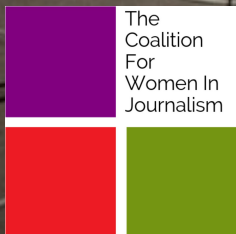


PRESS FREEDOM STATUS FOR WOMEN JOURNALISTS: AUGUST 2021



The
Coalition
For
Women In
Journalism

Photo Credit: Jalil Rezayee/EPA

2021
MONTHLY
REPORT

ABOUT US

The Coalition For Women In Journalism (CFWIJ) is a global organization of support for women journalists. The CFWIJ pioneered mentorship for mid-career women journalists across several countries around the world and is the first organization to focus on the status of free press for women journalists. Our network of individuals and organizations brings together the experience and mentorship necessary to help female career journalists navigate the industry. Our goal is to help develop a strong mechanism where women journalists can work safely and thrive.

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Throughout the month of August 2021, The Coalition For Women In Journalism documented 27 cases of violations against women journalists. Types of violations include detentions, legal harassment, and physical assaults in the field, among other various kinds of press freedom attacks towards women journalists reporting from different parts of the world. Simultaneously we aided and assisted our colleagues in Afghanistan after the takeover of Kabul by Taliban forces this month. Read our August 2021 report to find out more about the Press Freedom challenges women journalists have encountered in the physical and digital world as well as the struggles currently facing Afghan journalists.

At least three women journalists were physically assaulted:

Greece: Eleftheria Spyraiki, a correspondent associated with OPEN TV, was attacked and physically assaulted by miscreants in Thrakomakedones.

Turkey: Journalist Büşra Taşkıran was physically assaulted with police force while following a women's protest.

Turkey: Journalists Büşra Taşkıran and Seda Taşkın were physically attacked and barred by the police from covering the racist attacks against refugees in Ankara.



Four women journalists were attacked in the field:

Afghanistan: Shabnam Dawran, a broadcaster at state-run news channel Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA), was denied entry to work. Another female presenter, Khadija Amin, was instructed to go home and wait when she tried to return to work on August 18.

Canada: Journalists Alexa MacLean, Sarah Plowman and Zane Woodford were asked to vacate the premises of the Horseshoe Park while they were covering the eviction of citizens who had taken shelter there.

Three women journalists received threats:

Afghanistan: Journalists Storay Karimi had to leave her home after she received death threats from extremists. Another woman journalist, Somaia Valizadeh, also expressed her concerns over women journalists forced to leave their jobs and livelihood due to the Taliban takeover of Herat.

Mexico: Azucena Uresti, a broadcast journalist associated with the Radio Formula and Multimedios, was threatened in a video message from a drug cartel group.



At least five women journalists were detained by state authorities:

Azerbaijan: Ulviyya Ali, Nargis Absalamova, and Elnare Gasimova were verbally abused and physically assaulted by the police while covering a protest against the murder of 24-year-old Sevinj Maharramova.

Belarus: Carola Schneider, a correspondent for Austria's national broadcaster, was detained by the police along with her cameraman. The incident took place in Minsk on August 9.

Turkey: Jin news reporter Beritan Canözer was detained on August 13 after the police raided her home.

One woman journalist continues to remain in prison despite deteriorating health:

China: The health of journalist Zhan Zhang is rapidly deteriorating in prison. She was arrested last year in May for reporting on state mismanagement and negligence in their response to the COVID crisis.

Two women journalists had their accreditation revoked:

Turkey: Journalists Dilek Gül and Gülşah İnce, who were covering wildfires in Turkey, faced an accreditation barrier by the security forces.



Two women journalists were unjustly deported:

Afghanistan: Journalist Stefanie Glinski and nine of her colleagues were detained by the United States Armed Forces at Kabul airport. Despite the journalist wanting to stay in Kabul, the U.S. forces deported her.

Russia: Sarah Rainsford, a BBC correspondent in Moscow, was denied an extension to her work visa.

Two women journalists faced legal harassment:

Turkey: Jin News reporter Hikmet Tunç was sentenced to eight months and 22 days in prison as a result of the trial against her over her coverage. She was penalized for insulting Harun Yücel, the trustee appointed to Muradiye Municipality.

Turkey: A man accused of child abuse lodged a police complaint against Bianet editor Evrim Kepenek, for covering his case.

Two women journalists faced state oppression:

Bangladesh: Rozina Islam, a senior correspondent for Daily Prothom Alo, is facing challenges as the state authorities continue to target her. According to the latest reports, the Financial Intelligence Unit has asked all banks to submit Rozina's account details, even if she is listed as a beneficiary.



Turkey: BirGün Newspaper reporter Sarya Toprak's work was impeded upon by the ministry of Environment and Urbanization. The reporter was filming areas and citizens affected by the recent wildfire but was prevented from doing so by the minister.

One woman journalist was harassed online:

Russia: An attempt was made to hack into the phone of Irina Pankratova, a journalist associated with the publication, The Bell.

Two women journalists were forced to confront an organized trolling campaign:

Pakistan: Journalist and Youtuber Javeria Siddique was targeted online by trolls after she criticized a male journalist on his insensitive comments about the violence against women in the country.

United States/Iran: Journalist Farnaz Fasihi has been on the receiving end of deeply gendered and misogynistic online attacks by Iranian trolls for over several months.



Coalition For Women In Journalism's efforts for journalists in Afghanistan:

The Coalition For Women In Journalism is trying its utmost to aid and assist journalists currently present in Afghanistan and caught in the midst of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the country. The CFWIJ is in the process of vetting applications by those seeking to leave the country, prioritizing and processing the cases with the most urgent needs. As the CFWIJ is engaged with several countries, including the U.S., Canada, and Pakistan, and assisting work with international organizations in evacuation efforts, we are helping to facilitate safe passage for the most vulnerable journalists, activists, and human rights defenders.

The Taliban takeover has crushed the dreams women have been working towards for the last two decades. The brave and resilient journalists risked their lives over the years to report the war crisis and Taliban atrocities. They have shown courage when faced with fear, intimidation, and threats. A tragic number of these journalists lost their lives, were severely injured in attacks, or were threatened with violence.



The Coalition For Women In Journalism was flooded by applications for assistance. With a tireless team effort and sincere commitment to our women journalists on the ground, we have managed to relocate more than 30 at-risk individuals so far. The bustling Afghan media that once thrived even amidst the worst of threats is now finding it hard to survive under Taliban rule.

Women journalists destroyed the traces of their identities and work documentation as they wrote their applications to CFWIJ for safe relocation. Every story is similar in terms of the fear, pain, and struggle to survive. We continue to report and assist the women journalists, activists, and social workers stuck in this crisis, fearing for their lives and families.

After a bomb attack at the Kabul airport on August 26 left more than 110 people dead, the situation for Afghan women journalists is deteriorating. According to the latest updates, a number of women journalists are stuck at different points, taking shelter in homes, buses, safe houses— wherever they can stay out of danger. Some have toddlers and family to feed, but there is no reprieve from the circumstances they are facing. The escalating security threats have further derailed the already slow process of evacuation.



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