



Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

Sexism and Misogyny Prevalent Against Women In Media

August 2022



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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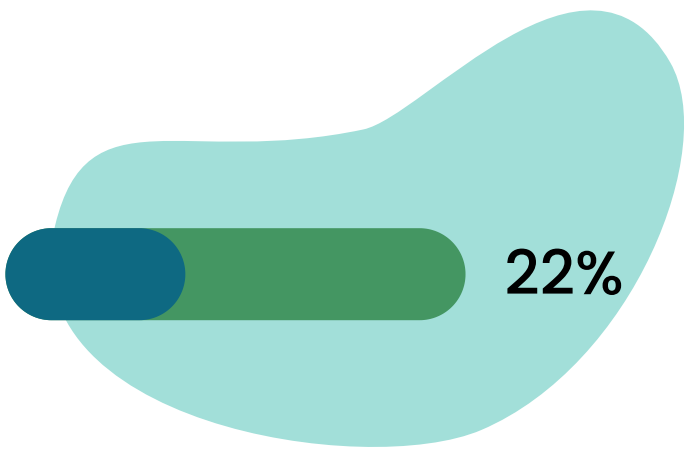
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Introduction

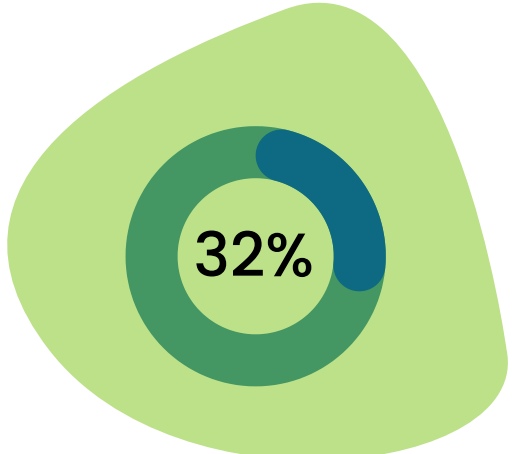
The month of August 2022 underscored yet again that disparaging attitudes towards gender, prevalent in society at large, infiltrate the news media industry as well. In societies that frequently discourage women from speaking up, whether through gendered rhetoric or impunity for gender-based violence, the barriers to entry for women journalists begin before they reach the field. Once they enter the profession, they are cognizant that gender can be weaponized against them at any stage of their career. Women journalists routinely face disproportionate violence, due to both their gender and their reportage.

The Coalition For Women In Journalism reported as many as 23 cases of violations against this month. The undercurrent of misogyny was apparent in nearly all of them. However, while attacks on journalists often go unpunished, gendered attacks on women journalists often also go unnoticed. We emphasize that nearly all cases involving violations against women journalists, including harassment, assaults, organized troll campaigns, threats and intimidation, are deeply gendered. The culture of impunity that is prevalent for violations against journalists is further extended when it comes to crimes against women journalists such as murder, abduction and assault. It also does not go amiss that verbal threats, whether in the virtual or physical space, do not take long before manifesting into physical attacks.



Detention

22% of cases that are documented in August consist of detentions against women and LGBTQ+ journalists.



Top country: Turkey

Turkey was the top country with seven cases of legal harassment and detention.



Top three trends

At least five women journalists were detained in Turkey, Russia, South Sudan and Guatemala. Four women journalists were subjected to online violence in Canada and Pakistan. Four female reporters were subjected to legal harassment in Turkey.

Belarus: Iryna Slavnikova, a former Belsat TV correspondent, was sentenced to five years in prison on August 3, after a regional court in Homel found her guilty of leading an extremist group and organizing activities that disrupt social order. The verdict was announced after a closed-door trial held in June. Iryna has been behind bars since October 2021 as President Alexander Lukashenko's authoritarian government continues its onslaught against the independent media. The journalist was jailed along with her husband on charges of distributing extremist materials and vandalism. After a month-long prison sentence ended in November 2021, her husband was released but Iryna was charged and arrested again. Though she had formerly been associated with Belsat TV, which has been banned by the Belarusian interior ministry as an "extremist organization", at the time of her arrest last October she was a full-time employee of the Polish TV channel TVP. [Learn more about her story here](#)

Tajikistan: A closed-door trial for noted human rights defender and independent journalist Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva began on August 3 and was held on the premises of the State Committee of National Security's detention center in Dushanbe. Ulfatkhonim, who has been behind bars since May 18, 2022, faces up to 25 years in prison on different charges including inciting the public for violent change to the country's constitutional order, organizing a criminal group, murder, attempted murder and terrorism. Ulfatkhonim has reported extensively on social and political conditions in the autonomous Gorno-Badakhshan region. Shortly after her arrest, Tajik state television broadcast a film in which the journalist is purportedly seen admitting to organizing unrest in the region and is accused of receiving foreign funding to do so. Local journalists believe that the alleged confession was taken under duress. [Continue reading for more details](#)



Two Imprisoned Women Journalists Stand Trial

Canada: Online violence against women journalists remains rampant in Canada. On August 2, award-winning journalist Saba Eitizaz shared on Twitter the screenshot of a racially charged and deeply vile email she was sent in retaliation to her work. Saba said she is sent similar emails almost every Friday and demanded an end to the impunity with which women journalists of color in the country are being targeted online. However, over the course of the month, Saba continued to receive misogynistic, deeply sexualized and racist online hate. [Continue reading for further details](#)

Pakistan: Gharidah Farooqi was subjected to yet another campaign of organized online trolling after commenting on the undue arrest and alleged torture of former prime minister Imran Khan's political aide Shahbaz Gill. Gharidah, a vocal critic and staunch journalist, is frequently targeted by vicious organized trolls and this campaign was no different. She was spammed by trolls who resorted to vile and deeply gendered language to insult the journalist and call her credibility into question. [Learn more about her story](#)

Canada: *Global News* reporter Rachel Gilmore remained a frequent target of nationalist organized online trolls throughout August. Her name was repeatedly mentioned in [hate emails](#) and messages sent to women journalists of color, including Erica Ifill and Saba Eitezaz. Derogatory and deeply misogynistic comments were directed at Rachel, who is white, in these emails. The sender(s) spoke of a list of their targets and mentioned a harassment campaign designed to silence prominent women journalists in Canada. [Read more about violations against Rachel here](#)

Canada: Journalist, economist, anti-racism consultant and *The Hill Times* columnist Erica Ifill was also targeted by right-wing nationalist organized online trolls. Erica is among several other women journalists of color who continue to face visceral, deeply racist and misogynistic online hate in Canada's increasingly hostile digital space. On August 23, Erica shared on Twitter screenshots of one of the troll emails as an example of the kind of hate she routinely receives online. [Read on for further details](#)



Four Women Journalists Faced Online Attacks and Organized Trolling Campaigns



Canada: Veteran journalist and the country's top news anchor Lisa LaFlamme was suddenly and unceremoniously dismissed from CTV National News on August 15. Although Bell Media, CTV's parent company, claims that the lay off was a "business decision", details surrounding the incident convey otherwise. Internal correspondent and feedback from journalists in the newsroom imply that the decision to dismiss Lisa came down to the anchor's gray hair and occasions on which she pushed back against Michael Melling, the vice president of news at Bella Media. [Learn more about her story here.](#)



One Woman
Journalist Was Laid
Off



Turkey: A court in Diyarbakır rejected the appeals of four women journalists, who were detained last June, along with 12 other Kurdish journalists after simultaneous police raids on their homes. The detained women journalists include Jin News director Safiye Alagaş, Nese Toprak, Elif Ungur and Remziye Temel. [Learn more about their case here](#)



Four Women Journalists Faced Legal Harassment

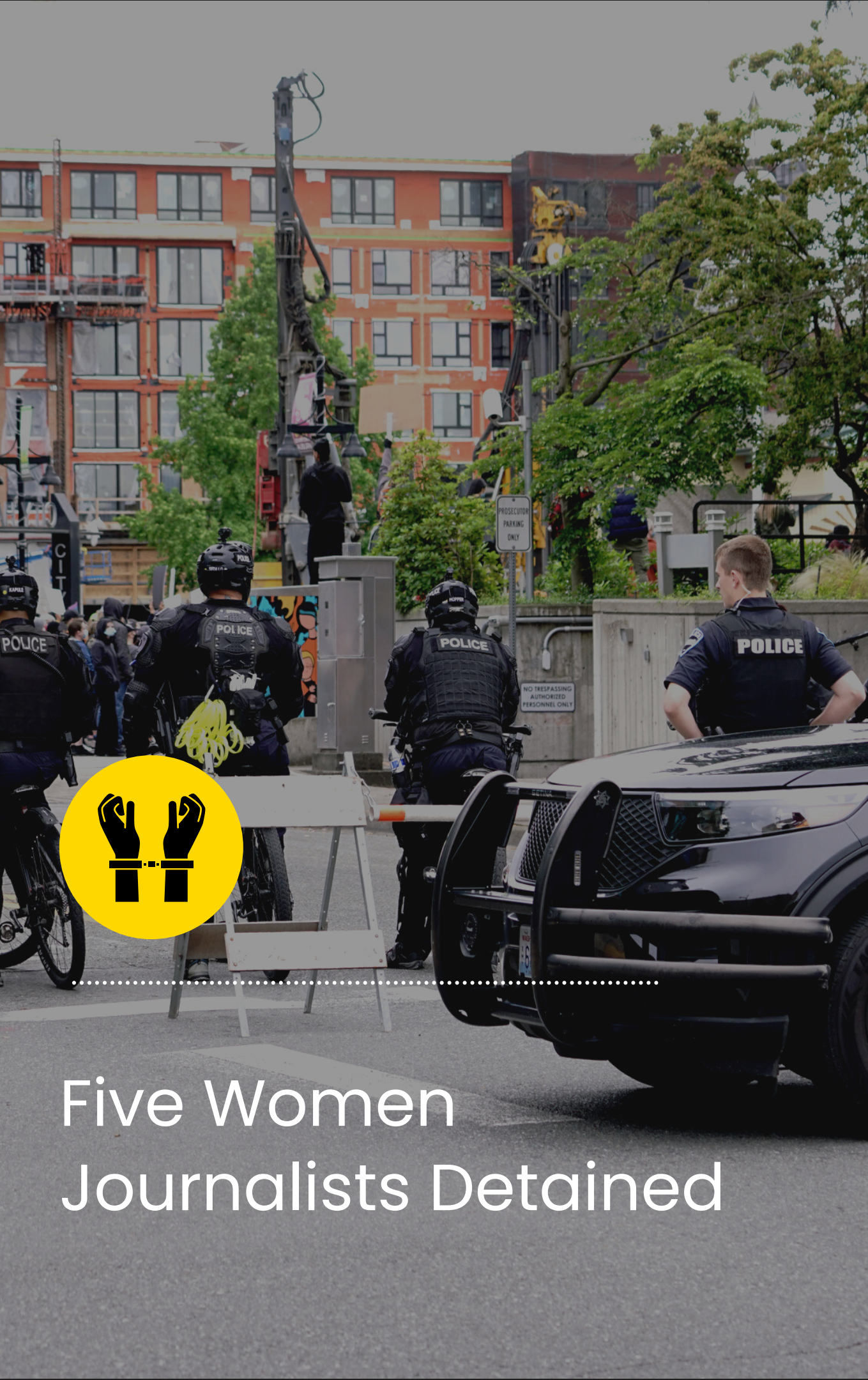
South Sudan: Freelance reporter Diing Magot was detained on August 7, while covering a protest in the capital Juba, on assignment for US Congress-funded broadcaster Voice of America. She was released on bail eight days later and is due for a hearing, yet unscheduled, on charges related to her alleged participation in the protest. The authorities retained her phone and recorder reportedly as part of evidence. [Learn more details here.](#)

Russia: On August 8, police detained Aleksandra Bayazitova, a freelance journalist associated with pro-government media website *Life* and with a Telegram channel. The latter is a platform in widely-used Russia and Ukraine by independent media outlets to disburse otherwise censored news and by Russian propaganda outlets. The journalist was charged and accused of extorting money from Promsvyazbank, a Russian state-owned bank, in exchange for not reporting negative information about it. On August 10, the Kuzminsky district court in Moscow ordered Aleksandra detained till October 7, 2022. [Continue reading here](#)

Turkey: Photojournalist Zeynep Kuray was obstructed by the police and briefly detained on August 12, while covering a protest by workers of a state-run real estate developer in Istanbul. Police resorted to excessive force to disperse the protesting workers and prevented journalists from covering the events of the day. Zeynep was detained and released roughly two hours later after a complaint was lodged against her for “damaging public property”. [Continue reading for further details](#)

Turkey: Diren Yurtsever, a reporter with Mesopotamia News Agency (MA), was arbitrarily detained at Istanbul airport Sabiha Gökçen when she arrived from Diyarbakir late on August 15. The authorities claimed to have a search warrant in her name. The journalist was conditionally released the next morning and summoned to testify before Istanbul Court in Çağlayan within two days. [Find more details here](#)

Guatemala: On August 19, police raided the home of El Periódico newspaper staffer Flora Silva and detained her. The media worker was produced before a court on August 25 and sent to preventive detention. Flora faces criminal charges in connection with an ongoing investigation against the opposition newspaper’s president José Rubén Zamora. Legal proceedings are to continue in November 2022. [Read on for more details](#)




Five Women Journalists Detained

Congo: On August 2, reporter Fify Kibwana was physically assaulted by perpetrators, who identified themselves as supporters of President Félix Tshisekedi's political party Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS). Fify was on court premises in Kinshasa to cover a hearing involving opposition politician Jean-Marc Kabund, who was arrested following his fall out with Tshisekedi. Perpetrators hounded Fify, pushed her, pulled her scarf and verbally threatened her against conducting interviews of activists critical of the incumbent president. [Continue reading for more details](#)

Zimbabwe: Pellagia Mpurwa, a reporter for online magazine Technomag, was among four journalists physically assaulted and injured during a political rally in Gokwe on August 25. Pellagia, who suffers from asthma had to be resuscitated after losing consciousness and was shifted to a hospital with a suspected leg fracture, after she and her colleagues were beaten by 10 alleged supporters of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party.

Nigeria: Journalist Nefeesah Vandi was brutally physically assaulted by her estranged husband in late August. The attack left her with multiple injuries and severe trauma. The case underscores that women journalists face disproportionate violence not just because of their work but also their gender. [Learn more about her story here](#)



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Three Women Journalists Were Physically Assaulted



Lebanon: MTV anchor Dima Sadek was subjected to a fresh wave of threats and intimidation after she posted a satirical post about the recent assassination attempt on renowned novelist Salman Rushdie in the United States. Beginning from August 13, Dima was sent death and rape threats by accounts linked to Hezbollah. [Learn more details here](#)

BosniaAndHerzegovina: Balkan Insight investigative reporter Nermina Kuloglija-Zolj and her colleagues were subjected to a threat and intimidation campaign allegedly by the Turkish far-right #GreyWolves group for reporting on its activities in Bosnia. [Find further details here](#)

Two Women Journalists Threatened And Intimidated




One Woman Journalist Obstructed

Turkey: On August 22, Sultan Eylem Keleş was physically assaulted and obstructed by the police while covering evictions being carried out in Beykoz district, İstanbul, on the pretext of urban development. The district authorities moved against the residents despite a stay order granted to the latter by the courts. Video footage surfaced of protestors and journalists being violently chased away by the police. [Find more details here](#)

Two Woman Journalist banned/denied access

Zimbabwe: Danish journalist Camilla Nielsson's political film documentary "President" was banned by Zimbabwe authorities. According to the country's censorship board, the film "has the potential to incite violence" as Zimbabwe prepares for presidential election in 2023. [Continue reading for further details here](#)



One Woman
Journalist
Obstructed & Two
Woman Journalists
Banned



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



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