



**WORLD PRESS  
FREEDOM INDEX 2020**

**PRESS KIT**

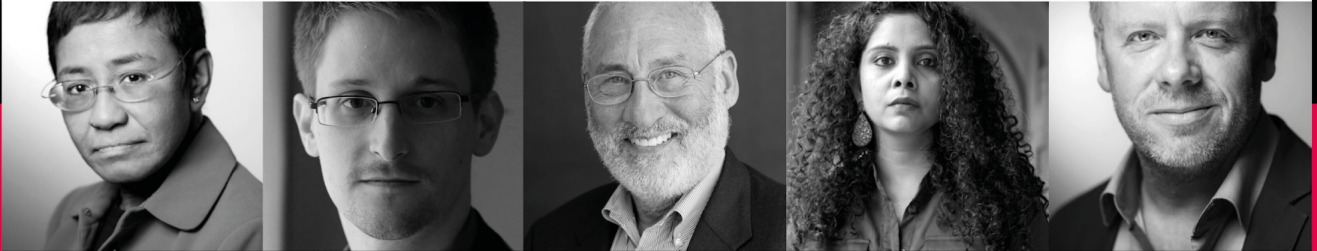
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** VIRTUAL PRESS CONFERENCE
- 4** THE MAP
- 5** GENERAL ANALYSIS
- 11** REGIONAL ANALYSIS
  - 11** 1/AFRICA
  - 14** 2/ NORTH AFRICA
  - 15** 3/ LATIN AMERICA
  - 17** 4/ PACIFIC ASIA
  - 20** 5/ NORTH AMERICA
  - 23** 6/ EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
  - 26** 7/ EUROPEAN UNION AND BALKANS
  - 29** 8/ MIDDLE EAST
- 31** WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX 2020

# | VIRTUAL PRESS CONFERENCE |

#RSFINDEX

**RSF** REPORTERS  
WITHOUT BORDERS



## JOURNALISM IN CRISIS: A DECISIVE DECADE

RSF VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, APRIL 21

To launch the 2020 Press Freedom Index,  
RSF is hosting a virtual conference:

### JOURNALISM IN CRISIS: A DECISIVE DECADE

Tuesday, 21st April 2020  
at **18.00 PM CEST**

With speakers including:

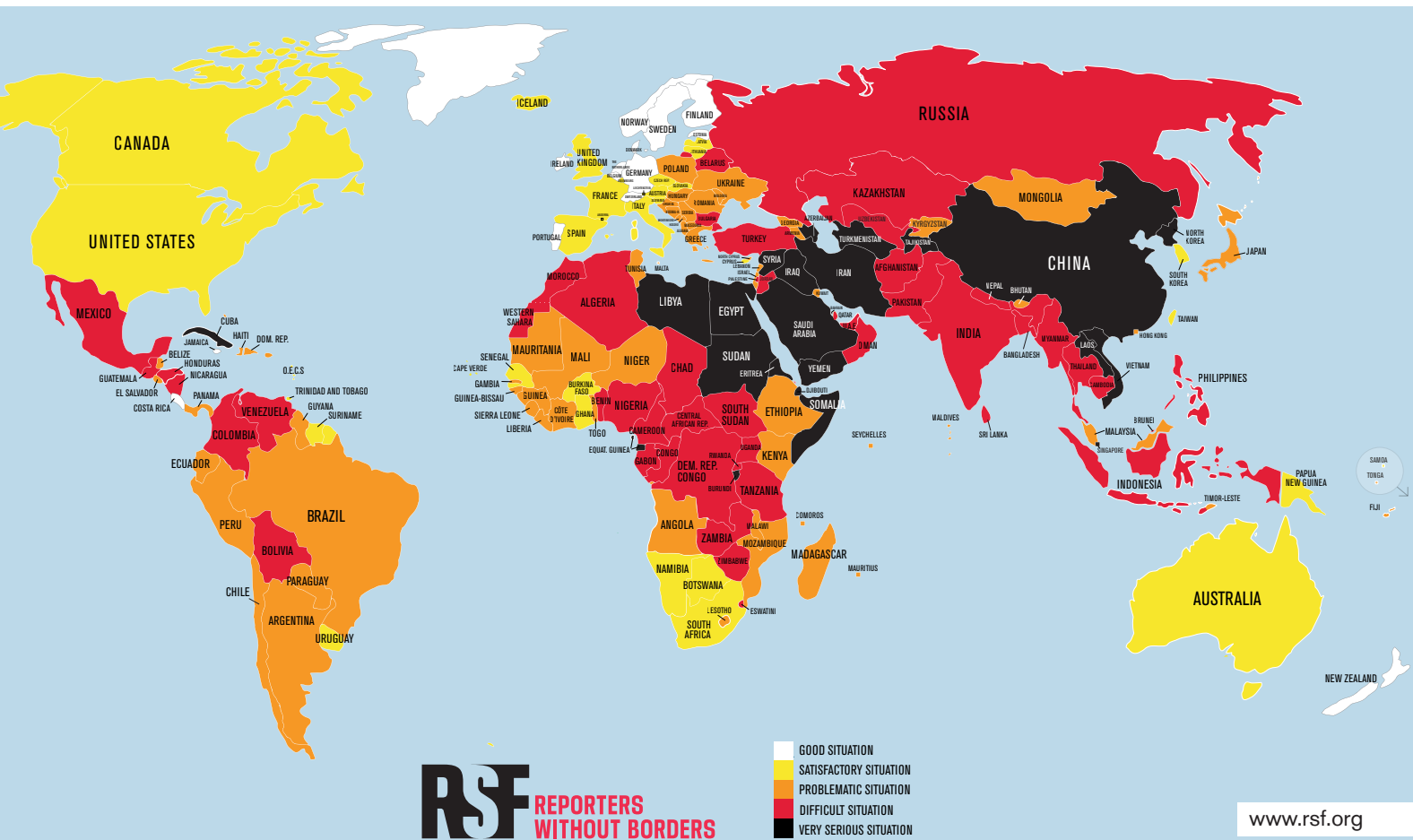
- **Maria Ressa (Moderator)**, Journalist and author, co-founder of Rappler
- **Edward Snowden**, Whistleblower, President of Freedom of the Press Foundation
- **Joseph E. Stiglitz**, recipient of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics
- **Rana Ayyub**, Journalist, Global Opinions Writer at the Washington Post, author of Gujarat Files
- **Christophe Deloire**, Secretary general of Reporters Without Borders

The conference will be in English only, limited seats

[HERE TO SUSCRIBE](#)

# THE MAP

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST REMAIN UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 21 APRIL 2020, 6 AM CEST



## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WORLDWIDE 2020

# | GENERAL ANALYSIS |

## 2020 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

### “ENTERING A DECISIVE DECADE FOR JOURNALISM, EXACERBATED BY CORONAVIRUS”

**The 2020 World Press Freedom Index, compiled by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), shows that the coming decade will be decisive for the future of journalism, with the Covid-19 pandemic highlighting and amplifying the many crises that threaten the right to freely reported, independent, diverse and reliable information.**

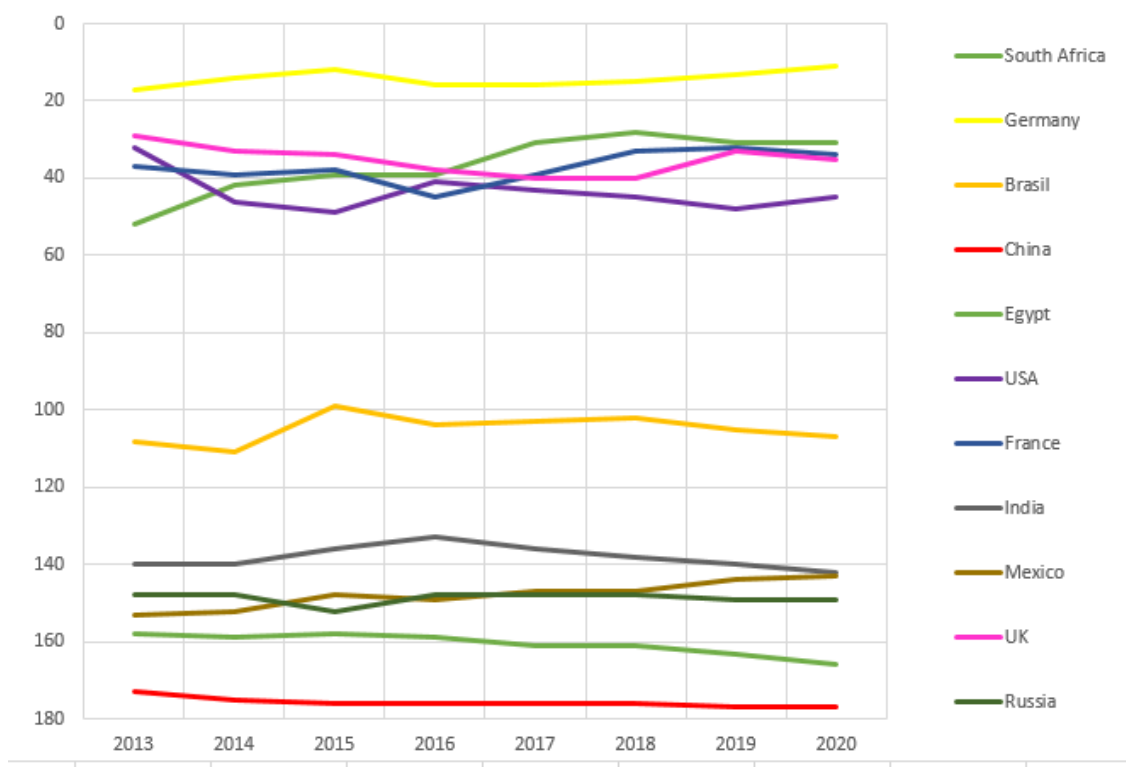
This 2020 edition of the Index, which evaluates the situation for journalists each year in 180 countries and territories, suggests that the next ten years will be pivotal for press freedom because of converging crises affecting the future of journalism: a geopolitical crisis (due to the aggressiveness of authoritarian regimes); a technological crisis (due to a lack of democratic guarantees); a democratic crisis (due to polarisation and repressive policies); a crisis of trust (due to suspicion and even hatred of the media); and an economic crisis (impoverishing quality journalism).

These five areas of crisis – the effects of which the Index’s methodology allows us to evaluate - are now compounded by a global public health crisis.

*“We are entering a decisive decade for journalism linked to crises that affect its future,” RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire said. “The coronavirus pandemic illustrates the negative factors threatening the right to reliable information, with the pandemic itself an exacerbating factor. What will freedom of information, pluralism and reliability look like in 2030? The answer to that question is being determined today.”*

There is a clear correlation between suppression of media freedom in response to the coronavirus pandemic, and a country’s ranking in the Index. Both China (177th) and Iran (down 3 at 173rd) censored their major coronavirus outbreaks extensively. In Iraq (down 6 at 162nd), the authorities stripped *Reuters* of its licence for three months after it published a story questioning official coronavirus figures. Even in Europe, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary (down 2 at 89th), had a “coronavirus” law passed with penalties of up to five years in prison for false information, a completely disproportionate and coercive measure.

*“The public health crisis provides authoritarian governments with an opportunity to implement the notorious “shock doctrine” – to take advantage of the fact that politics are on hold, the public is stunned and protests are out of the question, in order to impose measures that would be impossible in normal times,” Deloire added. “For this decisive decade to not be a disastrous one, people of goodwill, whoever they are, must campaign for journalists to be able to fulfil their role as society’s trusted third parties, which means they must have the capacity to do so.”*

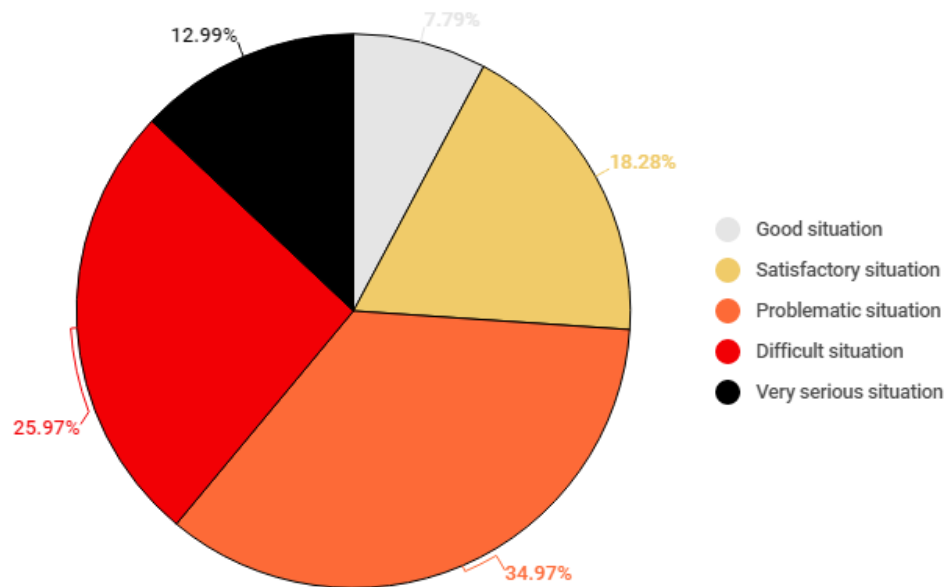


EVOLUTION OF SOME COUNTRIES RANKED SINCE 2013

## The main findings of the 2020 Index

Norway tops the Index for the fourth year in a row in 2020, while Finland is again the runner-up. Denmark (up 2 at 3rd) is next as both Sweden (down 1 at 4th) and the Netherlands (down 1 at 5th) have fallen as a result of increases in cyber-harassment. The other end of the Index has seen little change. North Korea (down 1 at 180th) has taken the last position from Turkmenistan, while Eritrea (178th) continues to be Africa's worst-ranked country.

Malaysia (101st) and the Maldives (79th) registered the biggest rises in the 2020 Index – 22nd and 19th, respectively – thanks to the beneficial effects of changes of government through the polls. The third biggest leap was by Sudan (159th), which rose 16 places after Omar al-Bashir's removal. The list of biggest declines in the 2020 Index is topped by Haiti, where journalists have often been targeted during violent nationwide protests for the past two years. After falling 21 places, it is now ranked 83rd. The other two biggest falls were in Africa – by Comoros (down 19 at 75th) and Benin (down 17 at 113th), both of which have seen a surge in press freedom violations.



RSF'S "GLOBAL INDICATOR"

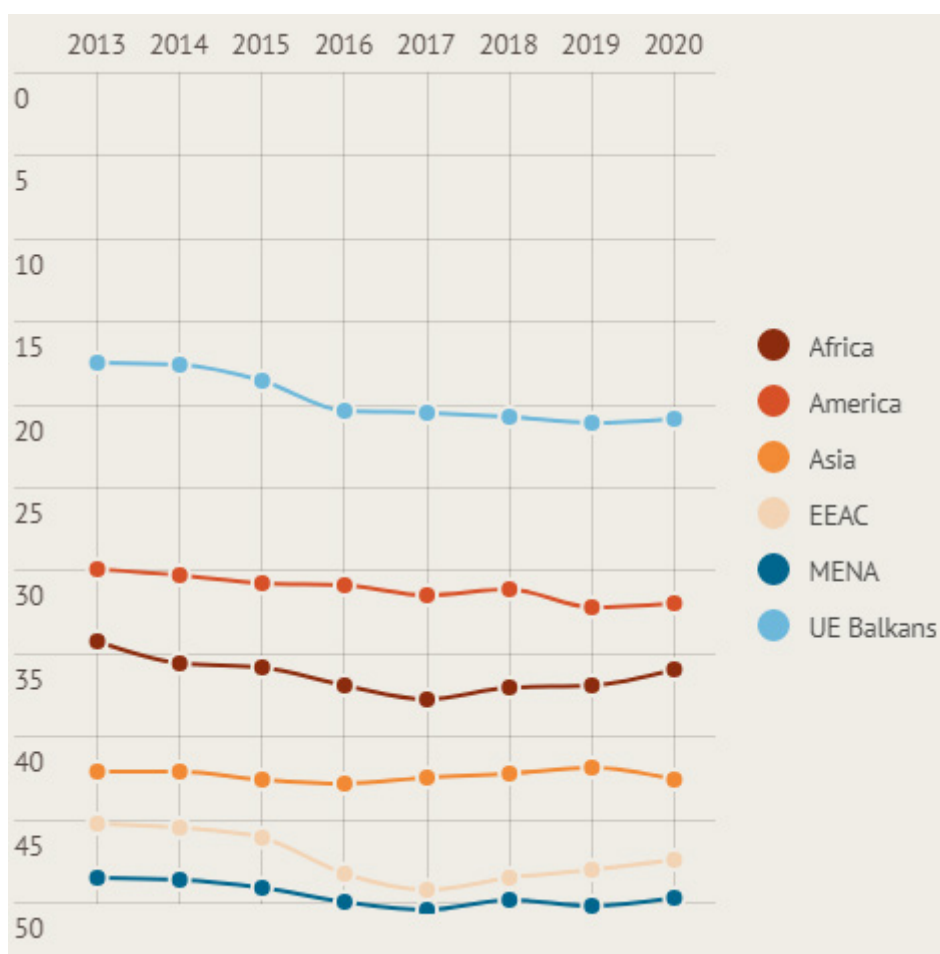
RSF's "global indicator" – its measure of the level of media freedom worldwide – improved very slightly in the 2020 Index, by 0.9%. However, it has deteriorated by 13% since this measure was created in 2013. The proportion of countries that are coloured white on the press freedom map, meaning the press freedom situation is "good," is unchanged at 8%, but the percentage of countries coloured black, meaning the situation is "very bad," has increased by two points to 13%.

## The Index region by region

**Europe** continues to be the most favourable continent for media freedom, despite oppressive policies in certain European Union and Balkan countries. It is followed by the **Americas** – North, Central and South – even if the regional heavyweights, the United States and Brazil, are becoming models of hostility towards the media. **Africa**, which is third, has also suffered major reversals, above all in the forms of prolonged arbitrary detention and online attacks.

It is the **Asia-Pacific** region that saw the greatest rise in press freedom violations (up 1.7%). Australia (down 5 at 26th) used to be the regional model but is now characterised by its threats to the confidentiality of sources and to investigative journalism. Two other countries also made significant contributions to the increase in the region's press freedom violation score. One was Singapore (158th), which fell seven places, in large part thanks to its Orwellian "fake news" law, and joined the countries coloured black on the press freedom map. The other was Hong Kong, which also fell seven places because of its treatment of journalists during pro-democracy demonstrations.

The **Eastern Europe/Central Asia** region has unsurprisingly kept its second-to-last place in the regional ranking, the position it has held for years, while the **Middle East and North Africa** continues to be the world's most dangerous region for journalists. The recent detention of RSF's correspondent in Algeria (down 5 at 146th) showed how the authorities in some countries have taken advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to settle scores with independent journalists.



EVOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL SCORES SINCE 2013

## Crisis threatening journalism's future

### Geopolitical crisis

One of the most salient crises is geopolitical, caused by leaders of dictatorial, authoritarian or populist regimes making every effort to suppress information and impose their visions of a world without pluralism and independent journalism. Authoritarian regimes have kept their poor rankings. China, which is trying to establish a “new world media order,” maintains its system of information hyper-control, of which the negative effects for the entire world have been seen during the coronavirus public health crisis. China, Saudi Arabia (up 2 at 170th) and Egypt (down 3 at 166th) are the world's biggest jailers of journalists. Russia (149th) is meanwhile deploying increasingly sophisticated resources to control information online, while India (down 2 at 142nd) has imposed the longest electronic curfew in history in Kashmir. In Egypt, accusations of “fake news” are used as grounds for blocking access to websites and webpages and for withdrawing accreditation.



## **Technological crisis**

The absence of appropriate regulation in the era of digitalised and globalised communication has created information chaos. Propaganda, advertising, rumour and journalism are in direct competition. The growing confusion between commercial, political and editorial content has destabilised democratic guarantees of freedom of opinion and expression. This encourages the adoption of dangerous laws which, on the pretext of restricting the spread of fake news, facilitate tougher crackdowns on independent and critical journalism. Like Singapore, Benin has established a new law that is supposedly intended to combat disinformation and cyber-crime but is liable to be used to arbitrarily restrict the freedom to inform. The pandemic has amplified the spread of rumours and fake news as quickly as the virus itself. State troll armies in Russia, India, Philippines (down 2 at 136th) and Vietnam (175th) use the weapon of disinformation on social media.

## **Democratic crisis**

The previous two editions of the World Press Freedom Index reflected a crisis caused by growing hostility and even hatred towards journalists, and this crisis has now worsened. It has resulted in more serious and frequent acts of physical violence, and therefore an unprecedented level of fear in some countries. Leading politicians and those close to them continue to openly foment hatred of journalists. The democratically elected presidents of two countries, Donald Trump in the United States (up 3 at 45th) and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil (down 2 at 107th), continue to denigrate the media and encourage hatred of journalists in their respective countries. The “hate cabinet” surrounding the Brazilian leader orchestrates large-scale online attacks on journalists who expose government secrets. President Bolsonaro has stepped up his attacks on the media since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, blaming them for “hysteria” and panic.

## **Crisis of trust**

Mistrust of media outlets suspected of broadcasting or publishing news contaminated by unreliable information continues to grow. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, which studies the public’s trust in institutions, 57% of the people polled in its latest international survey thought the media they used were contaminated with untrustworthy information. Undermined by this crisis of trust, journalists become the targets of the public’s anger during big street protests taking place in many parts of the world, including Iraq, Lebanon (down 1 at 102nd), Chile (down 5 at 51st), Bolivia (down 1 at 114th) and Ecuador (down 1 at 98th), as well as in France (down 2 at 32nd), where journalists are also the victims of police violence. In another increasingly visible phenomenon, nationalist or far-right activist groups have openly targeted journalists in Spain (29th), Austria (down 2 at 18th), Italy (down 2 at 41st) and Greece (65th), while the Taliban in Afghanistan (down 1 at 112nd) and some Buddhist fundamentalists in Myanmar (down 1 and 139th) have no qualms about using violence to impose their world vision on the media.

## **Economic crisis**

The digital transformation has brought the media to their knees in many countries. Falling sales, the collapse in advertising revenue and the increase in production and distribution costs linked above all to increases in the price of raw materials have forced news organisations to restructure and lay off journalists. In the United States, for example, half of the media jobs have been lost over the past ten years. These economic problems have social consequences and an impact on the editorial freedom of media around the world. Newspapers that are in a much weaker economic situation are naturally less able to resist pressure.

The economic crisis has also accentuated the phenomena of ownership concentration and, even more, conflicts of interest, which threaten journalistic pluralism and independence. The acquisition of Central European Media Enterprises (CME) by the Czech Republic's wealthiest billionaire has alarmed several Eastern European countries where CME controls influential TV channels. The consequences of concentration are being felt in Argentina (down 7 at 64th) and in Asia. In Japan (up 1 at 66th), newsrooms are still heavily influenced by their bosses in the "keiretsu," the media-owning conglomerates that put business interests first. In Taiwan (down 1 at 43rd) and Tonga (down 5 at 50th), the now all-important profit motive has encouraged the media to become very polarised and sensationalist, helping to discredit them even more and accentuating the public trust crisis.

## **How the Index is compiled**

Published annually by RSF since 2002, the World Press Freedom Index measures the level of media freedom in 180 countries and territories. It assesses the level of pluralism, media independence, the environment for the media and self-censorship, the legal framework, transparency, and the quality of infrastructure that supports the production of news and information. It does not evaluate government policy.

The global indicator and the regional indicators are calculated on the basis of the scores registered for each country. These country scores are calculated from responses to a questionnaire in 20 languages that is completed by experts throughout the world, supported by a qualitative analysis. The scores measure constraints and violations, so the higher the score, the worse the situation. Growing awareness of the Index has made it an extremely useful advocacy tool.

# REGIONAL ANALYSIS

## 1 / AFRICA

### 2020 RSF INDEX: FUTURE OF AFRICAN JOURNALISM UNDER THREAT FROM ALL SIDES

**On the 2020 World Press Freedom Index map, compiled by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 21 African countries appear in red or black. Those who produce news and information are working in difficult, even critical, conditions. The coming decade will be decisive for the future of journalism on the continent.**

Press freedom remains highly fragile in sub-Saharan Africa. The fall of several dictators and authoritarian governments in recent years in countries such as **Angola** (up three at 106th), **Ethiopia** (up 11 at 99th), **Gambia** (up five at 87th), the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** (up 4 at 150th), **Sudan** (up 16 at 159th) and **Zimbabwe** (up one at 126th), has loosened the noose on journalists in these countries.

However, the profound changes needed to allow high-quality, free and independent journalism to flourish are few and far between. Worse, some countries such as **Tanzania** (down six at 124th) and **Benin** (down 17 at 113th) have seen significant retreats. Arrests and arbitrary and lengthy detentions are increasing, as are on-line attacks and repressive new laws which can be abused to curb freedom of news and information on the pretext of fighting disinformation and Internet crime.

#### **Decriminalizing journalism and protecting journalists**

Journalists continue to lose their lives in Africa and the killers generally go unpunished. According to RSF figures, 102 journalists have been killed in the continent over the past 10 years, half of them in Somalia (up one at 163rd). Somalia remains the most dangerous country for reporters despite significant progress towards punishing police officers and military personnel who commit violence against media workers.

In the DRC one journalist was killed in the west of the country last year and colleagues were forced to flee to escape the same fate. News organizations covering the response to the Ebola epidemic have regularly been targeted. In West Africa, an investigation into the murder of the investigative journalist Ahmed Hussein-Suale in **Ghana** (down three at 30th) in January last year failed to identify those responsible. In **Nigeria** (up five at 115th), those behind the killing of two journalists, shot dead six months apart while covering protests, are still on the loose.

Journalists' safety remains a major issue and requires greater legal protection. In this respect, the abolition of custodial sentences imposed on journalists for carrying out their work remains unfinished business. Some journalists, such as the former head of the state radio and TV broadcaster in **Cameroon**

(up three at 134th), Amadou Vamoulké, are tried by special courts without due process. Vamoulké has been held in provisional detention since 2016. Eritrea is the only country in Africa where his fellow journalists are treated as harshly.

In 2019, RSF reported the arbitrary detention of 171 journalists in sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of the continent's countries have resorted to such practices, even where local laws may have already decriminalized press offences. When reform of repressive laws is lagging, new all-purpose legislation in the name of the fight against disinformation or hate speech crops up everywhere.

These laws never fulfil their stated objectives but can easily be misused to curb freedom of information. Press laws are circumvented and journalists are accused of being, among other things, terrorists, spies, crooks or cybercriminals with the aim of silencing them.

In Benin, the investigative journalist Ignace Sossou was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment under a new digital law for "harassment by means of electronic communications". He accurately tweeted statements of public concern and should never have been prosecuted for something that was strictly journalistic.

In **Chad**, (down one at 123rd), the charge against newspaper publisher Martin Inoua Doulguet was changed from defamation to cyber-bullying. The charges against Tanzanian investigative journalist Erick Kabendera were changed three times with the aim of keeping him in detention. He was released after seven months but still faces prosecution. His arbitrary detention is one reason for Tanzania's big drop in the Index (down six at 124th). It has fallen 57 places since 2016. No other country has seen such a rapid decline in its position in recent years.

### **The new threats: cyber-censorship, cyber-surveillance and cyber-attacks**

**Sudan** (up 16 at 159th), on the other hand, has made great progress since the overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir in April last year. The number of direct attacks, arrests of journalists and censorship of newspapers has fallen considerably, although news organizations, particularly online, are still monitored. According to information received by RSF, the Cyber Jihadist Unit, an offshoot of the intelligence services, is still active and continues to track journalists' activities.

The communications of journalists and African news media are increasingly monitored and they face online censorship and attacks. They can also face smear tactics, as happened in 2019 to the National Media Group, the first privately-owned media group in **Kenya** (down three at 103rd), which was tagged with the hashtag #NationMediaGarbage by trolls close to the government, and of drowning in social media chaos where reliable news and information is often swamped by a jumble of propaganda, conspiracy theories and misinformation.

Among new threats, cyber-censorship continues to gain ground and has become a highly effective weapon against journalism in Africa. Since 2015, almost half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa assessed by RSF have used cyber-censorship, at least 10 of them in the past year alone. These include the DRC, **Mauritania** (down three at 97th), **Malawi** (down one at 69th) and Ethiopia. Chad holds the record in this regard, having cut off social media for 470 days consecutively, depriving journalists and citizens of access to essential news outlets.

### **Historic political accountability**

As the world of online news and information undergoes fundamental change, traditional news media still have trouble breaking free from political and economic constraints 30 years after the sector was liberalized. In most African countries, state media have yet to achieve this. They remain firmly in the grip of government, generally content to relay government statements without reflecting the diversity of opinion within their societies. The proliferation of news outlets in a growing number of countries provides only the appearance of pluralism. Most news organizations remain, directly or indirectly, in thrall to government, opposition or financial interests.

Only firm political decisions can usher in high-quality independent media. This also holds true for investigative journalism, which requires commitment on the part of those willing to take it up even in the highest-ranking countries such as **Namibia** (23rd), top of the list of African countries in this edition. There, too, disclosures about the dubious allocation of fishing quotas led to an increase in verbal attacks by senior political figures and the dismissal of one journalist at the official news agency.

At the other end of the Index, **Eritrea** (178th), which has the largest number of journalists in prison in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, with 11 media workers behind bars from whom nothing has been heard for many years, and **Djibouti** (down three at 176th), remain black holes for independent news and information. In **Rwanda**, (155th) the crackdown on dissident voices has been so severe that self-censorship is now the rule.

Tanzania and **Burundi** (down one at 160th), where four journalists were jailed merely for covering a story that the authorities hoped would be ignored, is slipping perilously towards the camp of countries where critical stories no longer see the light of day. Others, such as Benin, **Mozambique** (down one at 104th) and the **Comoros** (down 19 at 75th), where attacks on press freedom mushroomed during a disputed election, have also been heading in a worrying direction.

At a time when misinformation is increasing, the next decade will see historic choices for journalism in Africa. Societies where factual accuracy and open discussion of ideas are cardinal values must firmly and unequivocally support journalists, giving them legal protection, providing financial support that is not based on political favour in a precarious sector whose employees are vulnerable to influence, and expanding training facilities – still few and far between -- before and during a journalist's career.

### RSF 2020 INDEX: ENVIRONMENT WORSENS FOR NORTH AFRICA'S JOURNALISTS

**What with interminable trials in Morocco, frequent arrests and prolonged pre-trial detention in Algeria and media outlets pressganged into serving belligerents in Libya, the environment for journalists has continued to worsen in North Africa – except Tunisia, which continues its democratic transition despite delays with reforming its media legislation.**

In Algeria (146th), whose five-place fall is the region's biggest, journalists have been sorely tested ever since the wave of "Hirak" street protests began in February 2019. Cases of journalists being detained and intimidated by the security services became more frequent as the protests continued, and didn't stop when the coronavirus epidemic ended the protests. On the contrary, Casbah Tribune website editor Khaled Drareni, who is also the Algeria correspondent of RSF and TV5 Monde, was arrested on 29 March near Blida, a region that was supposed to be under lockdown because it is the epidemic's epicentre in Algeria, and he is now facing a possible ten-year jail sentence on a charge of "inciting an unarmed gathering and endangering national unity." Sofiane Merakchi, the correspondent of the Lebanese TV channel Al Mayadeen and a reporter for France 24 et RT, was the first journalist to be detained in connection with his coverage of the protest movement. Arrested in late September 2019 on a charge of importing equipment without a permit and evading customs duties, he was sentenced to eight months in prison.

Morocco (133rd) has risen two places in the 2020 Index, above all because of the creation of a Press Council, even if it has not as yet helped to make the environment for media and journalists any less threatening. Judicial harassment continues. In addition to the trials of a number of media figures that have dragged on for several years, several new prosecutions have been initiated and heavy sentences have been passed. Taoufik Bouachrine, a columnist and editor of the Arabic-language newspaper Akhbar al-Yaoum, was sentenced to 15 years in prison and a fine of 255,000 euros on rape charges that he denied, insisting that he was the victim of a "political trial." Journalist and human rights defender Omar Radi was given a four-month suspended prison sentence for a single tweet criticizing a judicial decision.

#### **Media forced to work for belligerents**

Libya (164th) has continued its slide down the Index, falling another two places. Crimes of violence against journalists by press freedom predators have gone completely unpunished for the past nine years, while the war between rival regimes in the east and west of the country has resulted in an appalling climate of threats and violence for the media. Forced to censor themselves or flee abroad since the fighting began in 2014, Libya's journalists and media outlets now find themselves being pressganged into working for one or other of the warring factions.

Against this rather sombre regional backdrop, Tunisia is still the best ranked country by far and has held on to its 72nd place. Continuing its democratic transition, it has created the basis for a free, independent and professional media sector. Nonetheless, the drafting of new media legislation has dragged on for years and the climate for the media and journalists has worsened notably since the election of a new president in October 2019.

## 3/ LATIN AMERICA

### RSF 2020 INDEX: LATIN AMERICA'S DARK HORIZON FOR PRESS FREEDOM

**The environment for journalists in Latin America is increasingly complex and hostile. Many journalists covering sensitive subjects have experienced an increase in harassment, violence and intimidation. At the same time, tha**

Aside from two notable exceptions – Costa Rica, now ranked 7th in the Index after rising three places, and Uruguay, which has held on to its 19th place – the 2020 Index is characterized by an overall decline in respect for press freedom in Latin America. Harassment and stigmatization of the media, fed by online disinformation and attacks, have increased in scope, especially in countries with major social conflicts.

#### **Hostility fuelled by political and social instability**

This is the case in Haiti (83rd), which has suffered a 21-place fall, the biggest in the 2020 Index. For nearly two years there have been major, often violent protests against President Jovenel Moïse, who is accused of corruption, and journalists have often been targeted during the protests. Journalist Néhémie Joseph's murder in 2019 testified to a disturbing spiral of violence and to Haitian journalism's extreme vulnerability.

As in Haiti, social conflicts and the need to cover demonstrations have put journalists on the front line in many of the region's countries. This has been the case in Ecuador (down 1 at 98th), where protests by the part of the population that feels betrayed by President Lenín Moreno's adoption of neoliberal policies have been accompanied by attacks on journalists that have often made it impossible for them to work. So too in Chile (51st) – which has fallen another five places after the previous year's eight-place fall – where violent protests triggered by a hike in Santiago metro fares led to a wave of aggression and targeted attacks against journalists and media outlets throughout the country.

Bolivia (down 1 at 114th) also saw many cases of harassment and attacks on journalists during demonstrations throughout the election campaign and presidential election in November 2019 that resulted in President Evo Morales resigning and being forced into exile, plunging the country into a period of uncertainty and instability.

Even if it continues to be one of the region's better behaved countries, Argentina (64th) has fallen seven places in the 2020 Index above all because of police violence and attacks on journalists during demonstrations in the biggest cities and during the election that brought Alberto Fernández to the presidency in December 2019.



## **Authoritarian excesses and multiform censorship**

In Brazil (down 2 at 107th), the effects of Jair Bolsonaro's installation as president in January 2019 is the chief reason why the country has fallen two places in RSF's Index for the second year running. And it will probably continue to fall as long as Bolsonaro, egged on by his family and several members of his government, continues to insult and humiliate some of Brazil's leading journalists and media outlets, feeding a climate of hate and mistrust towards news providers. Journalists, especially women journalists, are increasingly vulnerable in this fraught environment and are constantly attacked by hate groups and Bolsonaro supporters, especially on social media.

In Venezuela (147th), which owns its one-place rise in the Index solely to other countries falling, President Maduro's authoritarianism continues to grow and his government's constant persecution of the independent press takes many forms, including arbitrary arrests, violence by police and intelligence officers, depriving critical radio and TV stations of broadcast frequencies, Internet cuts and blocking of social media, and expulsions for foreign journalists.

The independent press in Nicaragua (down 3 at 117th) has suffered the same fate and is succumbing to persecution by President Daniel Ortega – who was reelected for a third consecutive term in 2016 – by his government and by his supporters. Cases of journalists being arbitrarily detained or fleeing the country increased in 2019. Because of a government-orchestrated shortage of the necessary inputs (including newsprint and rubber), printed newspapers have virtually disappeared.

By falling two places, Cuba (171st) has reentered the Index's bottom ten and continues to be Latin America's worst ranked country. Now headed by Miguel Díaz-Canel, the Cuban regime maintains its near-total monopoly of news and information, and the constitution continues to ban privately-owned media. Arrests and imprisonment of troublesome journalists increased in 2019.

## **Intractable structural problems**

With at least ten journalists murdered in connection with their work in 2019, Mexico (up 1 at 143rd) continues to be Latin America's most dangerous country for the media, and President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's government has proved unable to rein in the spiral of violence and impunity. As in its Central American neighbours, the collusion between organized crime and corrupt politicians and officials – especially at the local level – puts news providers in great danger. In Guatemala (116th) and Honduras (down 2 at 148th), in particular, journalists with the opposition and community media outlets who dare to denounce political corruption are often attacked, threatened, forced to flee the country, or murdered.

The problems are proving equally intractable in Colombia (130th), which has fallen one place in the Index, and is back to where it was in 2018. The increase in attacks, death threats and abductions targeting journalists since Iván Duque's installation as president in August 2018 has turned various parts of the country into black holes from which absolutely no news and information emerges and has undermined journalism even further.



## Pressure reinforced by cyber-harassment

In Latin America, as in many other parts of the world, physical attacks against journalists are usually accompanied by cyber-harassment campaigns waged by troll armies or the supporters of authoritarian regimes, or both. These methods of online censorship are growing dangerously and target women journalists in particular.

The panorama is far from promising and, in fact, lasting and significant progress for press freedom faces countless challenges in Latin America. If journalists and media outlets cannot count on strong and democratic institutions to guarantee their safety and survival, they will have to reinvent themselves and find alternative and innovative solutions.

## 4/ PACIFIC ASIA

### RSF 2020 INDEX: ASIA-PACIFIC – HYPER-CONTROL AND NATIONAL-POPULIST EXCESSES

**You could still harbour serious hopes about press freedom in Asia and Oceania in 2010 but the past decade has seen a steep decline, with the adoption of undemocratic and totalitarian practices, the emergence of a populism that unleashes hatred on journalists, and extreme media polarization. The region is facing huge challenges.**

One of the lessons of the 2020 Index in Asia and Oceania is that press freedom is potentially in danger in any country. The proof is Australia (26th), formerly cited as a regional model, which has fallen five places, above all because of federal police raids on a journalist's home and the state TV broadcaster's headquarters. The precedent set by the raids poses a serious threat to investigative reporting and the confidentiality of journalists' sources. It also drew Australians' attention to the fact that their constitution is completely lacking in guarantees for the right to inform and to be informed.

This is all the more alarming because Asia has the world's worst violator of this freedom. North Korea (down 1 at 180th) is back in its former position at the very bottom of the Index after climbing one place in 2019 because of the semblance of an opening to foreign journalists during the summit meetings in June 2018 and February 2019 between President Trump and "Supreme Leader" Kim Jong-un.

In the race to be toughest on press freedom, North Korea is still closely followed by China (177th), which never stops enhancing its system of information hyper-control and persecution of dissident journalists and bloggers. Further evidence of this came in February 2020, when it arrested two of its citizens for taking it upon themselves to cover the coronavirus crisis. The world's biggest jailer of journalists, China is currently holding around 100, of whom the vast majority are Uyghurs.

## **Undemocratic systems, a geopolitical challenge**

Vietnam (175th) has risen one place in the 2020 Index but, rather than signifying any real improvement, this is just a bounce back after the previous year's one-place fall, which was due to the level of repression in 2018. Laos (172nd) has fallen yet again, above all because of the regime's crackdown on the nascent blogosphere.

In a novel development, these four Communist one-party states have been joined in the Index's "black zone" by a regime that is an expert in wielding absolute control over news and information – Singapore (158th). Thanks to an Orwellian law that is supposed to combat "fake news," it has fallen seven places in a single year.

The Sultanate of Brunei (152nd) has also reinforced its information control arsenal by an addition to its criminal code – the death penalty for any written or spoken statement deemed to have blasphemed Islam. Two other regimes in the region have managed to enhance their system for cracking down on dissent: Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodia (down 1 at 144th) and Gen. Prayut's Thailand (down 4 at 140th).

Pakistan (145th), which has brought almost all of the traditional media into line, is now stepping up its attempts to silence online critics, with the result that it has fallen three places. Similarly, by trying to impose draconian legislation, Nepal (112th) has fallen six places.

## **Political and religious intolerance**

The geopolitical challenge to press freedom posed by these alternative authoritarian systems is being accompanied by an increase in a "national-populism" that tolerates no critical journalism, regarding it as "anti-government" and, by extension, "anti-national."

This puts reporters who try to do their job on the front line. They have been the targets of police violence on the streets in Sri Lanka (down 1 at 127th) and during pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong (80th), the semi-autonomous territory that has fallen seven places, one of Asia's biggest falls.

They have also been attacked by pro-government political activists, as in Bangladesh (down 1 at 151st), Philippines (down 2 at 136th) and India (down 2 at 142nd). By completely depriving the Kashmir Valley's 8 million inhabitants of Internet access, New Delhi also imposed the biggest electronic curfew in history.

India's Hindu nationalist right is also an example of the extraordinary intolerance that religious extremists have shown towards journalists who don't share their views, an intolerance displayed by the Taliban in Afghanistan (down 1 at 122nd) and Buddhist fundamentalists in Myanmar (down 1 at 139th). All are always quick to try to impose their world vision on the media.

## **Troll armies**

This ideological loathing of the very idea of an independent press finds a natural terrain for expression on the Internet, a major battleground in the information war. Physical attacks against journalists are often accompanied or preceded by online threats from troll armies and click farms. In Asia, these digital

soldiers are the spearheads of an uninhibited national-populism that feeds on online disinformation and hate speech.

In this extremely complex environment, the media can play an absolutely decisive role in ensuring that democracies function as they should, especially during elections. This is the case in Indonesia (up 5 at 119th), where President Jokowi is in a position to put press freedom at the centre of his second term.

The big rises by Malaysia (up 22 at 101st) and Maldives (up 19 at 79th) confirm the dramatic effect that a change of government through the polls can have in improving the environment for journalists and combatting self-censorship.

The media have managed to impose themselves as a major player in emerging democracies such as Bhutan (up 13 at 67th), East Timor (up 6 at 78th) and Samoa (up 1 at 21st). In countries where the government is less tolerant towards critical media, such as Fiji (52nd) and Mongolia (down 3 at 73rd), journalists have managed to resist, above all thanks to legal guarantees.

### **Concentration and polarization**

In confirmed democracies, governments readily use national security as a pretext for curbing journalistic freedom. This is often seen in South Korea (down 1 at 42nd), where the law provides for severe penalties for the publication of information deemed to be sensitive, especially in connection with North Korea.

The consequences of media ownership being concentrated in ever fewer hands continues to be one of the biggest threats to press freedom in democracies in Asia and Oceania. This is the case in Japan (up 1 at 66th), where newsrooms are still heavily influenced by management within the “keiretsu,” the conglomerates that own the media in Japan, which put their business interests first.

Business imperatives also threaten media independence by tending to encourage an extreme polarization and search for sensationalism, as is the case in Tonga (down 5 at 50th), Papua New Guinea (down 8 at 46th) and Taiwan (down 1 at 43rd). Even the regional model, New Zealand (9th), has fallen two places because media ownership continues to be highly concentrated. It shows that regardless of where in the world you want to exercise the right to press freedom, you have to keep fighting for it.

## 5/ NORTH AMERICA

### 2020 RSF INDEX: TROUBLING TRENDS PERSIST IN NORTH AMERICA DESPITE REGION'S IMPROVEMENTS

**The 2020 Reporters Without Borders (RSF) World Press Freedom Index shows that troubling trends continued throughout North America, despite a slight overall improvement. Moving into the new decade, it is urgent that the United States restores its role as a champion of the free press at home and abroad in order for it to be considered a leading democracy.**

Across North America, journalists and news outlets face verbal and physical attacks, access denials, and legislation and prosecutions that limit their rights. Press freedom in the **United States** continues to suffer under President Donald Trump, but after three years of consistent falls the country returned to 45th in the 2020 Index (up three since last year) and now teeters on the edge of countries with a “satisfactory situation.” Hostility toward journalists and news outlets in the United States deepened and intensified, and few attacks were as vitriolic as those that came from the president. The abuse is only getting worse amid the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, as journalists covering the Trump administration’s response to the crisis are subjected to the president’s attacks during his press briefings. Despite a rise in the 2020 Index, **Canada** (16th, +2) had a mixed record, with access denials and court rulings that both hindered and helped journalists’ rights.

#### **Harassment and threats persist**

Public denigration, threats, and harassment of journalists continued to be a serious problem in the United States. As in years past, President Trump regularly targeted journalists and news outlets throughout 2019 with ad hominem attacks and claims of “fake news.” This phrase, popularized by President Trump dating back to his campaign for presidency, has now been deployed by leaders around the world as a tool to crack down on the media.

The harassment of journalists by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents at US ports of entry, is a growing trend in the past two years. One journalist said he was unduly questioned about his reporting on President Trump while another was [accused by a border officer](#) of being a “liar” who was “attacking [American] democracy.” Even in **Jamaica** (6th, +2), the highest ranked country in North America, the [prime minister borrowed from President Trump’s playbook when he attempted to sow public distrust](#) by telling political supporters the press doesn’t always report facts and urging them to refer to his social media pages for reliable information.

In the United States in 2019, local governments, [religious leaders](#) and the American public demonstrated a growing hostility toward the press and physical attacks persisted. However, the violence was nowhere near as severe as it was in 2018—when a gunman killed five employees at the *Capital Gazette* in Maryland—and the overall number of reported physical assaults in the United States was lower in 2019 than in the previous two years, according to the [US Press Freedom Tracker](#). Yet journalists were assaulted across the country, including at [protests](#), [Trump rallies](#), and [state](#) and [federal](#) legislative buildings. Federal

authorities arrested a [US Army soldier](#) and a [Coast Guard lieutenant](#) who were plotting separate violent attacks on major US media outlets and reporters.

## **Retaliation and access denials**

The [rise in reported access denials](#) in the United States in 2019 took place in states across the country, and the federal authorities in both the United States and Canada attempted to keep reporters from covering contentious issues. Local and state governments everywhere from [New Jersey](#) to [Kansas](#) restricted press access to events or meetings of public interest, and some introduced rules that would limit the types of coverage permitted in municipal buildings, such as in [Vermont](#) and [Arkansas](#). The Trump administration did not set a better example. The once-daily televised White House press briefing with a press secretary stopped [taking place in March 2019](#) and was replaced primarily by President Trump's paparazzi-style "chopper talks" in front of Air Force One or Marine One, allowing the president to limit and control the time he will spend taking questions. Trump administration officials also [attempted to revoke](#) a White House correspondent's press pass in August 2019 and [banned](#) press pool members from high-level [meetings](#).

In March 2019 reporting showed that [the US government was keeping a secret database of journalists](#), activists and others to stop for secondary-screenings and questioning at checkpoints along the US-Mexico border around the time a migrant caravan had arrived from Honduras. Journalists on this list were detained, forced to show border officers the contents of their reporting materials or identify individuals who had been at the border.

In Canada, political staffers for two indigenous tribes physically obstructed female indigenous reporters who attempted to interview tribal leaders. Separately, the federal police [blocked press access](#) during an environmental protest on indigenous land. Months later, [a March 2019 landmark court decision](#) affirmed that journalists have a right to cover such protests and noted the importance of media coverage for indigenous issues.

## **Testing the limits of press freedom**

The Trump administration continued its [aggressive crackdown](#) on whistleblowers in 2019, prosecuting three government employees under the WWI-Espionage Act for giving journalists classified information. And in an unprecedented move, the US Justice Department charged Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange with 18 counts, [including 17 under the Espionage Act](#), marking the first time the agency has charged someone with espionage for publishing classified documents. If Assange is extradited from the United Kingdom and found guilty under the Espionage Act in the United States, the ruling could create a new and dangerous legal precedent allowing for the criminal prosecution of journalists for doing their constitutionally-protected jobs.

Canada's federal "shield law," which was adopted in 2017, was tested for the first time in September 2019, reaffirming journalists' rights to withhold the identities of their confidential sources in court. Unfortunately the shield law does not apply to the protection of confidential materials, such as communications. This was spotlighted in July 2019, when a court ruled that a *VICE Canada* reporter must divulge his confidential communications with a source to the federal police. This ruling has dangerous implications for journalistic independence, as reporters are not meant to be investigative arms of law enforcement, and depend on trustworthy source relationships to do their jobs effectively.

While the United States does not have a federal “shield law,” most states have their own statutes to ensure journalists are not forced to disclose their confidential sources. In May 2019, San Francisco police acted in violation of California’s “shield law” when they [raided the home of freelance journalist Bryan Carmody](#) and seized his reporting materials in an effort to uncover his confidential source. Judges eventually quashed the police’s search warrants, deeming them illegal under this law.

## **What lies ahead**

Moving into the new decade, the nations that comprise the North America region should prioritize policies and practices that improve press freedom and ensure journalists’ safety. In the United States, newly-elected public officials should champion policies such as a federal “shield law” and reform of the Espionage Act that prohibits the prosecution of journalists and allows for a public interest defense for whistleblowers. In spite of measures taken against the press on indigenous territory, Canada, which co-founded the Media Freedom Coalition in partnership with the United Kingdom in July 2019, is proving a leader in global press protections. Caribbean nations like [Trinidad and Tobago](#) (26th, +3) and [Jamaica](#) introduced legislation in 2019 that could potentially harm press protections, and moving forward should revise these laws and ensure future legislation avoids infringing on media freedom.

Journalists and news outlets around the United States in 2019 had been preparing for potential violence and unrest leading up to the 2020 elections, but with the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping across the United States and throughout the world, the media’s concerns have evolved. Governments, authorities and private institutions in the United States and across North America have a responsibility to allow the press to cover this pandemic and its impact on everyday life, and to allow scientists, medical workers and government employees to speak to the press on these critical issues without infringement.

## 6/ EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

### RSF 2020 INDEX: EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA – CLAMPDOWN CONTINUES

**Behind the lack of any major movement by the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the latest World Press Freedom Index, there are disturbing signs. The increasing expertise in new technologies that the region's authoritarian or unstable regimes are acquiring could result in more censorship of the media. The regional heavyweights, Moscow and Ankara, continue to set a bad example.**

Almost everywhere in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, strongmen are consolidating their grip on news and information. They include Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey (up 3 at 154th), where censorship of the media, especially online media, has been stepped up. Turkey's three-point rise in the Index is just the result of other countries falling, and the decrease in the number of imprisoned journalists following changes to judicial procedure in October 2019 was only temporary. Turkey is more authoritarian than ever. Quoting a communiqué by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) or the Syrian Democratic Forces, or taking issue with the government's security policies on social media can lead directly to imprisonment. The jailing of six journalists for their coverage of the Libyan crisis – three of them reporters for *Odatv.com*, a website that was shut down – is just one example among many.

Turkey's neighbours, led by Russia (149th), are also persevering in their efforts to control the Internet, using ever more elaborate methods. Russia's "Sovereign Internet" law will allow the government to disconnect the Russian Internet from the rest of the world. The declared aim is to protect Russia from cyber-attacks in the event of conflict. Internet service providers will be required to direct traffic through a centralized system of devices controlled by the state. Even if technical difficulties have so far delayed implementation, the prospect of a Chinese-style scenario is alarming. Large-scale Internet traffic disconnections were trialled during protests in Moscow and Ingushetia.

Russia's zealous media control agency Roskomnadzor, which RSF has included in its list of Digital Predators of Press Freedom, is already totally or partially blocking news sites and social media. Crimea, a news and information black hole since its annexation, is particularly affected.

The closure of the national Internet is already a reality in Turkmenistan (up 1 at 179th), which is second from last in the Index. The few Internet users can only access a highly censored version of the Internet, often in cafés where they have to show ID before connecting. In Tajikistan (161st), the authorities also assumed an Internet access monopoly in 2018. New blocking techniques are being used that sometimes prevent use of a VPN to access the few independent media outlets such as *Asia-Plus*. In Kazakhstan (up 1 at 157th), a country in transition, cuts are becoming more effective, with *Radio Azattyk*, Google and Telegram being favourite targets.



## Widespread surveillance

Although the new Kazakh president, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, talks about reform, the authorities have tried to install real-time online monitoring. Last summer, Internet users had to download and install a “national security certificate” to avoid losing their Internet access. Described as a “trial,” It was finally dropped but “certificates” that have not been uninstalled can still act as spies. On national sovereignty grounds, Moscow has ordered platforms to store the data of Russian users on servers inside Russia, allowing the authorities to spy on journalists and social media users.

The troll armies run by pro-Kremlin businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin and by the Tajik government offer an additional censorship mechanism, spreading fake news and targeting journalists in particular. Even in Georgia (60th), which has the region’s highest ranking, Facebook has closed hundreds of fake accounts posing as media outlets that were involved in a pro-government disinformation campaign. Troublesome media outlets are subjected to cyber-attacks, as in Kyrgyzstan (up 1 at 82nd), whose pluralism is an exception in Central Asia. In January 2020, the authorities refused to investigate a series of DDoS attacks on various websites including *Factcheck.kg* that were clearly a reprisal for their investigative coverage of a major corruption case.

## Information harder to access

What with ever longer official response times to requests for information, documents suddenly “classified” to restrict access and denial of accreditation to cover events, reporters for independent media outlets find it hard to access state-held information in most of the region’s countries. This is the case in Azerbaijan (down 2 at 168th) and Belarus (153rd), where denial of access to public events is common. In Kyrgyzstan, important subjects are increasingly discussed behind closed doors, in parliamentary committees, for example, or in places from which journalists are in effect barred, such as trials held in very small courtrooms.

Denial of accreditation to journalists working for foreign media outlets or the threat of rescinding accreditation blocks access to information and encourages self-censorship. The local operations of the US government-funded *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* are especially affected in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (156th), which has nonetheless risen four places thanks to reforms undertaken since President Islam Karimov’s death in 2016. Some foreign journalists are finding it harder and harder to get accreditation for Russia even if the procedures are officially unchanged. Freelancers working for foreign media outlets now risk being branded as “foreign agents,” a label already placed on some media outlets and leading media defence NGOs.

## Growing impunity

At least 37 Russian professional journalists have been killed in connection with their work since 2000. In the overwhelming majority of cases, as in other countries, the investigations have drawn a blank and the instigators have never been identified. At the same time, hate speech is getting more violent. The president of the small Russian republic of Chuvashia publicly called for journalists to be “wiped out.” After *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Elena Milashina was physically attacked during a visit to Chechnya, an information black hole, local TV channels unleashed a wave of hostile propaganda against her, voicing approval of the violence and even calling for her to be killed – all this with complete impunity.



The six-place rise by Ukraine (96th), the region's biggest, is due more to other countries falling than to any real progress. The hopes raised by Volodymyr Zelensky's election as president are taking time to realize. The media are as polarized as the rest of Ukrainian society and the prevailing impunity has fuelled an increase in violence against journalists. Nationalist groups in particular target independent media outlets such *Bellingcat*, which has received death threats. In Armenia (61st), hostility towards journalists, which previously took the form of direct physical violence, is gradually being replaced by judicial harassment. The disturbing increase in prosecutions tends to criminalize journalism and force media outlets to dedicate resources towards a legal defence instead of reporting.

The state itself often sets an example, exploiting vaguely-worded and selectively-applied legislation to convict journalists and bloggers on such charges as extremism or endangering territorial sovereignty. This is the case in Russia, which used radio commentary by the journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva as grounds for adding her to its list of "terrorists." In Central Asia and in Azerbaijan, the authorities are happy to use bans on inciting social, religious or inter-ethnic hatred in this way.

### **Excesses in the fight against disinformation**

Editorial independence is clearly still a problem when the editorial line of media outlets reflects their owners' interests in most countries in the region. In Moldova (91st), the media empire built by former billionaire and Democratic Party boss Vladimir Plahotniuc has lost its influence but has been quickly replaced by a media group affiliated to the Democratic Party's rival, the pro-Russian Party of Socialists. The oppressive influence wielded by pro-government or pro-opposition oligarchs and the accompanying disinformation campaigns result in laws that pose an ever-greater threat to press freedom. In Ukraine, a new bill would criminalize "disinformation" by journalists and create a new body with discretionary powers to verify the accuracy of content. In Armenia, social media users have been arrested on the grounds of combatting fake news and defending the national interest and some ministries have tried to draft anti-disinformation legislation without prior discussion with civil society and the media.

At a time when many independent media are struggling to survive and economic precarity prevents expansion, investigative journalism is barely developing because of a lack of resources. Denied state subsidies and advertising, and with few readers, listeners or viewers, they have also been subjected to a series of fines in Belarus. In Uzbekistan, businesses fear reprisals if they place ads in the independent media, which are meanwhile banned from receiving subsidies from abroad. In Moldova, politicians or their allies control the advertising market. All these restrictions increase the problems for journalists working for independent media, who are paid much less than their counterparts working for the state media.

## 7/EUROPEAN UNION AND BALKANS

### 2020 RSF INDEX: EUROPE'S JOURNALISTS FACE GROWING DANGERS

**More and more of the continent's journalists are suffering the consequences of a decline in the rule of law, assaults, online threats and financial troubles.**

Press freedom is high on the agenda of the new European Commission, appointed in 2019, in accordance with [recommendations](#) published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) during the campaign for the European elections. Europe was shaken by a series of serious abuses, including murder, carried out against journalists and now is the time for it to focus on the battle for press freedom. RSF welcomes the action plan announced by the European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Vera Jourová, which provides for strengthening media freedom, making social networks more accountable and protecting the democratic process. However, it is regrettable that the EU enlargement portfolio, crucial for integrating the countries of the Western Balkans, was attributed to the commissioner from Hungary, one of the EU's most repressive governments.

If the new EU institutions place such importance on press freedom, it is because the danger of backsliding is fully recognized. The drift towards [authoritarianism](#) has strengthened in Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has assumed full powers indefinitely, using the coronavirus epidemic as a pretext. Anyone convicted of publishing fake news faces a prison term of up to five years. This provision gives Hungarian courts and the political authorities another means of putting pressure on independent media. The government had earlier established [control over](#) most of the media with the formation of the Central European Press and Media Foundation. The allocation of government advertising to media outlets regarded as loyal is another means of pressure. The election of members of the ruling party Fidesz to the Media Council, the broadcasting watchdog, further strengthened the government's control over the media. This explains **Hungary's** two-point decline in the 2020 Index to 89<sup>th</sup>.

In **Poland** (down three at 62<sup>nd</sup>), which lost three places this year, the government's control over the judiciary has adversely affected press freedom. Some courts use article 212 of the penal code which allows [sentences](#) on journalists of up to a year in prison on defamation charges. Up to now judges have only imposed fines but the damage has been done and an underlying climate of self-censorship has now come to the surface.

In southern Europe, a crusade by the authorities against the media is very active. In **Bulgaria** (111<sup>th</sup>), which remains in the region's lowest position, an attempt by the public radio management to [suspend](#) the experienced journalist Silvia Velikova, a government critic, has highlighted the lack of independence of Bulgaria's public broadcasting media and the hold some political leaders have over their editorial policy.

EU candidate countries **Montenegro** (105<sup>th</sup>) and **Albania** (84<sup>th</sup>) each fell two places after a year which saw journalists detained on the pretext of the fight against disinformation, and instances of legal harassment exemplified by the Kafkaesque trial of investigative reporter [Jovo Martinovic](#).

During the same period, many abuses directed against reporters in the Balkans went unpunished. In **Serbia** (93<sup>rd</sup>), down another three places in the 2020 Index, those who set fire to the house of the investigative journalist [Milan Jovanovic](#) have yet to be convicted in court.

The fight against impunity for violence against journalists has made progress in two EU countries. In **Slovakia** (up two at 33<sup>rd</sup>), where those alleged to be behind the murder of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová have been brought to trial, the country has moved up in the Index for the first time in three years, while in **Malta** (down four at 81<sup>st</sup>) the investigation into the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is finally [making progress](#), although journalists there are still coming under intense judicial pressure.

### Verbal and physical attacks

Journalists also face violence by police officers as well as by demonstrators. In **France** (down two at 34<sup>th</sup>), for example, many journalists were injured by flashball rounds and teargas grenades fired by the police during the [“yellow vest”](#) protests, and were assaulted by angry protesters. This phenomenon has become more widespread throughout Europe as a result of hate campaigns and declining trust in journalists on the part of the public. In **Spain** (29<sup>th</sup>), the worrying electoral breakthrough by [the far-right VOX](#) party and attacks against journalists by its supporters came on top of violence carried out by [pro-independence demonstrators](#) in Catalonia. In **Austria** (down two at 18<sup>th</sup>), **Italy** (up two at 41<sup>st</sup>) and **Greece** (65<sup>th</sup>) the far right regularly attacks reporters on the ground in a growing climate of hostility towards [migrants](#).

Reporters have even lost their lives in the course of their work, as in the case of journalist [Lyra McKee](#) from Northern Ireland, who was shot dead as she covered rioting in the city of Derry. Her death was the third murder of a journalist in Europe in three years, after those of Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta and Ján Kuciak in Slovakia.

### Online harassment and surveillance

Online threats such as harassment and surveillance undermine the work of journalists throughout the continent, even in countries where freedom is held in high regard. Online harassment is growing in **Norway** (1<sup>st</sup>), which nonetheless holds on to its top position in the Index, as well as **Finland** (2<sup>nd</sup>) and **Estonia** (down three at 14<sup>th</sup>). This new threat led to **Sweden's** drop in the rankings (down one at 4<sup>th</sup>) and the **Netherlands** (down one at 5<sup>th</sup>), which led to the automatic promotion of **Denmark** (up two to 3<sup>rd</sup>) into the top three.

In Scandinavia, the most aggressive harassment of journalists comes from China and Iran, while Baltic reporters are targeted by Russian trolls.

Challenges to the confidentiality of sources are another threat facing journalism in Europe. In **Germany** (up two at 11<sup>th</sup>), the government has proposed measures that would criminalize the handling of [leaked data](#), as well as a draft bill allowing the intelligence services to hack into computers and smartphones and to intercept encrypted communications without judicial oversight.

In **Romania** (up two at 48<sup>th</sup>), which has already chalked up a series of violations of freedom of information, the new EU General Data Protection Regulation has been subverted to permit the authorities, as well as companies and individuals, to deny journalists access to information and to prosecute news organizations that publish investigative stories.

## Financial crisis

Throughout Europe, financial difficulties have led to the concentration of media ownership, and consequently new threats to journalism. In **Latvia** (up two at 22<sup>nd</sup>), which has maintained its high position in the Index, the oldest commercial television channel fired 30 journalists after a change of ownership. The purchase of Central European Media Enterprises (CME) by the company of Petr Kellner, the wealthiest man in the **Czech Republic** (40<sup>th</sup>), has aroused concerns in several Eastern European countries where CME controls a number of influential television stations.

Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, broadcast journalism has been undermined by constant attacks by governments on the editorial independence of public media outlets. Examples are the radio station BNR in **Bulgaria** (111<sup>th</sup>), [TVP](#) in **Poland** (down three at 62<sup>nd</sup>) and the state [broadcaster RTVS](#) in **Slovakia** (up two at 33<sup>rd</sup>), where journalists still come under pressure from management, despite the progress of the country in other fields.

Things have also deteriorated in Western Europe, where new financial management methods among public broadcasters show little regard for freedom of information. In **Luxembourg** (17<sup>th</sup>), some members of the editorial staff at the public broadcaster staged an unprecedented revolt, accusing the government of interfering in the way it is run. In **Belgium** (down three at 12<sup>th</sup>), journalists held a march - unseen before - in protest against a lack of resources caused by budget cuts, which contributed to its three-point drop in the Index.

## 8/ MIDDLE EAST

### 2020 RSF INDEX: THE ILLUSION OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**Dark clouds still gather over the Middle East, with one country, Iraq, slipping into the countries coloured black on the press freedom map. After a slight drop in the number of infringements, any hopes of appeasement were dispelled by violent crackdowns on public protests, the resumption of increasingly localized military operations and tighter control by iron-fisted governments.**

The wars in the Middle East may have become less deadly in the past year but this region still had the largest number of journalists' deaths. Although there was a reduction in violence and insecurity in the region's conflicts, the lull was short-lived. Turkey's operation in Syrian Kurdistan, the government offensive in Idlib in north-western Syria (174<sup>th</sup>), an upsurge in protest movements in several countries and a drift towards authoritarianism on the part of some governments, were among the threats facing journalists and media organizations in the region.

#### **Keep quiet or we'll lock you up**

In countries that are free from conflict, journalists are relatively safe but are still closely monitored and strictly controlled by iron-fisted authorities. **Saudi Arabia** (up two at 170<sup>th</sup>) and **Egypt** (down three at 166<sup>th</sup>), acknowledged as stable countries and reliable allies of the West in the region, are the countries with the largest number of journalists in prison after China.

The control over news and information exerted by these two authoritarian governments has been confirmed by the coronavirus crisis. Starting with a wave of arrests of journalists in September 2019, the largest since Gen. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi took over as president in 2014, Egypt has used its arsenal of anti-terrorist legislation to gradually tighten the screws on journalists, particularly since the start of the pandemic. Allegations of spreading fake news are used to justify blocking access to pages and sites on the Internet, and journalists who question official figures have had their accreditation withdrawn.

#### **Control tightened over news and information**

All means are used to control news and information. Before the coronavirus health crisis, the Egyptian government openly issued instructions about the death of former president Mohamed Morsi to news organizations in June last year and sent them official statements to publish.

In areas controlled by the Syrian government, the only permitted source of news is the official news agency SANA. Since the appearance of Covid-19, the Syrian health ministry has reasserted the agency's monopoly over news and information about the pandemic.

The slightest hint of criticism, or any reference to cases of infection or corruption and poverty can earn even the most loyal of journalists a summons by the intelligence services or an indefinite prison term. The journalist Wissam Al-Tair, who was close to President Bashar al-Assad, was jailed for several months merely for having mentioned an increase in fuel prices.

News organizations are closely monitored using sophisticated hacking and espionage methods. Saudi authorities collected personal details from the Twitter accounts of thousands of people regarded as opponents of the government and hacked into the phone of Jeff Bezos, owner of the Washington Post, for which the assassinated Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi worked.

## **Storm of protest meets wave of repression**

The second half of the year saw an unexpected wave of protests in several Middle Eastern countries, including **Lebanon** (down one at 102nd), and **Iraq** (down six at 162nd) which has joined the countries coloured black in the Index. Since October last year, the Iraqi media, which referred to the popular discontent in their coverage of the protests, were targeted by the authorities, militias and security forces which used live ammunition to break up rallies. The government has much to do with the climate of hostility: the media regulator has suspended nine TV channels, preventing them from broadcasting, and has also restricted Internet access.

This type of crackdown was inspired by the measures in force in Iran (down three to 173rd) where Internet access is regularly blocked and the government has imposed its own “halal Internet” inspired by Sharia, or Islamic law. This network allows it to restrict the flow of news and information, as occurred when large-scale public protests took place in the country. The creation of the Islamic Radio and Television Union, which has more than 200 members worldwide, also allows the dissemination of Iranian propaganda and fake news beyond its borders.

The proliferation of opposition movements has intensified the polarization of news media and distrust of journalists. In Lebanon, dozens of crews from pro-government and anti-revolutionary television channels were attacked by protesters. Other journalists have been attacked online by political community groups.

In **Israel** (88th), Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his supporters regularly attack news organizations, accusing them of propagating fake news and left-wing propaganda, to the point where a journalist who broke a story about a corruption scandal was forced to request a bodyguard to ensure his safety.

At the same time, journalists in **Palestine** (137th) were finding it as difficult as ever to cover the regular Friday protests against Israeli occupation. Tension rose again after the announcement by US President Trump of the “deal of the century” peace plan and the number of those seriously injured has been rising.

Armed conflict, political instability and the crackdown on protests mean violence is ever-present in the work of journalists in the Middle East. Ensuring the safety of those working in news and information is more of a concern than ever in the region, especially as a number of governments have decided to boost their control over news and information using technological advances to strengthen their scrutiny of journalists. In a climate where the criminalization of journalism and regular crackdowns are the norm and governments are not amenable to the idea of free and independent news media, the very idea of journalism could disappear from the region over time.

# WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX 2020

ISO	Rank 2020	FR_Country	EN_country	Score 2020	^	Rank 2019	Score 2019	Zone	Couleur
NOR	1	Norvège	Norway	7,84	+0	1	7,82	UE Balkans	
FIN	2	Finlande	Finland	7,93	+0	2	7,90	UE Balkans	
DNK	3	Danemark	Denmark	8,13	+2	5	9,87	UE Balkans	
SWE	4	Suede	Sweden	9,25	-1	3	8,31	UE Balkans	
NLD	5	Pays-Bas	Netherlands	9,96	-1	4	8,63	UE Balkans	
JAM	6	Jamaïque	Jamaica	10,51	+2	8	11,13	Amériques	
CRI	7	Costa Rica	Costa Rica	10,53	+3	10	12,24	Amériques	
CHE	8	Suisse	Switzerland	10,62	-2	6	10,52	UE Balkans	
NZL	9	Nouvelle-Zélande	New Zealand	10,69	-2	7	10,75	Asie-Pacifique	
PRT	10	Portugal	Portugal	11,83	+2	12	12,63	UE Balkans	
DEU	11	Allemagne	Germany	12,16	+2	13	14,60	UE Balkans	
BEL	12	Belgique	Belgium	12,57	-3	9	12,07	UE Balkans	
IRL	13	Irlande	Ireland	12,60	+2	15	15,00	UE Balkans	
EST	14	Estonie	Estonia	12,61	-3	11	12,27	UE Balkans	
ISL	15	Islande	Iceland	15,12	-1	14	14,71	UE Balkans	
CAN	16	Canada	Canada	15,29	+2	18	15,69	Amériques	
LUX	17	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	15,46	+0	17	15,66	UE Balkans	
AUT	18	Autriche	Austria	15,78	-2	16	15,33	UE Balkans	
URY	19	Uruguay	Uruguay	15,79	+0	19	16,06	Amériques	
SUR	20	Surinam	Suriname	17,50	+0	20	16,38	Amériques	
WSM	21	Samoa	Samoa	18,25	+1	22	18,25	Asie-Pacifique	
LVA	22	Lettonie	Latvia	18,56	+2	24	19,53	UE Balkans	
NAM	23	Namibie	Namibia	19,25	+0	23	18,95	Afrique	
LIE	24	Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein	19,52	+2	26	20,49	UE Balkans	
CPV	25	Cap-Vert	Cape Verde	20,15	+0	25	19,81	Afrique	
AUS	26	Australie	Australia	20,21	-5	21	16,55	Asie-Pacifique	
CYP	27	Chypre	Cyprus	20,45	+1	28	21,74	UE Balkans	
LTU	28	Lituanie	Lithuania	21,19	+2	30	22,06	UE Balkans	
ESP	29	Espagne	Spain	22,16	+0	29	21,99	UE Balkans	
GHA	30	Ghana	Ghana	22,26	-3	27	20,81	Afrique	
ZAF	31	Afrique du Sud	South Africa	22,41	+0	31	22,19	Afrique	
SVN	32	Slovénie	Slovenia	22,64	+2	34	22,31	UE Balkans	
SVK	33	Slovaquie	Slovakia	22,67	+2	35	23,58	UE Balkans	
FRA	34	France	France	22,92	-2	32	22,21	UE Balkans	
GBR	35	Royaume-Uni	United Kingdom	22,93	-2	33	22,23	UE Balkans	



ISO	Rank 2020	FR_Country	EN_country	Score 2020	^	Rank 2019	Score 2019	Zone	Couleur
TTO	36	Trinité-et-Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago	23,22	+3	39	24,74	Amériques	
AND	37	Andorre	Andorra	23,23	+0	37	24,63	UE Balkans	
BFA	38	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso	23,47	-2	36	24,53	Afrique	
BWA	39	Botswana	Botswana	23,56	+5	44	25,09	Afrique	
CZE	40	République tchèque	Czech Republic	23,57	+0	40	24,89	UE Balkans	
ITA	41	Italie	Italy	23,69	+2	43	24,98	UE Balkans	
KOR	42	Corée du Sud	South Korea	23,70	-1	41	24,94	Asie-Pacifique	
TWN	43	Taiwan	Taiwan	23,76	-1	42	24,98	Asie-Pacifique	
XCD	44	OECS	OECS	23,78	+6	50	26,04	Amériques	
USA	45	Etats Unis	United States	23,85	+3	48	25,69	Amériques	
PNG	46	Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée	Papua New Guinea	23,93	-8	38	24,70	Asie-Pacifique	
SEN	47	Sénégal	Senegal	23,99	+2	49	25,81	Afrique	
ROU	48	Roumanie	Romania	25,91	-1	47	25,67	UE Balkans	
GUY	49	Guyana	Guyana	26,63	+2	51	26,63	Amériques	
TON	50	Tonga	Tonga	27,27	-5	45	25,41	Asie-Pacifique	
CHL	51	Chili	Chile	27,31	-5	46	25,65	Amériques	
FJI	52	Fidji	Fiji	27,41	+0	52	27,18	Asie-Pacifique	
BLZ	53	Bélize	Belize	27,50	+0	53	27,50	Amériques	
MDG	54	Madagascar	Madagascar	27,68	+0	54	27,76	Afrique	
DOM	55	République dominicaine	Dominican Republic	27,90	+0	55	27,90	Amériques	
MUS	56	Maurice	Mauritius	28,00	+2	58	28,46	Afrique	
NER	57	Niger	Niger	28,25	+9	66	29,26	Afrique	
BIH	58	Bosnie-Herzégovine	Bosnia and Herzegovina	28,51	+5	63	29,02	UE Balkans	
HRV	59	Croatie	Croatia	28,51	+5	64	29,03	UE Balkans	
GEO	60	Géorgie	Georgia	28,59	+0	60	28,98	EEAC	
ARM	61	Arménie	Armenia	28,60	+0	61	28,98	EEAC	
POL	62	Pologne	Poland	28,65	-3	59	28,89	UE Balkans	
SYC	63	Seychelles	Seychelles	28,66	+6	69	29,41	Afrique	
ARG	64	Argentine	Argentina	28,78	-7	57	28,30	Amériques	
GRC	65	Grèce	Greece	28,80	+0	65	29,08	UE Balkans	
JPN	66	Japon	Japan	28,86	+1	67	29,36	Asie-Pacifique	
BTN	67	Bhoutan	Bhutan	28,90	+13	80	29,81	Asie-Pacifique	
CIV	68	Côte d'Ivoire	Ivory Coast	28,94	+3	71	29,52	Afrique	
MWI	69	Malawi	Malawi	29,32	-1	68	29,36	Afrique	
XKO	70	Kosovo	Kosovo	29,33	+5	75	29,68	UE Balkans	
TGO	71	Togo	Togo	29,33	+5	76	29,69	Afrique	
TUN	72	Tunisie	Tunisia	29,45	+0	72	29,61	MENA	
MNG	73	Mongolie	Mongolia	29,61	-3	70	29,51	Asie-Pacifique	
SLV	74	El Salvador	El Salvador	29,70	+7	81	29,81	Amériques	
COM	75	Comores	Comoros	29,77	-19	56	27,91	Afrique	



ISO	Rank 2020	FR_Country	EN_country	Score 2020	^	Rank 2019	Score 2019	Zone	Couleur
PAN	76	Panama	Panama	29,78	+3	79	29,78	Amériques	
CTU	77	Chypre (partie Nord)	Cyprus North	29,79	-3	74	29,67	UE Balkans	
TLS	78	Timor-Leste	East Timor	29,90	+6	84	29,93	Asie-Pacifique	
MDV	79	Maldives	Maldives	29,93	+19	98	32,16	Asie-Pacifique	
HKG	80	Hong-Kong	Hong Kong	30,01	-7	73	29,65	Asie-Pacifique	
MLT	81	Malte	Malta	30,16	-4	77	29,74	UE Balkans	
KGZ	82	Kirghizstan	Kyrgyzstan	30,19	+1	83	29,92	EEAC	
HTI	83	Haïti	Haiti	30,20	-21	62	29,00	Amériques	
ALB	84	Albanie	Albania	30,25	-2	82	29,84	UE Balkans	
SLE	85	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	30,28	+1	86	30,36	Afrique	
LSO	86	Lesotho	Lesotho	30,45	-8	78	29,74	Afrique	
GMB	87	Gambie	Gambia	30,62	+5	92	31,35	Afrique	
ISR	88	Israël	Israel	30,84	+0	88	30,80	MENA	
HUN	89	Hongrie	Hungary	30,84	-2	87	30,44	UE Balkans	
PER	90	Perou	Peru	30,94	-5	85	30,22	Amériques	
MDA	91	Moldavie	Moldova	31,16	+0	91	31,21	EEAC	
MKD	92	Macédoine	Macedonia	31,28	+3	95	31,66	UE Balkans	
SRB	93	Serbie	Serbia	31,62	-3	90	31,18	UE Balkans	
GNB	94	Guinée-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	32,06	-5	89	30,95	Afrique	
LBR	95	Liberia	Liberia	32,25	-2	93	31,49	Afrique	
UKR	96	Ukraine	Ukraine	32,52	+6	102	32,46	EEAC	
MRT	97	Mauritanie	Mauritania	32,54	-3	94	31,65	Afrique	
ECU	98	Equateur	Ecuador	32,62	-1	97	31,88	Amériques	
ETH	99	Éthiopie	Ethiopia	32,82	+11	110	35,11	Afrique	
PRY	100	Paraguay	Paraguay	32,97	-1	99	32,40	Amériques	
MYS	101	Malaisie	Malaysia	33,12	+22	123	36,74	Asie-Pacifique	
LBN	102	Liban	Lebanon	33,19	-1	101	32,44	MENA	
KEN	103	Kenya	Kenya	33,72	-3	100	32,44	Afrique	
MOZ	104	Mozambique	Mozambique	33,79	-1	103	32,66	Afrique	
MNE	105	Monténégro	Montenegro	33,83	-1	104	32,74	UE Balkans	
AGO	106	Angola	Angola	33,92	+3	109	34,96	Afrique	
BRA	107	Brésil	Brazil	34,05	-2	105	32,79	Amériques	
MLI	108	Mali	Mali	34,12	+4	112	35,23	Afrique	
KWT	109	Koweït	Kuwait	34,30	-1	108	33,86	MENA	
GIN	110	Guinée	Guinea	34,34	-3	107	33,49	Afrique	
BGR	111	Bulgarie	Bulgaria	35,06	+0	111	35,11	UE Balkans	
NPL	112	Népal	Nepal	35,10	-6	106	33,40	Asie-Pacifique	
BEN	113	Bénin	Benin	35,11	-17	96	31,74	Afrique	
BOL	114	Bolivie	Bolivia	35,37	-1	113	35,38	Amériques	
NGA	115	Nigeria	Nigeria	35,63	+5	120	36,50	Afrique	
GTM	116	Guatemala	Guatemala	35,74	+0	116	35,94	Amériques	

ISO	Rank 2020	FR_Country	EN_country	Score 2020	^	Rank 2019	Score 2019	Zone	Couleur
NIC	117	Nicaragua	Nicaragua	35,81	-3	114	35,53	Amériques	
COG	118	Congo	Congo	36,56	-1	117	36,04	Afrique	
IDN	119	Indonésie	Indonesia	36,82	+5	124	36,77	Asie-Pacifique	
ZMB	120	Zambie	Zambia	37,00	-1	119	36,38	Afrique	
GAB	121	Gabon	Gabon	37,20	-6	115	35,60	Afrique	
AFG	122	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	37,70	-1	121	36,55	Asie-Pacifique	
TCD	123	Tchad	Chad	39,70	-1	122	36,71	Afrique	
TZA	124	Tanzanie	Tanzania	40,25	-6	118	36,28	Afrique	
UGA	125	Ouganda	Uganda	40,95	+0	125	39,42	Afrique	
ZWE	126	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	40,95	+1	127	42,23	Afrique	
LKA	127	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	41,94	-1	126	39,61	Asie-Pacifique	
JOR	128	Jordanie	Jordan	42,08	+2	130	43,11	MENA	
QAT	129	Qatar	Qatar	42,51	-1	128	42,51	MENA	
COL	130	Colombie	Colombia	42,66	-1	129	42,82	Amériques	
ARE	131	Émirats arabes unis	United Arab Emirates	42,69	+2	133	43,63	MENA	
CAF	132	République centrafricaine	Central African Republic	42,87	+13	145	47,27	Afrique	
MAR	133	Maroc	Morocco	42,88	+2	135	43,98	MENA	
CMR	134	Cameroun	Cameroon	43,28	-3	131	43,32	Afrique	
OMN	135	Oman	Oman	43,42	-3	132	43,42	MENA	
PHL	136	Philippines	Philippines	43,54	-2	134	43,91	Asie-Pacifique	
PSE	137	Palestine	Palestine	44,09	+0	137	44,68	MENA	
SSD	138	Soudan du Sud	South Sudan	44,49	+1	139	45,65	Afrique	
MMR	139	Birmanie	Myanmar	44,77	-1	138	44,92	Asie-Pacifique	
THA	140	Thaïlande	Thailand	44,94	-4	136	44,10	Asie-Pacifique	
SWZ	141	Swaziland	Swaziland	45,15	+6	147	49,09	Afrique	
IND	142	Inde	India	45,33	-2	140	45,67	Asie-Pacifique	
MEX	143	Mexique	Mexico	45,45	+1	144	46,78	Amériques	
KHM	144	Cambodge	Cambodia	45,46	-1	143	45,90	Asie-Pacifique	
PAK	145	Pakistan	Pakistan	45,52	-3	142	45,83	Asie-Pacifique	
DZA	146	Algérie	Algeria	45,52	-5	141	45,75	MENA	
VEN	147	Venezuela	Venezuela	45,66	+1	148	49,10	Amériques	
HND	148	Honduras	Honduras	48,20	-2	146	48,53	Amériques	
RUS	149	Russie	Russian Federation	48,92	+0	149	50,31	EEAC	
COD	150	RD Congo	The Democratic Republic Of The Congo	49,09	+4	154	51,71	Afrique	
BGD	151	Bangladesh	Bangladesh	49,37	-1	150	50,74	Asie-Pacifique	
BRN	152	Brunei	Brunei Darussalam	49,65	+0	152	51,48	Asie-Pacifique	
BLR	153	Bélarus	Belarus	49,75	+0	153	51,66	EEAC	
TUR	154	Turquie	Turkey	50,02	+3	157	52,81	EEAC	
RWA	155	Rwanda	Rwanda	50,34	+0	155	52,43	Afrique	

ISO	Rank 2020	FR_Country	EN_country	Score 2020	^	Rank 2019	Score 2019	Zone	Couleur
UZB	156	Ouzbékistan	Uzbekistan	53,07	+4	160	53,52	EEAC	
KAZ	157	Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan	54,11	+1	158	52,82	EEAC	
SGP	158	Singapour	Singapore	55,23	-7	151	51,41	Asie-Pacifique	
SDN	159	Soudan	Sudan	55,33	+16	175	72,45	Afrique	
BDI	160	Burundi	Burundi	55,33	-1	159	52,89	Afrique	
TJK	161	Tadjikistan	Tadjikistan	55,34	+0	161	54,02	EEAC	
IRQ	162	Irak	Iraq	55,37	-6	156	52,60	MENA	
SOM	163	Somalie	Somalia	55,45	+1	164	57,24	Afrique	
LBY	164	Libye	Libya	55,77	-2	162	55,77	MENA	
GNQ	165	Guinée équatoriale	Equatorial Guinea	56,38	+0	165	58,35	Afrique	
EGY	166	Égypte	Egypt	56,82	-3	163	56,47	MENA	
YEM	167	Yémen	Yemen	58,25	+1	168	61,66	MENA	
AZE	168	Azerbaïdjan	Azerbaijan	58,48	-2	166	59,13	EEAC	
BHR	169	Bahreïn	Bahrain	60,13	-2	167	61,31	MENA	
SAU	170	Arabie saoudite	Saudi Arabia	62,14	+2	172	65,88	MENA	
CUB	171	Cuba	Cuba	63,81	-2	169	63,81	Amériques	
LAO	172	Laos	Lao People's Democratic Republic	64,28	-1	171	64,49	Asie-Pacifique	
IRN	173	Iran	Islamic Republic of Iran	64,81	-3	170	64,41	MENA	
SYR	174	Syrie	Syrian Arab Republic	72,57	+0	174	71,78	MENA	
VNM	175	Viêt Nam	Vietnam	74,71	+1	176	74,93	Asie-Pacifique	
DJI	176	Djibouti	Djibouti	76,73	-3	173	71,36	Afrique	
CHN	177	Chine	China	78,48	+0	177	78,92	Asie-Pacifique	
ERI	178	Érythrée	Eritrea	83,50	+0	178	80,26	Afrique	
TKM	179	Turkménistan	Turkmenistan	85,44	+1	180	85,44	EEAC	
PRK	180	Corée du Nord	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	85,82	-1	179	83,40	Asie-Pacifique	

## | PRESS CONTACT |

Julie Bance: [jbance@rsf.org](mailto:jbance@rsf.org)  
+33 (0)1 44 83 84 57