WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX 2014

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS
FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

World Press Freedom index - Methodology

The press freedom index that Reporters Without Borders publishes every year measures the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. It reflects the degree of freedom that journalists, news organizations and netizens enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the authorities to respect and ensure respect for this freedom.

It is based partly on a questionnaire that is sent to our partner organizations (18 freedom of expression NGOs located in all five continents), to our network of 150 correspondents, and to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists.

The 180 countries ranked in this year's index are those for which Reporters Without Borders received completed questionnaires from various sources. Some countries were not included because of a lack of reliable, confirmed data. There has been a major change in the method used to compile the index in 2013, including the use of a new questionnaire. Quantitative questions about the number of violations of different kinds are handled by our staff. They include the number of journalists, media assistants and netizens who were jailed or killed in the connection with their activities, the number of journalists abducted, the number that fled into exile, the number of physical attacks and arrests, and the number of media censored. In the event of a military occupation of one or more territories, any violations by representatives of the occupying force are treated as violations of the right to information in foreign territory and are incorporated into the score of the occupying force's country.

The rest of the questionnaire, which is sent to outside experts and members of the RWB network, concentrates on issues that are hard to quantify such as the degree to which news providers censor themselves, government interference in editorial content, or the transparency of government decision-making. Legislation and its effectiveness are the subject of more detailed questions. Questions have been added or expanded, for example, questions about concentration of media ownership and favouritism in the allocation of subsidies or state advertising. Similarly, discrimination in access to journalism and journalism training is also included.

A score and a position are assigned to each country in the final ranking. They are complementary indicators that together assess the state of press freedom.

In order to make the index more informative and make it easier to compare different years, scores will henceforth range from 0 to 100, with 0 being the best possible score and 100 the worst. The index does not look at human rights violations in general, just violations of freedom of information.

The index should in no way be taken as an indication of the quality of the media in the countries concerned.

How we score countries

The questions consider six general criteria. Using a system of weighting for each possible response, countries are given a score of between 0 and 100 for each of the six overall criteria. These scores are then used as indicators in calculating each country's final score.

- **Pluralism** [indicator Plu]
  Measures the degree to which opinions are represented in the media
- **Media independance** [indicator Ind]
  Measures the degree to which the media are able to function independently of theauthorities
- **Environment and self-censorship** [indicator EnA]
  Analyses the environment in which journalists work
- **Legislative framework** [indicator CaL]
  Analyses the quality of the legislative framework and measures its effectiveness
- **Transparency** [indicator Tra]
  Measures the transparency of the institutions and procedures that affect the productionof news and information
- **Infrastructure** [indicateur Inf]
  Measures the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news andinformation

Reporters Without Borders meanwhile calculates a score of between 0 and 100 reflecting the level of violence against journalists during the period considered. The score is based on the monitoring carried out by RWB's own staff.

The overall score, the one that determines a country's ranking, is calculated on the basis of these seven scores in a three-step process. A first score is calculated on the basis of the questionnaire alone, using the following weighting:

$$SCOA = \frac{1}{3}.\ Plu + \frac{1}{6}.\ (Ind + EnA + CaL) + \frac{1}{12}.(Tra + Inf)$$

A second score uses the first score but incorporates the violence score, giving it a weight of 20%:

$$SCOB = \frac{1}{5}.\ Exa + \frac{4}{15}.\ Plu + \frac{2}{15}.\ (Ind + EnA + CaL) + \frac{1}{15}.\ (Tra + Inf)$$

The final score is determined as follows:

$$ScoreFinal = max(SCOA, SCOB)$$

The violence score is calculated according to the following formula:

$$ScoreExa = 10 * log(90 * Mor + Coeff_i * Emp_i + 10 * Enl + 5 * Med + 3 * Exi + Arr + Agr + noteHT)$$ [1]

The longer a journalist, netizen or media assistant is imprisoned, the more this imprisonment penalizes the country concerned. The weighting coefficient $\boldsymbol{Coeff_i}$ has the following values, based on the length of imprisonment in years $\boldsymbol{i}$:

i	1-	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10+
$Coeff_i$	10	20	35	60	80	85	87	88	89	89,5	$lim\ Coeff_i = 90$

[1] Mor : number of dead, Emp_i : number of imprisoned since years, Enl : number of kidnapped, Med : number of media attacked and ransacked, Exi : number who have fled the country, Arr : number of arrests, Agr : number of physical attacks, $noteHT$: score on respect for freedom of information in foreign territory

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Biggest rises and falls in the 2014 World Press Freedom Index

The 2014 World Press Freedom Index spotlights the negative impact of conflicts on freedom of information and its protagonists. The ranking of some countries has also been affected by a tendency to interpret national security needs in an overly broad and abusive manner to the detriment of the right to inform and be informed. This trend constitutes a growing threat worldwide and is even endangering freedom of information in countries regarded as democracies.

Finland tops the index for the fourth year running, closely followed by Netherlands and Norway, like last year. At the other end of the index, the last three positions are again held by Turkmenistan, North Korea and Eritrea, three countries where freedom of information is non-existent. Despite occasional turbulence in the past year, these countries continue to be news and information black holes and living hells for the journalists who inhabit them.

This year's index covers 180 countries, one more than last year. The new entry, Belize, has been assigned an enviable position (29th). Cases of violence against journalists are rare in Belize but there were some problems: defamation suits involving demands for large amounts in damages, national security restrictions on implementation of the Freedom of Information Act and sometimes unfair management of broadcast frequencies.

FALLS DUE TO ARMED CONFLICTS

The 2014 index underscores the negative correlation between freedom of information and conflicts, both open conflicts and undeclared ones. In an unstable environment, the media become strategic goals and targets for groups or individuals whose attempts to control news and information violate the guarantees enshrined in international law, in particular, article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Protocols Additional 1 and 2 to the Geneva Conventions.

Syria (unchanged at 177th) has been an extreme example of this since March 2011. Now one of the countries where freedom of information and its actors are most in danger, it rubs shoulders with the bottom three. The Syrian crisis has also had dramatic repercussions throughout the region, reinforcing media polarization in Lebanon (106th, -4), encouraging the Jordanian authorities to tighten their grip, and accelerating the spiral of violence in Iraq (153rd, -2), where tension between Shiites and Sunnis is growing.

In Iran (173rd, +2), one of the Middle East's key countries, there has so far been no implementation of the promises to improve freedom of information that the new president, Hassan Rouhani, made. Coverage of the Syrian tragedy in both the official Iranian press and on the blogosphere is closely watched by the regime, which cracks down on any criticism of its foreign policy.

This negative correlation is also seen in the big falls registered by Mali (122nd, -22) and Central African Republic (109th, -34). The open or internecine warfare destabilizing Democratic Republic of Congo (151st, -8) and the activities of guerrillas and terrorist groups in Somalia (176th, unchanged) and Nigeria (112th, +4) prevented any significant improvement in their ranking.

The formation of a government led by Mohamed Morsi in Egypt (159th, unchanged) in the summer 2012 was accompanied by an increase in abuses against journalists and all-out efforts to bring the media under the Muslim Brotherhood's control. That was brought to a complete halt by the army's return to power a year later. The ensuing persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood affected not only Egyptian journalists but also their Turkish, Palestinian and Syrian colleagues. In the Persian Gulf, especially the United Arab Emirates (118th, -3), bloggers and journalists were arrested and tried on charges of links to the Brotherhood.

The upsurge in violence against journalists finally elicited a response from the international community – in terms of resolutions, at least. The United Nations General Assembly adopted its first-ever resolution on the safety of journalists by consensus on 26 November. It included a call for 2 November to be celebrated as International Day to End Impunity for crimes of violence against journalists.

It was unquestionably a step in the right direction, complementing Resolution 1738 condemning attacks on journalists in armed conflicts, which the Security Council adopted in December 2006 on Reporters Without Borders' initiative, and the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and Impunity, adopted in April 2012. Reporters Without Borders now wants the UN to create a group of independent experts with the task of monitoring respect by member states for their obligations, in particular, their obligation to protect journalists, to investigate all cases of violence against them, and bring those responsible to justice.

INFORMATION SACRIFICED TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

Countries that pride themselves on being democracies and respecting the rule of law have not set an example, far from it. Freedom of information is too often sacrificed to an overly broad and abusive interpretation of national security needs, marking a disturbing retreat from democratic practices. Investigative journalism often suffers as a result.

This has been the case in the United States (46th), which fell 13 places, one of the most significant declines, amid increased efforts to track down whistleblowers and the sources of leaks. The trial and conviction of Private Bradley Manning and the pursuit of NSA analyst Edward Snowden were warnings to all those thinking of assisting in the disclosure of sensitive information that would clearly be in the public interest.

US journalists were stunned by the Department of Justice's seizure of *Associated Press* phone records without warning in order to identify the source of a CIA leak. It served as a reminder of the urgent need for a "shield law" to protect the confidentiality of journalists' sources at the federal level. The revival of the legislative process is little consolation for James Risen of *The New York Times*, who is subject to a court order to testify against a former CIA employee accused of leaking classified information. And less still for Barrett Brown, a young freelance journalist facing 105 years in prison in connection with the posting of information that hackers obtained from Statfor, a private intelligence company with close ties to the federal government.

The United Kingdom (33rd, -3) distinguished itself in the war on terror by the disgraceful pressure it put on *The Guardian* newspaper and by its detention of David Miranda, journalist Glenn Greenwald's partner and assistant, for nine hours. Both the US and UK authorities seem obsessed with hunting down whistleblowers instead of adopting legislation to rein in abusive surveillance practices that negate privacy, a democratic value cherished in both countries.

The "special intelligence protection bill" that the National Diet in Japan (59th, - 5) adopted in late 2013 would reduce government transparency on such key national issues as nuclear power and relations with the United States, now enshrined as taboos. Investigative journalism, public interest and the confidentiality of journalists' sources are all being sacrificed by legislators bent on ensuring that their country's image is spared embarrassing revelations.

The "war on terror" is also being exploited by governments that are quick to treat journalists as "threats to national security." Dozens of journalists have been jailed on this pretext in Turkey (154th), especially for covering the Kurdish issue. In Morocco, unchanged in 136th position, the authorities readily confused journalism with terrorism since the case of online newspaper editor Ali Anouzla. In Israel (96th, +17), freedom of information is often sacrificed to purported security requirements.

In India's northern Kashmir region, mobile Internet and communications are suspended in response to any unrest. In the north of Sri Lanka (165th, -2), the army reigns supreme, tolerating no challenge to the official vision of the "pacification" process in Tamil separatism's former strongholds. Alarmed by the Arab Spring turmoil, authoritarian regimes in the Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia have stepped up media censorship and surveillance to head off any "attempt at destabilization."

PRIVATIZATION OF VIOLENCE

Non-state groups constitute the main source of physical danger for journalists in a number of countries. The militias fomenting chaos in the new Libya (137th, -5) and Yemeni armed groups linked to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula are leading examples of this privatization of violence. Al-Shabaab in Somalia (176th, unchanged) and the M23 movement in Democratic Republic of Congo (151st, -8) both regard journalists as enemies. Jihadi groups such as Jabhat Al-Nosra and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) use violence against news providers as part of their drive to control the regions they "liberate."

Organized crime is a fearsome predator for journalists in many parts of the world, especially Honduras (129th, -1), Guatemala (125th, -29), Brazil (111th, -2) and Paraguay (105th, -13), but also Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and the Balkans. In organized crime's shadow, it is hard if not impossible to refrain from self-censorship on such sensitive subjects as drug-trafficking, corruption and criminal penetration of the state apparatus. The passivity or indifference often shown by authorities towards crimes of violence against the media, or sometimes even their connivance or direct involvement, reinforces the impunity enjoyed by those responsible and fuels the cycle of violence against news providers.

The annual "indicator" of the global level of media freedom, which Reporters Without Borders published for the first time 12 months ago, along with the 2013 index, shows a slight increase in violations of the right to inform and be informed. The global indicator has gone from 3395 a year ago to 3456 now, an increase of 61 points or 1.8 per cent, meaning a small decline in respect for freedom of information worldwide.

While 2013 was less deadly for journalists than 2012, a year of unprecedented carnage, it saw a rise in physical attacks and threats against media personnel. The indicator's rise was due not only to this increase in violence but also to variations in the other measures used to compile the index:

- Pluralism, meaning the representation of different views in the media
- Independence of the media vis-à-vis political, economic, religious and military centres of power
- Quality of the legislation governing the media
- Transparency of the bodies regulating the media
- Performance of the infrastructure supporting the media
- Overall climate for freedom of information

The indicator is a tool for measuring overall performance.
The breakdown of the indicator's scores by region shows a worsening in all continents except Asia, where it was unchanged. Like last year, the European Union and Balkans obtained the best score (17.6), followed by the Americas (30.3), Africa (35.6), Asia-Pacific (42.2), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (45.5) and finally Middle East and North Africa (48.7).

Annual media freedom indicator: 3456 in 2014
(3395 in 2013)
• European Union and Balkans: 17.6 (17.5)
• Americas: 30.3 (30.0)
• Africa: 35.6 (34.3)
• Asia-Pacific: 42.2 (42.2)
• Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 45.5 (45.3)
• Middle East and North Africa: 48.7 (48.5)

NOTEWORTHY FALLS

In **the Americas**, the 13-place fall registered by the United States (46th, -13) was more than doubled by Guatemala (125th, -29), which saw a two-fold increase in the number of physical attacks on journalists, including four murders, and was equalled by Paraguay (105th, -13), where the pressure on journalists to censor themselves keeps on mounting. Paraguay had already plummeted last year, following a coup in June 2012, three years after a coup sent Honduras (129th, -1) to the level where it remains in the current post-election chaos.

In **Africa**, the two most noteworthy falls, by Mali and Central African Republic, were due to armed conflicts mentioned above. In Burundi, where a presidential election is imminent, the senate passed a law restricting the freedom of journalists. In Kenya (90th, -18), the government's much criticized authoritarian response to the media's coverage of the Westgate Mall attacks was compounded by dangerous parliamentary initiatives, above all a law adopted at the end of 2013 creating a special court to judge audiovisual content.

In **Guinea** (102nd, -15), journalists found it dangerous and difficult to work during elections marked by many protests. Several journalists were attacked or injured by over-excited demonstrators or by members of the security forces dispersing the protests. Zambia (93rd, -20), which had progressed in recent years, was dragged down by measures to censor and block news websites. Finally, rulers who have clung to power for years and fear change got tougher with the media, resulting in abusive prosecutions in Chad (139th, -17) and several closures in Cameroon (131st, -10).

The 13-place fall by **Kuwait** (91st) reflects the tougher measures being taken with the media including the adoption of a law that allows the authorities to fine journalists up to 300,000 dinars (1 million dollars) for criticizing the emir or the crown prince, or misrepresenting what they say, and impose sentences of up to 10 years in prison on journalists who insult God, the Prophets of Islam, or the Prophet Mohamed's wives or companions.

These spectacular changes should not make us forget the tragic immobility at the bottom of the index where **Vietnam** (173rd, -1), **Uzbekistan** (166th, -1) and **Saudi Arabia** (164th, unchanged), to name but three, continue to tighten their grip on news and information and adapt their methods of radical censorship to the digital era. The cruellest punishments await those of their citizens who have the courage to resist. In **Kazakhstan** (161st, unchanged) and **Azerbaijan** (160th, -3), media pluralism is in the process of succumbing to the increasingly repressive tendencies of rulers clinging to power.

NOTEWORTHY RISES

Violence against journalists, direct censorship and misuse of judicial proceedings are on the decline in **Panama** (87th, +25), **Dominican Republic** (68th, +13), **Bolivia** (94th, +16) and **Ecuador** (94th, +25), although in Ecuador the level of media polarization is still high and often detrimental to public debate.

The past year was marked by laudable legislative developments in some countries such as **South Africa** (42nd, +11), where the president refused to sign a law that would have endangered investigative journalism.

In **Georgia** (84th, +17), the 2013 presidential election was less tense that the previous year's parliamentary elections, which were marked by physical attacks and hate campaigns against journalists. Thanks to political cohabitation and then a change of government through the polls, Georgia has recovered some of the terrain lost in recent years as the Saakashvili administration's reforming zeal ran out of steam. Media polarization will nonetheless continue to be a challenge in the coming years.

Israel's 17-place rise must be offset against its 20-place fall in the 2013 index as a result of Operation "Pillar of Defence" in November 2012, when two Palestinian journalists were killed, and the many raids it carried out against Palestinian media. Security needs continue to be used as an excuse to limit freedom of information. The Israeli media are able to be outspoken but media located in "Israeli territory" must comply with prior military censorship and gag orders. Investigative reporting involving national security is not welcome.
Abusive treatment of Palestinian and foreign journalists by the Israel Defence Forces is common, especially during the weekly demonstrations at the Separation Wall. Many photojournalists were deliberately targeted when leaving the demonstrations in November 2013. On 4 December, an Israeli high court endorsed the seizure of equipment from *Wattan TV* during an IDF raid in February 2012.

Timor-Leste (77th) rose 14 places in the wake of a historic journalists' congress in Dili on 25-27 October

at which a code of professional conduct and the creation of a seven-member Press Council were approved. But continuing vigilance is needed. The media law currently before parliament is the next challenge for media freedom in Timor-Leste.

REGIONAL MODELS IN DECLINE?

The movements of some countries in the index, which are indicative of their approach to freedom of information, has an impact not only on their own population but also on neighbouring countries because of their regional importance and influence and the fact that they are regarded – rightly or not – as models to be watched or followed. South Africa's 11-place rise to 42nd position contrasts with the performance of other countries regarded as regional models, which have either shown no improvement or are in decline.

The European Union's members are becoming more dispersed in the index, a development accelerated by the effects of the economic crisis and outbreaks of populism. Greece (99th, -14) and Hungary (64th, -7) are the most notable examples. In Greece, journalists are often the victims of physical attacks by members of Golden Dawn, the neo-Nazi party that entered parliament in June 2012. The government's actions have also contributed to the fall. By closing the state broadcaster under pressure from the Troika (the European Commission, European Central Bank and IMF), Prime Minister Antonis Samaras seems to be cutting back on democracy to save money.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government gives the impression of having abandoned EU values in its zeal for draconian reforms. As a direct result of the European model's erosion, the EU is finding it harder to get membership candidates to improve their position in the index. Membership negotiations are no longer necessarily accompanied by efforts to increase respect for civil liberties. Macedonia (123rd), for example, has never been so low in the index.
The western hemisphere's giants – United States (46th, -13) and Brazil (111th, -2) – have not set an example either. Since 9/11, the former has been torn by the conflict between national security imperatives and respect for the principles of the First Amendment. Thanks to organized crime's impact, the latter is one of the continent's deadliest countries for the media, while its media pluralism is handicapped by the phenomenon of powerful politicians who are also big businessmen and media owners, with the result that Brazil has been dubbed "the country of 30 Berlusconis."

Russia (148th) might have been lower in the index had it not been for the stubbornness and resistance shown by its civil society. But the authorities keep on intensifying the crackdown begun when Vladimir Putin returned to the Kremlin in 2012 and are exporting their model throughout the former Soviet Union. From Ukraine (127th, unchanged) and Azerbaijan (160th, -3) to Central Asia, Russia's repressive legislation and communications surveillance methods are happily copied. Moscow also uses UN bodies and regional alliances such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in its efforts to undermine international standards on freedom of information.

Despite its regional aspirations, Turkey (154th) registered no improvement and continues to be one of the world's biggest prisons for journalists. The Gezi Park revolt highlighted the repressive methods used by the security forces, the increase in self-censorship and the dangers of the prime minister's populist discourse. In view of the upcoming elections and the unpredictability of the peace process with the Kurdish separatists, 2014 is likely to be a decisive year for the future of civil liberties in Turkey.

Chine (175th, -1) failed to improve its ranking because, despite having an astonishing vital and increasingly militant blogosphere, it continues to censor and jail dissident bloggers and journalists. This new power is also using its economic might to extend its influence over the media in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, compromising their independence.

India (140th, +1) experienced an unprecedented wave of violence against journalists, with eight killed in 2013. They are targeted by both state and non-state actors. Almost no region is spared but Kashmir and Chhattisgarh continue to be the only two where violence and censorship are endemic. Those responsible for threats and physical violence against journalists, who are often abandoned by the judicial system and forced to censor themselves, include police and security forces as well as criminal groups, demonstrators and political party supporters.

The substantial reforms in Burma, which could become a regional model for a transition to democracy, were reflected in a big leap in the 2013 index. As the reform process begins to flag, the "Burmese model" has yet to prove itself.

Africa

WARS AND TERRORIST THREATS WEAKEN MEDIA IN WEST AFRICA

When wars assume new forms, a commitment to serve freedom of information means taking risks that are hard to calculate. The negative correlation between conflicts and freedom of information was highlighted by the way Mali and Central African Republic plunged in the index.

Control of the media has always been a strategic goal in conflicts. When soldiers led by Capt. Amadou Sanogo staged a coup d'état in the Malian capital of Bamako in March 2012, their first move was to take over the national radio and TV broadcaster.

Thanks to new technology, traditional media such as radio stations and newspapers are no longer the only news outlets, and the number and type of news and information providers operating on the ground has increased. Conflicts in Africa are also now assuming many different forms. No longer limited to battles between armies, they may take the form of lower-level or asymmetric conflicts pitting armed groups against more or less proper armies or against other armed groups. At the same time, the terrorist threat is increased by the way some groups with a political agenda use armed conflict for economic gain, as seen in the internecine wars for the control of mineral deposits in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

These problems impact the flow of news and information. Because of the dangers, journalists find it increasingly difficult to access the terrain of military operations. During France's Operation Serval in Mali, some reporters chose to travel with military convoys going to the front line in order not to leave the French military as the only source of information about this war. But this method nonetheless resulted in very partial coverage, from a single viewpoint, of events on the ground.

Armed conflict's new protagonists, especially terrorist groups, do not feel bound by the Geneva Conventions, which protect civilians, including journalists, during armed conflict. On the contrary, journalists become high-value targets in an "information war".

Somalia's Islamist militia Al-Shabaab, for example, has always targeted journalists as unwanted witnesses of its terrorist methods. With seven journalists killed in 2013, Somalia is Africa's deadliest country for media personnel. No fewer than 18 were killed in terrorist attacks in 2012. The threat in Mogadishu is so great that some media went so far as to let their journalists live at their workplace to avoid dangerous commutes. Is it not a succesful terror campaign when journalists can no longer move about freely in search of information?

Another characteristic of these guerrilla wars is that they do not end. Ceasefires are not signed or not respected. Law and order break down in a more or less permanent manner leaving varied groups to alternate in power. Inasmuch as the conflict situation is not resolved, control of the media continues to be a strategic goal to the detriment of freedom of information.

After taking control of parts of Nord-Kivu, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in the winter of 2012, the M23 armed group insisted on checking newspapers prior to distribution, and threatened radio station managers who broadcast reports that reflected badly on M23.

Constant instability makes for weaker governments, ones that easily feel threatened. The situation in Central African Republic in November was a good example. The former rebel politicians tried to normalize the situation as the coalition that brought them to power, Seleka, was refusing to disarm and so the supporters of François Bozizé, the ousted president, were taking up arms. In Bangui, a general heading the government's political police personally interrogated and threatened a journalist just for raising the possibility of a cabinet reshuffle.

This persecution is nonetheless also indicative of the immense power that journalists still wield as watchdogs. They make it possible for the population to see and hear, and they make sense out of scraps of information, fashioning it into something intelligible to all and thereby maintaining their importance, all the more so in time of war.

DESCENT INTO HELL CONTINUES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The levels of poverty and authoritarianism are higher in the Horn of Africa than anywhere else in the continent. Civil liberties are collateral victims.

Post-Zenawi Ethiopia - a missed chance to liberalize

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's death in August 2012 and his replacement by Hailemariam Desalegn raised hopes of political and social reforms that would benefit freedom of information. Sadly, these hopes

have been dashed. The repressive anti-terrorism law adopted in 2009 is a threat that continues to hang over journalists, forcing them to censor themselves. Media that dare to violate the code of silence, especially as regards government corruption, are systematically intimidated.

Five journalists are currently detained in Kality prison on the outskirts of Addis Ababa. Two of them, Woubeshet Taye, the deputy editor of the Amharic-language weekly *Awramba Times*, and Reyot Alemu, a columnist with the national weekly *Fitih*, have been held for two and a half years, since their arrest in June 2011 on terrorism charges. There is no sign of any loosening of the vice that grips the Ethiopian media and the regime is unlikely to tolerate criticism before the elections in 2015.

Djibouti - unable to hear the voice of those without a voice

Djibouti is a highly strategic regional crossroads. Because of its economic and geopolitical advantages, it is easy to turn a blind eye to the dictatorial methods used by Ismail Omar Guelleh, who has ruled since 1999. Under Guelleh, Djibouti has steadily cut itself off from the outside world and suppressed criticism. The list of journalists who have been jailed and tortured gets longer and longer. Releases are only ever provisional. The journalist and Guelleh opponent Daher Ahmed Farah is a case in point. He has been jailed five times and arrested a dozen times since returning to Djibouti in January 2013.

The concept of independent media is completely alien to Djibouti. The only national broadcaster, *Radio-Télévision Djibouti*, is the government's mouthpiece. The few opposition newspapers have disappeared over the years. There is an independent radio station based in Europe – *La Voix de Djibouti*. Two of its journalists have been jailed in the past 12 months.

Eritrea – Africa's biggest prison for journalists

Ever since President Issayas Afeworki closed down all the privately-owned media and jailed 11 journalists in 2001, Eritrea has been Africa's biggest prison for the media. A total of 28 journalists are currently detained.

There are no longer any privately-owned media, and the state media are subject to such close surveillance that they have to conceal entire swathes of contemporary history such as the Arab Spring. Accessing reliable information is impossible in the absence of satellite and Internet connections. A few independent radio stations, such as *Radio Erena*, manage to broadcast from abroad.

Somalia - danger and authoritarianism

Those who had seen some improvement in Somalia were quickly disabused. Journalists still trying to provide objective news coverage are targeted by both terrorists and security-driven government officials. In 2013, seven journalists were the victims of terrorist attacks blamed with varying degrees of certainty on the Islamist militia Al-Shabaab. In November, Al-Shabaab deprived an entire region of television by seizing satellite dishes on the grounds they carried images that did not respect Islam. Information is seen as threat.

Unfortunately, the Somali government does not help. On the interior minister's orders, police evicted *Radio Shabelle*, winner of the 2010 Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize, from its building and seized its equipment in October 2012 after a series of reports criticizing the upsurge in violence in Mogadishu. It was a double blow because the station also used the building to house its journalists, for whom moving about the city is very dangerous. When the equipment was returned a few weeks later, it was so badly damaged as to be unusable. Not that the station is authorized to broadcast anyway, because the communication ministry refuses to give it a permit.

CONTINUING DECLINE IN CENTRAL AFRICA

In 2013, the situation of freedom of information continued to decline in Central Africa, a region extending from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes.

A respite seems to be taking hold in the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo even if the situation is still tense for the media. But Central African Republic is still in the grip of fighting of unpredictable consequences. President Idriss Déby's Chad is cracking down on journalists, the climate for the media is getting tougher in Cameroon, Burundi has adopted disturbing media legislation and Equatorial Guinea continues to be a black hole for news and information.

The situation in Equatorial Guinea, Africa's only Spanish-speaking country, is perhaps the most extreme. No media freedom violation was reported because of the complete absence of independent media. Journalists have to censor themselves or flee abroad. Freedom of information is non-existent.

The armed conflict in Central African Republic led to the complete disbanding of a weakened and discredited media network. By taking sides in the conflict, the print media helped to fuel tension instead of providing reliable news and information.

Chad is rightly regarded as an authoritarian country. Its ruler of the past 23 years got even tougher in 2013, jailing three journalists on trumped-up charges for several months. Although finally released, they have not been able to go back to independent journalism. One has kept a low profile, another has become a government ally and the third has fled abroad. It was a victory for state intimidation, which helps to ensure that the country is deprived of media watchdogs.

Security grounds are used when needed to defend increased control over the media or the repressive status quo. In Cameroon, for example, the National Communication Council is trying to penalize coverage of the government's cooperation with Nigeria in combatting Boko Haram. In Chad, a newspaper editor was accused of "inciting a revolt" for reporting discontent within the army. The armed conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has been paralyzing the rest of the country for years with the result that, while media law reform is often described as a government priority, it is never actually addressed.

Defamation laws are used to keep corruption under wraps. In eastern DRC, Nicaise Kibel'oka, the editor of the bimonthly *Les Coulisses*, has been the target of judicial harassment for the past year over an article about customs fraud. His trial has been postponed seven times since June 2013 and the judicial proceedings have been accompanied by many irregularities. In Angola, the journalist Rafael Marques de Morais has been arrested and questioned several times in connection with his book *Diamantes de Sangue: Corrupção e Tortura em Angola*, which looks at the dark side of his country's diamond mining.

Some countries are working actively to make their legislation much more repressive. Burundi is an example. Despite civil society's protests, it approved a law in April 2013 that constitutes a grave attack on media freedom and violates all international standards. The law has a long list of vaguely defined subjects which, if addressed by a journalist, could lead to imprisonment. Neither proportionality of penalties, nor the status of journalists nor respect for the confidentiality of their sources is guaranteed. The law is all the more disturbing for being part of a legislative package that would also restrict freedom of association and political expression. Western governments do not however seem very bothered by Burundi's growing authoritarianism.

Is Africa's strategic heart doomed to sink further, with its media increasingly unable or prevented from acting as the independent watchdogs of regimes that seek more and more control?

Reporting in Nord-Kivu

Reporting in Nord-Kivu has become a daily battle. Whether governed by the M23 armed rebels or the Congolese authorities, the region's journalists are subjected to constant pressure and harassment. M23 distinguished itself by imposing total censorship, insisting on seeing newspaper issues before distribution. Six news outlets were ransacked or closed and at least seven journalists were injured or threatened when M23 was in control.

The Congolese authorities are complicit in threats against journalists in the territories they control. They also tolerate arbitrary arrests and even abductions, such as the kidnapping of a journalist who was found tied up at a roadside in Beni in October 2013. In a country with a flawed judicial system, such crimes go unpunished. The result is self-censorship, while dozens of journalists have fled to other parts of the country in search of refuge. Some continue their courageous work, but for how much longer?

Middle East and North Africa

SYRIAN CRISIS IMPACTS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN REGION

Already the world's most dangerous country for journalists, Syria saw a further decline in the security situation in 2013 as the conflict became more complex. Nearly 130 news and information providers have been killed since the conflict began in March 2011. They are under attack from both sides: on the one hand by Bashar Al-Assad's regular army, which continues to arrest and kill those who document the conflict; and on the other by armed Islamist groups in the so-called "liberated" areas in the north, above all by Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS).

Since the spring of 2013, these Jihadi groups have been abducting journalists and installing legal committees (*hay'at shar'iya*) that dispense arbitrary justice. The security forces operated by the Democratic and Union Party (PYD), the dominant political group in the Kurdish regions, pose an additional obstacle to freedom of information. Under threat from all sides, Syrian news providers are fleeing the country in large numbers.

In Lebanon, where the media serve as the propaganda outlets of businessmen and politicians, the Syrian conflict has consolidated the existing fault line between media allied with "8 March" (the mainly Shiite movement supported by Tehran and Damascus) and media allied with "14 March" (the mainly Sunni coalition supported by Saudi Arabia against Damascus). This polarization between media that support and oppose the Syrian government has reinforced Lebanon's social and political polarization.

In Jordan, the Arab Spring and the Syrian conflict have led the authorities to tighten their grip on the media and, in particular, the Internet, despite an outcry from civil society. Access to around 300 news websites was blocked within Jordan in June 2013 under a new media law that drastically restricts online freedom of information.

Since 2012, Iraq has been sinking into a new cycle of violence that is an aftereffect of the chaos and civil war following the US-led intervention of 2003. Religious tension between Sunnis and Shiites is being exacerbated by the Syrian crisis and, like the constant obstructiveness of the authorities and security forces, is having a negative impact on the safety of journalists and the independence of the media. In late 2013, for example, ISIS attacked the headquarters of *Salaheddin TV* in the northern city of Tikrit, killing five of its journalists.

Iran, a major regional actor, is playing a key role in the Syrian conflict. The Iranian authorities continue to control news coverage strictly, especially when it concerns its ally, the Assad regime, the Revolutionary Guard presence in Syria and Iran's financial aid. Any coverage of these subjects is regarded as "endangering national security." Reporting on the nuclear issue, human rights and prisoners of conscience is also censored.

At the end of 2013, Iran continued to be one of the world's biggest prisons for media personnel, with 50 journalists and netizens detained. A few prisoners of conscience were released, but President Hassan Rouhani has not kept his campaign promises to "release all political prisoners" and bring about a change "in favour of free speech and media freedom."

Syria

According to the tally kept by Reporters Without Borders:
- Nearly 130 news providers (including 25 professional journalists) were killed in connection with their work from March 2011 to December 2013. Seven of the professional journalists were foreign.
- At least 120 Syrian news providers fled abroad during the same period.

At the end of 2013:
- Around 20 Syrian news providers were being held by the Assad regime.
- 19 foreign journalists were detained, held hostage or missing.
- At least 20 Syrian news providers were being held hostage by Islamist armed groups.

NON-STATE GROUPS WITH NO LEGITIMACY IMPOSE REIGN OF FEAR

Non-state groups are the main threat to news providers and a source of danger for everyone in several countries in the region. The Islamist armed groups responsible for threats and kidnappings in Syria since the spring of 2013 count among the latest predators of freedom of information. In Iraq, journalists are targeted by armed militias often linked to organizations that are both political and religious in nature. After operating solely in Syria, ISIS began carrying out attacks on the media in Iraq in late 2013.

In Libya, freedom of information is under threat from the violence that continues to rock the country. Working as journalist is still very arduous nearly three years after the February 2011 uprising against the Gaddafi regime, which used strict media control to hold on to power for more than four decades. The enthusiasm generated by the Libyan "media spring" is running out of steam.

Ruled by a provisional government, today's "free" Libya is on the verge of anarchy with the reign of armed militias replacing the rule of law. This has had a big impact on journalists. As a result of repeated arrests, intimidation, arbitrary detention and even torture, they are censoring themselves again. All the militias have been guilty of abuses against journalists including those created summarily, those legitimized by the government – such as the Libya Shield Force, placed under the defence ministry's nominal authority – and well-known militias such as Al-Qa'qa'a.

Yemen has enjoyed more freedom of expression since Abd Rab Mansour Hadi took over from Ali Abdullah Saleh as president in February 2012 but a range of armed groups – including those linked to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the Houthi rebellion in the north, the secessionist movement in the south, and conservative clerics – have been responsible for an upsurge in threats and violence against the media.

Double penalty for Iraqi journalists

Armed groups have no compunction about killing media personnel in Iraq. Four TV journalists were gunned down in the northern city of Mosul in the space of three months in late 2013. Two cameramen employed by local stations, Alaa Edward Boutros of *Nineveh Al-Ghad* and Bashar Abdulqader Najm al-Nouaymi of *Al-Mosuliya*, were shot near their homes, the former in late November and the latter in late October. And two *Al-Sharqiya* journalists, reporter Mohamed Karim Al-Badrani and cameraman Mohamed Al-Ghanem, were gunned down while out reporting in central Mosul in early October. Nawras al Nouaymi, a young *Al-Mosuliya TV* presenter, was shot near her Mosul home a month later. Impunity reigns. No one has been arrested for these murders. Instead of doing what is necessary to protect journalists, the authorities compound their problems by prosecuting them in connection with their reporting.

The political parties also play a role, as most Yemeni media are the mouthpieces of parties, and many journalists are the victims of mistrust or even hostility from the security forces.

The Freedom Foundation, a Yemeni NGO that monitors the situation of the media, reported a total of 268 attacks affecting 356 people in the first eleven months of 2013. The Union of Yemeni Journalists reported a total of 333 attacks against journalists and media at the height of the uprising in 2011. And impunity reigns. The justice system has on the whole failed to investigate these abuses and punish those responsible. Despite the start of a national dialogue, the press and publications law has not been amended. Special courts and jail terms for journalists are still in effect.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

"Brotherization" of Egypt's media under Morsi

Hosni Mubarak's removal in February 2011 raised hopes of an improvement in respect for fundamental freedoms but they were quickly dashed after a Muslim Brotherhood government headed by Mohamed Morsi was installed in the summer of 2012.

President Morsi had a decree adopted in November 2012 that gave him special powers but backtracked in the face of an outcry. The constitution that was approved by referendum the following month lacked sufficient safeguards for freedom of expression. It did not guarantee the independence of the state-owned media and, in practice, opened the way for the Islamization of media legislation.

As soon as the Muslim Brotherhood took office, it began asserting its control over the state media. In August 2012, Morsi got the upper chamber to appoint Muslim Brotherhood supporters to run the state-owned newspapers. These appointments had a big effect on their editorial policies. At the same time, there was a big increase in lawsuits and physical attacks against journalists.

"Sisification" of Egypt's media under Gen. Sisi

Since Morsi's removal by the army under Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the new authorities have systematically targeted foreign and Egyptian media affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood – which has again been banned

– or regarded as sympathetic to it. The pan-Arab TV station *Al-Jazeera* has been particularly targeted. Five journalists were killed and at least 80 were arbitrarily detained by police or demonstrators – pro-army or pro-Morsi – in the second half of 2013. Arbitrary arrest and torture is now common. An anti-Brotherhood witchhunt is under way that targets not only Egyptian journalists but also their Turkish, Palestinian or Syrian colleagues. This persecution violates provisions in the new constitution that was adopted by referendum in January 2014.

Morocco's anti-terrorism pretext

Morocco, which has had a moderate Islamist-led coalition government since November 2011, has yet to carry out the constitutional reforms promised after a referendum in July 2011. The leading media development in 2013 was the September arrest of Ali Anouzla, the editor of the Arabic-language version of the news website *Lakome*, for posting a link to an article in the Spanish daily *El País*, which in turn had a link to a video attributed to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Released after five weeks in "preventive detention," Anouzla continues to face a possible sentence of 10 to 30 years in prison on charges of providing "material assistance" to a terrorist organization and "defending terrorist crimes." The case is indicative of a disturbing readiness on the part of the authorities to view journalistic work as inciting terrorism.

Tunisia: state media independence blocked

The Islamist party Ennahda's victory in Tunisia's first free elections has not ended the tradition of close government control of the state-owned media. Perpetuating deposed President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's methods, the Ennahda-led government has been making and breaking careers at the head of the state radio and TV stations. The hopes of media freedom defenders were raised when the appointment of members of the Independent High Authority for Broadcasting Communication (HAICA) was announced on 3 May 2013 but they dashed again when another wave of senior appointments in the state broadcast media were quickly unveiled in August. Three years after Ben Ali's removal, authoritarian methods continue to short-circuit reform attempts and block state media independence.

ARABIAN PENINSULA: PRIORITIZING NEWS CONTROL

Fearing the spread of the Arab Spring, the countries of the Arabian Peninsula have reinforced surveillance and control of the media, starting with the Internet, which has come to be a place where people express themselves with a freedom not found in the traditional media. As a result, the cyber-police of the Persian Gulf monarchies are on the lookout for any online article, post or tweet critical of government policy.

In the United Arab Emirates, any support for the Muslim Brotherhood is crushed. Long jail sentences were passed on two netizens who tweeted about the trial of 94 Emiratis accused of membership of Al-Islah, a local party with links to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. The authorities had banned observers and foreign reporters from the courtroom, leaving carefully selected local reporters to cover the trial. It will probably be the same for the trial of 20 Egyptians and 10 Emiratis accused of links with the Muslim Brotherhood and trying to overthrow the government. On 21 January 2014, they were given sentences ranging from three months to five years in prison.

Saudi Arabia, which is on the Reporters Without Borders list of "Enemies of the Internet," does not lag far behind. The kingdom is relentless in its censorship of the Saudi media and the Internet, and jails netizens without compunction. In 2013, the censors paid particular attention to calls for women to be allowed to drive, a popular topic online that even received a mention in some of the traditional media. *Asharq Al-Awsat* columnist Tariq Al-Mubarak was arrested in October on various grounds including a column criticizing the ban on women drivers.

The Saudi authorities are even stricter on matters concerning religion. In July, a sentence of seven years in prison and 600 lashes was passed on Raef Badawi, the founder of the now censored *Saudi Liberals* website, who had posted an article about St. Valentine that allegedly denigrated the religious police. The charges brought against him after his arrest in June 2012 initially included "apostasy" (abandoning one's religious beliefs), but it was finally dropped.

In Kuwait, the authorities are cracking down on two sensitive subjects – the emir and religion. Two citizen-journalists, Badr Al-Rashidi and Ourance Al-Rashidi, were given long jail sentences for "insulting" the emir. They eventually received a royal pardon but, without reform of the law, there could be more convictions

and there is no guarantee that the emir will be so benevolent with the next victims. A draconian bill was considered and then abandoned in April. It would have allowed the authorities to impose fines of up to 800,000 euros for criticizing the emir or the crown prince, and sentences of up to 10 years in prison for "insulting God, the Prophets of Islam, or the Prophet Mohamed's wives or companions."

In Oman, the sultan continues to be one of the main taboos. Anyone criticizing him is liable to feel the regime's wrath. Netizens have been given long jail terms although some have subsequently been pardoned.

Bahrain, kingdom of disinformation

Ever since the start of a popular uprising in February 2011, the Bahraini monarchy has been a past master in the art of manipulating coverage of the street protests and the ensuing crackdown. In its efforts to protect Bahrain's image, it has also cleverly exploited the reticence of western governments to condemn it, persuading them to accept its insincere promises and superficial reforms.

As a result, Manama was designated 2012 capital of Arab culture and 2013 capital of Arab tourism. Bahrain's latest PR coup was to persuade the Arab League to let it host the Arab Court of Human Rights, although some of its jails are overflowing with prisoners of conscience.

Asia-Pacific

CHINESE BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING, AND EXPORTING ITS METHODS

In a speech shortly after his appointment as Communist Party general secretary in November 2012, Xi Jinping addressed journalists directly: "Friends from the press, China needs to learn more about the world, and the world also needs to learn more about China. I hope you will continue to make more efforts and contributions to deepening the mutual understanding between China and the countries of the world."

Woe to any journalist who thought he was saying "Describe China's stark realities" when what he really meant was "Follow the Party's propaganda to the letter!" Since the speech, the authorities have arrested more journalists and bloggers, cracked down harder on cyber-dissidents, reinforced online content control and censorship and stepped up restrictions on the foreign media.

Embarrassing officials or exposing corruption means risking public condemnation. Luo Changping, a journalist who was forced to leave *Caijing* magazine in November, Liu Hu, a *New Express* reporter who was arrested for disseminating "false information", and the *New York Times* newspaper are among the recent examples of journalists and news media that have been punished for investigative reporting. Human rights activists and dissident bloggers such as Xu Zhiyong and Yang Maodong (also known as Guo Feixiong), who were jailed on trumped-up charges are among those who paid a high price in the past year.

The daily "directives" to the traditional media from the Department of Propaganda, the constant online censorship, the growing number of arbitrary arrests and the detention of the largest number of journalists and netizens in the world (including 2010 Nobel peace laureate Liu Xiaobo) have made China a model of censorship and repression. Adoption of the model is unfortunately spreading in the region.

Vietnam has stepped by information control to the point of being close to catching up with its Chinese big brother. Independent news providers are subject to enhanced Internet surveillance, draconian directives, waves of arrests and sham trials. Vietnam continues to be the world's second largest prison for bloggers and netizens. Of the 34 bloggers currently detained, 25 were arrested since Nguyen Phu Trong became the party's general secretary in January 2011.

The party took censorship to a new level in September 2013 when it issued Decree 72 banning the use of blogs and social networks to share information about news developments. It shows that the party is waging an all-out offensive against the new-generation Internet, which it sees as a dangerous counterweight to the domesticated traditional media.

ASIAN AND PACIFIC DEMOCRACIES

The past year showed that certain governments in the Asia-Pacific region, even democratic ones, can be extremely sensitive to criticism. This was evident from the many judicial proceedings, often resulting in disproportionate sentences, that were initiated against journalists under pressure from government agencies or officials.

The Thai government uses lèse-majesté charges as an effective weapon for intimidating or silencing those who are disrespectful. The suspended jail sentence imposed on Chiranuch Premchaiporn (also known as Jiew), the editor of the online newspaper *Prachatai*, for "comments critical of the monarchy" and the 11-year-jail sentence given to Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, editor of the *Voice of Thaksin* bimonthly, were noteworthy examples. These sentences had a deterrent effect on the entire Thai media.

In South Korea, independent journalists Kim Ou-joon and Choo Chin-woo were accused of broadcasting "false information" and "defamatory content" about President Park Geun-hye's brother and father in their satirical podcast "Naneun Ggomsuda." In Tonga and Papua New Guinea, four journalists were fined or sanctioned for "criticizing" their respective prime ministers.

The Asian democracies also have "forbidden areas" where news is subject to blackouts or censorship. In northern India's Kashmir region and in Indonesia's West Papua province, the work of journalists is handicapped by draconian news control policies. In Kashmir, the authorities impose curfews and often block the Internet and mobile phone networks.

Surveillance and confidentiality of sources

In Australia, the lack of adequate legislative protection for the confidentiality of journalists' sources continues to expose them to the threat of imprisonment for contempt of court for refusing to reveal their sources. No fewer than seven requests for disclosure of sources were submitted to the courts in 2013 alone. In New Zealand, the interception of reporter Jon

Stephenson's metadata by the military, which thought his articles were overly critical, and the release of journalist Andrea Vance's phone records to a leak investigation is indicative of growing government mistrust of the media and their watchdog role.

Chinese threat

China's growing economic weight is allowing it to extend its influence over the media in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, which had been largely spared political censorship until recently. Media independence is now in jeopardy in these three territories, which are either "special administrative regions" or claimed by Beijing. The Chinese Communist Party's growing subjugation of the Hong Kong executive and its pressure on the Hong Kong media through its "Liaison Office" is increasingly compromising media pluralism there. It has also been threatened in Taiwan by the pro-Beijing Want Want group's acquisition of the *China Times*.

Censorship of Fukushima

Arrests, home searches, interrogation by the domestic intelligence agency and threats of judicial proceedings – who would have thought that covering the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster would have involved so many risks for Japan's freelance journalists? The discrimination against freelance and foreign reporters resulting from Japan's unique system of Kisha clubs, whose members are the only journalists to be granted government accreditation, has increased since Fukushima.

Often barred from press conferences given by the government and TEPCO (the Fukushima nuclear plant's owner), denied access to the information available to the mainstream media (which censor themselves), freelancers have their hands tied in their fight to cover Japan's nuclear industrial complex, known as the "nuclear village." Now that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government has tightened the legislation on "state secrets," their fight will get even more dangerous.

VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY IN INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

For the second year running, the Indian sub-continent is the Asian region with the biggest rise in violence for journalists. The most disturbing development is the increasingly targeted nature of the violence. In Nepal, Maoist party activists were more aggressive towards journalists who criticize their leaders, especially in the run-up to constituent assembly elections in November.

A record number of eight journalists and one media worker were killed in India in 2013. Half of these deaths were premeditated reprisals. This was twice the 2012 death toll and more than the death toll in Pakistan, long the world's deadliest country for media personnel. Criminal organizations, security forces, demonstrators and armed groups all pose a threat to India's journalists. The violence and the resulting self-censorship is encouraged by the lack of effective investigations by local authorities, who are often quick to abandon them, and inaction on the part of the federal authorities.

It was a grim year for freedom of information in Bangladesh as well. Independent bloggers, especially those covering the trials of former political leaders accused of war crimes during the 1971 independence war, have been the targets of constant physical attacks since February. One, Ahmed Rajib Haider, was hacked to death. Another, Asif Mohiuddin, was stabbed by Islamist activists who accused him of blasphemy and insulting the Prophet. Journalists were targeted by both police and rioting protesters during a series of demonstrations from May to October to demand a blasphemy law. The February 2012 murders of journalists Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi are still unpunished.

The same lack of interest in rendering justice is to be found in Pakistan, where the government seems powerless against not only the Taliban, Jihadis and other armed groups but also the military apparatus, which international observers describe as a "state within the state." Seven journalists were murdered in connection with their work in 2013. Four of them – Mohammad Iqbal of *News Network International*, Saifur Rehman and Imran Shaikh of *Samaa News* and Mehmood Ahmed Afridi – were killed in Balochistan, Pakistan's deadliest province.

While armed groups pose the biggest threat to Pakistani journalists, the intelligence agencies, especially Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), continue to represent a danger. Journalists who dare to speak out accuse the military of spying on media personnel, abducting them, torturing them and even murdering them.

Uthayan: for some media, the war is far from over

Northern Sri Lanka's Tamil-language daily *Uthayan* was the target of two violent attacks within the space of 10 days in April. Two of its employees were nearly killed, its printing press was set on fire and its premises were badly damaged. These raids could not however be blamed on the civil war between the Tamil Tigers and the regular army because that officially ended in May 2009.

Founded in 1985, *Uthayan* was the only Tamil newspaper not to suspend publishing at any time during the civil war. Today it is read by nearly 100,000 Tamils, or 20 per cent of the population of the Jaffna Peninsula. It does hesitate to criticize the ruling Rajapaksa family's authoritarian methods and continues to pay a high price for not kowtowing to either the military or the government. Six of its employees have been killed in connection with their work. In December 2013, *Uthayan* received the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize.

BURMA'S DEMOCRATIC SPRING STARTS TO FALTER

Are Burma's reforms and democratization beginning to run out of steam? More and more international human rights NGOs are beginning to worry, and rightly so. The widespread euphoria generated by the successive amnesties of political prisoners in October 2011 and January 2012 has evaporated. The government is struggling to resolve sectarian and ethnic conflicts. With more freedom to speak out, civil society is complaining about the authorities.

The launch of privately-owned daily newspapers was one of the big novelties of 2013. The government announced in March that it had given permission for eight dailies and was studying permit requests for at least six other publications including some operated by former "exile media" that have returned to Burma and set up shop in Rangoon. A score of these new newspapers are already being sold on the streets of the main cities. The transformation of the media landscape also includes the creation of several online media and radio stations.

The process has been accelerated by the assistance provided by international organizations that promote and defend the media. These initiatives have included training in media technology and professional ethics. They have also benefited Burma's minorities, some of which now have local media in their own language.

The legislative framework has evolved more slowly. The government and parliament kept the promises made in 2012 to end prior censorship and grant more freedom to the media and media organizations. But the promise to draft media legislation that complies with international standards has not been kept. Without any consultation, the government submitted a draft media law to the lower house of the parliament (the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw) on 4 March that would impose clearly unacceptable restrictions on media freedom. The printing and publications law and the latest draft of a proposed broadcast media law also reveal government ambivalence about real respect for fundamental rights.

The reform process is nonetheless being watched with great interest elsewhere, especially in neighbouring countries such as Laos, where the situation of freedom of information has stagnated alarmingly, in Cambodia, in Singapore, where the authorities are on edge, and in Vietnam, still in the grip of authoritarian single-party rule. The governments and population of these countries are following the development of a new regional model of governance in Burma, a model that is still far from proving itself. Will Burma become Southeast Asia's benchmark for positive change in freedom of information? This remains to be seen.

Americas

MEDIA UNDER THREAT FROM VIOLENCE

More than 20 years have passed since the military dictatorships and civil wars ended in Latin America and the Caribbean, except Colombia, which still endures an armed conflict that began half a century ago. Cuba is also distinguished by a regime inherited from the Cold War that tolerates no independent watchdogs although an emerging civil society is challenging its "model."

Peace and democratic institutions have been established in the region, at least formally, as there is a long road from constitutional guarantees of civil liberties to real democracy with respect for the rule of law. Many journalists and human rights defenders continue to be exposed to a high level violence that comes from different quarters including organized crime, paramilitary groups and sometimes the state.

Honduras is an example of such a confluence of violence, with a murder rate comparable to that of a country at war – 80 per 100,000 in a population of 7 million. More than 30 journalists have been killed in the past decade, 27 of them since the June 2009 coup that ousted Manuel Zelaya, an elected president. A link with the victim's work as a journalist has been established in nine of these murders but almost all of them have gone unpunished in this failed state. Militias in the pay of big landowners, the militarized police, the army and the criminal cartels all have a hand in the threats, beatings and shootings and in the "protection" of certain media.

The situation is similar in other parts of Central America and the Andes. In Peru and Colombia, covering drug trafficking, corruption, land conflicts or mining conflicts exposes journalists to reprisals. There is a slim but real hope of an imminent peace accord between the Colombian government and the guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Nonetheless, even if the hope is realized, it will leave the narco-paramilitaries, a side-product of the civil war, still in place. How many journalists, trade unions, human rights lawyers and civil society activists have been subjected to often deadly harassment and pressure from reconstituted paramilitary units such as the Urabeños or Rastrojos?

In Mexico, the Zetas and other criminal organizations act in a similar predatory manner towards journalists with the complicity of corrupt local, and sometimes federal, officials. No fewer than 88 journalists were killed from 2000 to the end of 2013, and 18 others disappeared during the same period. This appalling death toll was aggravated by the so-called "federal offensive" against the drug cartels under President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), in which more than 60,000 people were killed.

Organized crime and its infiltration of the state apparatus also obstructs media work and, in particular, investigative reporting in countries further south such as Brazil and Paraguay. In these countries, and in others, the position of journalists is often weakened by their lack of status, a lack of solidarity within the profession and the tragic subjugation of the media, especially the regional media, to centres of political power and influence. In Brazil, the phenomenon of "colonels," regional politicians who are also businessmen and media owners, constitutes a major obstacle to media pluralism and independence, turning journalists into the tools of local barons and exposing them to often deadly score-settling.

Journalists and news media are also political tools in highly polarized countries where the polarization between the private sector and the public sector (or the state) develops into sometimes violent confrontation. An extreme example is Venezuela, where the level of insults and physical attacks increases during the frequent election campaigns. A similar climate exists in Ecuador and Bolivia and, to a lesser extent, Argentina.

USA AND BRAZIL – NEW WORLD GIANTS THAT SET A BAD EXAMPLE

One is a superpower and the other an emerging power. One for a long time was the embodiment of an established democracy where civil liberties reign supreme. The other created the conditions for developing a powerful civil society during the Lula years (2003-2010) on the basis of a democratic constitution adopted just three years after the end of two decades of military dictatorship (1964-1985). Rich in diversity, the United States and Brazil should have given freedom of information a supreme position both in their laws and their social values. Unfortunately the reality falls far short of this.

In the United States, 9/11 spawned a major conflict between the imperatives of national security and the principles of the constitution's First Amendment. This amendment enshrines every person's right to inform and be informed. But the heritage of the 1776 constitution was shaken to its foundations during

George W. Bush's two terms as president by the way journalists were harassed and even imprisoned for refusing to reveal their sources or surrender their files to federal judicial officials.

There has been little improvement in practice under Barack Obama. Rather than pursuing journalists, the emphasis has been on going after their sources, but often using the journalist to identify them. No fewer that eight individuals have been charged under the Espionage Act since Obama became president, compared with three during Bush's two terms. While 2012 was in part the year of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, 2013 will be remember for the National Security Agency computer specialist Edward Snowden, who exposed the mass surveillance methods developed by the US intelligence agencies.

The whistleblower is the enemy. Hence the 35-year jail term imposed on Private Chelsea/Bradley Manning for being the big WikiLeaks source, an extremely long sentence but nonetheless small in comparison with the 105-year sentence requested for freelance journalist Barrett Brown in a hacking case. Amid an all-out hunt for leaks and sources, 2013 will also be the year of the *Associated Press* scandal, which came to light when the Department of Justice acknowledged that it had seized the news agency's phone records.

While investigative journalism is under threat in the United States, day-to-day reporting exposes journalists to physical danger in Brazil. With five journalists killed in 2013, Brazil has become the western hemisphere's deadliest country for media personnel, the position held until then by Mexico, a much more dangerous country.

These tragic deaths in Brazil are obviously also due to a high level of violence. Organized crime's hold on certain regions makes covering subjects such as corruption, drugs or illegal trafficking in raw materials very risky. The crime rings defend themselves. So do government officials, sometimes using force but more often judicial proceedings. Lúcio Flávio Pinto, a journalist and campaigner against trafficking in precious wood has been the target of no fewer that 33 prosecutions and lawsuits. It is a paradox of the 2009 repeal of the 1967 media law inherited from the military dictatorship that compliant courts are now jammed with requests by politicians for censorship orders against news media and journalists,

Many of these politicians are what are called "colonels" – governors or parliamentarians who own the state they represent. They own or control local newspapers and radio stations while, at the national level, ten families control the broadcast media. This media model, which limits pluralism, was one of the targets of the "Brazilian spring" protests that were forcibly dispersed. The giant has been slow to overhaul this model, to the detriment of the many community and alternative media.

Brazil - not so sunny spring

News providers were among those hit by the major police crackdown in Brazil in 2013. The large-scale protests that erupted in São Paulo in June in response to public transport fare hikes spread to the rest of the country, fuelled by discontent about the massive spending on the 2014 Football World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. The "Brazilian spring" protests raised questions about the dominant media model and highlighted the appalling methods still used by the state military police since the time of the dictatorship. In the course of the protests, around 100 journalists were the victims of acts of violence, of which more than two thirds were blamed on the police.

CLAMOUR ON THE LEFT FOR MEDIA REGULATION

Are broadcast frequencies easier to redistribute than parcels of land? Agrarian reform has long been a rallying cry in a Latin America notorious for social inequality. It has found an echo in a challenge taken up by progressive governments in the south of the region – the democratization of the media.

Like the land itself, the Latin American media landscape is distinguished by a very high concentration of ownership, by media oligopolies that are a reflection of local and national oligarchies. This has allowed the perpetuation of broadcast media configurations that were established or confirmed under the military dictatorships of the 1960s and 70s, when the media were a controlled preserve.

The end of systematic censorship has unfortunately not ended this high concentration of ownership, which still constitutes an obstacle to real pluralism. Brazil, Chile and Colombia are all good examples. Even more serious are the incestuous links between

the dominant media and the power centres that dictate the political agenda in certain countries. These dominant media played a key role in the coups d'état in Honduras in 2009 and Paraguay in 2012.

In other countries, this media model has been challenged by progressive governments that came to power in elections during the first decade of this century. But with what agenda? Are they just regulating broadcasting and providing a legislative framework for the media and journalists? The answers to these questions vary a great deal from country to country although polarization is a common feature.

In Argentina and Uruguay, broadcasting is in the process of being overhauled in an effective manner by a similar law called (in both countries) the Broadcasting Communication Services Law (LSCA). Adopted in 2009, Argentina's LSCA was the pioneer of this kind of legislation, reserving a third of broadcast frequencies to non-profit organizations. Such a provision would provide a real opportunity to Latin America's many community broadcasters, who are denied legal frequencies and, by extension, are often criminalized.

Because of its anti-oligopoly provisions, Argentina's LSCA inevitably encountered opposition from the Clarín group, the country's biggest media conglomerate, which has been in open conflict with President Cristina Kirchner since 2008. After a four-year legal battle, the supreme court ruled on 29 October 2013 that two articles challenged by Clarín were constitutional. One limits the overall number of broadcast licences that can be held by any one company. The other limits the percentage of the market that can be held by a company in any one region.

The provisions of Argentina's LSCA have directly influenced legislation in other countries in the region aimed at ensuring a fair distribution of frequencies according to the type of broadcaster (commercial, public and community). The 2011 reform of the telecommunications law in Bolivia adopts this principle. So too does the communication law that Ecuador adopted in June 2013. Ecuador's law continues to be criticized for insisting that news coverage must be "accurate, opportune, balanced, contextualized and of public interest."

Ecuador's government now has a legislative weapon against the country's often aggressive and much criticized privately-owned media. It can also count on a chain of state-owned media (or media that it has taken over), which is now dominant at the national broadcast frequency level. And finally it can use the allocation of state advertising, which is essential to the survival of many privately-owned media in the region. In Venezuela, the war between state and privately-owned media dating back to an abortive coup in 2002 has counted for more than any form of regulation. The national airwaves are now almost entirely dominated by the government and its obligatory announcements, called *cadenas*.

Uruguay's model legislation

Approved by the Chamber of Deputies on 10 December 2013, Uruguay's Broadcasting Communication Services Law (LSCA) could become even more of a regional model of broadcasting regulation than Argentina's LSCA. Uruguay's adoption of a community radio law in 2007 had already established it as a regional pioneer.

Its LSCA reallocates broadcasting frequencies, assigning a third to commercial stations, a third to state-owned stations and a third to community stations. The law also includes a major guarantee in the form of a ban on any discretionary allocation of frequencies influenced by a station's editorial policies. The LSCA's success is favoured by the limited media polarization in Uruguay, compared with neighbouring countries, and the major debate involving civil society that accompanied its drafting.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

AUTHORITARIAN REGIONAL MODELS

Behind Sochi Olympic showcase - Kremlin war on civil society

More than two decades after the Soviet Union's implosion, the entire region still looks to Moscow, to which it is bound by strong cultural, economic and political ties. All the pomp of the inauguration of the Sochi Winter Olympics in February 2014 must not divert attention from the reality in Russia of a trial of strength between an increasingly determined civil society and an increasingly repressive state.

Criticism of the regime is common since the major demonstrations of 2011 and 2012 but media self-censorship is far from disappearing. The federal TV stations continue to be controlled and, in response to the "return of politics in Russia," the authorities have chose repression. Ever since Vladimir Putin returned to the Kremlin in May 2012, more and more draconian laws have been adopted. Activists, news media and bloggers have all been targeted. Defamation has been criminalized again, websites are being blacklisted and the range of activities that can be construed as "high treason" is now much broader. "Traditional values" are used to justify new restrictions on freedom of information, including the criminalization of "homosexual propaganda" and "insulting the feelings of believers."

Journalists are being detained in connection with their work. In Sochi, freelance reporter Nikolai Yarst spent six months under house arrest and continues to face a trumped-up charge of drug possession. In Rostov-on-Don, the blogger Sergei Reznik and the journalist Alexander Tolmachev are being held on questionable charges. The Russian photographer Denis Sinyakov and the British videographer Kieron Bryan spent two months in provisional detention on charges of piracy and hooliganism for covering Greenpeace protests in the Arctic. Continuing impunity sustains a climate of violence, especially in the Caucasus. At least 33 journalists have been murdered in connection with their work in Russia since 2000.

Turkey at the crossroads

Thanks to its diplomatic and economic influence, Turkey is establishing itself as a regional model of democracy, especially for governments that emerged from the Arab Spring. After ten years of rule by the moderate Islamist AKP, the army's sway over politics and the media has ended and a number of taboos linked to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's heritage are crumbling. New red lines are nonetheless emerging to replace them.

Despite a few limited reforms, judicial practices continue to be repressive and the number of detained journalists is still at a level that is unprecedented since the end of the military regime. Around 60 journalists were in detention at the end of 2013, making Turkey one of the world's biggest prisons for media personnel. Despite directives intended to limit use of provisional detention, journalists often spend months if not years in prison before being tried.

After the most violent fighting in a decade, hopes have been raised by the start of negotiations between Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government and the Kurdish rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The authorities have promised democratic reforms. They are urgently needed. Most of the journalists in prison or being prosecuted are the victims of anti-terrorism legislation inherited from the dark years. A score of articles in the penal code complete this repressive legislative arsenal. Aside from legislative reform, a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue would allow some evolution in a judicial culture marked by paranoid and repressive reflexes.

The unprecedented protests of the summer of 2013 highlighted Turkish society's thirst for freedom. It also drew attention to the lack of democratic culture within the police and the threat to pluralism from the growing concentration of media ownership in the hands for businessmen linked to the government.

Gezi Park minefield for journalists

With 153 journalists injured and 39 detained, the media paid a high price for their coverage of the wave of anti-government demonstrations from May to September and the police use of force against protesters. Journalists were systematically targeted by the police and sometimes by demonstrators. The violence was sustained by a climate of hysteria fuelled by the speeches of government officials and pro-government media branding critical columnists, social network users and foreign reporters as agents of an international plot to overthrow the government or even as terrorists.

The level of self-censorship was such that 24-hour TV news channels completely ignored the violent clashes rocking Istanbul. Recalcitrant journalists were sidelined. No fewer than 14 were fired and 22 resigned. Astronomical fines were imposed on those TV channels that covered the protests closely.

IMPUNITY FOR OIL AND GAS DESPOTS

The former Soviet republics that most violate freedom of information – Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan – are subjected to little pressure from the international community for the simple reason that they are rich in oil and gas deposits, and pipelines. Rich enough to feel untouchable, they are also wooed because of the strategic importance. So for the time being they keep their news media under tight control and jail recalcitrant journalists with complete impunity.

Despotic winters and crackdowns

After 20 years of the most absolute despotism, Turkmenistan adopted a media law in January 2013 that proclaims pluralism and bans censorship. It is a complete fiction. President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov's totalitarian regime still controls all the local media. Independent journalists can only operate clandestinely, reporting for news media based outside the country. This obviously involves risks. Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadjiyev have just completed seven-year jail terms in appalling conditions. Arbitrary arrests are common. Turkmenistan continues to be ranked with North Korea and Eritrea at the bottom of the press freedom index.

Strict censorship also prevails in Uzbekistan, where no fewer than 10 journalists and netizens are currently detained. One was awarded the 2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom prize. He is Muhammad Bekzhanov, a former editor of the newspaper *Erk* and champion of the fight for democracy, who has been held for nearly 15 years. Tortured and denied medical attention, he is in danger of dying in prison. Another is the freelance journalist Solidzhon Abdurakhmanov, held since 2008 for writing about the consequences of the Aral Sea ecological disaster. Not content with absolute control over the traditional media, the authorities have been taking care to refine their Internet censorship techniques in recent years.

Succession is a thorny issue for despots who have been in power for more than 20 years. Like his Uzbek counterpart, Islam Karimov, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has yet to designate a clear successor. Kazakhstan has been stable since independence but, as appetites are whetted and threats to this stability manifest themselves, the regime's paranoia and desire to control have grown. And freedom of information is in free fall. All the main national opposition news outlets were closed at the end of 2012 and start of 2013 and the most outspoken critics are being prosecuted or subjected to administrative harassment.

More repression is also the strategy being adopted in Azerbaijan, where the very survival of media pluralism is in danger. The TV stations are under government control, the main foreign radio stations are banned, and the main opposition newspaper barely circulates except in the capital and is on the verge of financial extinction. At the same time, recalcitrant journalists and bloggers are exposed to physical attacks, death threats, smear campaigns and abduction. Will the emergence of new alternative exile media save pluralism?

Despots with no oil or gas

Some post-Soviet states have decided they need no oil or gas to crack down on the media. In Belarus, independent journalists continue to fight on unequal terms against "Europe's last dictatorship" and its propaganda. Those who cover street protests are routinely detained. The KGB and the judicial authorities often use "combatting extremism" as a pretext for silencing those who refuse to toe the official line. A book containing the winning photos of the 2011 Belarus Press Photo competition was banned in 2013 and one of the leading independent publishing houses was stripped of its licence. The magazine *Arche* and independent media based abroad such as *Belsat TV* are subjected to all sorts of administrative harassment.

INFORMATION THREATENED BY POLARIZATION

Leading quartet

The region's four best-placed countries in this year's index are the same as last year. Although their positions in the index are fairly dispersed, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan all enjoy a significant degree of pluralism and relatively little state censorship. But the considerable social polarization is reflected in the media and the climate for journalists, who are often harassed by pressure groups. Given that the political orientation of individual media usually coincides with that of their owners, it would seem that respect for the editorial independence of media employees is still limited.

The 2013 elections in Georgia and Armenia were calmer than previous ones. Violence against journalists was rare. Armenia's state broadcaster has progressed as regards impartiality but the electoral

environment exacerbated the ongoing information war in the privately-owned media – a war in which the authorities have a clear advantage.

The change of government through the polls in Georgia was reflected in the media. *Imedi*, a TV station acquired by allies of former President Mikheil Saakashvili in 2007, was returned to the family of the original main shareholder shortly after the October 2012 elections. The justice system began investigating alleged fraudulent share transfers and money laundering involving the mayor of Tbilisi. After being elected prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili announced the closure of *TV9*, a privately-owned TV station which his wife had launched in 2012 and which had played a major role in propelling him to power. A new broadcasting law should limit the political in-fighting within Georgia's state broadcaster that resulted in a wave of dismissals in 2013.

Ukraine and Tajikistan in limbo

Respect for the editorial independence of media employees seems to be equally limited in Ukraine, where changes of media ownership led to sudden changes in editorial policy, the introduction of new taboos and many dismissals. A draft law would make media ownership more transparent but its second reading in parliament has been delayed.

The political crisis that began in December 2013 and the government's sudden adoption of very repressive policies came after the period covered by this index but will clearly have an impact on Ukraine's ranking next year.

The precursors of these policies were nonetheless clearly visible – growing concentration of leading media ownership in the hands of pro-government oligarchs, increasingly frequent violence against journalists that went unpunished, and attempts to intimidate independent journalists. By the end of 2013, there had already been significant erosion of the freedom of information won in the Orange Revolution.

In Tajikistan, coverage of the 2013 presidential election campaign was openly skewed in favour of the incumbent, Emomali Rakhmonov, who has ruled for more than 20 years. The arbitrary blocking of independent news websites has become common, even if it usually lasts just a few days. A new media law that took effect in March 2013 contained satisfactory provisions on paper but seems to have made no difference in practice so far.

European Union and Balkans

EUROPEAN UNION – RIGHTS GUARANTEED BUT UNDER THREAT

The Council of Europe was barely a year old in 1950 when it affirmed the "freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."

In the 63 years since then, this principle has been reiterated many times in documents that have established the foundations of the European Union. European law requires member states to enforce explicit and well-crafted guarantees. They include those contained in the European Convention on Human Rights, which took effect in 1953, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was proclaimed in 2000 and which enshrines the freedom to inform and be informed. The press freedom index seems to suggest that these guarantees are being applied. The top 50 countries include 31 European ones.

The models of respect for media freedom are in northern Europe. Finland, Norway and Netherlands have led the index for years. Their success rests on solid constitutional and legal foundations, which in turn are based on a real culture of individual freedoms, a culture that is more integrated than in southern Europe. The only positive evolution in the south is to be found in Italy, which has finally emerged from a negative spiral and is preparing an encouraging law that would decriminalize defamation via the media.

The country that has headed the index since 2008, Finland, paradoxically evinces two obstacles to the development of a benign environment for freedom of information: defamation is punishable by imprisonment in certain circumstances, and just three companies own virtually almost all the national media. In practice, however, it is extremely rare for journalists to receive jail terms for what they write and there is a great deal of media pluralism despite the concentrated ownership. In a country where print is resisting digital well, the media are self-regulated through the Council for Mass Media, an independent body based on the voluntary membership of news media and journalists' associations and funded mainly by member contributions.

Despite the European Union's good showing in the press freedom index, regrettable developments have sullied the performance of some countries as regards protection of freedom of information. They include the United Kingdom and France – countries traditionally respectful of media freedom which had a worrying 2013.

The Franco-German tandem hit some bumps. Germany remained in a good position but France slipped one position. Its Constitutional Council approved a law that makes publishing the assets of certain elected officials punishable by imprisonment and it still awaits a law that would provide effective protection for the confidentiality of journalists' sources. The year's low point in France was a court order withdrawing the Bettencourt recordings from the Mediapart and *Le Point* websites, a grave media freedom violation that denied the public's right to be informed about a matter of general interest involving leading politicians.

In the United Kingdom, the government sent officials to *The Guardian*'s basement to supervise destruction of the newspaper's computer hard disks containing information from whistleblower Edward Snowden about the practices of GCHQ, Britain's signals intelligence agency. Shortly thereafter, the partner of Glenn Greenwald, the former *Guardian* star reporter who had worked closely with Snowden, was held at Heathrow Airport for nine hours under the Terrorism Act. By identifying journalism with terrorism with such disturbing ease, the UK authorities are following one of the most widespread practices of authoritarian regimes. Against this backdrop, civil society could only be alarmed by a Royal Charter for regulating the press. Adopted in response to the outcry about the *News of the World* tabloid's scandalous phone

Bulgaria – lowest ranked EU country

Although closely challenged by Greece, Bulgaria retains the status of lowest ranked European Union country after a trying year marked by five months of major protests and political tension. Reporters were repeatedly the victims of police violence during these demonstrations calling for the government's resignation.

Independent journalists, especially investigative reporters, are meanwhile exposed to harassment that can take the form of arson attacks on their cars. In 2013, the car of Genka Shikerova, a journalist known for her hard-hitting political interviews, was set on fire outside her Sofia home. In 2012, investigative reporter Lidia Pavlova's car was torched.

hacking, its impact on freedom of information in the UK will be assessed in the next index.

These developments showed that, while freedom of information has an excellent legal framework and is exercised in a relatively satisfactory manner overall in the European Union, it is put to a severe test in some member countries including those that most pride themselves on respecting civil liberties.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THAT ARE FALLING IN THE INDEX

While freedom of information is occasionally abused in some European Union countries, it is repeatedly and blatantly flouted in others. This is the case in Greece, which has plunged more than 50 places in the press freedom index in the space of just five years. This is a dizzying fall for the world's oldest democracy.

The 2007 economic crisis hit the Greek media hard. The few wealthy shipowners and entrepreneurs who financed the national media have moved their investments into more profitable sectors. One news organization after another has announced layoffs. Many journalists are now unemployed. As well as economic difficulties, the Greek media have a bad reputation that is the result of years of clientelism. Reporters covering the frequent street protests against the austerity measures adopted by a series of short-lived governments have been the victims of both police violence and violence by demonstrators accusing them of colluding with the government.

The security situation has been aggravated by the rise of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, which won nearly 20 seats in the Voulí (parliament) in June 2012 thanks to euroscepticism and growing hostility towards foreigners accused of "stealing Greece." Golden Dawn's leaders and supporters openly target journalists. Physical attacks have become systematic throughout the country. Death threats are growing.

June 2013 was a turning point in Greece's media history. In a race to cut spending, conservative Prime Minister Antonis Samaras took what was an unprecedented decision in a European Union country. Under pressure from the troika (the European Commission, European Central Bank and IMF) to reduce the budget deficit, Samaras closed the state-owned national broadcaster, *ERT*, consisting of four TV stations and five radio stations. Just hours after *ERT* was told of the decision, dark screens with the words "No signal" stunned Europe and the world. Under international pressure, the government finally announced the creation of a new state broadcaster to be called NERIT.

Now jostling Greece in the press freedom index, Hungary has undergone a significant erosion of civil liberties, above all freedom of information, since Viktor Orbán was elected prime minister in 2010.

The Orbán government used its two-thirds majority in parliament to get a highly restrictive media law adopted in 2011. It introduced fines for the creators of content that is not "balanced" – a concept deliberately left vague – and established a dangerous media regulatory authority with statutory links to Fidesz, the conservative ruling party. This "Media Council" guaranteed just one thing – political interference in news and information content. The European Union subsequently managed to get the government to rescind some of its provisions but not the most draconian ones.

In the witchhunt against independently reported news, the Budapest-based news and talk radio station *Klubradio* became symbol of the fight to be informed. The new Media Council refused to renew its licence, despite its years of existence and hundreds of thousands of listeners, and reassigned its frequency to an unknown station. After a major campaign in support of the station and several court rulings, the Media Council finally gave *Klubradio* a long-term licence in March 2013.

EU's 28th member facing challenges

Croatia became the European Union's 28th member in July 2013. Six years of negotiations with the European Commission led to significant changes such as the inclusion of references to media freedom and the right of access to information in the constitution. But much remains to be done. The state radio and TV broadcaster *HRT* has been criticized for a lack of independence after reforms carried out under centre-left Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic. The head of HRT, the members of its supervisory board and its administrators are now appointed by parliament. This gives the ruling party political control over broadcast content.

BALKAN POWDER KEG FOR JOURNALISTS

Macedonia has been seeking European Union membership since 2005 but, eight years later, membership negotiations have yet to start. Ever since independence in 1991, Macedonia has been locked in a naming dispute with neighbouring Greece that is blocking talks. Both countries and their peoples claim the name of Macedonia, Greece for its northern region. Although Macedonia has been tackling reforms designed to put it on the road to membership, the democratic window-dressing of the past few years is not enough to hide the many freedom of information violations.

The journalist Tomislav Kezarovski has become the symbol of these violations. After he was sentenced to four and a half years in prison in October 2013 for revealing the name of a protected witness in a murder case, his jail term was changed to house arrest under international pressure. But another Macedonian journalism, Zoran Bozinovski, was arrested in Serbia on an Interpol warrant for spying the next day. Known as "Macedonia's Julian Assange," Bozinovski has done a great deal of investigative reporting on Sashe Mijalko, Macedonia's intelligence chief and relative of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski.

Journalists' safety continues to be a major concern in Montenegro, Europe's youngest country since winning independence from Serbia in 2006. It has a tradition of investigative journalism that is more developed than in some of its neighbours. The main sources of independent reporting are the daily newspapers *Vijesti* and *Dan* and the magazine *Monitor*, whose journalists are often the victims of threats and physical attacks. Some of these attacks have been extremely serious.

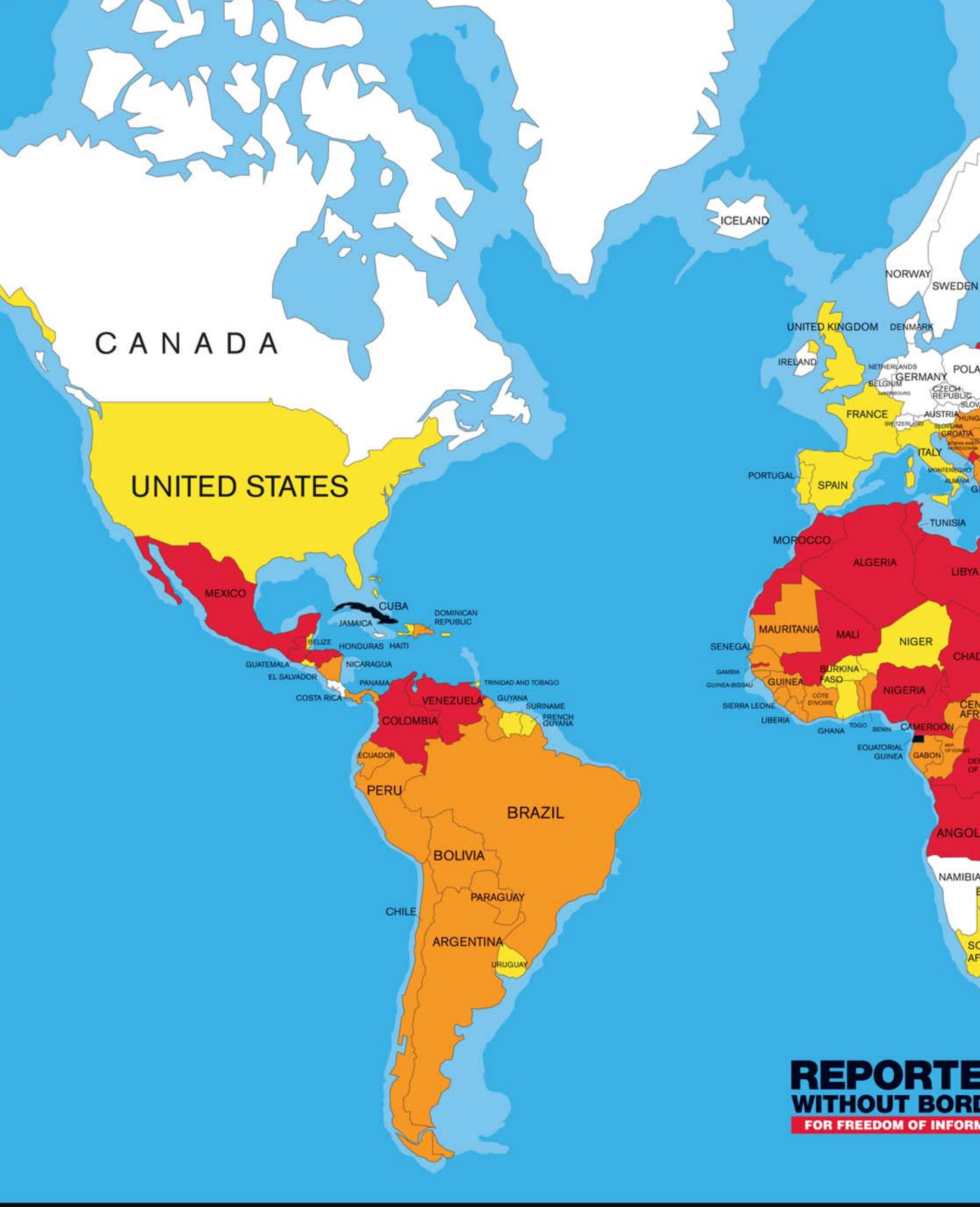
In August 2013, a TNT charge exploded outside the home of Tufik Softic, an investigative reporter who writes for both *Vijesti* and *Monitor*. Softic, who is used to threats and violence, was not hurt but the bomb could have been fatal if it had gone off a few minutes earlier. He has been writing about clandestine organizations and drug trafficking for years, often implicating government officials in his articles. The response from the authorities to this violence has been minimal. Almost all cases have gone unpunished, including the 2004 murder of *Dan* editor Dusko Jovanovic, who was gunned down on the street. The person behind it has never been identified and brought to justice.

The threat to independent journalists is not just physical. Other means are used in an attempt to silence them. Like Macedonia, Montenegro has been trying to join the EU since 2010. Its politicians have mastered the language of the EU's institutions and put on show of striving to be more democratic for the benefit of an international community more concerned about regional stability than actual progress in respect for civil liberties. Led by President Milo Djukanovic, a wealthy and controversial businessman and former associate of Slobodan Milosevic, the Democratic Socialist Party (DPS) that has ruled Montenegro for nearly 20 years wages full-blown hate campaigns against independent journalists.

Often branded as "traitors to the nation" or "fascists," they are also subjected to threats and insults of incredible vulgarity. In 2013, shortly after publishing an op-ed piece headlined "Dancing with the dictator," *Monitor* editor Milka Tadic-Mijovic was the target of obscene sexist vilification by various means including an SMS message. Although a report was filed with the police, which was given the phone number from which the SMS was sent, no action was taken against those responsible.

New page in Albania's media history

Albania's June 2013 elections resulted in a change of government. The Socialist Party of Albania won clean elections that ended two decades of complicated electoral exercises. Its programme for the Albanian media is ambitious: draft new legislation that improves media ownership transparency, reinforce the Albanian public broadcaster's independence and guarantee media access to information held by state entities. In October 2013, the 11 members of the public broadcaster's board of governors had exceeded their term of office by one year. This gives an idea of the scale of the challenge faced by the new government, which aspires to be accepted as a candidate for European Union membership.



REPORTE
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FREEDOM OF THE PRES

SS WORLDWIDE IN 2014

2014 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Rank	Country	Note	Differencial
1	Finland	6,4	0 (1 ; 6,38)
2	Netherlands	6,46	0 (2 ; 6,48)
3	Norway	6,52	0 (3 ; 6,52)
4	Luxembourg	6,7	0 (4 ; 6,68)
5	Andorra	6,82	0 (5 ; 6,82)
6	Liechtenstein	7,02	+1 (7 ; 7,35)
7	Denmark	7,43	-1 (6 ; 7,08)
8	Iceland	8,5	+1 (9 ; 8,49)
9	New Zealand	8,55	-1 (8 ; 8,38)
10	Sweden	8,98	0 (10 ; 9,23)
11	Estonia	9,63	0 (11 ; 9,26)
12	Austria	10,01	0 (12 ; 9,4)
13	Czech Republic	10,07	+3 (16 ; 10,17)
14	Germany	10,23	+3 (17 ; 10,24)
15	Switzerland	10,47	-1 (14 ; 9,94)
16	Ireland	10,87	-1 (15 ; 10,06)
17	Jamaica	10,9	-4 (13 ; 9,88)
18	Canada	10,99	+2 (20 ; 12,69)
19	Poland	11,03	+3 (22 ; 13,11)
20	Slovakia	11,39	+3 (23 ; 13,25)
21	Costa Rica	12,23	-3 (18 ; 12,08)
22	Namibia	12,5	-3 (19 ; 12,5)
23	Belgium	12,8	-2 (21 ; 12,94)
24	Cape Verde	14,32	+1 (25 ; 14,33)
25	Cyprus	14,45	-1 (24 ; 13,83)
26	Uruguay	16,08	+1 (27 ; 15,92)
27	Ghana	16,29	+3 (30 ; 17,27)
28	Australia	16,91	-2 (26 ; 15,24)
29	Belize	17,05	-
30	Portugal	17,73	-1 (28 ; 16,75)
31	Suriname	18,2	+1 (31 ; 18,19)
32	Lithuania	19,2	+2 (33 ; 18,24)
33	United Kingdom	19,93	-3 (29 ; 16,89)
34	Slovenia	20,38	+2 (35 ; 20,49)
35	Spain	20,63	+2 (36 ; 20,5)
36	OECS	20,81	-1 (34 ; 19,72)
37	Latvia	21,1	+3 (39 ; 22,89)
38	El Salvador	21,57	+1 (38 ; 22,86)
39	France	21,89	-1 (37 ; 21,6)
40	Samoa	22,02	+9 (48 ; 23,84)
41	Botswana	22,91	0 (40 ; 22,91)
42	South Africa	23,19	+11 (52 ; 24,56)
43	Trinidad and Tobago	23,28	+2 (44 ; 23,12)
44	Papua New Guinea	23,46	-2 (41 ; 22,97)
45	Romania	23,48	-2 (42 ; 23,05)
46	United States	23,49	-13 (32 ; 18,22)
47	Haiti	23,53	+3 (49 ; 24,09)
48	Niger	23,59	-4 (43 ; 23,08)
49	Italy	23,75	+9 (57 ; 26,11)
50	Taiwan	23,82	-2 (47 ; 23,82)
51	Malta	23,84	-5 (45 ; 23,3)
52	Burkina Faso	24,45	-5 (46 ; 23,7)
53	Comoros	24,52	-1 (51 ; 24,52)
54	Serbia	25,05	+10 (63 ; 26,59)
55	Argentina	25,27	0 (54 ; 25,67)
56	Moldova	25,35	0 (55 ; 26,01)
57	South Korea	25,66	-6 (50 ; 24,48)
58	Chile	25,8	+3 (60 ; 26,24)
59	Japan	26,02	-5 (53 ; 25,17)
60	Mauritania	26,53	+8 (67 ; 26,76)
61	Hong Kong	26,55	-2 (58 ; 26,16)
62	Senegal	26,68	-2 (59 ; 26,19)
63	Tonga	26,7	+4 (66 ; 26,7)
64	Hungary	26,73	-7 (56 ; 26,09)
65	Croatia	26,82	0 (64 ; 26,61)
66	Bosnia and Herzegovina	26,86	+3 (68 ; 26,86)
67	Guyana	27,08	+3 (69 ; 27,08)
68	Dominican Republic	27,17	+13 (80 ; 28,34)
69	Tanzania	27,3	+2 (70 ; 27,34)
70	Mauritius	27,69	-7 (62 ; 26,47)
71	Nicaragua	27,7	+8 (78 ; 28,31)
72	Sierra Leone	28,23	-10 (61 ; 26,35)
73	Malawi	28,29	+3 (75 ; 28,18)
74	Lesotho	28,36	+8 (81 ; 28,36)
75	Benin	28,83	+5 (79 ; 28,33)
76	Togo	29	+8 (83 ; 28,45)
77	East Timor	29,04	+14 (90 ; 28,72)
78	Armenia	29,07	-3 (74 ; 28,04)
79	Mozambique	29,26	-5 (73 ; 28,01)
80	Kosovo	29,29	+6 (85 ; 28,47)
81	Madagascar	29,38	+8 (88 ; 28,62)
82	Republic of the Congo	29,44	-5 (76 ; 28,2)
83	Northern Cyprus	29,54	+12 (94 ; 29,34)
84	Georgia	29,78	+17 (100 ; 30,09)
85	Albania	29,92	+18 (102 ; 30,88)
86	Guinea-Bissau	30,05	+7 (92 ; 28,94)
87	Panama	30,2	+25 (111 ; 32,95)
88	Mongolia	30,3	+11 (98 ; 29,93)
89	Liberia	30,65	+9 (97 ; 29,89)
90	Kenya	30,7	-18 (71 ; 27,8)
91	Kuwait	30,71	-13 (77 ; 28,28)
92	Bhutan	30,73	-9 (82 ; 28,42)

Rank	Country	Note	Differencial
93	Zambia	30,89	-20 (72 ; 27,93)
94	Bolivia	31,04	+16 (109 ; 32,8)
95	Ecuador	31,16	+25 (119 ; 34,69)
96	Israel	31,19	+17 (112 ; 32,97)
97	Kyrgyzstan	31,24	+10 (106 ; 32,2)
98	Gabonese Republic	31,32	-8 (89 ; 28,69)
99	Greece	31,33	-14 (84 ; 28,46)
100	Bulgaria	31,42	-12 (87 ; 28,58)
101	Ivory Coast	31,63	-4 (96 ; 29,77)
102	Guinea	31,67	-15 (86 ; 28,49)
103	Seychelles	31,68	-9 (93 ; 29,19)
104	Peru	31,7	+2 (105 ; 31,87)
105	Paraguay	31,81	-13 (91 ; 28,78)
106	Lebanon	31,89	-4 (101 ; 30,15)
107	Fiji	32,57	+1 (107 ; 32,69)
108	Maldives	33,11	-4 (103 ; 31,1)
109	Central African Republic	33,13	-43 (65 ; 26,61)
110	Uganda	33,29	-5 (104 ; 31,69)
111	Brazil	34,03	-2 (108 ; 32,75)
112	Nigeria	34,24	+4 (115 ; 34,11)
113	Qatar	34,32	-2 (110 ; 32,86)
114	Montenegro	34,78	0 (113 ; 32,97)
115	Tajikistan	34,86	+9 (123 ; 35,71)
116	Venezuela	35,37	+2 (117 ; 34,44)
117	Brunei	35,45	+6 (122 ; 35,45)
118	United Arab Emirates	36,03	-3 (114 ; 33,49)
119	South Sudan	36,05	+6 (124 ; 36,2)
120	Nepal	36,16	-1 (118 ; 34,61)
121	Algeria	36,26	+5 (125 ; 36,54)
122	Mali	36,29	-22 (99 ; 30,03)
123	Republic of Macedonia	36,43	-6 (116 ; 34,27)
124	Angola	36,5	+7 (130 ; 37,8)
125	Guatemala	36,61	-29 (95 ; 29,39)
126	Colombia	36,68	+4 (129 ; 37,48)
127	Ukraine	36,93	0 (126 ; 36,79)
128	Afghanistan	37,07	+1 (128 ; 37,36)
129	Honduras	37,14	-1 (127 ; 36,92)
130	Thailand	37,94	+6 (135 ; 38,6)
131	Cameroon	38,13	-10 (120 ; 34,78)
132	Indonesia	38,15	+8 (139 ; 41,05)
133	Tunisia	38,69	+6 (138 ; 39,93)
134	Oman	38,83	+8 (141 ; 41,51)
135	Zimbabwe	39,19	-1 (133 ; 38,12)
136	Morocco	39,72	+1 (136 ; 39,04)
137	Libya	39,84	-5 (131 ; 37,86)
138	Palestine	40,11	+9 (146 ; 43,09)

Rank	Country	Note	Differencial
139	Chad	40,22	-17 (121 ; 34,87)
140	India	40,34	+1 (140 ; 41,22)
141	Jordan	40,42	-6 (134 ; 38,47)
142	Burundi	40,5	-9 (132 ; 38,02)
143	Ethiopia	40,58	-5 (137 ; 39,57)
144	Cambodia	40,97	0 (143 ; 41,81)
145	Burma	41,43	+7 (151 ; 44,71)
146	Bangladesh	42,58	-1 (144 ; 42,01)
147	Malaysia	42,73	-1 (145 ; 42,73)
148	Russia	42,78	+1 (148 ; 43,42)
149	Philippines	43,69	-1 (147 ; 43,11)
150	Singapore	44,29	0 (149 ; 43,43)
151	DR Congo	44,64	-8 (142 ; 41,66)
152	Mexico	45,04	+2 (153 ; 45,3)
153	Iraq	45,44	-2 (150 ; 44,67)
154	Turkey	45,87	+1 (154 ; 46,56)
155	Gambia	46,42	-2 (152 ; 45,09)
156	Swaziland	46,76	0 (155 ; 46,76)
157	Belarus	47,82	+1 (157 ; 48,35)
158	Pakistan	51,46	+2 (159 ; 51,31)
159	Egypt	51,89	0 (158 ; 48,66)
160	Azerbaijan	52,87	-3 (156 ; 47,73)
161	Kazakhstan	54,94	0 (160 ; 55,08)
162	Rwanda	56,57	0 (161 ; 55,46)
163	Bahrain	58,26	+3 (165 ; 62,75)
164	Saudi Arabia	58,3	0 (163 ; 56,88)
165	Sri Lanka	59,13	-2 (162 ; 56,59)
166	Uzbekistan	61,01	-1 (164 ; 60,39)
167	Yemen	67,26	+3 (169 ; 69,22)
168	Equatorial Guinea	67,95	-1 (166 ; 67,2)
169	Djibouti	70,34	-1 (167 ; 67,4)
170	Cuba	70,92	+2 (171 ; 71,64)
171	Laos	71,22	-2 (168 ; 67,99)
172	Sudan	71,88	-1 (170 ; 70,06)
173	Iran	72,29	+2 (174 ; 73,4)
174	Vietnam	72,36	-1 (172 ; 71,78)
175	China	72,91	-1 (173 ; 73,07)
176	Somalia	73,19	0 (175 ; 73,59)
177	Syria	77,04	0 (176 ; 78,53)
178	Turkmenistan	80,81	0 (177 ; 79,14)
179	North Korea	81,96	0 (178 ; 83,9)
180	Eritrea	84,83	0 (179 ; 84,83)

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