

The Coalition For
Women In Journalism



#JournalismIsNotACrime

Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

Turkey Cracks Down on Press Freedom: 25% of Documented Cases

April 2023

Photo Credit: TGS

Objective of report

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

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

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Three women journalists arrested

Ethiopia: Police arrest Amhara journalists **Genet Asmamaw** and **Meskerem Abera** among tensions resulting from a new security service law. Asmamaw, a founding member of ASRAT media and reporter for Yeneta Media, claimed police forces beat and verbally abused her during the arrest. On April 9, police arrested journalist, lecturer, and political analyst Meskerem Abera. Ten federal police officers took her away after they searched her home and confiscated her phone.

Turkey: Jinnews reporter **Beritan Canözer** was arrested on charges of "terrorist propaganda" due to her investigative reports on women's and Kurdish people's rights.

Two trans journalists convicted

United States: On April 19, LGBTQI journalists **Matilda Bliss** and **Veronica Coit** of the online news portal Asheville Blade were convicted of trespassing. The judge refused to recognize Bliss and Coit as journalists. The journalists reported on a police sweep at a homeless encampment at a public park when they were arrested in 2021.

"I think it took both of us by surprise," reporter Bliss told CFWIJ. "My press badge was around my neck. You can see that from the body cam footage. It is indicated pretty clearly."

"Our cooperative is entirely trans and non-binary people," editor Forbes says about Asheville Blade. "And we're the only journalists in Asheville who keep being arrested."



19 women Arrested,
Detained,
Convicted, Charged,
and Legally
Harassed

Eight women journalists detained

Turkey: On April 14, Mezopotamya News Agency reporter **Dilan Akyol** was taken into custody and charged with "terrorist propaganda." On April 29, **Eylem Nazlier, Esra Soybir, Serpil Unal, Zeynep Kuray, Pinar Gayip,** and **Yadigar Aygun** were beaten and detained by police officers while protesting the mass detentions of journalists in Diyarbakir. On April 30, police detained ETHA reporter **Nadiye Gurbuz** during a raid in Istanbul.

Five women journalists legally harassed

Lebanon: Latest in a series of attempts to legally harass and intimidate independent news outlets nationwide, the Lebanese Cybercrime Bureau summons the editor of The Public Source, **Lara Bitar**, over an investigative article on toxic waste. On April 5, the journalist refused the summons from the bureau and demanded the investigation be transferred to the Court of Publications.

Morocco: On April 10, **Hanane Bakour** appeared in court on charges of publishing "fake news" for a social media post criticizing the governing party. If convicted, the journalist faces a three-year prison sentence and a fine.

Peru: Prosecutor Patricia Benavides opened the investigation into Ugaz after Luciano Revoredo, the director of the portal La Abeja, filed a complaint claiming Ugaz seized donations for personal use while working with the press team of the former mayor of Lima Susana Villarán. The investigation is part of a string of legal actions following Ugaz investigations into the Ultra-Conservative Right group Sodalicio de Vida Cristiana.

Russia: On April 21, exiled DOXA news editor **Maria Menshikova** was charged with "incitement to terrorism" for social media posts on VKontakte. On April 18, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan initiated an investigation against **Svetlana Anokhina** for anti-war posts on Instagram. Anokhina is charged with "discrediting" the Russian Armed Forces.



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Four women journalists had their accreditation revoked

Georgia: The government revoked the press accreditations of **Sopo Gozalishvili, Tatia Tsotsonava,** and **Rusudan Dumbadze** following their questions to members of the parliament on sexual harassment allegations against the director of broadcaster POSTV, as well as US sanctions imposed on several high-profile judges.

Afghanistan: On April 20, the Taliban banned The Washington Post's Afghanistan bureau chief **Susannah George** from reporting inside the country. George is a seasoned journalist whose reporting has been vital for international audiences. The Washington Post has objected to the decision.

Two women journalists arbitrarily denied access

Uzbekistan: On April 3, **Shahida Yakub** (Tulyaganova) was stopped at Tashkent airport and denied entry into Uzbekistan.

"Two men were holding my passport and boarding passes and virtually whisked me through the crowds as if I was a criminal," Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker Shahida Yakub told CFWIJ.

"They don't want any criticism. That's the problem. Even though it's not criticism, we're not critical. We're just telling the truth," said Yakub.

Spain: Freelance journalist **Lorena R de La Torre** was banned from the political party Democracia Ourensane's events. In a letter to Agencia EFE, who de La Torre collaborates with, the party labeled the journalist "biased" and an "enemy of our party."

PRESS
ACCREDITATION



Four women
journalists had their
accreditation
revoked, two
arbitrarily denied
access

Two women journalists deported

Burkina Faso: On April 1, Burkina Faso deports French journalists Libération's **Agnes Faivre** and Le Monde Afrique's **Sophie Douce**. Both journalists had valid accreditation and visas to work in the country. Neither journalist received written notification explaining their expulsion.

Two women journalists' properties attacked

Italy: On April 3, an unknown assailant set fire to freelance journalist **Rossella Puccio**'s car. The fire destroyed the vehicle. Police have opened a criminal investigation. Puccio was previously assaulted while covering a police sweep at a migrant camp in 2020. Her attackers are currently on trial.

Tanzania: On April 1, intruders ransacked the home of journalist **Sharon Sauwa**. Her property was damaged, and her documents were scattered across the floor, but nothing was taken. Intruders also plugged in her iron and left it on a bed beside two pieces of wood and curtains.



Two women journalists
deported, two women
journalists' properties
attacked

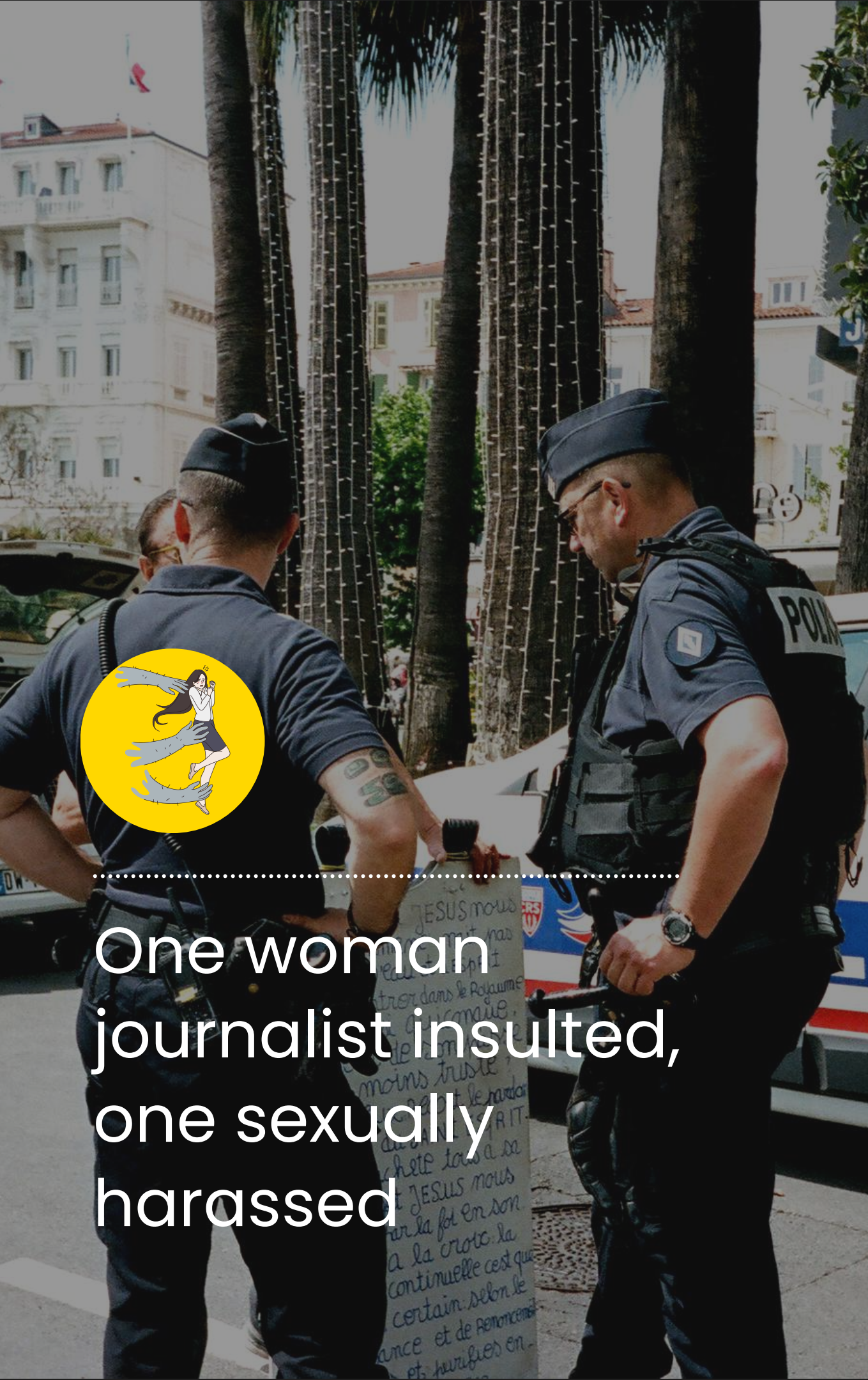
A woman journalist insulted

Spain: On April 11, left-wing political party Podemos insulted conservative TV host Ana Rosa Quintana in a campaign video for the party. The video names Quintana and labels her as “shameless” (sinvergüenza). Ana Rosa Quintana is a famous conservative journalist and television presenter who has been strongly critical of Podemos and its policies in the past.

A woman journalist sexually harassed

Sri Lanka: On April 21, TV presenter Ishara Dewendra announced her resignation from ITN, a state-run TV network, after her boss coerced sexual favors for promotion. Dewendra says she encountered a culture of sexual harassment and abuse while at the newsroom. Her complaints to management were ignored.

“Even though I informed the authorities about this, with an audio recording, with evidence, no one has taken action,” said Dewendra.



One woman
journalist insulted,
one sexually
harassed

Zambia: On April 8, **Sheila Kalunga** was beaten while covering a standoff between supporters of rival political parties. Kalunga and her colleagues from Radio Serenje reported on the demonstration when they were attacked by approximately 20 UPND supporters – the governing party.

Italy: Rai TV reporters **Barbara Di Palma** and **Tatiana Bellizzi** hit, spat at, and threatened while reporting a story in Salerno on April 21. The aggressor also hurled homophobic slurs at the reporters and attempted to hit Di Palma with his vehicle.

Bolivia: Radio Kollasuyo journalist **Iris Toro** was physically assaulted by a group of protestors while reporting on a demonstration in Potosi. The reporter was swarmed and violently attacked. This is the second time Toro has been attacked by demonstrators in less than a month.




Four women
journalists
physically assaulted

Bulgaria: On April 3, **Flora Stratieva**, a reporter for state television network BNT, was kicked out of far-right party Revival's press conference. Members of the party and its supporters ridiculed and humiliated the journalist before forcing her to leave the public party event.

Netherlands: De Volkskrant reporter and former China correspondent **Marije Vlaskamp** receives threats of Chinese origin. Bomb threats were made in Vlaskamp's name to the Chinese embassies in The Hague and Oslo. Before the threats, anonymous accounts pressed the journalist online to withdraw a critical piece on China.

Turkey: On March 29, 2023, **Merve Dişli**, a reporter with local newsroom Kocaeli Barış Gazetesi, was threatened with physical violence after reporting on the launch of a non-affiliated AKP youth center.



Three women
journalists threatened
and intimidated



Guyana: On April 14, a State-Affiliated Facebook page posted a derogatory post featuring Kaieteur News reporter **Davina Bagot**. The post followed a heated press conference on April 1st in which the President of the country, Irfaan Ali, refused to respond to Bagot. While asking questions, supporters of the government intimidated the journalist. Journalist **Nazima Raghubi**, who has led the country's 75-year-old press association since 2018, was also targeted by the same Facebook page on April 15th.



Two women journalists
subjected to online
harassment



**CFWIJ is working hard to change these
circumstances everyday.**
Join us in this mission



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