

2012 ROUNDUP IN NUMBERS

NEWS PROVIDERS DECIMATED IN 2012
88 JOURNALISTS
AND 47 CITIZEN-JOURNALISTS KILLED

DEADLIEST YEAR FOR JOURNALISTS
SINCE REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS
BEGAN PRODUCING ITS ANNUAL
ROUNDUP IN 1995

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2012 IN NUMBERS

88 *journalists killed (+33 %)*
879 *journalists arrested*
1993 *journalists threatened or physically attacked*
38 *journalists kidnapped*
73 *journalists fled their country*
6 *media assistants killed*
47 *netizens and citizen-journalists killed*
144 *bloggers and netizens arrested*
193 *journalists in prison*
as of December 18, 2012

This year has been exceptionally deadly, with a 33 per cent rise in the number of journalists killed in connection with their work over 2011. The worst-hit regions were the Middle East and Northern Africa (with 26 killed), Asia (24 killed) and sub-Saharan Africa (21 killed). Only the western hemisphere registered a fall in the number of journalists killed.

This is the worst set of figures since Reporters Without Borders began producing an annual roundup in 1995. The number of journalists murdered or killed was 67 in 2011, 58 in 2010 and 75 in 2009. The previous record was in 2007, when 87 were killed. The 88 journalists killed in 2012 lost their lives while covering wars or bombings, or were murdered by groups linked to organized crime (including drug trafficking), by Islamist militias or on the orders of corrupt officials.

“The reason for the unprecedented number of journalists killed in 2012 is mainly the war in Syria, the chaos in Somalia and Taliban violence in Pakistan,” Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire said. “The impunity enjoyed by those responsible for violations of human rights, in particular, the right to freedom of information, encourages the continuation of these violations.”

The victims were news providers of all kinds. Citizen-journalists and netizens have been hit hard – 47 killed in 2012 compared with 5 in 2011 – especially in Syria. These men and women act as reporters, photographers and video-journalists, documenting their day-to-day lives and the government’s crackdown on its opponents. Without their activities, the Syrian regime would be able to impose a complete news blackout on certain regions and continue massacring in secret.

	2011	2012	CHANGE
JOURNALISTS KILLED	66	88	+ 33%
JOURNALISTS ARRESTED	1044	879	- 16%
JOURNALISTS THREATENED OR ATTACKED	1959	1993	+ 2%
JOURNALISTS KIDNAPPED	71	38	- 46%
JOURNALISTS FLEEING ABROAD	77	73	- 5%
NETIZENS AND CITIZEN-JOURNALISTS KILLED	5	47	+840%
NETIZENS ARRESTED	199	144	-27%

To compile these figures, Reporters Without Borders used the detailed information it gathered in the course of its monitoring of violations of freedom of information throughout the year. The victims were journalists or netizens who were killed in connection with the collection and dissemination of news and information. Reporters Without Borders did not include cases of journalists and netizens who were killed solely in connection with their political or civil society activism, or for other reasons unrelated to the provision of news and information. Reporters Without Borders continues to investigate other cases in which it has so far been unable to get all the information it needs in order to take a decision.

THE FIVE DEADLIEST COUNTRIES FOR JOURNALISTS

Despite the UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1738 in 2006, stressing the need to protect journalists in dangerous areas, violence against journalists, above all the killing of journalists, continues to be one of the biggest threats to freedom of expression.

SYRIA – CEMETERY FOR NEWS PROVIDERS

At least 17 journalists, 44 citizen-journalists and 4 media assistants killed in 2012

Bashar Al-Assad's bloody crackdown in Syria has hit news providers hard because they are the unwanted witnesses of the atrocities being committed by a regime with its back to the wall. Journalists have also been targeted by armed opposition groups, which are increasingly intolerant of criticism and ready to brand journalists as spies if they fail to reflect their views. Because of the polarization of information sources, news manipulation, propaganda, technical constraints and the extreme violence to which journalists and citizen-journalists are exposed, anyone trying to gather or disseminate news and information in Syria needs a real sense of vocation.

BLACK YEAR FOR SOMALIA

18 journalists killed in 2012 in this Horn of Africa country

Twice as many journalists were killed in Somalia in 2012 as in 2009, until now the deadliest year for media personnel. The second half of September was particularly bloody with seven journalists killed, two of them in the space of 24 hours. One was gunned down, the other beheaded. Most are the victims of targeted murders or bombings. Those responsible for this violence are either armed militias such as Al-Shebaab or local government officials who want to silence news outlets. Somali journalists are subject to the most appalling constraints in both the capital Mogadishu and in the rest of the country. The lack of a stable government in this failed state for the past 20 years, endemic violence and generalized impunity all contribute to the grim death toll.

PAKISTAN, A JOURNALIST KILLED EVERY MONTH

9 journalists and 1 media assistant killed in 2012 – a minefield for the media because of endemic violence in Balochistan and Taliban reprisals

Ten journalists were killed in Pakistan for the second year running - almost one a month since February 2010. It was the world's deadliest country for the media from 2009 to 2011, and Balochistan continues to be one of the world's most dangerous regions. With its Tribal Areas, its border with Afghanistan, its tension with India and its chaotic political history, Pakistan is one of the world's most complicated countries to cover. Terrorist threats, police violence, local potentates with unlimited powers and dangerous conflicts in the Tribal Areas place often deadly stumbling blocks in journalists' paths.

JOURNALISTS TARGETED BY ORGANIZED CRIME IN MEXICO

6 journalists killed

Mexico's violence, which has grown exponentially during the federal offensive against the drug cartels of the past six years, targets journalists who dare to cover drug trafficking, corruption, organized crime's infiltration of local and federal government and human rights violations by government officials.

BRAZIL : BEHIND THE SCENES

5 journalists killed

Drug traffickers operating across the Paraguayan border seem to have had a direct hand in the deaths of two of the five journalists murdered in connection with their work in Brazil in 2012. Both had covered drug cases. Two of the other victims were blogging journalists, who often find that the least criticism of local officials can expose them to danger.

THE WORLD'S FIVE BIGGEST PRISONS FOR JOURNALISTS A RECORD NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS IMPRISONED, WITH TURKEY TAKING THE PRIZE

There have never been as many journalists in prison. A total of 193 are currently jailed in connection with their work, while at least 130 netizens are also detained in connection with the provision of news and information.

TURKEY, THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PRISON FOR JOURNALISTS

At least 42 journalists and 4 media workers detained

The number of journalists currently detained in connection with their work in Turkey is without precedent since the end of the military rule. Limited legislative reforms have barely slowed the pace of arrests, searches and trials to which journalists are subjected, usually on the grounds of combatting terrorism. Based on repressive laws, judicial practices are dominated by security concerns and show little respect for freedom of information and the right to due process. Although the climate is now more intimidating, the Turkish media continue to thrive and exhibit a great deal of diversity.

Reporters Without Borders recently concluded several months of investigations into Turkey's imprisoned journalists. Of the 72 journalists currently in prison, it managed to establish that at least 42 of them are being held in connection with their work of gathering and disseminating news and information. Many other cases are still being investigated.

LACK OF PROGRESS IN CHINA

30 journalists and 69 netizens in prison

The number of detained journalists has been fairly constant for years. Most of the hundred or so journalists and netizens currently held are serving long sentences in harsh conditions on charges of subversion or divulging state secrets. Those who arrest journalists are often local officials concerned about the bad publicity that can result from reports about corruption or nepotism. The political police focus on free speech activists and bloggers, who are increasingly inventive in their efforts to circumvent censorship.

ERITREA'S PRISON HELL

At least 28 journalists in prison

Africa's biggest prison for journalists has been cut off from the rest of the world since the major roundups in September 2001 and the closure of all of the privately-owned media. None of the 28

journalists currently in prison had the right to a trial or access to a lawyer and few have ever been allowed a family visit. Prison conditions are appalling and include solitary confinement, underground cells and torture.

At least seven journalists have died or committed suicide while held incommunicado – forgotten or ignored by the outside world. One of the planet's few remaining totalitarian dictatorships and ranked last in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index, Eritrea arrests journalists and leaves them to rot in prison on the least suspicion of posing a threat to national security or taking a critical view of government policies.

THE CRUEL INTOLERANCE OF IRAN'S MULLAH REPUBLIC

26 journalists and 17 netizens in prison

The media freedom situation deteriorated considerably in 2009 as a result of the crackdown on the protests that followed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed reelection. Ever since then, the regime has kept on jailing news providers for crossing its red lines. The state of health of some of the detainees is very worrying. In an additional punishment, the families of detainees are subject to frequent threats, harassment and reprisals if they dare to talk to the media. Some of those who are released are also victims of threats and prevented from working, their employers pressured to fire them.

HELD IN SYRIAN CELLS

At least 21 journalists and 18 netizens in prison

Journalists and citizen-journalists are not only being killed in the regime's crackdown. Many are also being arrested and torture is systematic. The authorities stop at nothing in order to extract information from prisoners and dismantle opposition networks.

SLIGHT FALL IN ARRESTS AND ABDUCTION OF JOURNALISTS, AND RANSACKING OF NEWS MEDIA

There has been a slight fall in cases of journalists being arrested or abducted in the past year, compared with 2011, except in Asia and the Americas, where the numbers have continued to grow. News providers were often targeted on the streets while covering demonstrations and protests.

The street dangers have continued above all in Syria (51 arrests, 33 physical attacks and 13 abductions) and to a lesser degree in Bahrain (18 arrests and 36 physical attacks). It is not easy to put a precise figure on the number of arrests of news providers amid operations targeting the civilian population in general. The figures given for Syria probably fall short of the reality.

The number of arrests and physical attacks has fallen sharply since the fall of Muammar Qadhafi and Hosni Mubarak respectively in Libya (7 arrests in 2012, down from 28 in 2011) and Egypt (33 arrests and 63 attacks in 2012, down from 116 arrests and 104 attacks in 2011). But there was a marked rise in cases of threats or attacks in Tunisia in 2012, following a 2011 revolution that was shorter and prompted a less violent crackdown than other uprisings in the region. In Oman, the authorities arrested around 30 bloggers in a bid to stop protests inspired by the Arab Spring.

In Latin America, Cuba has stepped up its harassment of dissident bloggers and journalists again since 2011. Peru continues to rank first in physical attacks, maintaining its average of around 100 a year. The biggest increases were registered in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. In Argentina, the increase was due to growing polarization; in Brazil, to electoral tension and violence; and in Mexico, to a still high level of violence compounded by political disturbances resulting from July's presidential election. Colombia was the only one to register a fall in the number of physical attacks, but it was not enough to end its status as one of the region's most violent countries.

India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal are among the Asian countries where such violations have increased. With an undeclared coup d'état in Maldives and the media silenced in Sri Lanka, the Indian subcontinent is the Asian region where the situation deteriorated most in 2012. The Chinese Communist Party congress was accompanied by an increase in arrests, attacks and acts of censorship. Many media are trying to free themselves of control by the Propaganda Department and local officials, but the Communist Party refuses to loosen its grip on this "strategic" sector and keeps on inventing new ways to censor.

In Africa, 2012 was marked by the appearance of violations in Mali, especially in the north (13 arrests, 8 cases of threats or attacks, 2 abductions and at least 4 news media censored). Abuses and cases of censorship are growing steadily in frequency in Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Somalia. A relative calm returned in Uganda, Malawi and Angola – countries where the authorities cracked down on protests in 2011

A relative calm also returned to Belarus, where the number of arrests fell to the more usual if still worrying level of 31 after a 2011 marked by unprecedented protests and a violent crackdown. Physical attacks increased in Ukraine, where impunity sustains a degree of violence against journalists although there is no security problem. In Turkey, the world's biggest prison for journalists, the number of arrests doubled as a result of tension surrounding the issue of the Kurdish minority.

Endemic violence accounts for the still high number of journalists being forced to flee abroad – 73 in 2012 compared with 77 in 2011. As a result of the Assad regime's bloody crackdown, Syria replaced Iran in 2012 as the biggest source of news providers fleeing into exile. And more than 10 journalists fled Somalia in the month of September alone.

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**REPORTERS
WITHOUT BORDERS**
FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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