

2024 ROUND-UP



Journalists killed,
detained, held hostage
and missing

RSF REPORTERS
WITHOUT BORDERS

PRESS

Statistics from 1 January to 1 December 2024

I TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	3
THE ROUND-UP IN NUMBERS	4
KILLED JOURNALISTS	6
DETAINED JOURNALISTS	8
TEN KEY RELEASES IN 2024	10
JOURNALISTS HELD HOSTAGE	12
MISSING JOURNALISTS	14
DEFINITIONS	16
WHAT ARE OUR STATISTICS USED FOR?	17
METHODOLOGY	17
MAP OF PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS IN 2024	18

INTRODUCTION

Journalists don't die – they're killed

Dying is not an acceptable risk of journalism. Of course, progress has been made in protecting journalists and training them to cover conflicts, and Reporters Without Borders' (RSF's) efforts sometimes bear fruit in mitigating the threats reporters face or securing their release. Yet, once again, RSF's round-up for the end of 2024 shows the heavy toll journalists pay with their lives, and acts as a round-up of the predators of press freedom – the repressive powers and armed groups who attack the people working every day to provide reliable information.

This fatalism cannot prevail, and passive tenses should not be used: journalists do not die, they are killed; they are not in prison, regimes lock them up; they do not disappear, they are kidnapped. These crimes violate international law and too often go unpunished. Journalists are no longer collateral victims but targets, inconvenient witnesses, and even bargaining chips, pawns in a political game.

The number of journalists killed in conflict zones is at a five-year high. In Gaza, the scale of the tragedy is incomprehensible. Since October 2023, over 145 journalists have been killed, including at least 35 who were very likely targeted or killed while working. Many of these reporters were clearly identifiable as journalists and protected by this status, yet they were shot or killed in Israeli strikes that blatantly disregarded international law. This was compounded by a deliberate media blackout and a block on foreign journalists entering the Strip.

In 2024, Gaza became the most dangerous region in the world for journalists, a place where journalism itself is threatened with extinction. A third of the journalists killed this year perished under the bombs of Israeli armed forces. Israel has, moreover, turned into one of the world's top five prisons for journalists.

Beyond Gaza, other conflicts escape our attention. Sudan is now a death trap for journalists caught between military and paramilitary factions. Even outside war zones, journalism is not spared. Pakistan – where seven journalists were killed in 2024 – and Mexico – which counted five assassinations – rank among the three countries with the highest number of journalists killed in the past five years, relentlessly persecuted

by gangs and armed factions. In Bangladesh, the violent crackdown on protests claimed the lives of five journalists. Security forces deliberately targeted them in a systematic attempt to censor coverage of this historic uprising, which led to the overthrow of the government.

Three further journalists were killed in Myanmar, in a conflict largely ignored by the international media. I didn't know them, but they certainly remind me of the courageous reporters I met in October in Chiang-Mai, Thailand, for the launch of an RSF support programme that closely supports these journalists who cannot be considered "in exile" as they regularly cross the border to get as close as possible to the front line to gather images and stories.

Let us repeat: journalists don't die – they're killed. We must hold all those responsible for these murders to account. Starting with the Israeli armed forces who, since 7 October 2023, stopped hiding behind hollow investigations and now disguise their targeting of journalists as part of a fight against terrorism – discrediting journalists in addition to physically eliminating them.

We need to get things moving, to remind ourselves as citizens that journalists are dying for us, to keep us informed. The inaction of public authorities is only made possible by the public's persistent indifference. So this is RSF's commitment: we won't give in to fatalism – things can be done differently. Protecting those who inform us means protecting the truth. We must continue to count, name, condemn, investigate, and ensure that justice is served.

I dedicate this report to the Ukrainian journalist [Victoria Roshchyna](#), whose family learned that she died in captivity on 10 October. At the time of writing, they had still not received any further explanation from the Russian authorities on the circumstances of her detention and death, and have not been able to recover her body. Informing is not a crime, but killing someone to silence them is.

Thibaut Bruttin,
Director General, Reporters Without Borders (RSF)

THE ROUND-UP IN NUMBERS¹ | 2024



54 JOURNALISTS KILLED*

ON THE JOB OR IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR WORK

- 51 PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
- 1 NON-PROFESSIONAL JOURNALIST
- 2 MEDIA WORKERS

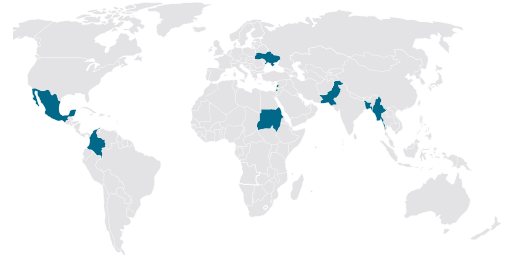
♂ ♀
52 MEN
2 WOMEN



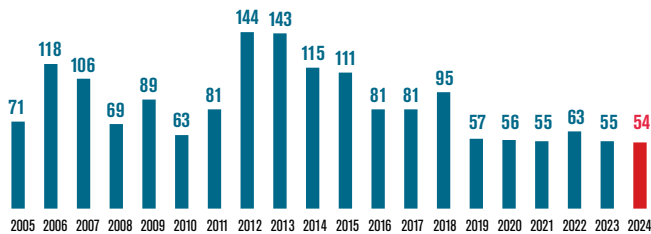
52 LOCALS
2 FOREIGNERS

The most dangerous countries and territories for journalists in 2024

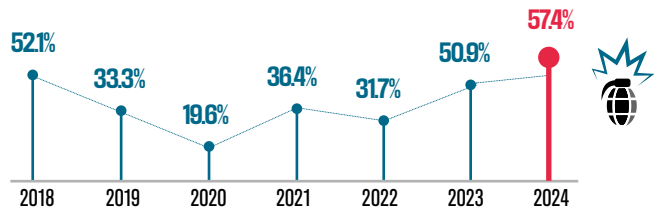
- 16 Palestine
- 7 Pakistan
- 5 Bangladesh
- 5 Mexico
- 4 Sudan
- 3 Myanmar
- 2 Colombia
- 2 Ukraine
- 2 Lebanon



Over 1,700 journalists killed in the past 20 years



Over half of killed journalists died in conflict zones



Israeli armed forces responsible for a third of the journalists killed in 2024

The main predators of press freedom in 2024

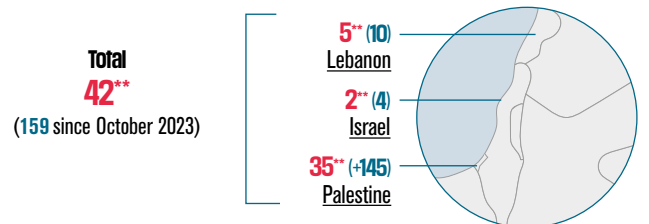
Israeli armed forces	18
Unidentified armed groups (in Pakistan, Mexico, Sudan, Colombia, Honduras, and Chad)	13
Unidentified assailants	6
Bangladeshi security forces	5
Burmese junta	3
Russian authorities	2
Tehrik-e-Taliban in Pakistan (TTP)	2
Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan	2

Subjects that kill

31	8	7	5	3
Conflict	Local politics	Organised crime	Protests	Other

Journalists killed in the Gaza region

since October 2023



**in connection with their work

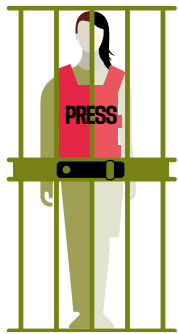
1. Statistics valid as of 1 December 2024

* See definitions on page 16



Updating statistics on RSF's barometer

This list only includes journalists that RSF has been able to establish as killed, imprisoned, or detained due to their work as journalists. It does not include journalists targeted for reasons unrelated to their profession or for whom the link with their work has not yet been confirmed.



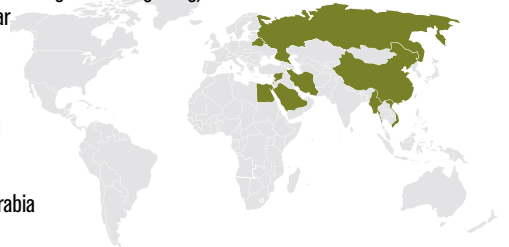
550 JOURNALISTS DETAINED*

↑ +72% (513 as of 1 December 2023)

439 PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS (63 women)
86 NON-PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS (9 women)
25 MEDIA WORKERS (5 women)

The world's 10 largest prisons for journalists

- 124 China (including 11 in Hong Kong)
- 61 Myanmar
- 41 Israel
- 40 Belarus
- 38 Russia
- 38 Vietnam
- 26 Iran
- 23 Syria
- 19 Saudi Arabia
- 19 Egypt



♂ ♀ **473 MEN**
77 WOMEN
 (i.e. 14%)

 PASSPORT **462 LOCALS**
88 FOREIGNERS
 (i.e. 16%)

🔒 **298 PROVISIONAL DETENTIONS**
244 IMPRISONMENTS (9 life sentences)
8 HOUSE ARRESTS

72 journalists were sentenced to a combined total of over 250 years in prison in 2024
10 were sentenced to over 10 years in prison
54 of these convicted journalists were still in prison as of 1 December



55 JOURNALISTS HELD HOSTAGE*

INCLUDING 2 TAKEN HOSTAGE IN 2024

48 PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
4 NON-PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
3 MEDIA WORKERS

♂ ♀ **52 MEN**
3 WOMEN

 PASSPORT **53 LOCALS**
2 FOREIGNERS

High-risk zones

38 Syria **5** Yemen **1** Mexico
9 Iraq **2** Mali

Top hostage-takers

- Islamic State (ISIS) **25**
- Syrian rebel groups (FSA, Ahrar Al-Sham, Al-Nosra, Hamza Division, Sultan Murad Division, Jaysh al-Islam) **11**
- Unidentified armed groups **8**
- Hayat Tahrir al-Cham (HTS) **6**
- Houthis **4**
- Al-Qaeda **1**



95 JOURNALISTS MISSING*

4 WENT MISSING IN 2024

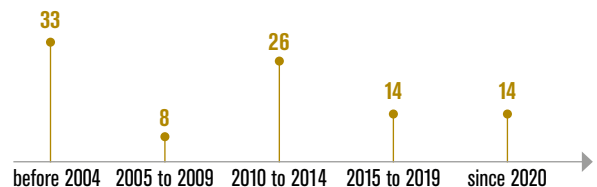
92 PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
2 NON-PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
1 MEDIA WORKER

♂ ♀ **88 MEN**
7 WOMEN

 PASSPORT **79 LOCALS**
16 FOREIGNERS

? **52 MISSING PERSONS**
43 ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

28 disappeared in the last 10 years



High-risk zones

39 Americas (30 in Mexico) **19** Maghreb and Middle East **17** Africa **12** Europe and Central Asia **8** Asia



54 JOURNALISTS KILLED

DUE TO THEIR WORK IN 17 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE

In 2024, the Gaza Strip accounted for nearly 30% of journalists killed in connection with their work, according to RSF's latest information. Palestine is the most dangerous zone for journalists, recording a higher death toll than any other country or territory in the past five years. Worldwide, the number of journalists killed for covering conflict zones – in the Gaza region, Iraq, Sudan, Myanmar and Ukraine – has reached a record high since 2020. Due to the large number of journalists killed in Pakistan (7) and the protests that rocked Bangladesh (5), Asia kept its place as the region with the second-highest number of murders.

PALESTINE (16) - LEBANON (2)

RSF filed its fourth complaint with the ICC for the Israeli army's war crimes against journalists

More than 155 journalists have been killed by the Israeli army since October 2023 in Gaza and Lebanon, an unprecedented massacre. RSF has sufficient evidence that at least 40 of them were deliberately targeted for their journalism. RSF has filed four complaints with the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes committed by the Israeli army against journalists.



"As long as these killings remain unpunished, the perpetrators will have no reason to stop. Protecting Gaza's journalists begins with the fight against impunity. We call on the ICC prosecutor to examine and act on these complaints as a matter of priority and urgency. Without Gaza's journalists, we will lose access to information on the situation in Gaza. Protect them now!"

Antoine Bernard,
Director of Advocacy and Assistance (RSF)

PAKISTAN (7)

A lethal year

With seven assassinations in 2024, Pakistan is one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists. Freelance journalist **Kamran Dawar** is one such victim, shot dead on 21 May outside his home in the North Waziristan district. Founder of the *Waziristan TV* Facebook page and a YouTube channel devoted to social challenges in his region – which borders Afghanistan – he had expressed concerns about his safety a few weeks before his death.

BANGLADESH (5)

Violent crackdowns on protests

In July, protests triggered by the reinstatement of a controversial quota system for public jobs were violently repressed by the police: five journalists lost their lives and many others were injured. **Mehedi Hasan**, a journalist for the *Dhaka Times*, was killed on 18 July while covering clashes between protestors and security forces in a southern district of the capital, Dhaka. This major political crisis led to the prime minister's departure.





MEXICO (5)

Flawed state protection

Due to the dangerous nature of journalism in Mexico, more than 650 media professionals are currently under state protection. Despite this safety measure, the journalist and founder of the media outlet *El Hijo del Llanero Solitario*, **Alejandro Alfredo Martínez Noguez**, was shot dead inside the police car of his security detail as he was escorted back from reporting.

SUDAN (4)

A deadly conflict

Sudanese cameraman **Hatem Maamoun**, who worked for various outlets including the television channel *Soudania 24*, died from injuries sustained during an attack on the Jebeit camp in the east of the country, where he was covering the visit of General Burhan, head of the Sudanese Armed Forces, on 31 July. At least four professionals have been killed on the job in Sudan this year.

MYANMAR (3)

Tortured and killed in custody

The body of **Myat Thu Tun**, a contributor to *Western News* who had previously worked for several other media outlets, was found on 11 February in the Rakhine region, bearing signs of torture and bullet wounds. Detained since September 2022, he is the fifth journalist to be killed by the ruling military junta since the February 2021 coup.

COLOMBIA (2)

Killed for covering local news

Mardonio Mejía Mendoza, director of community radio station *Sonora Estéreo*, was murdered on 24 January 2024 in San Pedro, a town in the department of Sucre, by gunmen on motorcycles. A well-known journalist, he hosted the program "Amanecer Campesino" ("Rural Dawn"), which focused on judicial issues and local security problems.

UKRAINE (2)

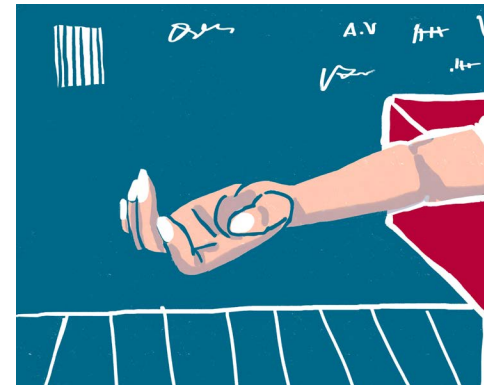
A murder ordered from Kazakhstan

Kazakh blogger **Aydos Sadykov** was shot dead in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, where he had been living as a refugee for 10 years. After 13 days in a coma, he died on 2 July 2024. The assassination – unrelated to the full-scale Russian invasion – was ordered from **Kazakhstan**. Aydos Sadykov and his wife, journalist **Natalia Sadykova**, co-founded the YouTube channel *Base*, which covered corruption in Kazakhstan.

RUSSIA (1)

The Ukrainian journalist who died in a Russian jail

Freelance journalist **Victoria Roshchyna**, who worked with the Ukrainian media outlet *Ukrainska Pravda*, disappeared on 3 August 2023 while travelling to Russian-occupied territories. The Kremlin did not acknowledge her detention until eight months after she was taken captive. Her relatives learned of her death, which allegedly occurred on 19 September 2024, in a letter from the authorities dated 10 October. Her family has still not received any information on the circumstances of her detention and death, and her body has not been returned. Eighteen of the 38 media professionals detained by Russia are Ukrainian journalists who have been imprisoned for their work.



INDONESIA (1)

Burned in an arson attack

Sempurna Pasaribu, a journalist for *Tribrata TV*, and three of his family members lost their lives in an arson attack on their home in Kabanjahe on 27 June. Threatened for his investigations into illegal networks, he had refused to bow to pressure from the police and army.

IRAQ (1)

Growing threats in Iraqi Kurdistan

On 8 July 2024, the vehicle of **Mirad Mirza**, a Kurdish journalist for the television channel *Çira TV*, was hit by a drone strike as he returned from reporting in northeastern Iraq, accompanied by his colleague **Medya Kemal Hassan**. The 27-year-old reporter died of his injuries three days after the bombing, which Kurdish media attribute to the Turkish army.

CHAD (1)

Life as a journalist in the Sahel

Journalist **Idriss Yaya**, from *Mongo* community radio, was shot dead with his wife and son on 1 March 2024 in Djondjol, a village in central Chad, in retaliation for his investigations into inter-communal conflicts and the illegal acquisition of arms. This assassination illustrates the intense danger facing journalists in the Sahel region.



In September, RSF and over 500 community radio stations mobilised to call on the authorities to support and protect local journalism in the Sahel.

Elsewhere in the world

Four other journalists were also killed in 2024, in **Syria** (1), **Turkmenistan** (1), **Honduras** (1) and **Nepal** (1).



550 JOURNALISTS DETAINED

ISRAEL AMONG THE WORLD'S THREE BIGGEST PRISONS FOR JOURNALISTS

This year's increase in the number of journalists behind bars (+7.2%) is due to new detentions in Russia (+8) and Israel (+17). Israel is, by far, the country that has locked up the most journalists since the start of the war in Gaza, and is now the world's third-largest jailer of journalists. Russia (38), meanwhile, uses its prisons to repress independent Russian and Ukrainian reporters (19). The world's four biggest prisons for media workers – China (124, including 11 in Hong Kong), Myanmar (61), Israel (41), and Belarus (40) – hold almost half of the world's jailed journalists.

THE 10 LARGEST PRISONS FOR JOURNALISTS

CHINA (124, including 11 in **HONG KONG**)



Crackdowns on reporting

Renowned journalist **Zhang Zhan**, already jailed for four years for her Covid-19 coverage, was detained again in August 2024, charged with “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”, an offence punishable by five years’ imprisonment. Meanwhile, **Sophia Huang Xueqin**, an investigative journalist famous for her involvement in the #MeToo movement, was sentenced to five years in prison for “incitement to subvert state power” after spending nearly 1,000 days in detention.

First-ever sedition convictions for journalists in Hong Kong

Two former editors of *Stand News*, **Chung Pui-kuen** and **Patrick Lam**, were sentenced to 21 months and 11 months in prison, respectively, on 26 September.

MYANMAR (61)

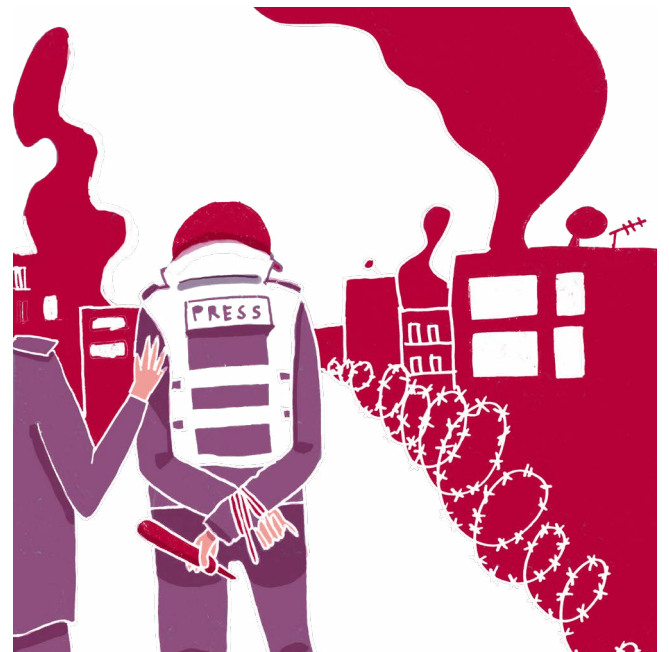
Life imprisonment: a symbol of the junta's repression

On 10 January 2024, the documentary filmmaker **Shin Daewe** received the heaviest sentence handed down to a journalist in Myanmar since the 2021 coup: life imprisonment for “abetting terrorism”. Arrested in October, she was reportedly tortured in custody.

ISRAEL (41)

The third-largest prison for journalists

Since the start of the war in Gaza, Israel has systematically utilised administrative detention, a procedure that allows the army to lock up individuals without communicating the charges. As a result, 37 Palestinian journalists are behind bars, such as **Alaa al-Rimawi**, a reporter for *J Media* news agency, and **Diaa al-Kahlout**, Gaza correspondent for *The New Arab*, who were both tortured in Israeli prisons.



BELARUS (40)

Forced confessions

On 22 October, a Telegram channel affiliated with the police published a video of journalist **Ihar Ilyash** being forced to make a confession, a humiliating tactic regularly used by Belarusian authorities. His wife, **Katsiaryna Andreyeva**, is one of the 39 other journalists detained for their work.

RUSSIA (38)

The forbidden topic of Alexei Navalny

In 2024, the Kremlin detained four media professionals for covering the trials of political opponent Alexei Navalny or subjects relating to Navalny's anti-corruption foundation, FBK: **Antonina Kravtsova** (known under the alias **Favorskaya**) and **Artyom Kriger** – both journalists for independent media *SOTAvision*, which was nominated for the 2024 [RSF Prize for Impact](#) – and **Konstantin Gabov** and **Sergey Karelin**.

VIETNAM (38)

A seized social media account

Freelance journalist **Huy Duc** was abducted by the Hanoi regime in Hanoi on 1 June 2024, shortly after publishing articles on political unrest in the country. Officially detained since 7 June, his Facebook account, which has 350.000 followers, has also been deleted.

IRAN (26)

Nobel Peace Prize winner still imprisoned

During the year **Narges Mohammadi**'s prison sentence was extended twice more, in retaliation for her continued writing and activism from within Evin prison. Her health has deteriorated sharply in detention, with a bone cancer scare and worrying artery blockages. This year, Iranian authorities locked up seven journalists due to their work. The latest is **Reza Valizadeh**, an American-Iranian former journalist for *Radio Farda*.



SYRIA (23)

Twenty journalists imprisoned for over a decade

Like *Halab News* journalist **Baraa Mais**, arrested in 2021, most of them are held by Bashar al-Assad's regime.

SAUDI ARABIA (19)

The journalist detained for supporting Palestine

Maha Al-Rafidi, journalist for *Al-Watan* is the latest media worker to be imprisoned by Saudi Arabia, jailed in 2021. Prior to her arrest, she had received threats for expressing solidarity with prisoners and torture victims, and her support for Palestine. She was tortured while behind bars and spent two months in solitary confinement.

EGYPT (19)

Four new incarcerations in 2024

Despite several released journalists, Abdel Fattah al-Sissi's government incarcerated four media professionals in 2024. Arrested on 21 July, **Ashraf Omar**, translator and cartoonist for the news site *Al-Minassa*, is [one of the four journalists imprisoned in 2024](#). Arrested on 21 July, he remains in pre-trial detention, accused of "spreading false news". This year, the government also refused to liberate bloggers **Mohamed Ibrahim Radwan**, winner of the RSF Prize for Courage who goes by "Mohamed Oxygen," and **Alaa Abdel Fattah**, despite the end of their sentences.

TARGETED FOR THEIR JOURNALISM

BURUNDI

Sentenced for a WhatsApp message

Journalist **Sandra Muhoza** risks 12 years imprisonment for sharing information in a private WhatsApp group for journalists.

KYRGYZSTAN

Suppressed anti-corruption investigations

Eleven [investigative journalists](#) working with the independent YouTube channels *Temirov Live* and *Ait Ait Dese* were arrested in January for "calling for mass riots". Four were convicted in October in an unfair trial.

AZERBAIJAN

Limited access to medical care

The co-founder and director of *Toplum TV*, **Alesker Mammadli**, detained since 8 March, suffers from a cancerous tumour and has not had sufficient access to healthcare. His health is gravely deteriorating.

TUNISIA

Detained for supporting a fellow journalist

Tunisian columnist **Mourad Zeghidi**, has been held since 11 May for supporting fellow journalist **Mohamed Boughalleb**.

CAMEROON

Endless convictions

The prison sentence of **Amadou Vamouké**, the former director general of Cameroon's public radio and television station *CRTV*, increased to 32 years in prison after an additional 20 years were added on charges of "embezzlement of public funds".



TEN KEY RELEASES IN 2024



14
January

Niloofar Hamedei and Elaheh Mohammadi

Iran

They were provisionally released in January 2024 after being jailed in September 2022 for their coverage of Mahsa Amini's death. **Niloofar Hamedei** had been arrested for photographing Masha Amini's weeping mother, while **Elaheh Mohammadi** had been arrested for covering the young woman's funeral. Both were facing charges of propaganda against the regime and collusion against national security. Since the start of the Woman, Life, Freedom protest movement in September 2022, more than 100 journalists have been arrested – 17 of whom remain in prison to this day.



19
March

Stanis Bujakera

Democratic Republic of Congo

"I was released from jail thanks to your efforts."

Stanis Bujakera thanked RSF for all its support day after his release, obtained after six long months in detention, seven requests for provisional release, and international mobilisation. He had been accused of "forging and distributing" a bogus memo from the intelligence services.

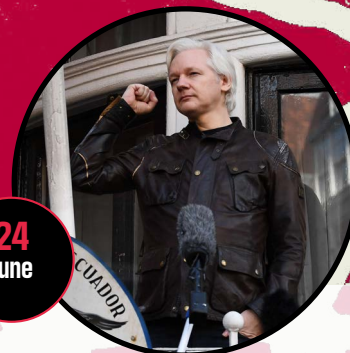


10
May

Aasif Sultan

India

A symbol of the Indian government's relentless legal attacks against independent journalists in Jammu and Kashmir, journalist for the monthly *Kashmir Narrator* **Aasif Sultan** spent nearly six years in prison. Detained under the UAPA anti-terrorism law and the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act – and freed for one day on 28 February – he was finally released on bail by a special court in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.



24
June

Julian Assange

United Kingdom

WikiLeaks founder **Julian Assange** was released from London's Belmarsh prison, bringing the United States' 14-year-old case against him to a close. An Australian citizen, he was facing up to 175 years in prison for 18 counts related to WikiLeaks' publication in 2010 of more than 250,000 leaked classified military and diplomatic documents. In exchange for his freedom, he pleaded guilty to conspiring to obtain and disclose classified US national defence documents.

"I am not free today because the system worked. I am free today after years of incarceration because I pled guilty to journalism," he stated on 1 October.



1 August

Alsu Kurmasheva and Evan Gershkovich

Russia

American correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal* **Evan Gershkovich** and American-Russian journalist for *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)* **Alsu Kurmasheva** were released as part of a prisoner exchange. They had been sentenced to 16 years and six-and-a-half years in prison, respectively, in July 2024, following their respective arrests in March 2023 for Evan Gershkovich and October 2023 for Alsu Kurmasheva.

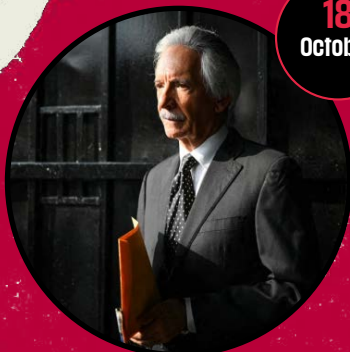


Floriane Irangabiye

Burundi

“Our joy is inexpressible,” the sister of radio host **Igicaniro Floriane Irangabiye** told RSF when the journalist was released from prison on 14 August 2024. She was unjustly sentenced in January 2023 to 10 years’ imprisonment for “undermining the integrity of national territory.” A well-known critic of the Burundian authorities, the broadcaster, who had been living in Rwanda since 2015, was arrested on 30 August 2022 during a visit to Burundi.

14 August



18 October

Jose Rubén Zamora

Guatemala

Founder and publisher of the newspaper *elPeriódico*, **Jose Rubén Zamora** was temporarily released from prison and placed under house arrest on 18 October 2024. The decision was revoked barely a month later, against the president’s recommendation. Jose Rubén Zamora’s request to appeal this decision is currently in the hands of the Guatemalan Supreme Court. The 68-year-old journalist, winner of the RSF Prize for Independence, has already spent more than 800 days behind bars and now faces the prospect of a possible return to prison. *“I had more impact in two years in prison than in 30 years of journalism because we stripped away the mask of democracy,”* he said from his home in November.

Ihsane El Kadi

Algeria

After 22 months in prison, **Ihsane El Kadi**, the director of *Radio M* and *Maghreb Émergent* was granted a presidential pardon. Wrongly accused of having received funds for malevolent intent, his release was bittersweet as his assets were confiscated, heavy fines were imposed on him and *Radio M* was forced to cease operations on 19 June 2024.



30 October



Society & RSF

A brand new collaboration highlighted the work of eight incarcerated journalists

- Dawit Isaak (Eritrea, held since 2001)
- Amadou Vamouké (Cameroon, 2016)
- Narges Mohammadi (Iran, 2021)
- Mohamed “Oxygen” (Egypt, 2021)
- Jose Rubén Zamora (Guatemala, 2022)
- Jimmy Lai (Hong Kong, 2022)
- Maryna Zolatava (Belarus, 2023)
- Irfan Mehraj (India, 2023)



55 JOURNALISTS HELD HOSTAGE IN FIVE COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE

Of the 55 media professionals currently held hostage worldwide, two were kidnapped in 2024, both in Yemen. All of the 55 hostages are concentrated in five countries: Syria (38), Iraq (9), Yemen (5), Mali (2), and Mexico (1). Syria alone holds 70% of these hostages. Most of the hostages in Syria were abducted by the Islamic State during the war and now, 10 years later, it is extremely difficult – if not virtually impossible – to obtain information on their fate and whereabouts.

TOP HOSTAGE-TAKERS

Islamic State (ISIS)

25

Syrian rebel groups (FSA, Ahrar Al-Sham, Al-Nosra, Hamza Division, Sultan Murad Division, Jaysh al-Islam)

11

Unidentified armed groups

8

Hayat Tahrir al-Cham (HTS)

6

Houthis

4

Al-Qaeda

1

Yemen

Two new hostages in 2024

Freelance journalist [Mohamad Al-Mayahi](#) was taken hostage by the Houthis in the Yemeni city of Sanaa on 20 September 2024, shortly after the publication of an article in which he criticised the rebel group. [Fahed al-Arhabi](#), a correspondent for the newspaper *Al-Wahdawi*, was also taken hostage by the Houthis for the third time, on 20 August 2024, after denouncing embezzlement by a bogus charity run by the brother of Mahdi al-Mashat, head of the Houthi political council.



RSF calls on the Houthis to provide information on these journalists' fate and whereabouts, and release them immediately.

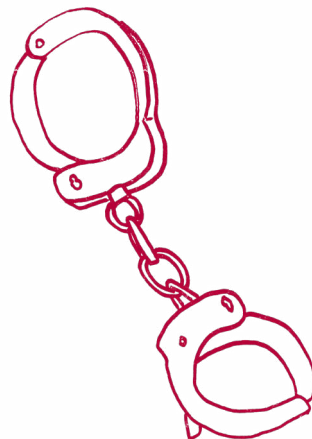
Mali

Journalists held captive for over a year

[Saleck Ag Jiddou](#) and [Moustapha Koné](#), director and host of *Radio Coton*, respectively, were kidnapped by an armed group on 7 November 2023, and are still in captivity. The demanded ransom is now 4 million CFA francs (around 6,150 euros).



RSF condemns this kidnapping, which reflects the growing threat to journalists in the Sahel region.



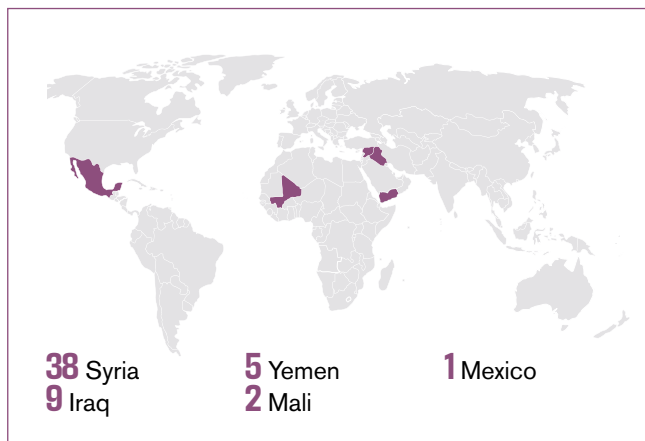


Syria

The only country where foreign journalists are held hostage

Nearly six years after the fall of the Islamic State (ISIS) in March 2019, RSF still has no news of the 38 journalists kidnapped between 2012 and 2021. Among them are three Syrian employees of Istanbul-based *Orient TV*, reporter **Obeida Batal**, technician **Aboud Al-Atik**, and sound recordist **Hosam Nizam Al-Dine**. In addition to holding two of the world's three hostages that are women journalists, Syria is also the only country where foreign journalists are held captive. Mauritanian reporter **Ishak Mokhtar** and Lebanese cameraman **Samir Kassab** were working for Emirati channel *Sky News Arabia* when they were kidnapped with their Syrian driver – whose anonymity was requested by his family – near Aleppo, the capital, in October 2013.

HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES IN THE LAST 10 YEARS



TAKEN HOSTAGE AND RELEASED IN 2024

Sudan

Aladdin Abu Harba, held from 23 to 31 August 2024

On 23 August, armed men affiliated with the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) kidnapped freelance journalist **Aladdin Abu Harba** from his home in the East Nile district of Khartoum. He was released on 31 August 2024.

Nigeria

Joshua Rogers, held from 11 to 12 April 2024

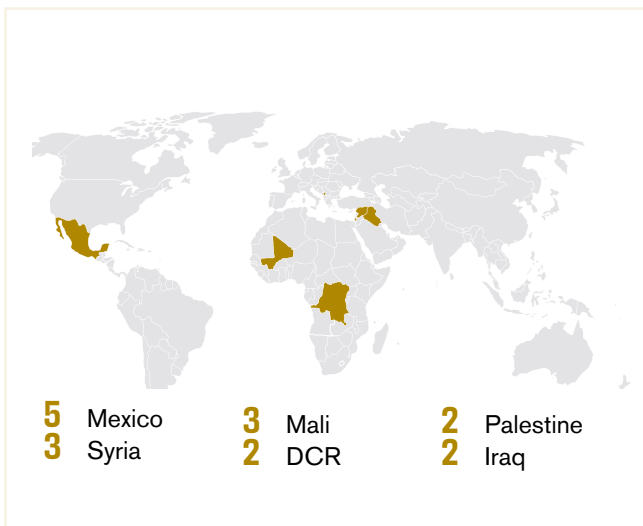
Joshua Rogers, reporter for *Channels TV*, was abducted near his home in Rumuosi, a community in the state of Rivers, on 11 April 2024, on his way home from reporting with the media outlet's branded car. He was released on 12 April 2024.



NEARLY 100 JOURNALISTS MISSING IN 34 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE

Almost one hundred journalists are currently missing around the world, and more than a quarter of them have disappeared in the last 10 years. Mexico stands out as the most dangerous country, accounting for over 30% of all cases of missing journalists. These disappearances, often attributed to authoritarian or negligent governments, highlight the urgent need to strengthen the protection of journalists and combat impunity.

THE 6 MOST HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES OF THE LAST 10 YEARS



In total, 28 journalists went missing after 01/01/2015

Sri Lanka

An RSF campaign

RSF and Cartooning for Peace launched an international campaign in support of cartoonist **Prageeth Eknaligoda**, who went missing on 24 January 2010 in Colombo, the capital. Since 2006, 14 journalists have been killed in Sri Lanka, three have disappeared, and dozens have fled the country.



GOVERNMENT-BACKED DISAPPEARANCES: 15 NEW ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES SINCE 2015



45% OF MISSING JOURNALISTS ARE VICTIMS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

"At a time when the number of enforced disappearances continues to rise, RSF is concerned about the active role played by certain authorities in silencing journalists' voices. RSF calls for the universal ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 but only counts 75 ratifications to date."

Antoine Bernard,
Director of Advocacy and Assistance (RSF)

FOUR NEW, ONGOING DISAPPEARANCES IN 2024



Burkina Faso

The fate and whereabouts of **Alain Traoré**, a journalist with the *Omega Media* press group, remain a mystery. The host of the column “Le Défouloir” was abducted from his home on 13 July by individuals claiming to belong to the National Intelligence Agency (ANR). Similar tactics were used in the kidnapping of **Serge Oulon**, who was arrested at his home on 24 June. Four months later, authorities announced that Serge Oulon had been conscripted into the army. News commentators **Adama Bayala** and **Kalifara Séré** were also abducted and conscripted in June. No information on their location or state of health has been released.

Nicaragua

On 12 July, Nicaraguan journalist **Fabiola Tercero Castro** disappeared with her family after her Managua home was raided by seven police officers who seized her work equipment. Although no formal charges had been brought against her, the journalist has been placed under house arrest and was obliged to report to a police station daily.



Russia

On 27 June, Russian occupation forces abducted Ukrainian journalist **Zhanna Kyselova** from her home in Kakhovka, a town in Ukraine’s Kherson region which is partially occupied by Russia. She was editor-in-chief of the local newspaper *Kakhovska Zorya*, which closed after the 24 February 2022 invasion. No information on her disappearance or the location of her detention has been released.

Syria

Hanin Gebran, Damascus correspondent for the *Syria Monitor* news site, has been missing in Syria since 23 June. According to RSF’s information, she was targeted by air force intelligence. Many of the journalists who have disappeared in Syria since 2011 are presumed to be held in prison by Bashar Al-Assad’s regime. The fate and whereabouts of these journalists remain uncertain as the country’s repression of independent voices is systematic and ruthless. One such journalist is an American freelancer who has been missing in Syria for 12 years: **Austin Tice** was taken hostage near Damascus in August 2012, and is presumed still to be held in the country, although the Syrian regime has never confirmed his detention. Syria is ranked second to last (179th) in RSF’s 2024 World Press Freedom Index.

DEFINITIONS



Killed journalist

RSF logs a journalist's death in its press freedom barometer when they are killed on the job or in connection with their status as a journalist.



Detained journalist

RSF distinguishes between three categories for journalists thrown behind bars due to their work:

- **Provisional detention:** any deprivation of freedom for more than 48 hours of a person who has not yet been tried.
- **Imprisonment:** deprivation of a journalist's freedom after a conviction.
- **House arrest:** obliging a journalist to remain in a designated location – often in their home – determined by the authority ordering it, possibly under electronic surveillance, and/or with a requirement to report regularly to the police and/or to remain in the designated place at specific times. It can be imposed as an alternative to imprisonment for those convicted, or as a surveillance measure for those being prosecuted.



Journalist held hostage

RSF considers that a journalist is a hostage from the moment they are deprived of their freedom by a non-state actor who combines this deprivation of liberty with threats to kill or injure the journalist, or who continues to detain them with the aim of coercing a third party to perform or refrain from performing an act as an explicit or implicit condition for the hostage's release, safety or well-being.



Missing journalist

RSF classifies journalists as missing when there is not enough evidence to determine if they were victims of a homicide or abduction and no credible claim of responsibility has been made.

- **Reported missing:** the default status when a journalist or media worker is missing and it is not known if they were taken hostage, are in state custody or were killed, when evidence of death or abduction is non-existent or insufficient, and when no credible claim of responsibility has been made.
- **Enforced disappearance:** under international law, this is characterised by three essential criteria: deprivation of freedom by an official authority (or a group acting in its name, with its support or consent) combined with the refusal either to recognise this deprivation or reveal the fate and whereabouts of the person concerned.



WHAT ARE OUR STATISTICS USED FOR?

Our statistics, updated daily on our website, are used in the annual World Press Freedom Index, and help fuel our legal and political advocacy, and our actions on the ground.

> Updating our barometer in real-time

RSF's [online barometer](#) is constantly updated by our zone managers and correspondents with the names of journalists who have been subject to abuse (killed, detained, held hostage, missing).

> Taking action in crisis zones

RSF has opened [press freedom centres](#) in Ukraine and [Beirut](#), and launched a support project for [Myanmar journalists in Thailand](#) to continue protecting journalists in conflict zones where attacks against press freedom are the most prevalent.

> Creating our World Press Freedom Index

These statistics play an important role in [compiling](#) the World Press Freedom Index. The number of these violations committed in a single country or territory (known as the “abuses score”) represents a third of the “security score” category, one of five indicators used in the Index.

> Fighting impunity

RSF's rigorous methodology gives its data credibility. As our statistics are based on explicit, detailed rules, various institutions recognise and use our data. Our statistics are also regularly used to engage with governments or to fuel legal complaints, such as the complaints RSF brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the crimes committed against journalists in [Gaza](#) by the Israeli army.

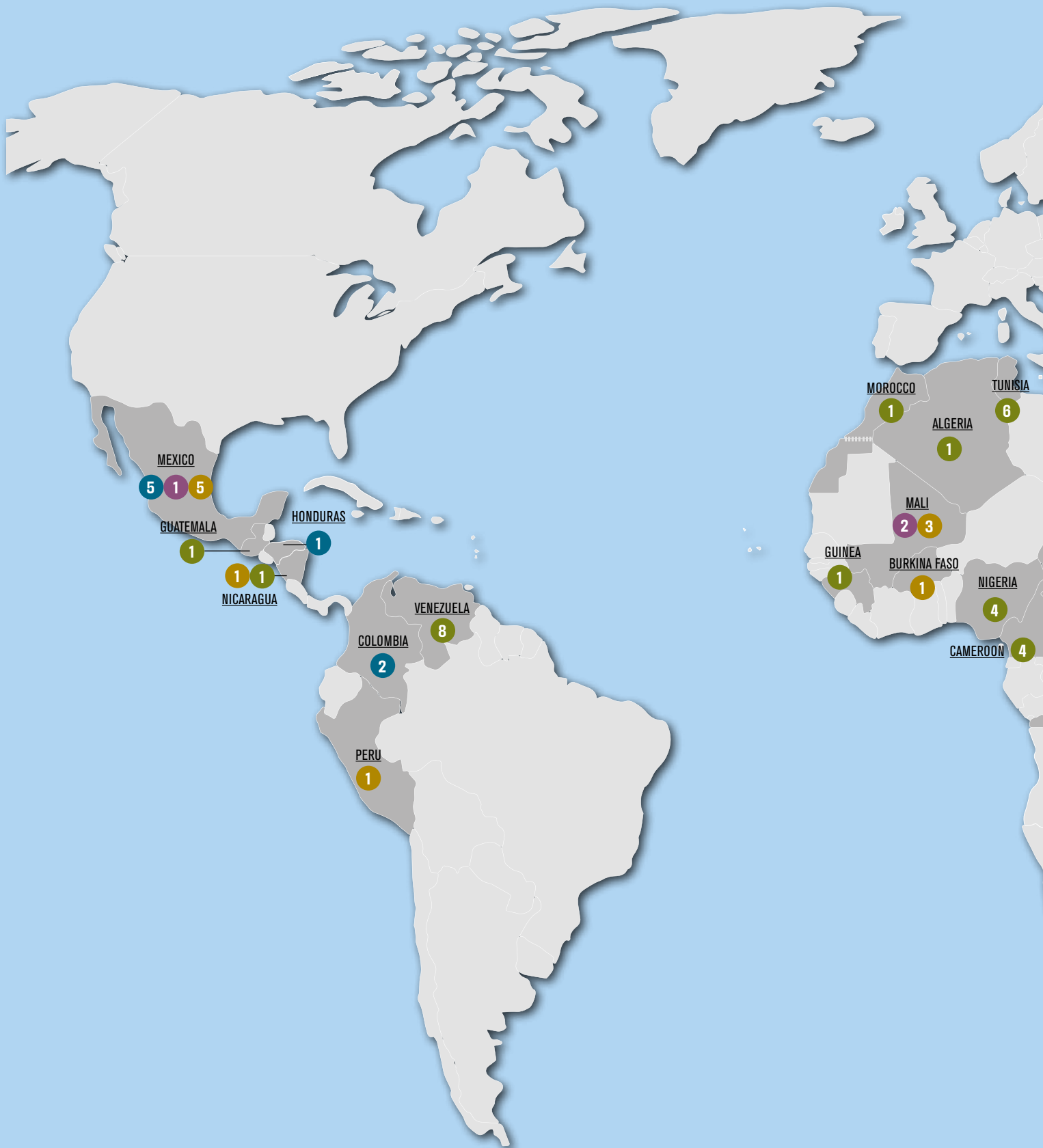
> Paying homage to journalists

Every year, the new names of fallen journalists added to our barometer are engraved on a memorial stone at the [War Reporters' Memorial in Bayeux](#) during the ceremony for the Bayeux Calvados-Normandy Award for war correspondents.



METHODOLOGY

Compiled by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) every year since 1995, the annual roundup of violence and abuses against journalists is based on data collected throughout the year. We gather detailed information that allows us to affirm with certainty or a great deal of confidence that the death, detention or abduction of each journalist was a direct result of their journalistic work. RSF only counts journalists who fall within the scope of its mandate, that is to say, anyone who – by any means of communication and on a regular or professional basis – collects, processes and disseminates news, information and ideas in such a way as to serve the general interest and the public's fundamental rights, all the while respecting the principles of freedom of expression and journalistic ethics. The 2024 round-up figures compiled by RSF include professional journalists, non-professional journalists and media workers. The round-up distinguishes these categories in its breakdowns in order to facilitate comparison with previous years. The figures in this round-up were compiled on 1 December 2024 and don't take into account arrests, releases, deaths or disappearances that took place after that date. The latest figures appear in RSF's [Press Freedom Barometer](#), which is updated on a regular basis.



|| PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS IN 2024 ||



REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF) defends and promotes journalistic freedom, independence and pluralism. Headquartered in Paris, it has consultative status with the UN and UNESCO, 13 international bureaus and sections, and correspondents in over 130 countries.