



**ROUND-UP OF ABUSES  
AGAINST JOURNALISTS**



Aside from a slight fall in the number of journalists killed in connection with their work, the Reporters Without Borders round-up for 2014 highlights an evolution in the nature of violence against journalists and the way certain kinds, including carefully-staged threats and beheadings, are being used for very clear purposes.

The murders are becoming more and more barbaric and the number of abductions is growing rapidly, with those carrying them out seeking to prevent independent news coverage and deter scrutiny by the outside world. Exposed to such diverse forms of intimidation, twice as many journalists fled into exile this year as in 2013.

The annual round-up of violence and abuses against journalists that Reporters Without Borders has been publishing since 1995 is based on precise data that RWB gathers in the course of its monitoring. It includes figures for both professional and citizen-journalists killed in connection with their reporting. RWB continues to investigate cases when it has not yet gathered enough information to reach a clear determination.

**THE CATEGORIES**

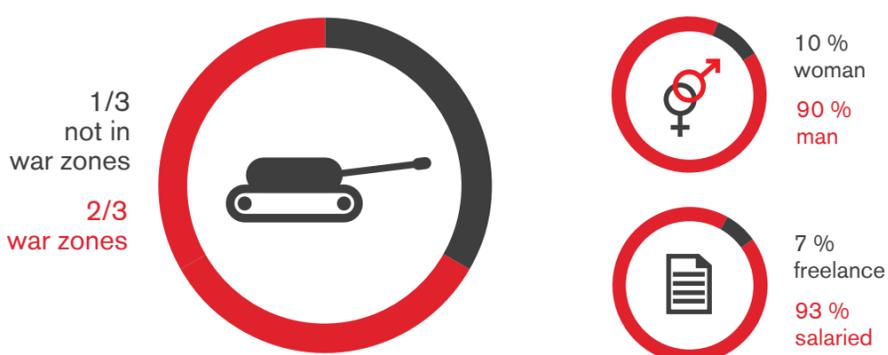
- 66** journalists killed
- 5** cases that marked 2014
- 119** journalists kidnapped
- the **5** most dangerous areas
- 178** journalists imprisoned
- 139** journalists who fled their country
- 853** journalists arrested
- 1846** journalists threatened or attacked

**66**

**JOURNALISTS KILLED**

↓ 7 %

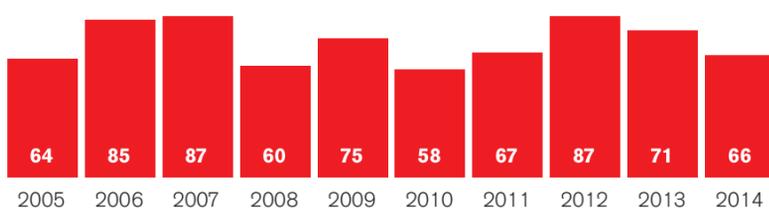
plus **19** citizen-journalists killed  
and **11** media workers killed



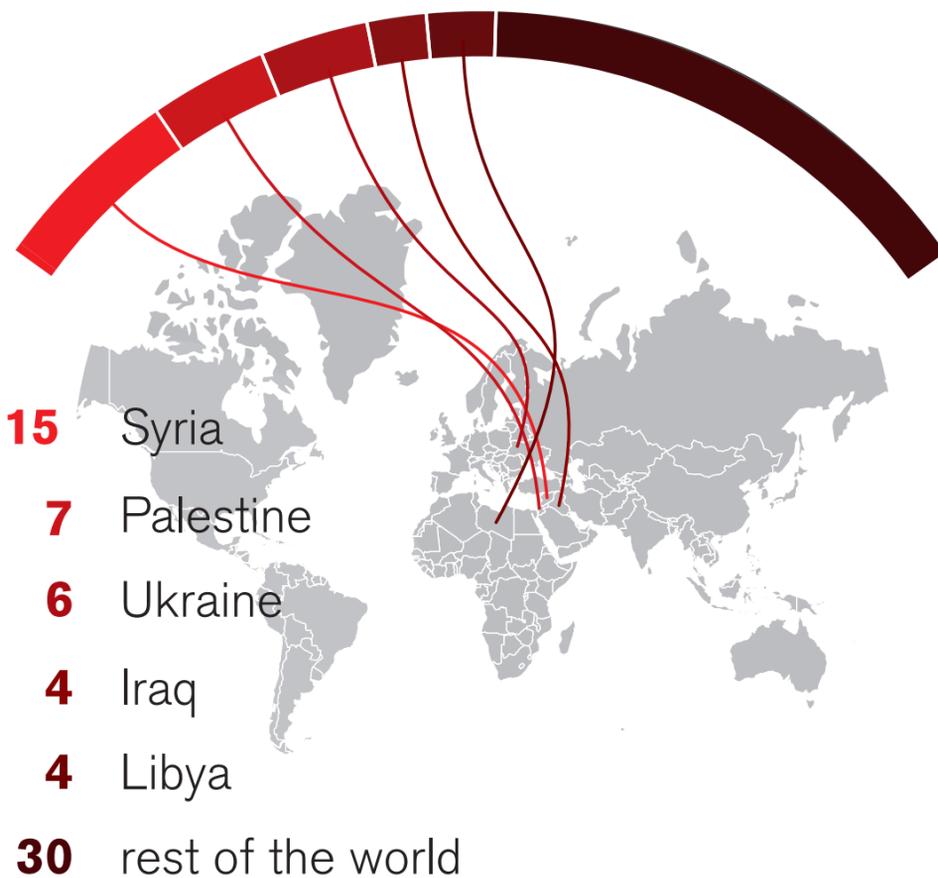
2014  
Round-up Figures  
for 1/01/2014  
to 8/12/2014

The beheadings of US and Iraqi journalists in 2014 testified to the scale of the violence that can be used against unwanted witnesses. Rarely have reporters been murdered with such a barbaric sense of propaganda, shocking the entire world. In all, 66 professional journalists were killed in connection with their work in 2014, which was 7% fewer than in 2013. Two thirds were killed in war zones, including Syria (which continues to be the world's deadliest country for journalists), the Palestinian Territories (especially Gaza), eastern Ukraine, Iraq and Libya. Two developments deserve highlighting: firstly, fewer journalists were killed in countries "at peace," notably in India and Philippines ; and secondly, the number of women journalists killed doubled, from three last year to six this year. The women journalists were killed in Central African Republic, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan and Philippines. A woman citizen-journalist was also killed in Mexico after being kidnapped by gunmen.

**720**  
journalists killed since 2005



The **5** deadliest countries  
for journalists





## CASES THAT MARKED

2014



### Raad Azaoui

An Iraqi cameraman working for Sama Salah Aldeen TV, Raad Mohamed Al-Azaoui was publicly executed on 10 October for refusing to cooperate with Islamic State, which tolerates only dead or compliant journalists. Aged 36 and a father, he was executed together with his brother and two other civilians in the IS-controlled Iraqi city of Samara a month after being captured along with around 20 other Iraqis. IS had announced its intention to execute him ever since his abduction.



### Raef Badawi

A Saudi citizen-journalist and winner of the 2014 Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize, Raef Badawi has been held since 2012 on a charge of “insulting Islam” for promoting liberal ideas on his website, the Liberal Saudi Network. Aged 30 and the father of three children, he was sentenced by a Riyadh court in September to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a heavy fine. In response to this inhuman sentence, which violates international law, RWB has launched a petition calling on King Abdullah to pardon him.



### James Foley

On 19 August, Islamic State released a horrifying video of US hostage James Foley being beheaded. Foley, 40, was a reporter for the *GlobalPost* news website and *Agence France-Presse*. Posted online, the carefully staged video was designed to put pressure on the US government and included a threat to similarly execute Steven Sotloff, a US journalist held in Syria since the summer of 2013. A video of Sotloff being dispatched in the same way was released exactly two weeks later.



### Khadija Ismailova

An investigative journalist who has covered high-level corruption, Khadija Ismayilova has been detained since 5 December. She feared she might be arrested but nothing could convince this media freedom symbol to leave the country for which she has fought for years with rare courage and persistence. Her reporting and defence of human rights turned her into a priority target for the government. In 2012 and 2013 she was the victim of a smear campaign and blackmail attempts with a sex tape. The pressure intensified this year, when she was accused of spying, charged with defamation, arrested and prevented from travelling abroad. And now, finally, she is being held on the absurd charge of “pushing” a former colleague to attempt suicide, a charge that carries a possible sentence of three to seven years in jail.



### Gao Yu

Well-known Chinese journalist Gao Yu, 70, is being tried on a charge of divulging state secrets to German public broadcaster *Deutsche Welle*. At her first hearing, on 21 November in Beijing, she pleaded not guilty, thereby retracting the forced confession that CCTV News broadcast in May. The first journalist to receive UNESCO's World Press Freedom Prize in 1997, Gao has already spent seven years in prison. If found guilty, she could be facing a 15-year sentence.

**119**

**JOURNALISTS KIDNAPPED**

↑ 37 %

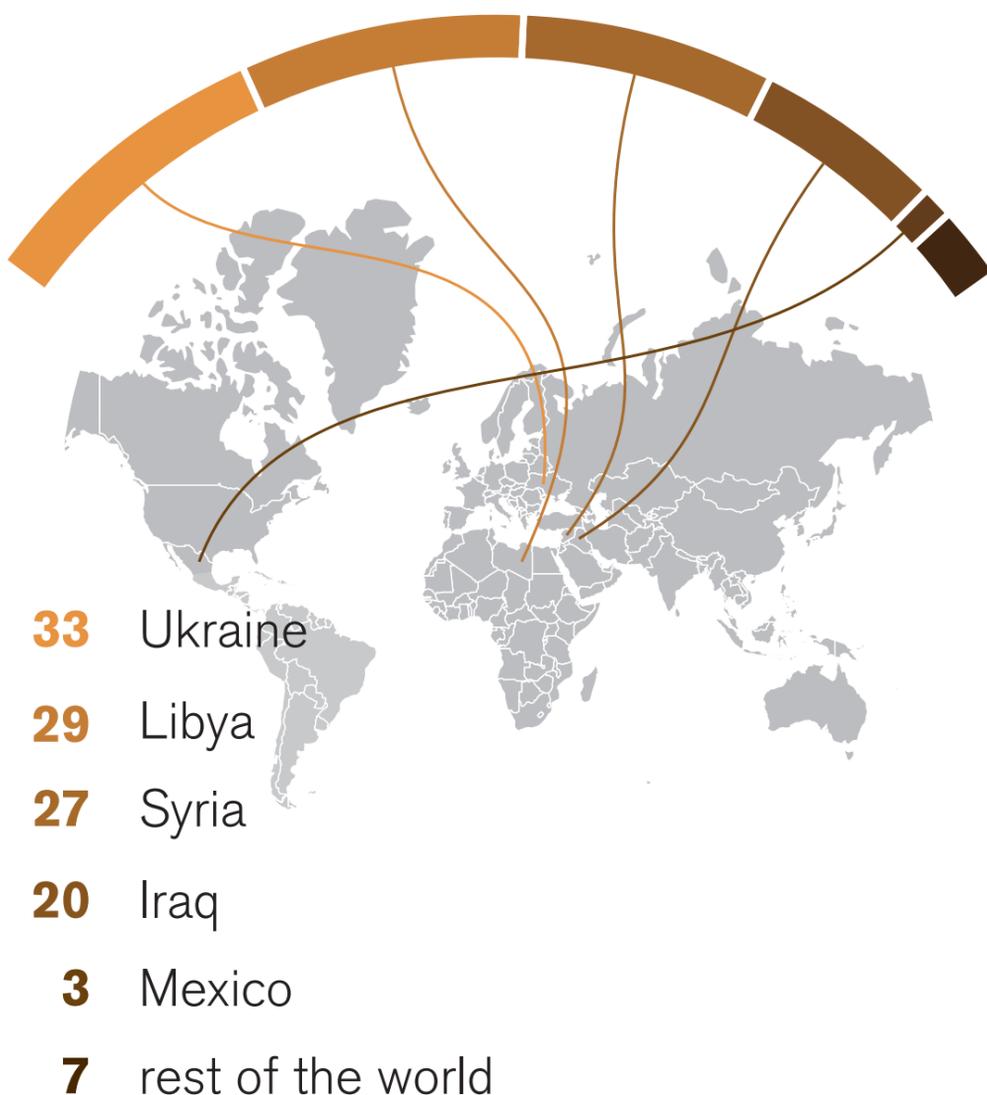
plus **8** citizen-journalists kidnapped



2014  
Round-up Figures  
for 1/12/2013  
to 8/12/2014

This year saw a sharp rise in the number of kidnapped journalists (including those released or killed after abduction and those still held hostage). Worldwide, 119 professional journalists were kidnapped (or continued to be kidnapped) in 2014, a 30% rise on last year's figure of 87. Most of the cases were in the Middle East and North Africa, with 29 in Libya, 27 in Syria and 20 in Iraq. The chief causes were Islamic State's offensive in Iraq and Syria, and the turmoil in Libya, where the clashes between rival militias have not let up. Many journalists were also kidnapped in Ukraine, mainly in the east of the country, where the conflict continued despite the ceasefire announced there in September. Worldwide, 40 journalists and three citizen-journalists are currently being held hostage. Local journalists pay the highest price, representing 90% of those abducted. Of the 22 journalists currently being held by armed groups in Syria, 16 are Syrians. All of the eight journalists currently held hostage in Iraq are Iraqis.

Where were  
the most journalists kidnapped?





## MOST DANGEROUS AREAS

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2014



### Territories controlled by Islamic State (in Iraq and Syria)

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Islamic State's Jihadi fighters impose a brutal news and information dictatorship in the regions they control in Iraq and Syria. Journalists are closely monitored and often hunted down, kidnapped and killed. The climate of terror has created "information black holes" such as the city of Mosul (400 km northwest of Baghdad), from which most journalists have fled for fear of reprisals. In the Syrian province of Deir Ezzor, IS has imposed a set of 11 rules for journalists that include swearing allegiance to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

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### Eastern Libya

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"We'll cut off your fingers if you continue to write." This is the kind of threat that journalists often get in eastern Libya. As the country plunges deeper and deeper into chaos, the war between rival militias disposes of inconvenient witnesses with complete impunity. Three journalists were gunned down on the street in the space of five months in 2014. The youngest was 18. Nine other journalists were kidnapped. No one keeps count any more of those detained or threatened. Carrying a camera or a press card takes a lot of courage.

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### Balochistan (Pakistan)

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Pakistan's biggest and poorest province, Balochistan sees frequent violent clashes between the security forces and local armed groups. Journalists working in the province are caught between these two "Predators of Press Freedom." As well as frequent Islamist and Taliban bombings or shootings, they are exposed to reprisals by Balochi separatists and to surveillance and arbitrary detention by the Pakistan military. The violence endemic to Balochistan since 2004 continues to be a daily reality for the region's few remaining journalists.

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### The Donetsk and Luhansk regions (eastern Ukraine)

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Parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions have been a limbo since the start of the armed conflict in April 2014. Six journalists were killed from May to August, but the fighting now seems less intense, and hostage-taking and arbitrary arrest have become less systematic. Nonetheless, the many checkpoints and patrols by unidentified gunmen still make it dangerous for journalists to move about. Regarded with suspicion and pressured to support the belligerents' cause, they are subjected to constant intimidation. The most exposed are local journalists, who are threatened, censored and liable to have their offices ransacked.

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### Department of Antioquia (Colombia)

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Reporting is a risky occupation in the northwestern department of Antioquia, especially for those covering corruption or organized crime. Criminal paramilitary groups sow terror, sometimes with the complicity of local officials. They often circulate hit-lists with the names of journalists earmarked for elimination. Reporters are threatened, attacked and murdered with almost complete impunity. One journalist, Luis Carlos Cervantes, was murdered on 12 August, just two weeks after his police escort had been withdrawn.

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**178**

**JOURNALISTS IMPRISONED**

— Stable

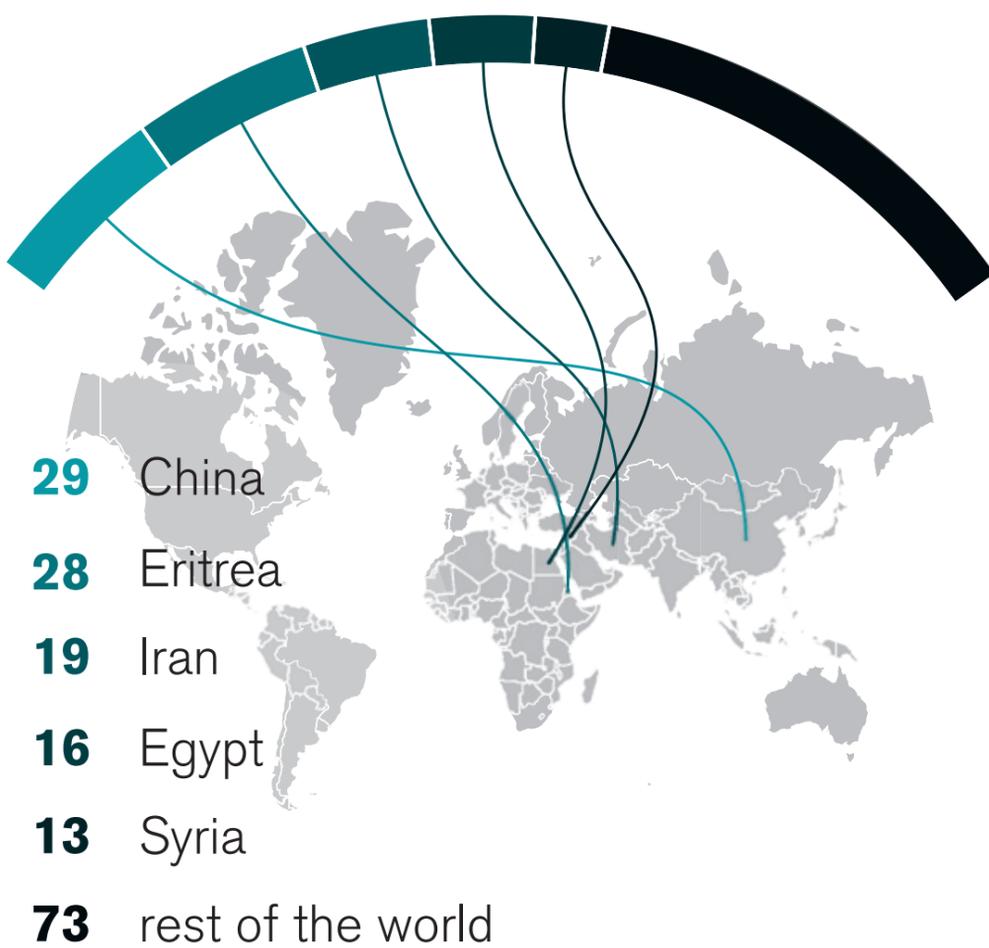
plus **178** citizen-journalists imprisoned



2014  
Round-up  
as of 8/12/2014

Worldwide, a total of 178 professional journalists were in prison in connection with their work on 8 December 2014 and, coincidentally, exactly the same number of citizen-journalists were also in prison that day. Some countries crack down more on one category than the other but China came first in both categories, with 17 % of the detained professional journalists and 44 % of the detained citizen-journalists. As in 2013, Eritrea (2nd), Iran (3rd) and Syria (5th) were again among the top five biggest prisons for professional journalists, while President Sisi's authoritarian regime in Egypt entered the top five in 4th position with 9%. Most of the journalists detained in Vietnam are citizen-journalists because it has almost no independent traditional media and its dynamic social media are a major source of news and information. In Saudi Arabia, the cyber-crime law is used equally against professional and citizen-journalists.

The five biggest prisons  
for journalists



**139**

## JOURNALISTS WHO FLED THEIR COUNTRY

↑ 106 %

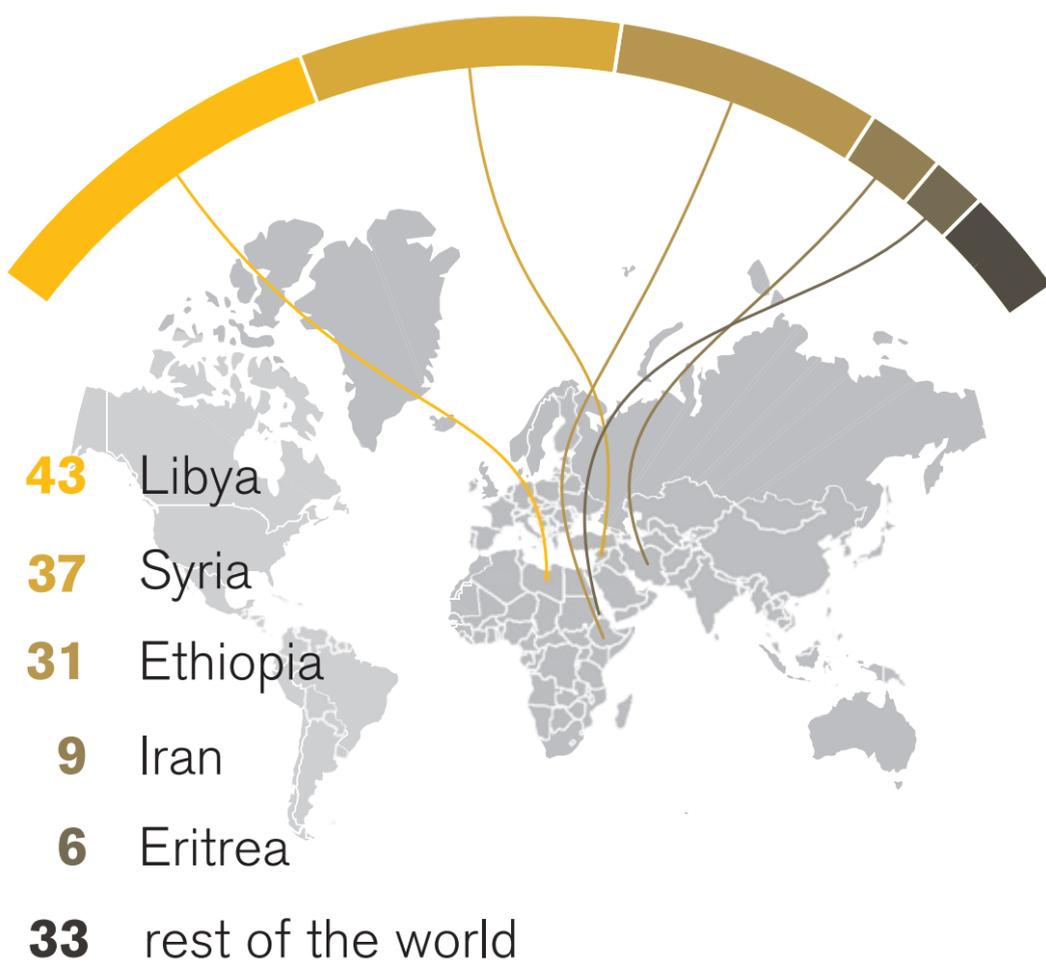
plus **20** citizen-journalists

A total of 139 professional journalists and 20 citizen-journalists contacted Reporters Without Borders as they fled abroad in 2014. This is more than twice as many as in 2013, when RWB registered a total of 77 cases of professional citizen-journalists having to flee abroad in connection with their work. Most journalists flee to a neighbouring country where they continue to fear for their safety because their government's thugs or militiamen often try to pursue them across the border.

2014  
Round-up Figures  
for 1/12/2013  
to 8/12/2014

A total of 43 Libyan and 37 Syrian journalists fled into exile in 2014 to escape the chaos and death threats at home, while a crackdown on privately-owned media in Ethiopia drove 31 journalists into exile. In Azerbaijan, now Europe's biggest prison for media personnel, dozens of journalists have fled abroad in recent months to escape the threat of arrest. Reporters Without Borders assisted six of them. And the exodus continued in Iran and Eritrea, two countries at the bottom of the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.

### The countries that journalists had to flee



**853**

**JOURNALISTS ARRESTED**

↑ 3 %

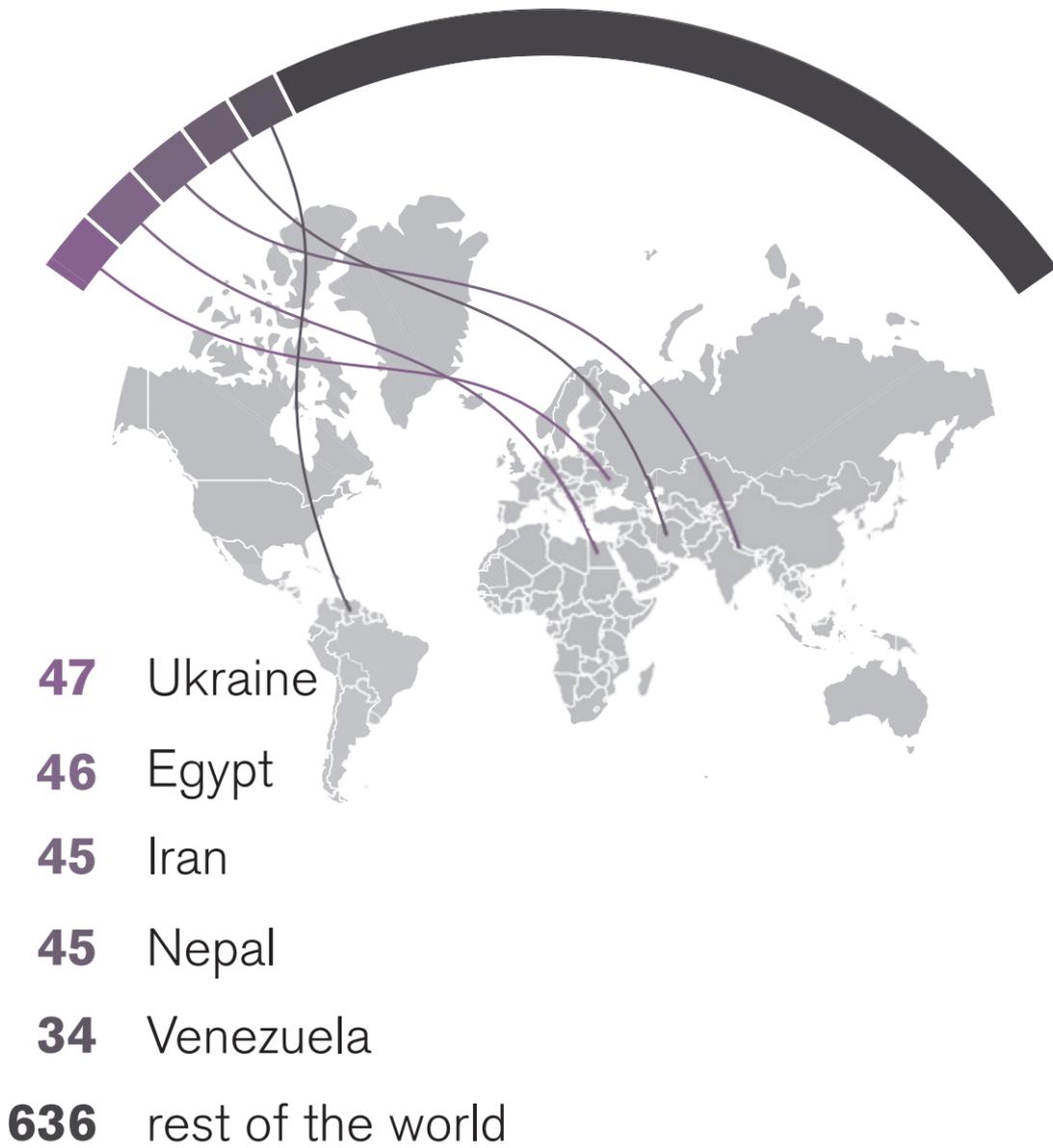
plus **122** citizen-journalists arrested

Arrests of journalists are obviously not such grave violations of freedom of information as murders or prolonged abduction, but they obstruct the media's work and often constitute a form of intimidation, which is unacceptable. At least 853 professional journalists were arrested in 2014, a 3 % increase on 2013.

2014  
Round-up Figures  
for 1/12/2013  
to 8/12/2014

In Ukraine, both government forces and separatist rebels operate checkpoints in combat zones at which journalists may be detained and taken away in a heavy-handed manner and then freed a few hours later without any explanation being given for their arrest. In Egypt, 46 journalists were arrested this year on such pretexts as being Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers, endangering national unity or inciting violence or riots. The political situation does not justify President Sisi's repressive policies and the propaganda regime he has established.

The countries  
where most journalists are arrested



**1846**

## JOURNALISTS THREATENED OR ATTACKED

↓ 15 %

This year, many countries saw often-violent demonstrations in which journalists were physically attacked or beaten up by protesters or police. In Venezuela, the Bolivarian National Guard was responsible for 62 % of the cases of violence against journalists during this year's major streets protests. In Turkey, the failure to punish police violence during the 2013 Gezi Park protests just encouraged more police abuses a year later, with journalists paying a high price when police responded to demonstrations with disproportionate force.

2014  
Round-up Figures  
for 1/12/2013  
to 8/12/2014

The record number of cases in Ukraine was due firstly to police use of targeted violence against journalists during the Maidan Square protests in January and February, and then to the turmoil in the east of the country and in Crimea, where about 50 journalists were attacked or manhandled. In China, the Communist Party did not hesitate to use plainclothes thugs to prevent journalists from covering demonstrations. Many journalists were also threatened, either by government officials or non-state actors, including organized crime groups, private militias or supporters of religious organizations.

### The countries where most journalists are threatened or attacked

