

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

FOR PRESS FREEDOM



PRESS FREEDOM IN 2005

**Violence still increasing
63 journalists killed,
more than 1,300 physically attacked or threatened**

Reporters Without Borders annual roundup

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In 2005

- 63 journalists and 5 media assistants were killed
- at least 807 journalists were arrested
- 1,308 physically attacked or threatened
- and 1,006 media outlets censored

In 2004

- 53 journalists and 15 media assistants were killed
- at least 907 journalists were arrested
- at least 1,146 physically attacked or threatened
- and 622 media outlets censored

On 1 January 2006

126 journalists
and **70** cyber-dissidents
were in jail around the world

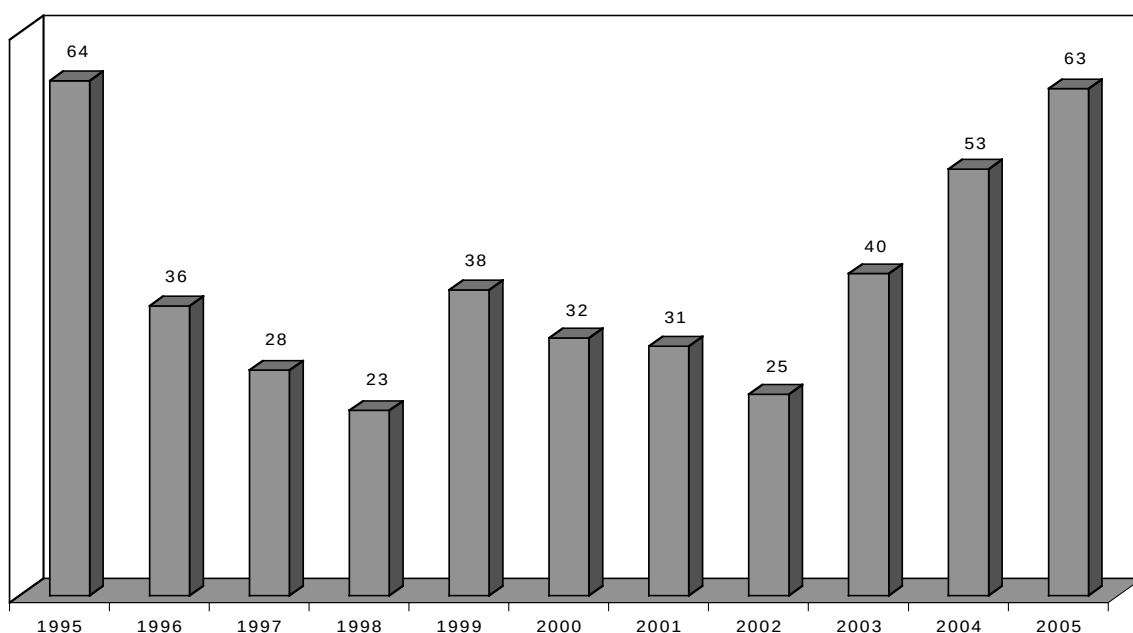
2005	Killed	Arrested	Physically attacked or threatened	Media outlets censored
Africa	5	256	213	86
Americas	7	20	229	10
Asia	17	352	583	745
Europe + ex-Soviet bloc	7	92	179	120
North Africa + Middle East	27	87	104	45
Total	63	807	1,308	1,006
in 2004	53	907	1,146	622

The deadliest year for a decade

At last 63 journalists were killed in 2005 while doing their job or for expressing their opinions, the highest annual toll since 1995 (when 64 were killed, 22 of them in Algeria). Five media assistants (fixers, drivers, translators, technicians, security staff and others) were also killed.

For the third year running, **Iraq** was the world's most dangerous country for the media, with 24 journalists and 5 media assistants killed. 76 journalists and media assistants have been killed there since the start of fighting in March 2003, more than in the 1955-75 Vietnam War. Terrorist strikes and Iraqi guerrilla attacks were the main cause but the US army killed three of them. Iraqi TV producer Wael al-Bakri,

Number of journalists killed every year



30, was shot dead by US troops on 28 June. A US Third Infantry Division spokesman admitted the next day in Baghdad that a US unit was involved in his death and said an enquiry had been

opened. No result has been announced, nor in the other investigated killings.

Journalists killed in 2005	
Afghanistan	2
Azerbaijan	2
Bangladesh	2
Belarus	1
Brazil	1
Colombia	1
Dem. Rep. of Congo	2
Ecuador	1
Haiti	2
Iraq	24
Kazakhstan	1
Kosovo	1
Lebanon	2
Libya	1
Mexico	2
Nepal	2
Pakistan	2
Philippines	7
Russia	2
Sierra Leone	1
Somalia	2
Sri Lanka	2

In the **Philippines** too, journalists were killed while trying to inform the public. Their enemies were no longer armed groups but politicians, businessmen and drug-traffickers ready to silence journalists who exposed their crimes. Despite the conviction during the year of the killer of journalist Edgar Damalerio, murdered in 2002 on the island of Mindanao, impunity remained the rule. Journalists in other Asian countries (**Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka**) were also killed because of their work.

Physical attacks on politicians and journalists rocked **Lebanon** during the year and two leading journalists were killed – Samir Kassir (in June) and Gebran Tueni (December). Kassir was a columnist for the daily *An-Nahar* and Tueni was the paper's publisher. May Chidiac, a well-known TV presenter with the station *LBC*, survived a bomb attack on her car in September but lost a hand and a leg.

Violence against journalists also increased in Africa, with journalists murdered in the **Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Somalia** and their killers (some of them known) going unpunished. The investigation of the December 2004 murder of Gambian journalist Deyda Hydera, the local correspondent of *Agence France-Presse* and Reporters Without Borders, made no progress because the authorities did all they could to prevent those responsible from being identified and to ensure they escaped punishment.

In the Americas, two journalists were killed in **Mexico** for investigating drug smuggling and petrol racketeering.

Several journalists were murdered in **Russia** and **Belarus** in shady circumstances and some apparently because of their work. Official investigations there, often biased and politically-influenced, hardly ever produce results.

Physical attacks and threats keep on growing

More than 1,300 physical attacks and threats were recorded by Reporters Without Borders during the year – more than in the previous one.

These occurred almost daily in **Bangladesh** and **Nepal** and came from all sides – police, government or opposition party activists and members of armed groups. The attackers are very rarely punished and can thus continue to target journalists undeterred.

Journalist Manjur Morshed was seriously injured when he was badly beaten with a bamboo stick in the southern Bangladeshi town of Baufal in August by a pro-government MP he had accused of corruption. Local journalists demonstrated in protest against the attack.

Election campaigns often bring violence against the media and national votes in **Egypt** and **Azerbaijan** saw dozens of physical attacks on journalists reporting on demonstrations and the actual voting.

About 50 journalists were beaten up by police, soldiers or henchmen of local politicians in **Nigeria** and **Peru** and accused of not minding their own business.

Such violence was worse in the provinces and the journalists were mostly punched or hit with sticks.

Other people attack journalists too and the Peruvian ambassador to Spain, during a trip home to Lima in April, physically attacked a radio journalist who wanted to interview him. The right arm of the reporter, Bettina Mendoza, of the station CPN, was injured. The diplomat later apologised.

Prisons still full of journalists

JOURNALISTS IN JAIL

CHINA: 32
CUBA: 24
ETHIOPIA: 17
ERITREA: 13
BURMA: 5

The same countries are still the world's biggest prisons for journalists, whose detention there gets ever longer. On 1 January 2006, 126 journalists and 3 media assistants were being held in 23 countries (for the complete list, see www.rsf.org).

In **China**, journalist and art critic Yu Dongyue has been in prison since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, serving an 18-year sentence for "counter-revolutionary propaganda." He has gone mad as a result of torture.

Cuba is still the world's second-biggest prison for journalists and 20 of the 27 journalists arrested in the spring 2003 crackdown are serving sentences of between 14 and 27 years. Four others

were jailed in summer 2005 and two of them have still to be tried.

In **Burma**, the country's best-known journalist/democrat, Win Tin, entered his 17th year in prison. The ruling generals stubbornly refused to release the 75-year-old former editor of the newspaper *Hanthawathi*.

Libyan writer Abdullah Ali al-Sanussi al-Darrat is the journalist who has been in prison the longest of anyone. He was arrested in 1973, very little is known about him and Libyan officials have never answered repeated requests for information by Reporters Without Borders. It is not known whether he is still alive.

The privately-owned press was abolished in **Eritrea** in autumn 2001 and its former editors and publishers are still in prison. A hunger strike by them in 2002 had no effect. Their place of detention remains unknown and their families are still not allowed to visit them.

The only figure that has fallen in the past year is the number of journalists arrested (807 compared with 907 in 2004). But this is not good enough, because every day an average of two journalists are arrested somewhere in the world just for trying to do their job.

Cases of censorship up by more than half

At least 1,006 cases of censorship were recording in 2005 (622 the previous year). The big rise was mostly due to the much worse situation in **Nepal**, where more than half (567) of all cases worldwide were

recorded. Since the state of emergency declared by King Gyanendra on 1 February, the media has receiving a battering which is getting harsher. This has included a ban on FM radio stations broadcasting news, blocking of websites, seizure of equipment and politically-inspired distribution of government advertising.

In **China**, the “broadcasting Great Wall” had new victims, with *Voice of Tibet*, the *BBC*, *Sound of Hope* and *Radio Free Asia* among the radio stations jammed by the regime with equipment from the French firm Thalès. Media and website editors and publishers get an almost daily list from the government’s propaganda department of topics to avoid.

Censorship continues to rule in **Belarus**, **Kazakhstan** and most of Central Asia and newspapers there are still shut down just for criticising the government. Printers and distributors are often used to exert pressure on independent or opposition publications.

The Internet under surveillance

CYBER-DISSIDENTS IN PRISON

CHINA: 62
VIETNAM: 3
IRAN: 1
SYRIA: 1

The Internet is still tightly controlled by some repressive governments and Reporters Without Borders has drawn up a list of 15 “enemies of the Internet” (Belarus, Burma, China, Cuba, Iran, Libya, the Maldives, Nepal, North Korea, Saudi

Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam).

These are the harshest towards online freedom of expression and censor independent news websites and opposition publications, spy on Internet traffic to silence dissident voices and harass, threaten and sometimes throw in prison Internet users and bloggers who deviate from the government line.

In **Tunisia**, for example, the family of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali controls national access to the Internet and he has built up very effective censorship, with the websites of all opposition publications and many news sites blocked. The regime also dissuades people from using webmail, which is harder to monitor than standard e-mail such as Outlook. The Reporters Without Borders website also cannot be seen inside Tunisia. The authorities imprison Internet users who defy them and pro-democracy lawyer Mohammed Abbou was given a three-and-a-half-year jail sentence in April 2005 for criticising the president online.

The information ministry in **Iran** boasts that it blocks access to hundreds of thousands of websites. The ruling ayatollahs target any kind of sexual content and also independent news sites. Iran has the grim distinction of having arrested and jailed the most bloggers – a score of them were thrown in prison between autumn 2004 and summer 2005. Mojtaba Saminejad, a 23-year-old blogger, has been in jail since February 2005. He was given a two-year sentence in June for insulting the country’s Supreme Guide.