

Hundreds of jailed journalists the new norm, CPJ census finds

For the third consecutive year, at least 251 journalists are behind bars for their work, as authoritarian regimes increasingly use imprisonment to silence dissent, the Committee to Protect Journalists found. In Africa, Egypt is a major culprit.



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As of December 1, 2018, CPJ [found](#) 251 journalists in jail for their work. China, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia imprisoned more journalists than last year as they intensified their repression of local journalists, and Turkey remained the world's worst jailer for the third year in a row, with at least 68 behind bars.

Amid global anti-press rhetoric, CPJ's [census](#) found 70% of journalists were jailed on anti-state charges and 28 charged with "false news" - the latter is an increase from nine in 2016. Politics was the most dangerous beat for journalists, followed by human rights.

The number of female journalists behind bars increased, with 33 imprisoned globally, including four in Saudi Arabia who wrote about women's rights. An increase in the overall number of journalists jailed in China this year is the result in part of Beijing's persecution of the Uighur ethnic minority.

Global assault

"The terrible global assault on journalists that has intensified in the past few years shows no sign of abating. It is unacceptable that 251 journalists are in jail around the world just for covering the news," said CPJ executive director Joel Simon. "The broader cost is being borne by all those who care about the flow of news and information. The tyrants who use imprisonment to impose censorship cannot be allowed to get away with it."



Egypt sentences photojournalist Shawkan to five years

10 Sep 2018



The prison census accounts only for journalists in government custody and does not include those who have disappeared

or are held captive by non-state actors. Cases including journalists [held by Houthi rebels](#) in Yemen and a [Ukrainian journalist](#) held by pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine are classified as "missing" or "abducted".

In the US, no journalists were in jail for their work on December 1, although in the past 18 months CPJ has [documented or assisted](#) with the cases of at least seven foreign journalists who were held in prolonged detention by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) after fleeing threats in their home countries.

CPJ's list is a snapshot of those incarcerated at 12:01 a.m. on December 1, 2018. It does not include the many journalists imprisoned and released throughout the year. Learn more under our [methodology](#).

CPJ's report is available in [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#), and [Turkish](#).

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