



Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists

May 2022

The deadliest month for women journalists

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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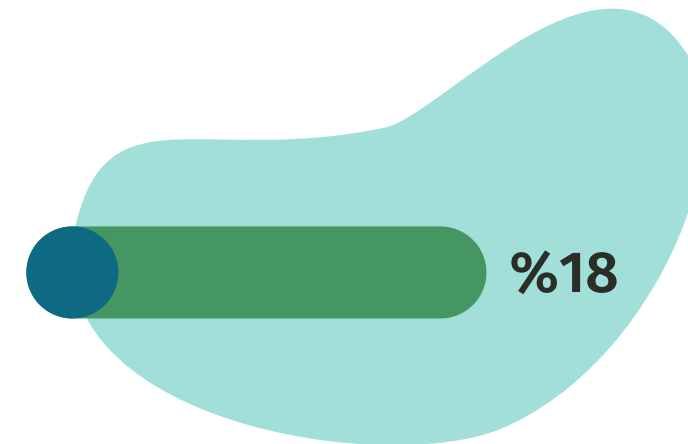
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Introduction

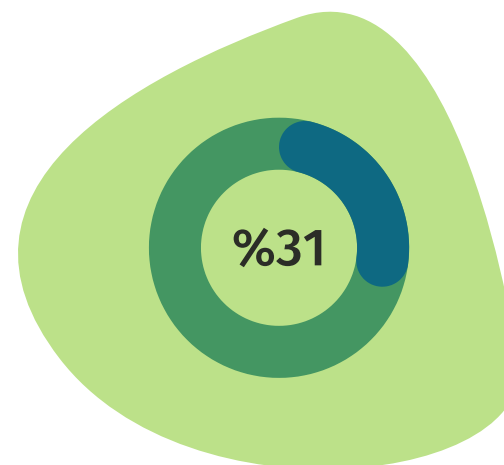
May has been the deadliest month for women journalists this year with at least five documented killings. Shireen Abu Akleh was shot dead by Israeli forces in occupied West Bank, Francisca Sandoval was gunned down during protests in Chile, Yessenia Mollinedo Falconi and Sheila Johana García Olivera were killed outside a grocery store in Mexico. The former two were on the job when they were killed and the latter two were targeted for their work. In Afghanistan, Maryam Madadi was killed in a series of explosions that targeted passenger busses in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Women journalists around the world were also subjected to arbitrary arrests, legal harassment, physical and sexual harassment, online violence, threats and intimidation. The Coalition For Women In Journalism documented as many as **40** cases of press violations throughout May 2022. Read on below for more details on the violations women journalists were subjected to this month.



Physical Assault

18% of cases that are documented in May consist of physical assaults against women and LGBTQ+ journalists.

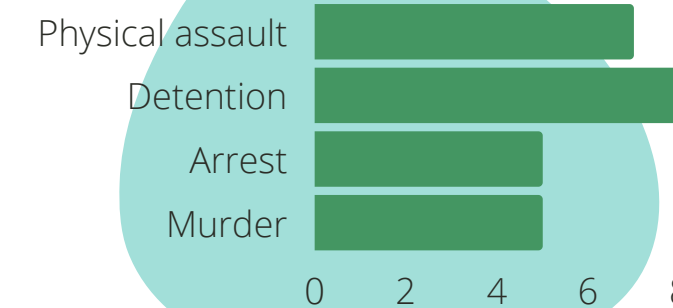
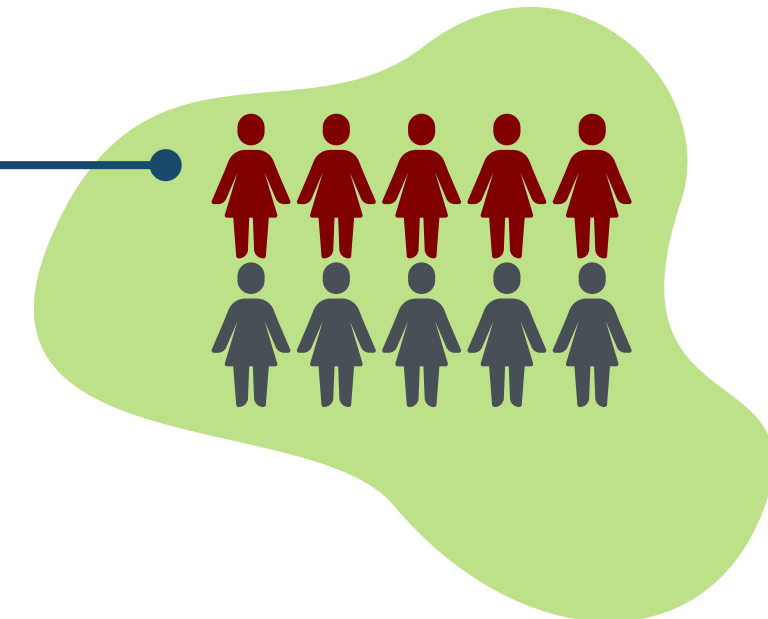


Top country: Turkey

Turkey was the top country with at least 12 cases against female reporters on May.

Killed/Murdered

10 women journalists were killed between Jan-May 2022. Five of them were killed on May only.



Top three trends

At least eight female reporters were detained. Seven women journalists were subjected to physical assault. Five women journalists were arrested.

Mexico: Yessenia Mollinedo Falconi and Sheila Johana García Olivera, director and reporter of online news portal El Veraz, respectively, were gunned down outside a convenience store on May 9. The seemingly targeted attack was carried out in broad daylight. The country has seen a spate of journalist killings this year with the death toll hitting 11 after the apparent murders of Yessenia and Sheila. The sharp uptick in violence against journalists across the country is alarming. The press faces threats by armed groups, influential economic and political elite as well as criminal elements. Four of the 11 journalists killed in 2022 were women who had been facing threats due to their gender or work. Yessenia's brother, [Ramiro Mollinedo Falconi](#), who is also a journalist, said she was repeatedly threatened over crime coverage by El Veraz. Local journalists decry negligence by the state which has been failing to protect them. [Find more details here.](#)

Israel: Veteran Palestinian journalist and Al Jazeera correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh was shot in the head while covering an Israeli Defence Force (IDF) raid in Jenin in occupied West Bank on May 11. She was shifted to a hospital and declared dead on arrival. Shireen was one of Al Jazeera's first field correspondents in the area, joining the network in 1997 and a household name in the region. Al Jazeera, eyewitnesses, Palestinian leaders, among others have accused IDF forces of targeting her while she was on the job wearing a vest clearly identifying her as press. The Israeli state initially claimed that Shireen was killed by militant fire but then conceded it could have been an Israeli bullet that hit her during an alleged crossfire. Reviews conducted by AP, CNN and others lend support to eyewitness accounts. Israel, however, has said it won't be conducting a criminal investigation but an operational one claiming an "active combative situation". [Find more details here.](#)



Five Women Journalists Killed



Chile: Francisca Sandoval, a reporter with local broadcaster Canal Señal 3 La Victoria, was shot in the face while covering Labor Day protests in Barrio Meiggs, Santiago on May 1. She was critically injured and succumbed to her wounds 12 days later while under treatment. The 29-year-old was the first journalist killed in Chile since Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship ended in 1990. Amid calls for justice, a street vendor was arrested for allegedly opening fire on the journalist as violence broke out during the demonstration after protestors attempted to enter commercial premises. Two other journalists were injured in the violence. [More details available here.](#)

Afghanistan: Former radio journalist Maryam Madadi was killed in a series of explosions that hit the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif on May 25. Three minibusses in different districts of the city were targeted and explosive devices were placed inside the vehicles. At least nine people were killed in the bombing and 15 others were wounded. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attacks. Maryam had worked at Rabia Balkhi radio station in Balkh until recently when it shut down after an office fire. She, and all other victims, reportedly belonged to the ethnic Hazara and religious Shia communities.



Five Women Journalists Killed

Iran: Iranian intelligence service arrested filmmakers Firoozeh Khosravani, Mina Keshavarz, Shilan Assadi and photographer Reyhaneh Taravati on May 9 and 10, without disclosing the charges against them. [Read our detailed report here.](#)



Ethiopia: Founding editor of private broadcaster Ethio Nekat Media Meskerem Abera was arrested on May 21. The journalist had arrived at the Bole International Airport in the capital Addis Ababa from the northern city of Bahir Dar, when she was taken to the Addis Ababa Police Commission's offices. Meskerem was charged with inciting public violence through her media appearances and produced before the court on May 23 and 24, according to her lawyer Henok Aklilu. She is now due to appear on June 6. Her arrest comes on the heels of a crackdown launched by the Ethiopian government on May 19 under the pretext of a "law enforcement" operation. Around 4,500 people have reportedly been arrested since on allegations of illegal activity. [Find more details here.](#)



Five Women Journalists Imprisoned



Russia: On May 8, ahead of Russia's Victory Day celebrations police raided the house of Skat Media editor Darya Pak, who is currently outside of the country. The charges against her or grounds for the raid were not specified. Several other journalists were subjected to state-linked harassment with the authorities relentless in efforts to suppress coverage of possible protests on the occasion. [Read our details coverage here.](#)

Serbia: Journalist Sara Mikić and her colleague Sava Majstorov continue to face criminal charges lodged against them in April 2022 over an environmental protest they reported on last December. The journalists stand accused of organizing an illegal protest and blocking roads in Northern Serbia. A hearing on May 9 was adjourned till a later yet without significant progress. If convicted, the journalists could be fined between 100,00 to 150,000 dinars, around 1,400USD. [Find more information here.](#)

Turkey: The first hearing of a fabricated terror case against journalist Nurcan Yalçın was held in Diyarbakır on May 17. The journalist faces charges of "aiding an organization knowingly and willingly" for news reports published between 2015-2016. The prosecutor sought conviction of Nurcan while the defense asked for additional time to prepare arguments and the hearing was adjourned till July 5. [Click here for more details.](#)



Six Women Journalists Faced State Suppression and Legal Harassment

Greece: Journalist Stavroula Poulimeni appeared before court on May 19 to face the SLAPP (strategic lawsuit against public participation) brought against her by a senior executive of a gold mining company in retaliation to her reports on legal action against environmental damage caused by said company. In October 2021, Efstathios Lialios, a senior executive at Hellas Gold, sued Stavroula and her employer publication, AlterThess, a small independent media outlet, over news reports of his criminal conviction. The gold mining executive has claimed 100,000 euros (estimated \$106,600) in damages for a news story published in October 2020 on his first instance of conviction over the company's pollution of water in Chalkidiki, northern Greece. [Read our detailed coverage here.](#)

Turkey: An investigation was opened against journalist Rabia Çetin on May 30 over her social media posts. The journalist had shared news about a lawsuit filed against the father of Deniz Poyraz, a political worker for the pro-Kurdish party, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) killed in June 2021, allegedly with state collusion. For retweeting posts by a Twitter account campaigning for justice for Poyraz, the İzmir Prosecution Office has accused Rabia of "targetting a counter-terrorism official". In her statement to the police, the journalist denied all charges against her.

Turkey: Zelal Tunç was handed a suspended sentence of eight months and 22 days in absentia on May 31, at the first hearing of her retrial on "insulting a public official" charges. The journalist was first tried for the charge in October 2020, when the court announced the verdict under a simple or expedited trial procedure. She was the first journalist whose trial was conducted under this procedure, which the court informed her lawyers of on the day the trial was set to begin. The case was reopened when the defense objected to the verdict and the unusual trial. But at the first hearing of the retrial the court convicted the journalist and upheld the previous verdict.



Six Women Journalists Faced State Suppression and Legal Harassment

Turkey: Journalist Buse Söğütlü was physically obstructed by law enforcement officials while documenting police brutality against the demonstrators in İstanbul Taksim Square on May 1, Labor Day. She was prevented from filming the protests and scenes of state overreaches despite clearly identifying herself as press. Buse was asked to give her statement and released after a brief detention. [Continue reading for more details.](#)

Russia: On May 7, Sota.Vision journalist Anna Loiko was arrested in Moscow by the Second Special Regiment, a special police unit designed to disperse rallies, and detained overnight. The officer in charge of internal affairs at Khoroshevskoye Police Station said Anna was being kept there to prevent her from working on May 9, Russia's Victory Day. Sota Vision reported that Anna was charged with disobedience under Article 19.3 of the administrative code for allegedly refusing to show the police her passport. A court ordered that she be detained for five days. [Read our full coverage.](#)

Russia: *Skat Media's* Angelina Roshchupko was detained on May 8 after her home in Moscow was searched. The journalist was charged under Article 239.3 of the criminal code for "participation in a non-profit organization infringing on people's identity and rights". If convicted, Angelina faces up to two years in prison. [Read more here.](#)

Russia: Viktoria Arefyeva, journalist at Sota.Vision, was prevented from covering the Victory Day parade on May 9. She was restricted by the police in St. Petersburg despite showing her press accreditation. Officials said she was on a special "list" after which Federal Protective Service officers took her accreditation badge and refused to return it. Viktoria was taken to Police Station No28 and held for over three hours before being released without explanation or charge. [Continue reading for more details.](#)



Eight Women Journalists Detained

Zimbabwe: Chengeto Chidi and her colleague at Alpha Media Holding (AMH), Blessed Mhlanga, were arrested on May 7 for their reports on state abuses against politicians during Chitungwiza by-elections. They were produced before court two days later and granted bail against surety bonds of ZWD 20,000 each on charges of contravening electoral regulations or alternatively, disorderly conduct in a polling station. Their trial was to begin on May 24 but was postponed till June 13. [Find more details here.](#)

Ethiopia: Sabontu Ahmed, an entertainment journalist at [Finfinnee Integrated Broadcasting \(FIB\)](#), was detained by two security officials while on her way home from work on May 26. According to FIB, she was taken to Addis Ababa Police Station in the Lebu area of the capital and held overnight. FIB Executive Director Lami Taye said when they went to visit the journalist at the police station they were told she was taken by “members of intelligence”. Sabontu was later [released](#) on May 27 without any charges specified, but told by the police that “they will call her when she is needed”. [Continue reading for more details.](#)

Ethiopia: Meaza Mohammed was the third woman journalist arrested within the span of a week. Co-founder and host of YouTube-based media outlet [Roha TV](#), Meaza was taken from her colleague’s house on May 28. By then the number of journalists targeted since May 19 had risen to 18, with several still under arrest. Ethiopian media outlet *Addis Standard* reported that security forces in civilian clothes stormed Meaza’s coworker’s house and confiscated digital devices. The raid party left with Meaza in custody. This is the second time that the journalist has been arbitrarily detained in less than six months. [Read our detailed coverage here.](#)

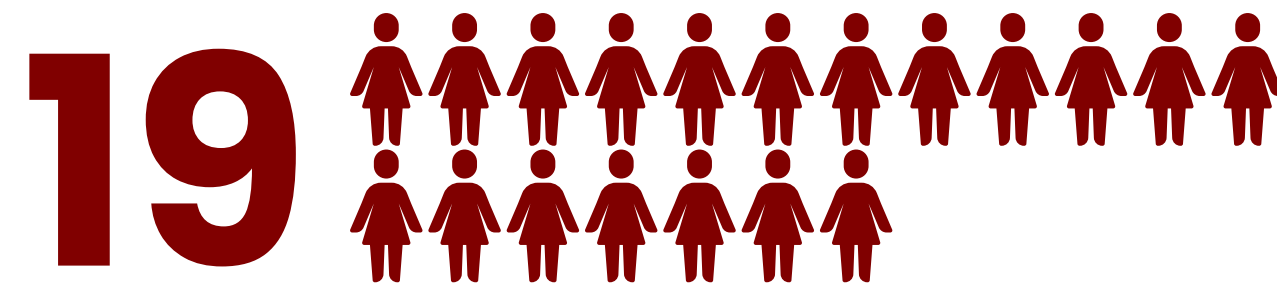
Afghanistan: Basira Mutasim was among three local journalists arbitrarily detained in the northern Faryab province on May 27. They were released on bail after spending several hours in detention.



Eight Women Journalists Detained



Five Women Journalists Faced Online Attacks and Organized Trolling Campaigns



At least 19 women journalists were subjected to major online trolling campaigns between Jan-May 2022.

Turkey: Journalist Seda Taşkın was sent death threats online via a social media account, which has targeted various journalists and public figures before. The journalist was targeted over her coverage of prominent music composer Ahmet Say's funeral. [More details available here.](#)

Turkey: Journalists Nevşin Mengü, Burcu Karakaş, Suzan Demir and Neşe İdil were targeted online by supporters of Zafer (Victory) Party, a right-wing group, for criticizing a short film "Silent Invasion" for its anti-refugee and anti-migrant messaging. Online trolls threatened and intimidated the journalists using racist and misogynistic language. [Learn more here.](#)



One Woman Journalist Obstructed

Burkina Faso: On May 14, TV5 Monde reporter Fanny Noaro-Kabré was expelled from a public meeting hosted by Kémi Séba, anti-colonialist Pan-African activist on allegations of “spreading misinformation” about his campaign. [Continue reading.](#)

One Woman Journalist Deported

Afghanistan: The Taliban authorities restricted award-winning VICE journalist Isobel Yeung from working in Kabul and instructed her to “immediately” leave the country. She was also restricted from leaving her hotel after she arrived in the city, the journalist wrote on Twitter on May 13. Isobel said that the Taliban cited issues with VICE’s reportage on women’s rights violations in the country. The deportation orders for her and her crew came days after the Taliban’s latest rollback on women’s rights - a decree for women to cover their faces in public and for broadcast female journalists to do the same on-air. The move has been widely protested. [Find more details here.](#)



Two Women
Journalists
Obstructed and
Deported

Five Women Journalists Were Physically Assaulted And Injured

Chile: Journalist Fabiola Moreno was shot and injured while covering a Labor Day demonstration in the Barrio Meiggs area of the capital, Santiago, on May 1. She was shot in the shoulder as violence broke out during the demonstration after protestors attempted to enter commercial premises. Fabiola was on site reporting for Radio 7. [Read more details here.](#)

Armenia: Journalist Suzy Badoyan was obstructed in the field when a member of parliament belonging to the ruling Civil Contract in Armenia snatched her phone and hurt her hand during an interview. Another media worker, Lia Sargsyan, was injured as law enforcement officials resorted to using force to prevent coverage of anti-government protests. [Continue reading.](#)

Azerbaijan: Journalist Ayten Mammadova was physically attacked and threatened to death by an unidentified man on May 8. The perpetrator barged inside the elevator of her apartment building while she was in it and held a knife to her throat, threatening her against her journalistic investigation and coverage of a minor girl's murder. [Find more details here.](#)

Cameroon: Sports reporter of a private Pan-African sports website kick442.com, Eyong Macdella Bessong was physically assaulted by policemen on May 18. The journalist was barred from entering the Molyko Omnisport Stadium and prevented from covering a football match. She was dragged away from the main pitch before the game started because she could not provide a hard copy of her press accreditation and only had a digital copy on her mobile phone. [Continue reading for more details.](#)



Seven Women
Journalists Were
Physically Assaulted



Two Woman Journalist Was Physically Assaulted But Not Injured

Turkey: Derya Doğan was physically obstructed by law enforcement officials while documenting police brutality against the demonstrators in İstanbul Taksim Square on May 1, Labor Day. She was prevented from filming scenes of state overreaches despite clearly and roughed up while recording her colleague Buse Söğütü's arrest despite clearly identifying herself as press. [Read more details here.](#)

Pakistan: Zamzam Saeed, a reporter with Samaa TV, and her cameraman Imran were attacked by a mob while filming rioters setting ablaze a police van during protests by ousted premier Imran Khan's party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Karachi on May 25. Zamzam and her colleague were forced to take temporary refuge in a private TV van.



Seven Women
Journalists Were
Physically Assaulted

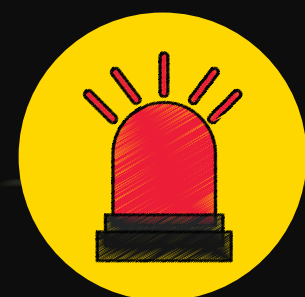


Two Women Journalists Threatened And Intimidated

Turkey: Journalists Hale Gönültaş and Seyhan Avşar were targeted and threatened by extremists and Alaattin Çakıcı, a far-right mafia group. The journalists were reluctant to disclose further details for security reasons.

Sports Journalists Call Out Sexism In Industry

Scotland: TV presenter Eilidh Barbour and sports journalist Gabriella Bennet called out sexist and crass humor at the gala dinner hosted by the Scottish Football Writers' Association (SFWA) in Glasgow on May 8. The two pointed to sexism and misogyny prevalent in both the news and sports industries, calling for redressal. Their concerns were lended support by local journalists' group Women In Journalism Scotland. The CFWIJ too has repeatedly highlighted this pattern which prevails around the world. [Read our detailed coverage here.](#)



Two Women Journalists Threatened And Intimidated



The Coalition For
Women In Journalism

Is the press really free?

What does the press look like for women journalists?

64

women journalists are behind bars
as far June 1, 2022.



10

women journalists were
killed this year.



**CFWIJ is working hard to change these
circumstances everyday.**

Join us in this mission



Contact Email: info@womeninjournalism.org

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