

# Africa



## Five decades after independence, African journalists still seeking freedom

### Horn still worst off, censorship hits Sudan and Rwanda, prison death mars Cameroon

With many African countries marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their independence, 2010 should have been a year of celebration but the continent's journalists were not invited to the party. The Horn of Africa continues to be the region with the least press freedom but there were disturbing reverses in the Great Lakes region and East Africa.

**Eritrea** (178<sup>th</sup>) is at the very bottom of the world ranking for the fourth year running. At least 30 journalists and four media contributors are held incommunicado in the most appalling conditions, without right to a trial and without any information emerging about their situation. Journalists employed by the state media – the only kind of media tolerated – have to choose between obeying the information ministry's orders or trying to flee the country. The foreign media are not welcome.

In **Somalia** (161<sup>st</sup>), the media are not being spared by the civil war between the transitional government and Islamist militias, and journalists often fall victim to the violence. The two leading Islamist militias, Al-Shabaab and Hizb-Al-Islam, are gradually seizing control of independent radio stations and using them to broadcast their religious and political propaganda.

The temporary lifting of prior censorship on the print media in **Sudan** (172<sup>nd</sup>) was just a smokescreen. It has fallen 24 places and now has Africa's second worst ranking, partly as a result of the closure of the opposition daily *Rai-al-Shaab* and the jailing of five members of its staff, but above all because of the re-

turn of state surveillance of the print media, which makes it impossible to cover key stories such as the future referendum on South Sudan's independence.

**Rwanda** (169<sup>th</sup>), where President Paul Kagame was returned to power in a highly questionable election, has fallen 12 places and now has Africa's third worst ranking. The closure of leading independent publications, the climate of terror surrounding the presidential election and *Umuvugizi* deputy editor Jean-Léonard Rugambage's murder in Kigali were the reasons for this fall. Journalists are fleeing the country because of the repression, in an exodus almost on the scale of Somalia's.

Surveillance of the press and a decline in the climate for journalists during the May elections account for **Ethiopia's** continued bad ranking (139<sup>th</sup>). Violence against journalists, arbitrary police arrests and intelligence agency abuses explain why **Nigeria** (145<sup>th</sup>) and the Democratic Republic of **Congo** (148<sup>th</sup>) are still in the bottom third.

**Uganda** (96<sup>th</sup>) fell a relatively modest 10 places but the murders of two journalists in separate incidents in September and the recent increase in physical attacks and arrests of journalists are fuelling serious concerns about the climate for the media in the run-up to next year's elections. **Cameroon** (129<sup>th</sup>) fell 20 places as a result of newspaper editor Bibi Ngota's death in prison and the continuing detention of two other editors. **Côte d'Ivoire** (118<sup>th</sup>) also fell a few places due to the harassment of newspapers such as *L'Expression* and *Le Nouveau Courrier d'Abidjan* and the temporary ban on local retransmission of French TV station *France 24* in February.

Reporters Without Borders promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 76  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
africque@rsf.org -  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org



## Africa

**Gambia** (125<sup>th</sup>) and **Niger** (104<sup>th</sup>) were neck and neck last year at a 137<sup>th</sup> and 139<sup>th</sup> thanks to the predatory behaviour of their respective presidents, Yahya Jammeh and Mamadou Tandja. But press freedom in Niger has improved markedly since Tandja's overthrow in February, accounting for its 35-place jump, although the situation is still very uncertain. Uncertainty is also the dominant feature of another country in transition, **Guinea** (113<sup>th</sup>). It fell 13 places because of a massacre on 28 September 2009 but a new government that could show more respect for press freedom is still seen as a possibility.

After two difficult years, **Kenya** (70<sup>th</sup>) has recovered a respectable position. **Chad** (112<sup>th</sup>) is also leaving behind the fraught period in 2008 when a state of emergency was imposed, but the level of freedom allowed the press is still insufficient. **Angola** (104<sup>th</sup>) has an acceptable ranking although the situation has been soured by a *Radio Despertar* journalist's still unsolved murder in September 2010.

After sharp falls in 2009, **Gabon** (107<sup>th</sup>) and **Madagascar** (116<sup>th</sup>) have recovered some of the lost ground thanks to a decline in tension. But Madagascar's transitional authorities need to show more respect for the press by ceasing to jail journalists (such as those of *Radio Fahazavana*) and ceasing to close down news media. **Zimbabwe** (123<sup>rd</sup>) has again made some slow progress, as it did last year.

The return of independent dailies is a step forward for public access to information but the situation is still very fragile.

Two more African countries have entered the ranks of the world's top 50 nations in terms of respect for press freedom. They are **Tanzania** (41<sup>st</sup>), although certain stories such as albinism continue to be off-limits for the press, and **Burkina Faso** (49<sup>th</sup>), even if justice still has not been rendered in the case of Norbert Zongo, a journalist who was murdered 12 years ago.

The relative positions of the African countries in the top 50 have also changed. They are now led by **Namibia** (21<sup>st</sup>), which has recovered its former pre-eminent position, while **Cape Verde** (26<sup>th</sup>) has caught up with **Ghana** (26<sup>th</sup>) and **Mali** (26<sup>th</sup>). **South Africa** (38<sup>th</sup>) has fallen five places, in part because of attacks on journalists during the Football World Cup but above all because of the behaviour of senior members of the ruling African National Congress towards the press. ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema, for example, expelled BBC correspondent Jonah Fisher from a news conference on 8 April, calling him a "bastard" and "bloody agent." And the government plans to pass two bills that would endanger press freedom, one creating a media tribunal and the other restricting the disclosure of information.

**Reporters Without Borders** promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 76  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
afrique@rsf.org -  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org



# Europe falls from its pedestal, no respite in the dictatorships

“Our latest world press freedom index contains welcome surprises, highlights sombre realities and confirms certain trends,” Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard said as his organisation issued its ninth annual index today. “More than ever before, we see that economic development, institutional reform and respect for fundamental rights do not necessarily go hand in hand. The defence of media freedom continues to be a battle, a battle of vigilance in the democracies of old Europe and a battle against oppression and injustice in the totalitarian regimes still scattered across the globe.

“We must salute the engines of press freedom, with Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland at their head. We must also pay homage to the human rights activists, journalists and bloggers throughout the world who bravely defend the right to speak out. Their fate is our constant concern. We reiterate our call for the release of Liu Xiaobo, the symbol of the pressure for free speech building up in China, which censorship for the time being is still managing to contain. And we warn the Chinese authorities against taking a road from which there is no way out.

“It is disturbing to see several European Union member countries continuing to fall in the index. If it does not pull itself together, the European Union risks losing its position as world leader in respect for human rights. And if that were to happen, how could it be convincing when it asked authoritarian regimes to make improvements? There is an urgent need for the European countries to recover their exemplary status.

“We are also worried by the harsher line being taken by governments at the other end of the index. Rwanda, Yemen and Syria have

joined Burma and North Korea in the group of the world’s most repressive countries towards journalists. This does not bode well for 2011. Unfortunately, the trend in the most authoritarian countries is not one of improvement.”

## European Union loses its leadership status

Reporters Without Borders has repeatedly expressed its concern about the deteriorating press freedom situation in the European Union and the 2010 index confirms this trend. Thirteen of the EU’s 27 members are in the top 20 but some of the other 14 are very low in the ranking. Italy is 49<sup>th</sup>, Romania is 52<sup>nd</sup> and Greece and Bulgaria are tied at 70<sup>th</sup>. The European Union is not a homogenous whole as regards media freedom. On the contrary, the gap between good and bad performers continues to widen.

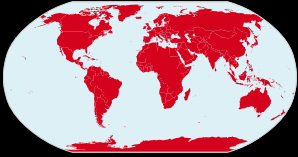
There has been no progress in several countries where Reporters Without Borders pointed out problems. They include, above all, France and Italy, where events of the past year – violation of the protection of journalists’ sources, the continuing concentration of media ownership, displays of contempt and impatience on the part of government officials towards journalists and their work, and judicial summonses – have confirmed their inability to reverse this trend.

## Northern Europe still at the top

Several countries share first place in the index again. This year it is Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. They have all previously held this honour since the index was created in 2002. Norway and Iceland have always been among the countries sharing first position except in 2006 (Norway) and 2009 (Iceland).

**Reporters Without Borders** promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org



These six countries set an example in the way they respect journalists and news media and protect them from judicial abuse.

They even continue to progress. Iceland, for example, is considering an exemplary bill, the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative (IMMI), that would provide a unique level of protection for the media. Sweden distinguishes itself by its Press Freedom Act, which has helped to create a particularly favourable climate for the work of journalists, by the strength of its institutions and by its respect for all those sectors of society including the media whose role in a democracy is to question and challenge those in positions of power.

### **Ten countries where it is not good to be a journalist**

In recent years, Reporters Without Borders drew particular attention to the three countries that were always in the last three positions – Eritrea, North Korea and Turkmenistan. This year, a bigger group of ten countries – marked by persecution of the media and a complete lack of news and information – are clumped together at the bottom. The press freedom situation keeps on deteriorating in these countries and it is getting harder to say which is worse than the other. The difference between the scores of the “best” and worst of the last 10 countries was only 24.5 points this year. It was 37.5 points in 2009 and 43.25 points in 2007.

It is worth noting that, for the first time since the start of the index in 2002, Cuba is not one of the 10 last countries. This is due above all to the release of 14 journalists and 22 activists in the course of the past summer. But the situation on the ground has not changed significantly. Political dissidents and independent journalists still have to deal with censorship and repression on a daily basis.

Freedom is not allowed any space in Burma, where a parliamentary election is due to be held next month, and the rare attempts to provide news or information are met with imprisonment and forced labour.

Finally, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Mexico, countries either openly at war or in a civil war or some other kind of internal

conflict, we see a situation of permanent chaos and a culture of violence and impunity taking root in which the press has become a favourite target. These are among the most dangerous countries in the world, and the belligerents there pick directly on reporters such as French TV journalists Stéphane Taponier and Hervé Ghesquière, who have been held hostage in Afghanistan for the past 300 days.

### **Economic growth does not mean press freedom**

The BRICs – Brazil, Russia, India and China – may all be at a roughly similar stage of economic development but the 2010 index highlights major differences in the press freedom situation in these countries. Thanks to favourable legislative changes, Brazil (58<sup>th</sup>) has risen 12 places in the past year, while India has fallen 17 places to 122<sup>nd</sup>. Russia, which had a particularly deadly preceding year, is still poorly placed at 140<sup>th</sup>. Despite an astonishingly vibrant and active blogosphere, China still censors and jails dissidents and continues to languish in 171<sup>st</sup> place.

These four countries now shoulder the responsibilities of the emerging powers and must fulfil their obligations as regards fundamental rights.

### **Heavy falls**

The Philippines, Ukraine, Greece and Kyrgyzstan all fell sharply in this year’s index. In the Philippines this was due to the massacre of around 30 journalists by a local baron, in Ukraine to the slow and steady deterioration in press freedom since Viktor Yanukovich’s election as president in February, in Greece to political unrest and physical attacks on several journalists, and in Kyrgyzstan to the ethnic hatred campaign that accompanied the political turmoil.

The changes are unfortunately often deceptive. Some countries have risen sharply in the index this year but in fact all they have done is recover their traditional position after a particularly difficult if not disastrous 2009. This is the case with Gabon, which rose 22 places, South Korea (+27) and Guinea-Bissau (+25).

**Reporters Without Borders** promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org



# World Press Freedom Index 2010

## The rankings

Rank	Country	Note	
1	Finland	0,00	=
-	Iceland	0,00	↑
-	Netherlands	0,00	↑
-	Norway	0,00	=
-	Sweden	0,00	=
-	Switzerland	0,00	↑
7	Austria	0,50	↑
8	New Zealand	1,50	↑
9	Estonia	2,00	↓
-	Ireland	2,00	↓
11	Denmark	2,50	↓↓
-	Japan	2,50	↑
-	Lithuania	2,50	↓
14	Belgium	4,00	↓
-	Luxembourg	4,00	↑
-	Malta	4,00	↓
17	Germany	4,25	↑
18	Australia	5,38	↓
19	United Kingdom	6,00	↑
20	United States of America	6,75	=
21	Canada	7,00	↓
-	Namibia	7,00	↑↑
23	Czech Republic	7,50	↑
-	Hungary	7,50	↑
25	Jamaica	7,67	↓
26	Cape Verde	8,00	↑↑
-	Ghana	8,00	↑
-	Mali	8,00	↑
29	Costa Rica	8,08	↑
30	Latvia	8,50	↓↓
-	Trinidad and Tobago	8,50	↓
32	Poland	8,88	↑
33	Chile	10,50	↑
34	Hong-Kong	10,75	↑↑
35	Slovakia	11,50	↑
-	Surinam	11,50	↑

Reporters Without Borders promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org



Rank	Country	Note	
37	Uruguay	11,75	↓
38	South Africa	12,00	↓
39	Spain	12,25	↑
40	Portugal	12,36	↓↓
41	Tanzania	13,00	↑↑
42	Papua New Guinea	13,33	↑↑
-	South Korea	13,33	↑↑
44	France	13,38	↓
45	Cyprus	13,40	↓↓
46	Slovenia	13,44	↓
47	Bosnia and Herzegovina	13,50	↓
48	Taiwan	14,50	↑↑
49	Burkina Faso	15,00	↑
-	Italy	15,00	=
51	El Salvador	15,83	↑↑
52	Maldives	16,00	↓
-	Romania	16,00	↓
54	Paraguay	16,25	=
55	Argentina	16,35	↓
56	Haiti	16,38	↑
57	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States	16,50	nc
58	Brazil	16,60	↑↑
59	Guyana	16,63	↓↓
60	Togo	17,00	↑
61	Cyprus (North)	17,25	↓↓
62	Botswana	17,50	=
-	Croatia	17,50	↑↑
64	Bhutan	17,75	↑
65	Mauritius	18,00	↓↓
-	Seychelles	18,00	↑
67	Guinea-Bissau	18,25	↑↑
68	Macedonia	18,40	↓↓
69	Central African Republic	18,50	↑↑
70	Benin	19,00	↑
-	Bulgaria	19,00	↓
-	Comoros	19,00	↑↑
-	Greece	19,00	↓↓
-	Kenya	19,00	↑↑
75	Moldova	19,13	↑↑
76	Mongolia	19,42	↑↑
77	Guatemala	20,25	↑↑
78	Lebanon	20,50	↓↓
79	Malawi	21,00	↓↓
80	Albania	21,50	↑

Reporters Without Borders promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org





Rank	Country	Note	
81	Panama	21,83	↓↓
82	Zambia	22,00	↑↑
83	Nicaragua	22,33	↓
84	Liberia	22,50	↓↓
85	Serbia	23,00	↓↓
86	Israel (Israeli territory)	23,25	↑
87	Kuwait	23,75	↓↓
-	Tonga	23,75	↕
-	United Arab Emirates	23,75	↓
90	Lesotho	24,00	↑
91	Sierra Leone	24,25	↑↑
92	Kosovo	24,83	↓↓
93	Senegal	25,00	↓
-	Timor-Leste	25,00	↓↓
95	Mauritania	25,38	↑
96	Uganda	25,50	↓↓
97	Dominican Republic	26,13	↑
98	Mozambique	26,50	↓↓
99	Georgia	27,00	↓↓
-	United States of America (extra-territorial)	27,00	↑
101	Armenia	27,50	↑↑
-	Ecuador	27,50	↓↓
103	Bolivia	28,13	↓
104	Angola	28,50	↑↑
-	Montenegro	28,50	↓↓
-	Niger	28,50	↑↑
107	Gabon	28,75	↑↑
108	Burundi	28,88	↓
109	Peru	30,00	↓↓
110	Djibouti	30,50	=
111	Samoa	33,00	↕
112	Chad	33,17	↑↑
113	Guinea	33,50	↓↓
114	Congo	33,60	↑
115	Tajikistan	34,50	↓
116	Madagascar	34,88	↑↑
117	Indonesia	35,83	↓↓
118	Côte d'Ivoire	36,00	↓↓
119	Nepal	36,38	↓
120	Jordan	37,00	↓
121	Qatar	38,00	↓↓
122	India	38,75	↓↓
123	Zimbabwe	39,50	↑↑
124	Oman	40,25	↓↓

Reporters Without Borders promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org



Rank	Country	Note	
125	Gambia	40,50	↑↑
126	Bangladesh	42,50	↓
127	Egypt	43,33	↑↑
128	Cambodia	43,83	↓↓
129	Cameroon	44,30	↓↓
130	Iraq	45,58	↑↑
131	Ukraine	46,83	↓↓
132	Israel (extra-territorial)	47,00	↑↑
133	Algeria	47,33	↑
-	Venezuela	47,33	↓
135	Morocco	47,40	↓
136	Mexico	47,50	↑
-	Singapore	47,50	↓
138	Turkey	49,25	↓↓
139	Ethiopia	49,38	↑
140	Russia	49,90	↑↑
141	Malaysia	50,75	↓↓
142	Brunei	51,00	↑↑
143	Honduras	51,13	↓↓
144	Bahrein	51,38	↓↓
145	Colombia	51,50	↓↓
-	Nigeria	51,50	↓↓
147	Afghanistan	51,67	↑
148	Democratic Republic of Congo	51,83	↓
149	Fiji	52,75	↑
150	Palestinian Territories	56,13	↑↑
151	Pakistan	56,17	↑
152	Azerbaijan	56,38	↓
153	Thailand	56,83	↓↓
154	Belarus	57,00	↓
155	Swaziland	57,50	↓↓
156	Philippines	60,00	↓↓
157	Saudi Arabia	61,50	↑
158	Sri Lanka	62,50	↑
159	Kyrgyzstan	63,00	↓↓
160	Libya	63,50	↓
161	Somalia	66,00	↑
162	Kazakhstan	68,50	↓↓
163	Uzbekistan	71,50	↓
164	Tunisia	72,50	↓↓
165	Vietnam	75,75	↑
166	Cuba	78,00	↑
167	Equatorial Guinea	79,00	↓
168	Laos	80,50	↑
169	Rwanda	81,00	↓↓

Reporters Without Borders promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
www.rsf.org





Rank	Country	Note	
170	Yemen	82,13	↓
171	China	84,67	↓
172	Sudan	85,33	↓↓
173	Syria	91,50	↓
174	Burma	94,50	↓
175	Iran	94,56	↓
176	Turkmenistan	95,33	↓
177	North Korea	104,75	↓
178	Eritrea	105,00	↓

**Reporters Without Borders** promotes and defends the freedom to be informed and to inform others throughout the world. Based in Paris, it has nine international offices (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Madrid, Montreal, New York, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington DC) and more than 140 correspondents in all five continents.

47, rue Vivienne  
75002 Paris  
Tél. : 33 1 44 83 84 84  
Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51  
rsf@rsf.org  
Read more :  
[www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org)

# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WORLDWIDE IN 2011



# LA LIBERTÉ DE LA PRESSE DANS LE MONDE EN 2011