

Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

July 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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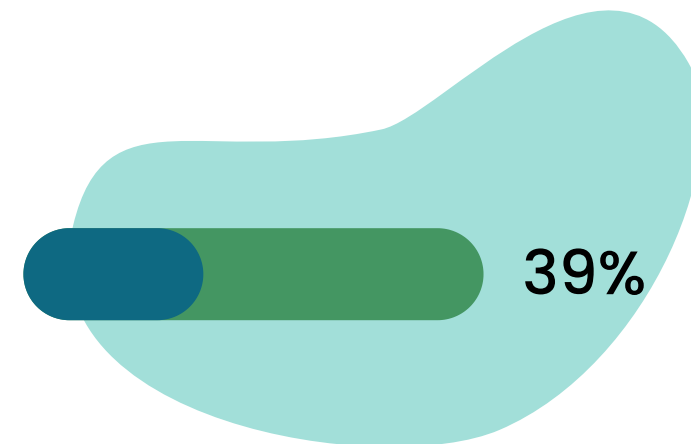


Introduction

July 2022 was another challenging month for women journalists around the world. The Coalition For Women In Journalism documented **23** cases of violations. These included detentions, legal harassment and physical assaults in the field, among other attacks on press freedom and women journalists reporting from different parts of the world.

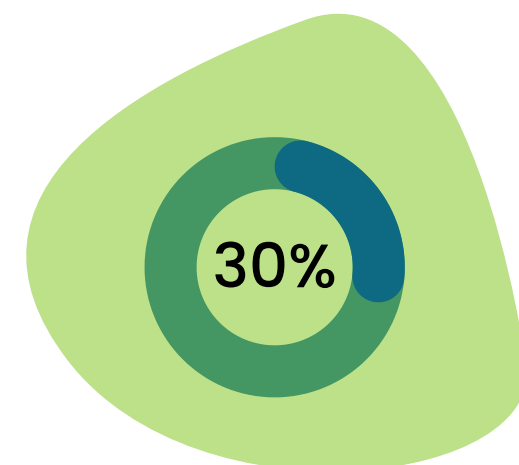
Once again, Turkey fared poorly on our press freedom radar. Women journalists were subjected to different types of violations with police brutality often exposing them to violence. Police and judicial overreaches have reached an alarming level in the country with women journalists facing violent obstructions in the field and then prison time and detentions, often without trial. Canada, too, flared red on our radar as right-wing nationalists continue to weaponize the digital space against women journalists of color.

On the other hand, July also saw some major wins for press freedom. Sheila Rayam was named the executive editor of *The Buffalo News* (New York) making her the first Black and second woman journalist to hold the position in the publication's 142-year history. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere, we saw the courts stepping up to effectively respond to cases involving severe and sustained sexual harassment. Read on below to know more details of the cases the CFWIJ documented in the month of July 2022.



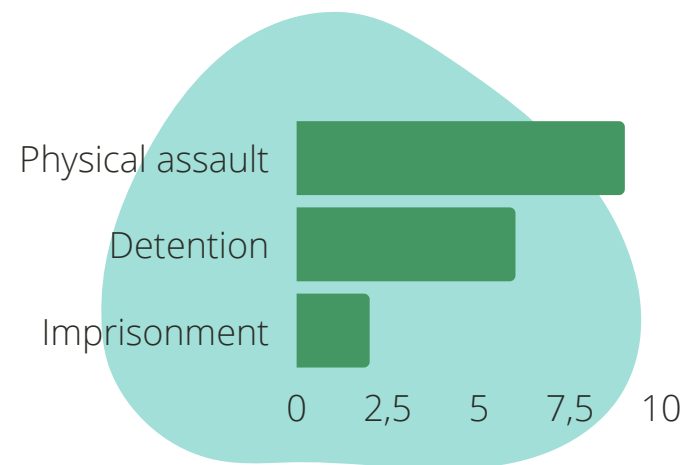
Physical Assault

39% of cases that are documented in June consist of physical assaults against women and LGBTQ+ journalists.



Top country: Turkey

Turkey was the top country with at least seven cases against female reporters on July.




Top three trends

At least nine women journalists were physically assaulted in Turkey and Sri Lanka. Five women journalists were detained in Uzbekistan, Russia and Turkey. Two female reporters were imprisoned in Belarus and Myanmar.

Belarus: Belarusian journalist Katsiaryna Andrejeva, a correspondent for Poland-based independent Belarusian broadcaster Belsat TV, was sentenced to eight years in prison on trumped up treason charges. The journalist had already been in jail for 18 months after covering protests in November 2020, when she was handed the sentence. On July 13, a closed-door trial began on treason charges in the city of Homel. The court concluded proceedings with an eight-year prison sentence for the journalist on “high treason” charges under Article 356 of the Belarusian Criminal Code. Prior to this, Katsiaryna was sentenced to two years in prison in February 2021, along with her colleague Darya Chultsova based on their coverage of widespread protests against Aleksandr Lukashenko in 2020. [Continue reading here for further details.](#)

Myanmar: A military court inside Yangon’s notorious Insein prison sentenced freelance journalist Nyein Nyein Aye to three years in prison with hard labor on July 14. The journalist was sentenced months after her arrest on January 15, 2022, on charges of “causing fear, spreading false news and agitating crimes against a government employee” under Section 505 (a) of the country’s penal code. Before her arrest, Nyein Nyein Aye was freelancing for different media outlets, including an independent online news portal banned by the junta, *Mizzima News*. She also worked for two newspapers, *The Standard Time Daily* and *Kumudra Journal*, before the February 2021 coup. [Find our detailed coverage here](#)

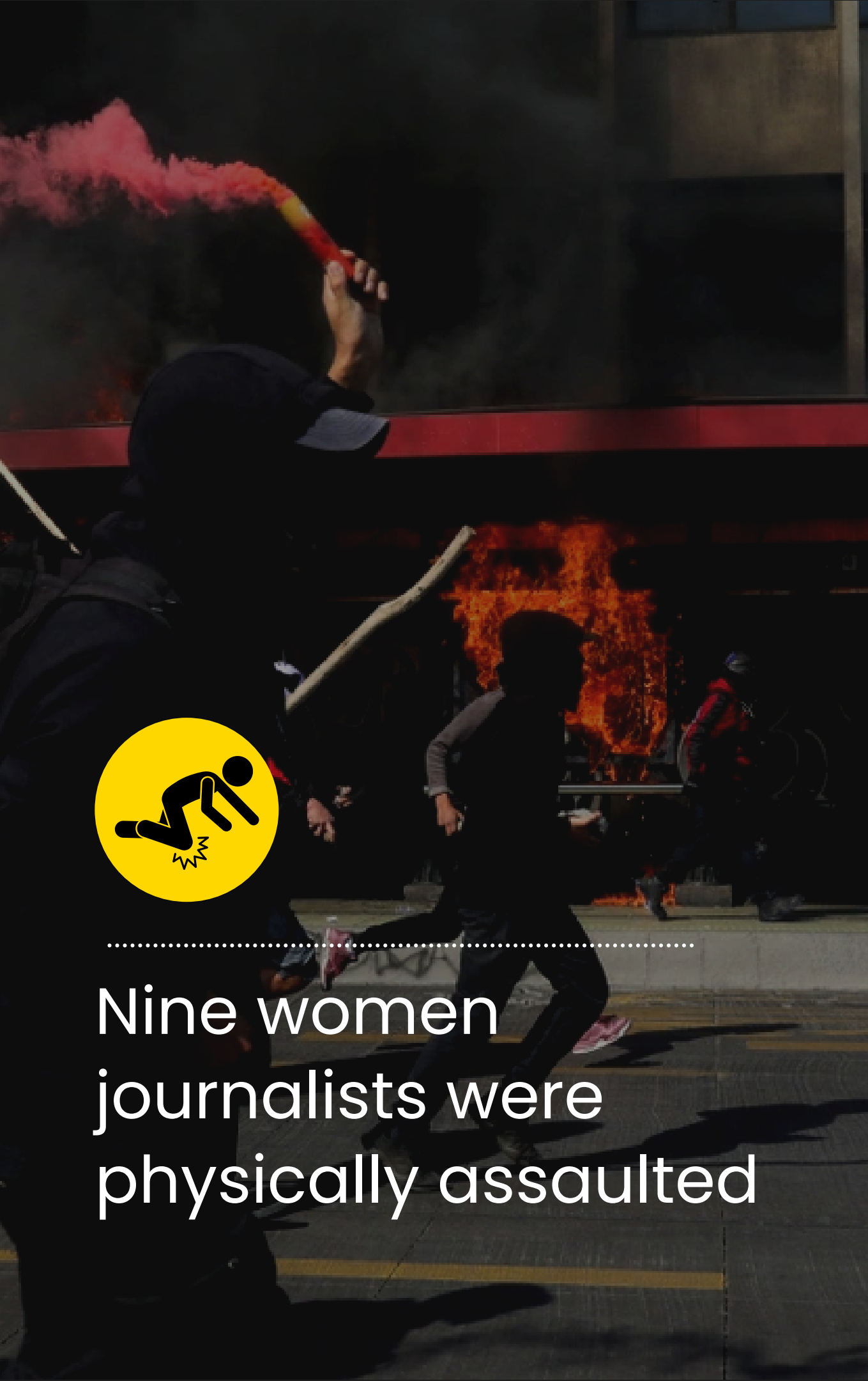


Two women
journalists were
imprisoned

México: Journalist Susana Carreño was critically injured when unidentified armed men on motorcycles crashed into her car in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco on July 1. The perpetrators then forced the journalist out of her car at gunpoint, asked her to lay down on the ground and stabbed her repeatedly with a knife. Susana was shifted to a hospital in critical condition and discharged on July 23. [Find more details here](#)

Russia: Journalist Maria Ponomarenko, who was detained earlier in April this year on allegations of discrediting the Russian armed forces based on her social media posts about the Kremlin's war in Ukraine, was transferred to a Siberian psychiatric hospital, her lawyer revealed on July 2. It later emerged that the journalist was physically assaulted at the hospital with three Federal Penitentiary Service officers holding down her arms and legs as a nurse injected her with an unknown substance against her will. Maria said she can not recall what happened in the next three days as her memory was severely hampered. [Find our detailed coverage here.](#)

Turkey: Two journalists were physically assaulted while following LGBTQ+ Pride events in Ankara on July 5. Mesopotamia Agency reporter Emel Vural was hospitalized after she passed out because the police sprayed her face with tear gas while Kaos GL reporter Asli Alpar was wounded in the leg during the police assault on participants of the event. [Find our detailed coverage here.](#)

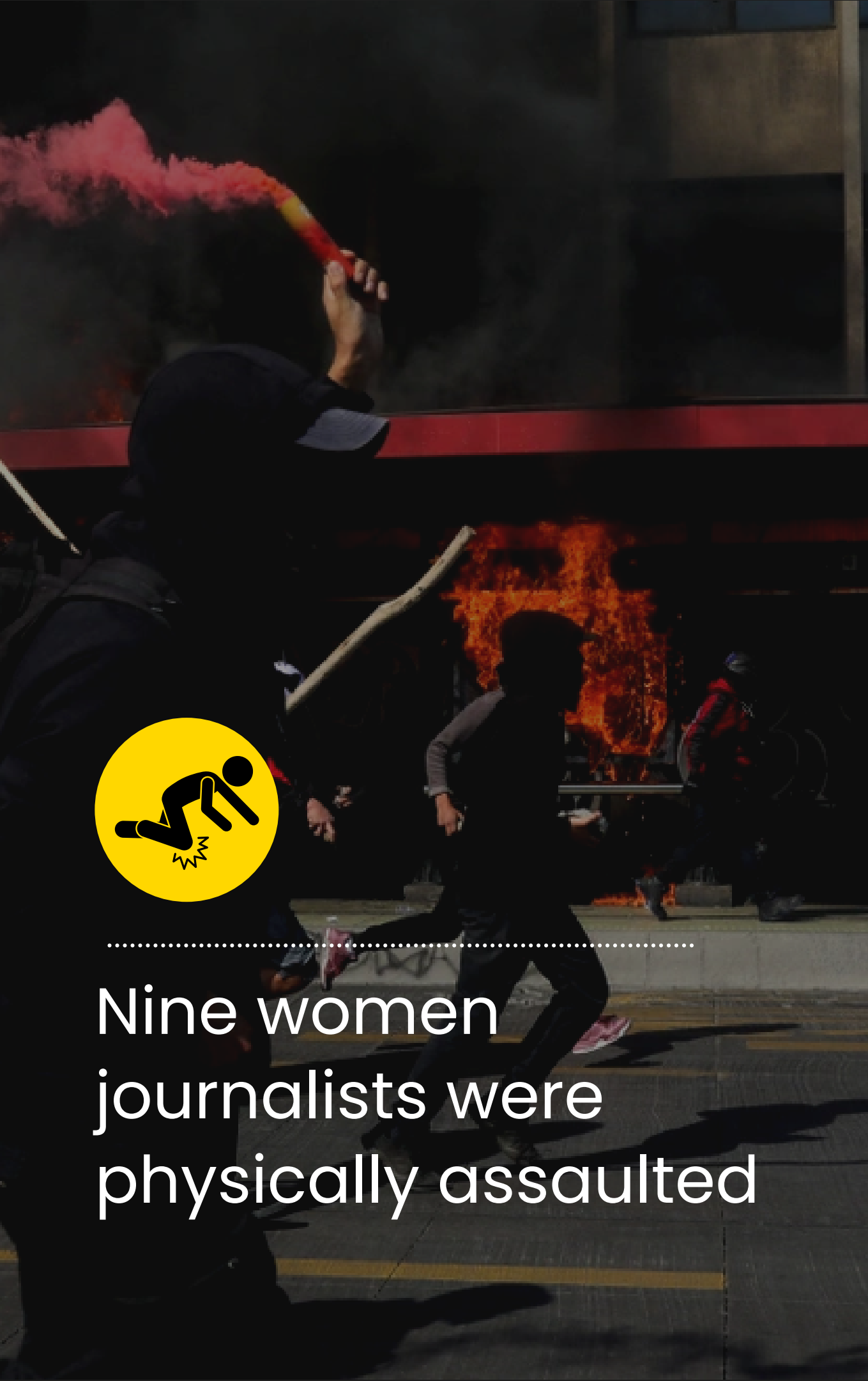


Nine women
journalists were
physically assaulted

Turkey: At least three women journalists were physically assaulted during protests against the murder of a cardiologist in Konya. Police used excessive force, including baton charge and tear gas, against protesting healthcare workers and obstructed journalists covering the incidents. Habertürk reporter Gizem Türemen, tv100 reporter Gülay Alaca and Artı TV reporter Meral Danyıldız were among those assaulted and obstructed by the police while following the protests. [Continue reading for more details here](#)

Sri Lanka: Sarasi Peiris, a reporter from private broadcaster News First, was physically assaulted and injured by the police while covering a protest outside Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's residence in the capital city of Colombo on July 9. Sarasi sustained injuries to her head and her back while three of her colleagues were also wounded. [Know more here](#)

Kazakhstan: Journalist Olesya Vertinskaya was physically assaulted outside her home in the Western city of Ataryu. Before the incident, the journalist was threatened with messages warning her against her reporting. The perpetrator, who witnesses said had been lurking outside Olesya's home for around half an hour, broke her nose, kicked her, and then fled when a passerby approached. Olesya was shifted to a local hospital and treated for a broken nose before being discharged. [Continue reading for more details here](#)



Nine women
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Uzbekistan: On July 1, Lolagul Kallykhanova, who runs the independent news outlet Makan.uz and its Telegram channel, was detained after posting a video about Karakalpakstan's status amid constitutional changes that would prevent the region from holding an independence referendum. Following her detention, the video was also deleted. [Read our detailed coverage here](#)

Uzbekistan: Joanna Lillis, an independent British journalist who contributes to various outlets such as The Economist and Eurasianet, was briefly detained and interrogated while reporting in Nukus, Karakalpakstan's capital on July 4. The police forced Joanna to delete pictures and videos of the interviews she conducted for her reporting. [Continue reading for more details here](#)

Turkey: Journalists Sibel Yüklér and Yıldız Tar were detained in Ankara on July 5, while campaigning for the release of 16 Kurdish journalists, including four women who were arrested from Diyarbakır on June 16, 2022. Sibel and Yıldız were released after their statements were taken by the police. [Find more details here](#)

Afghanistan: Australian journalist Lynne O' Donnell was forced to denounce the integrity of her work and apologize for her reporting or face a prison term by Taliban investigation officers who detained her for hours. Lynne, a columnist at *Foreign Policy*, was called in for questioning by the General Directorate of Intelligence a day after her arrival in Kabul on July 16. She first refused to submit for interrogation but was threatened and harassed by Afghan officials till July 19, when intelligence officers arrived at her guest house and took her with them to their office. There, they threatened that she would be prevented from leaving the country and imprisoned unless she publicly denounced her journalistic work. The journalist was released after tweeting out an apology for her "inaccurate" reporting on forced marriages of women and girls to Taliban commanders. [Read our detailed coverage here](#)



Five women
journalists were
arbitrarily detained

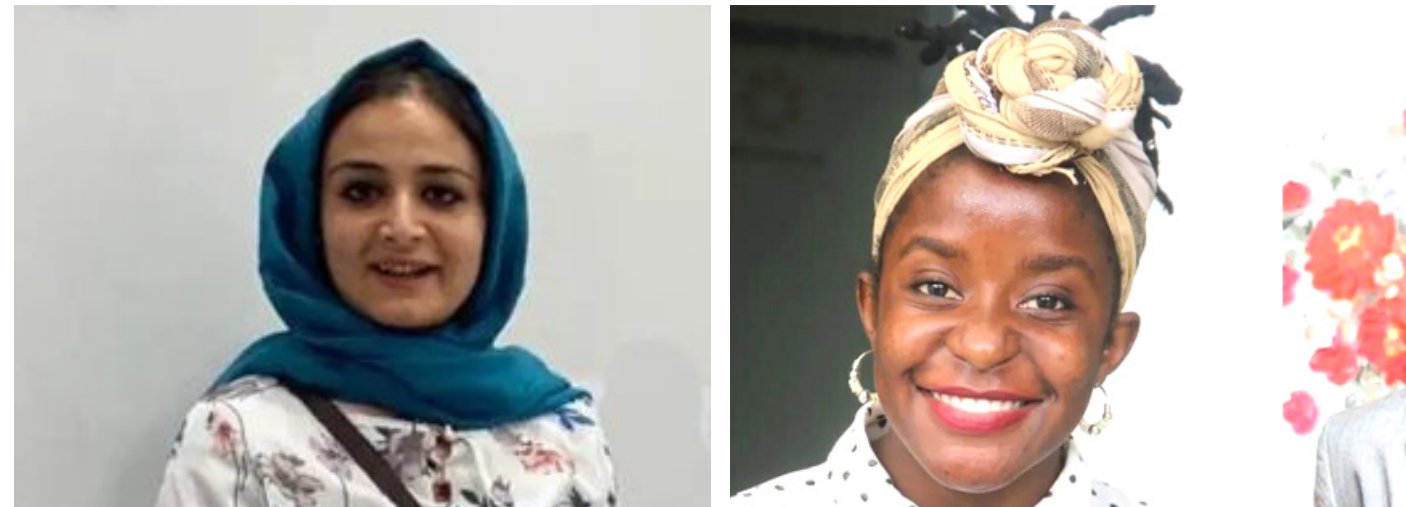


Iran: Masih Alinejad was subjected to threats and a vicious slander campaign for protesting against mandatory face veils for women. As a journalist and a woman, Masih is no stranger to threats and intimidation aimed at silencing her work. The recent wave of attacks on her severely compromised her safety, with state-linked media painting her as a "demon" and inviting harm to her person. [Read our detailed report here](#)

Angola: Journalist Isabel Makitoko and two other journalists were threatened and harassed while following political campaigns in the lead up to the upcoming August 24 elections. Supporters of the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) party harassed Isabel as she covered a rally by the opposition National Patriotic Alliance party. A man who was wearing an MPLA t-shirt shouted to the journalist and attempted to slap her. Her colleague António Sapalo was physically assaulted when he intervened. [Find more details here](#)

Two women
journalists were
threatened and
intimidated





India: Pulitzer-winning photojournalist Sanna Irshad Mattoo was barred from flying to Paris to attend a journalistic event by immigration officers in Delhi. She was informed that the authorities have imposed an international travel ban on her with no reasons given for this restriction. [Read our detailed report here](#)

Zimbabwe: Journalist Julia Ndlela and three other journalists from private media outlets were barred from covering an event featuring First Lady Auxullia Mnangagwa at the Marondera Female Prison in Marondera in the capital Harare. The journalists were told that only state-owned media has permission to cover the event.



Two women
journalists were
arbitrarily denied
access



Canada: Saba Eitizaz, co-host and producer of Toronto Star show “This Matters” was targeted with online hate on “Canada Day” – July 1. Saba posted on Twitter a screenshot of an email she was sent. The award-winning journalist was accused of spreading “left-wing, extremist satan talk” by the sender who directed racially charged sexist slurs at her. The sender belongs to the same group of organized online trolls who have targeted her and other women journalists of color repeatedly since last year. [Find our detailed coverage here](#) and [here](#).

Canada: Conservative candidate for Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Poilievre targeted Global News reporter Rachel Gilmore with slander after Rachel wrote two articles critical of the conservative candidate’s support for anti-vaccine far-right leaders. The journalist took to Twitter to express her frustration when Poilievre and his office refused to answer questions and then discredited attacking her integrity. [Find out more details here](#)



Two women journalists
were subjected to
organized online
trolling



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



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