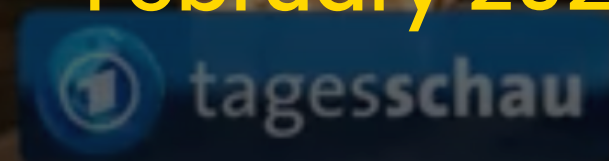




Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

*Europe sees surge in attacks against women journalists:
Cases increased by 83% compared to January*

February 2023



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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A woman journalist imprisoned



Russia: On February 6, a Moscow court sentenced **Veronika Belotserkovskaya** to nine years in prison. Belotserkovskaya has been a vocal opponent of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Veronika Belotserkovskaya was one of the first figures charged under Russia's military information law last March. The law introduced jail terms of up to fifteen years for people who publish "fake" information about the military. This law has been used to persecute those who report on the war including Siberian journalist Maria Ponomarenko who is in detention awaiting sentencing.

Turkey: Journalists who tried to report on the devastating aftermath of the earthquakes that struck Turkey were prevented from doing their jobs. Speaking to the CFWIJ journalist **Arzu Efeoğlu** said that while she was reporting with her team in Gaziantep, several citizens tried to attack them and asked for their ID cards.

Fox TV reporters **Sevgi Şahin** and camera operator Ömür Dikme were attacked by locals during a live broadcast on February 10. They were not harmed but note that it was a highly dangerous situation.

Halk TV correspondent **Şirin Payzın** and her team were harassed by individuals that appeared to be civilians. She said they were attacked in Antakya while they were filming a collapsed building.

In Malatya, a group of people attempted to physically attack ArtıGerçek reporter **Yağmur Kaya**. Posting on Twitter Kaya said the group accused her of being “a provocateur” and of “smearing the Justice and Development Party and the state.”

Gülbahar Altaş is another journalist who was targeted by local people. Speaking to the CFWIJ, Altaş said that on the evening of February 12, an argument broke out among people staying in tents in Diyarbakır Sümer Park. Two groups of people started to fight. She continued, *“While I was trying to film what was happening there, people walked up to me and tried to attack. They told me not to film. Thanks to my cameraman friend and other citizens who were there, I survived the attack. The police came to help and intervened.”*



10 women
journalists
physically assaulted

TELE1 reporter **Hazal Güven** and cameraman Umutcan Yitik, were attacked by an armed group when reporting in Hatay. Gunmen tried to obstruct the journalists as they were driving in the Defne district. The group ran away after the police were called.

Nigeria: At least 14 journalists were attacked and prevented from carrying out their duties during the presidential elections in Nigeria. **Bolanle Olabimtan** and **Ajayi Adebola** were among the attacked journalists. The assaults put into jeopardy the role of free media as watchdogs monitoring voting processes and documenting malpractices.

Albania: On February 8, **Antela Lika** and a team of journalists from the investigative TV show Fiks Fare were threatened and physically attacked while filming illegal mining at the ZeZe River in Nikel, Fushë-Krujë. The Top Channel team was using a drone to film footage of an excavation when three armed men shot at their drone. The journalists called the police. These armed individuals were filmed by the Fiks Fare cameraman and shown in their report.

Germany: **Wiebke Hüster**, a dance critic with the daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) was attacked by Marco Goecke, chief choreographer and director of the Hannover State Ballet. Goecke approached Hüster, pulled out a bag of excrement and smeared her face with it.



10 women
journalists
physically assaulted

Malawi: Journalist **Dorica Mtenje** detained and charged for a Maravi Post article criticizing the Director of National Intelligence Service. Although she works for the online outlet, Mtenje says she did not write the article. If convicted, she faces up to three years in prison.

Belarus: On February 6, **Anastasia Sharkevich**, social media manager of independent news outlet Narodnaya Volya, appeared in a video published by a pro-government Telegram channel. In the video, she claimed she was detained for attending a protest and allegedly promoting “destructive content” online. According to Zerkalo, in the “repentant” video, she said, “I work for the Narodnaya Volya newspaper, and also administer the Telegram channel Narodnaya Volya. I went to marches several times, and on this occasion, I was detained by police officers.”

Netherlands: On January 21, journalist **Sara Berkeljon** and photographer **Renate Beense** were reporting on climate change demonstrators preparing to block the A12 motorway in The Hague. The journalists were following activists of the Dutch Extinction Rebellion group for a feature in de Volkskrant magazine. Police disrupted the protest and detained the journalists along with protestors.

Turkey: On February 8, Jinnnews reporter **Sema Çağlak** and two of her colleagues were detained in Urfa, after speaking to earthquake victims and filming wreckage. After being questioned by the police, they were taken to the police station to make statements about their press accreditation. They were detained for not being equipped with turquoise press cards that are issued by the Presidency.



At least five women
reporters detained

Kazakhstan: In January, journalist **Dinara Yegeubayeva**'s car was set on fire outside her home and her son was threatened by an unknown person at gunpoint. The veteran journalist has been threatened and intimidated since investigating actions of Kazakh authorities during January 2022 protests. On February 5, Yegeubayeva's son was outside his home in Almaty when an unidentified man pointed a gun at him. According to Yegeubayeva, the man ordered her son to turn off his phone and put it away. Yegeubayeva believes this attack is connected to her journalistic activities. Police are investigating the incident, but this is not the first time the journalist has been targeted by criminals.

Turkey: Journalist **İrem Afşin** was threatened by the police while working with her crew in Şanlıurfa. While she was filming the aftermath of earthquakes, a police chief threatened Afşin and her crew saying, "If anything is said in this broadcast that will bring destruction to our state, I will go off the air and kick you out of here."

Ceren İskit, a journalist working with a foreign press team, was threatened while reporting on a temporary morgue in a sports center in Maraş. "Police did not allow us to film and literally threatened me," İskit said. "When I showed my temporary accreditation card, he said 'leave here, you are manipulating things.'"

Police prevented journalist **Sibel Tekin** and her lawyer from holding a press conference in front of the courthouse where the first hearing against Tekin was held today. At least five women journalists were obstructed, threatened, and followed by police. Journalists present there, including **İrem Afşin, Ceren İskit, Esra Tokat, Aslı Alpar, and Melis Ciddioğlu**, were first obstructed by the police, then threatened, and followed by the police for a long time after leaving the courthouse.



Eight women
journalists
threatened &
intimidated

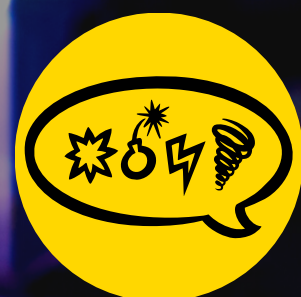
Pakistan: Javeria Siddique, a Pakistani reporter and wife of late journalist Arshad Sharif, has been on the receiving end of a vile and malicious smear campaign. The pro-government viral smear campaign accuses Siddique of remarriage to ex-governor Imran Ismail. Not only are these accusations based on falsehood, but their intent is also to silence Siddique, keep her voice out of the media and put an end to her seeking justice for her slain husband.

France: On February 8, France 3 Bretagne published an article reporting on death threats and intimidation faced by staff at magazine Le Poher. The article detailed phone calls and online harassment editorial staff experienced after reporting on a project to welcome refugees locally. Following its publication, the female journalist who wrote the article also received death threats. The journalist and France 3 Bretagne have filed several complaints to police.

Ukraine: The Chief Editor of Ukrainska Pravda, **Sevgil Musaieva**, and reporter Mykhailo Tkach have been sent hundreds of offensive messages on social media since publishing a report on a Ukrainian politician's trip to Dubai.

Georgia: After writing an article on February 14 criticizing Seymour Hersh's report on the Nord Stream pipeline explosion, **Natalia Antelava** has been subjected to harassment online. She told the CFWIJ that she received hundreds of messages containing sexist abuse and accusations of her being a "CIA spy". Antelava feels that this flood of abuse, "seems more aggressive and like I hit a nerve with the subject matter. Lots of accounts with a few followers, which did make me wonder whether it's coordinated but I am not sure it is."

Turkey: Not only the state, but fellow journalists working in pro-government media have also targeted journalists reporting on the facts in the field. Yeni Şafak journalist Taha Hüseyin Karagöz accused ETHA reporter **Elif Bayburt** of making propaganda for a terrorist organization and targeted her on Twitter. Karagöz, who took the journalist's photo and press card and shared them on social media, continued his accusations by sharing ETHA's past tweets as well.



Five women journalists
were subjected to
organized troll
campaigns



Russia: **Anastasia Zhvyk**, a journalist from Sevastopol, has been found guilty of 'discrediting the Russian armed forces'. Judge Yulia Sergeevna Stepanova of the Russian-controlled Leninsky District Court ruled on Zhvyk's case imposing a 40-thousand rouble fine.

Serbia: On February 13 a preliminary hearing of a defamation case brought against Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) by Predrag Kolvija was held in Belgrade Higher Court. Owner of company Jovanjica, Kolvija claims that BIRN's **Jelena Veljkovic** reported false information when covering a trial. He demands financial compensation (1,800 US dollars) for "mental pain" suffered.

Turkey: Journalist **Sibel Tekin** was arrested on December 17, 2022, after filming a police car for her new documentary project. She was detained for 43 days over allegedly being a member of an "armed terrorist organization". Her first trial was held on February 23, 2023. It was decided to return the digital materials other than those subject to expert examination, lift the judicial control condition, and continue the travel ban. The next hearing has been postponed to June 8, 2023.



Three women
journalists legally
harassed



Women journalists
verbally harassed,
accreditations
revoked

A woman journalist verbally harassed

Bulgaria: Emilia Milcheva was verbally attacked by pro-Russian and anti-EU party Revival. She was labeled a “provocateur” and “sniff” following the publication of an article on the party’s campaigners. While reporting, Bulgarian police gave her a warning without cause.

A woman journalist’s accreditation revoked

Russia: On February 9, Finnish news outlet Ilta-Sanomat reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Russia had failed to renew visa and press accreditation for its Russia correspondent **Arja Paananen**. The seasoned reporter, who has covered Russia since the nineties, was forced to leave in October 2022.



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



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