Taliban rule. In 2022, the CFWIJ assisted more than 450 journalists, women leaders and activists from Afghanistan to safety.

Afghanistan: Amidst Escalating Threats and Growing Fear, Women Prove Resilient

The Taliban takeover has crushed many of the dreams that Afghan women have been working towards for the last two decades, and journalists have risked their lives to provide an account of the war crisis and the atrocities taking place under Taliban rule. They have shown courage in the face of fear, intimidation, and threats of violence, but a tragic number of journalists have been severely injured and even lost their lives while reporting on the situation in Afghanistan

*Radio journalist **Maryam Madadi** was among nine killed in a series of explosions that hit the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif on May 25th, 2022.* Three passenger buses carrying members of the Hazara and Shia communities were targeted with explosives placed inside the vehicles. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attacks, in which at least 15 people were wounded, in addition to the nine lives lost.

Two women journalists were deported from Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2022. Upon her arrival in Kabul in May, VICE's award-winning journalist **Isobel Young** was forbidden to leave her hotel by Taliban authorities, who told her that she was not allowed to work in Kabul, and ordered her to leave the country "immediately". In October, photographer and independent reporter **Stefanie Glinski** was deported from Afghanistan by Taliban authorities and denied re-entry into the country.

Afghanistan: Amidst Escalating Threats and Growing Fear, Women Prove Resilient

On July 23rd, Australian journalist **Lynne O'Donnell** was forced by Taliban authorities to denounce the integrity of her work and apologize for her reporting. Lynne, a columnist at Foreign Policy, was called in for questioning by the General Directorate of Intelligence only one day after her arrival in Kabul. Intelligence officers threatened to prevent her from leaving the country unless she submitted to questioning, then detained her for hours and warned her that she would face imprisonment unless she tweeted an apology for her "inaccurate" reporting on forced marriages of women and girls to Taliban commanders.

On November 3rd, the Taliban arrested journalist and human rights activist **Zarifa Yaqoubi**, along with other women reporters who were attending a press conference in Dasht-e-Barchi, a settlement in western Kabul. According to sources, the Taliban disrupted the press conference, which was being held to announce the formation of the Afghan Women's Movement for Equality, and arbitrarily arrested women journalists and activists, who were then taken to an undisclosed location.

Aggression and Imprisonment: Women Face Increasing Risks While Reporting from Turkey

In 2022, the CFWIJ noted the increasingly dangerous terrain that women journalists in Turkey had to navigate, both physically and digitally, in order to continue doing their jobs. Between Jan-Dec 2022, we recorded 150 cases of violations against women journalists. The state routinely weaponized its institutions to target them. At least 50 women faced legal persecution, while 47 were assaulted in the field by either the police force or supporters of the state. The number of women journalists detained in Turkey increased by 27% in the last year. Women journalists were also targeted through organized online troll campaigns and through state media for criticizing government policies. Despite these attempts to silence them, women journalists in Turkey continued to fulfil their civic role of holding power accountable.

Aggression and Imprisonment: Women Face Increasing Risks While Reporting from Turkey

Currently, Turkey is the country with the most cases of physical violence against women journalists documented by the CFWIJ in 2022. On October 25th, 11 journalists, including seven women, were detained and physically assaulted after their homes were raided by Turkish police. Six of them were arrested and, in a single day, the country jumped from fifth to third place in the CFWIJ's ranking of the top jailers of women journalists in 2022. As of December 31, 2022, 17 women journalists are imprisoned in Turkey.

Online violence is another tactic used to attack and intimidate journalists around the world, but this form of harassment is not seen as real violence in Turkey. Female journalists seem to be the preferred target of online abuse, which is especially prevalent on various social media platforms. The threats of death and rape that are aimed at these women can often reach extreme levels of brutality, but are disregarded by Turkish authorities, despite the fact that they pose a very real danger to the women's lives. Journalists who are openly threatened online become vulnerable to attacks while reporting in the field.

Since January 2022, at least eight Turkish women journalists have been subjected to major online trolling campaigns. Artı Gerçek reporter **Seda Taşkın** became the target of online death threats on May 13th, 2022. Comments such as "I'm on your neck wherever you are" and "Death will find you" were posted to her Instagram page by an unidentified account.

Aggression and Imprisonment: Women Face Increasing Risks While Reporting from Turkey

In some cases, smear campaigns against women journalists were started by Turkish politicians as an intimidation tactic to divert attention from their dubious political endeavors. On May 5th, 2022, at least four female reporters became the targets of one of these campaigns after the right-wing Zafer (Victory) Party shared an anti-refugee short film on Youtube called "Silent Invasion", inciting its supporters to attack the women online. Journalists **Nevşin Mengü**, **Burcu Karakaş**, **Suzan Demir**, **Neşe İdil**, and lawyer and columnist **İpek Maya Saygın** were among the targets of the hate campaign, which weaponized racist and misogynistic language to threaten, intimidate, and censor the journalists.

This smear campaign tactic has been adopted by some of the Mafia heads that are frequently sighted in Turkey. On May 19th, far-right mafia leader Allaattin Çakıcı started a smear campaign against journalists **Hale Gönültaş** and **Seyhan Avşar**, which encouraged other extremists to attack the women online. The gender-based online violence experienced by women in the media is an issue that must be taken seriously by authorities not only in Turkey, but around the world.

Are women journalists safe in Canada?

In 2022, the CFWIJ documented at least 13 major organized online trolling campaigns against women journalists in Canada. This number does not include the dozens of other cases of online harassment that women journalists in Canada encountered daily. Since the beginning of 2022, more online attacks were documented in Canada than in any other country worldwide – an alarming 25% of all cases of online harassment against female journalists occurred in Canada in 2022.

Are women journalists safe in Canada?

On January 28th, journalists **Mercedes Stephenson** and **Rachel Gilmore** faced a concentrated, organized troll campaign, which occurred via their social media accounts. The journalists refused to be silenced and took to Twitter to share their accounts of the attacks.

On February 2nd, Cree/Iroquois/French journalist **Brandi Morin**, known for her work detailing the oppression of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, became yet another target of a vicious abuse campaign. She received messages which threatened her professional and personal safety through her email as well as on her social media accounts. The CFWIJ was informed that she received over 60 hateful and threatening emails in only 24 hours.

Saba Eitizaz, co-host and producer of the Toronto Star show "This Matters" was subjected to vile, racially-charged and sexist abuse via email. The perpetrator directed racially charged vile and sexist abuse at the journalist via email on "Canada Day" - July 1, 2022. Even as the Canadian government claims to celebrate the country's migrant population and multicultural diversity, right-wing populist leaders such as Maxime Bernier have been weaponizing racist and nationalist rhetoric, inciting their followers to threaten and abuse women journalists of color.

These attacks often occur online, because the internet provides a space for people in Canada to freely parrot this hateful rhetoric and remain anonymous.

[Read our campaign to learn more >>](#)

What Press Freedom Looked Like In 2022 For Women Journalists

2022 was a very difficult year for women in journalism. It was a year in which the highest number of women journalists were imprisoned and murdered. Women were physically assaulted while reporting in the field, and while in their own homes. Every day, women journalists are subjected to vicious cyber-attacks that damaged their psychological well-being and threatened them with physical and sexual abuse. In spite of everything, women continued to work tirelessly and fearlessly in the media sector.

In 2022, women were the first journalists to report on the war in Ukraine. Despite the danger to themselves, women remained in Afghanistan to document and expose the injustices imposed upon the Afghan people by the Taliban. It was women who risked everything to amplify the cries of their sisters in Iran, while the rest of the world looked away. In an environment of increasing fear-mongering and violence, women journalists around the world refused to be silenced. They were relentless in their pursuit of the truth, and continue to impress with their unyielding courage.