

MAPPING MEDIA FREEDOM Q3 2016



***AN UNPRECEDENTED
SERIES OF CRACKDOWNS
ON MEDIA PROFESSIONALS
AND NEWS OUTLETS TOOK
PLACE DURING THE THIRD
QUARTER OF 2016 AS
RECORDED BY INDEX ON
CENSORSHIP'S MAPPING
MEDIA FREEDOM PROJECT.***

Between 1 July and 30 September MMF's network of correspondents, partners and other sources submitted a total of 406 verified reports of threats to press freedom, a 19% rise from the second quarter of 2016.¹

During the third quarter of 2016, four journalists were killed; 54 incidents of physical assault were reported; 107 media professionals were arrested; 150 were detained and released; 112 reports of intimidation, which includes psychological abuse, sexual harassment, trolling/cyberbullying and defamation, were made; journalistic work was censored or altered 29 times; and media professionals were blocked from covering a story in 89 cases.

An important factor in the rise in media violations was the attack on Turkey's democratically-elected government on 15 July. Following the failed coup attempt, Turkish authorities forced more than 2,500 journalists out of their jobs, arrested and prosecuted 98 under trumped-up criminal charges, detained 133 and seized or shut down 133 media outlets.

"Dissenting voices have long been stifled in Turkey; however, the state of emergency, introduced in response to the failed coup attempt of 15 July, is now being used to legitimise an unprecedented crackdown on independent and opposition media," said Index senior advocacy officer Melody Patry.

Media freedom also continued to deteriorate with a notable increase of the use of violent intimidation and censorship tactics to silence journalists throughout European Union member states, candidates for entry and neighbouring countries.

ABOUT MAPPING MEDIA FREEDOM

Each report is fact-checked with local sources before becoming available on the interactive map. The number of reports per country relates to the number of incidents reported to the map. The data should not be taken as representing absolute numbers. For example, the number of reported incidents of censorship appears low given the number of other types of incidents reported on the map. This could be due to an increase in acts of intimidation and pressure that deter media workers from reporting such cases.

The platform – a joint undertaking with the European Federation of Journalists and Reporters Without Borders, partially funded by the European Commission – covers 42 countries, including all EU member states, plus Bosnia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Turkey, Albania along with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia in (added in April 2015), and Azerbaijan (added in February 2016). The platform marked its two-year anniversary in May 2016 and recorded over 2,400 incidents threatening media freedom by the end of the third quarter of 2016.

¹Some reports contain multiple updates and therefore the number of reports does not represent the total number of media freedom violations monitored.



**FOUR JOURNALISTS,
MUSTAFA CAMBAZ,
PAVEL SHEREMET,
ALEXANDER SHCHETININ
AND ANDREY NAZARENKO
WERE KILLED
DURING Q3 2016.**



DEATHS

Four journalists were killed in the third quarter. In Turkey, soldiers shot and killed Mustafa Cambaz, a photographer with the pro-government newspaper Yeni Safak. In Ukraine, Pavel Sheremet, a Belarusian journalist working for online investigative newspaper Ukrayinska Pravda and Radio Vesti, was killed in a car explosion; journalist and founder of news agency Novy Region Alexander Shchetinin was found dead with a bullet wound to the head in his apartment in Kiev. In Russia, Andrey Nazarenko, a cameraman for state TV channel Russia-1 was found dead in his apartment in Moscow with two bullet wounds – one in the head and one in his body.

“With nine out of every 10 murders of journalists never solved, the vicious cycle of impunity still prevails. It has to be broken. There can be no exception to the very basic rule that all attacks on journalists must be investigated quickly and thoroughly. We should never give up the fight for journalists’ safety and the struggle to end impunity for crimes committed against journalists,” Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, said.

PHYSICAL ASSAULTS AND INJURY

In total, 54 incidents of physical assaults and injury were documented, with more than half of incidents occurring in Russia, Ukraine and

Italy. In Russia, 12 reports were filed to the map. Elena Kostyuchenko, a correspondent for independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, and Diana Khachatryan, a reporter for independent Takie Dela website, were assaulted twice over the course of one day in Beslan, North Ossetia. Publisher of the newspaper Moskovski Komsomolets Chernozemye Denis Shaikin was severely beaten inside a police station. In Ukraine, 11 reports of violence were recorded. Serhiy Medianyky, a journalist working for the anti-corruption programme StopCor, and his crew were repeatedly assaulted when they were reporting on alleged illegal activities. Medianyky was hospitalised with a concussion. In Italy, reporters were injured in eight separate incidents. Political correspondent for La Gazzetta di Parma, Pierluigi Dallapina, was punched by an alleged supporter of the centre-left Democratic Party and then treated in hospital. He was reportedly unable to work for four days.

Attacks on journalists continued to occur at far-right rallies. Members of the Greek neo-nazi party Golden Dawn assaulted journalists who were covering a protest against a refugee detention centre on the island of Chios. Two photographers were assaulted by supporters of the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany party following the party’s electoral success in regional parliamentary elections.

54

**INCIDENTS OF
PHYSICAL ASSAULT
AND INJURY
WERE DOCUMENTED
IN TOTAL
IN Q3 2016.**



IN Q3 2016, 107 MEDIA PROFESSIONALS WERE ARRESTED AND 150 WERE DETAINED AND RELEASED.

ARREST / DETENTION

A total of 107 media professionals were arrested and 150 detained in the third quarter. On 25 July, nine days after the failed coup, Turkish authorities began to crackdown on the press with the first wave of arrest warrants for 42 journalists on the basis of being part of the “so-called media leg of terrorist” Gülenist Terror Organisation (FETÖ). Reporters were targeted regardless of the publications they were affiliated with. The second wave targeted Zaman newspaper when on 27 July authorities issued warrants for the detention of 47 former executives or senior journalists of the newspaper, which was seized by government trustees in March 2016.

Nine journalists were detained and 17 were arrested in the other 41 countries monitored by the project. Ahead of a September constitutional referendum in Azerbaijan, four journalists were detained and two were arrested. Faig Amirli, the

director of Azadliq newspaper, an outlet often critical of the state, was detained and arrested on multiple charges. Seven media professionals were detained or arrested in Russia. Police detained Kristina Gorelik, a Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty correspondent, while she was filming a documentary about Valentina Cherevatenko, director of human rights NGO Don Women. Three journalists were detained in Greece. Stratis Balaskas, the then editor-in-chief of Empros, was given a three-month prison sentence for calling a school director a “neo-Nazi”.

CRIMINAL CHARGES / CIVIL LAWSUITS

All 98 journalists arrested in Turkey were charged. The majority were accused of being linked to FETÖ, which officials say orchestrated the failed coup attempt on 15 July. Prominent cases also occurred in Russia, Poland and Belarus. Journalist Zhalaudi Geriev, working for the

independent regional website The Caucasian Knot, was sentenced to three years in jail on allegedly trumped-up drug possession charges. The state-owned Polish Security Printing Works initiated two lawsuits against media outlets. The Printing Works asked a court on 31 August to bar the national left-liberal daily Gazeta Wyborcza from publishing articles about the government-owned company for one year. The second lawsuit was filed against Ringier Axel Springer Polska and its weekly Newsweek on 28 September, for reputational damage. In Belarus, nine articles published on the pro-opposition website 1863x.com were declared “extremist” as part of a case against detained editor-in-chief, Eduward Palchys, who is currently facing charges of inciting hatred.

“The situation in the Caucasus remains extremely dangerous for journalists. Alleged kidnappings, assaults and arrests on spurious charges continued to occur in the third quarter. The ongoing violence against journalists has had a pernicious effect on press freedom and, as a result, journalists are often too frightened to report on topics the authorities might not tolerate.”

HANNAH MACHLIN,

Project officer for Mapping Media Freedom

ATTACKS TO PROPERTY

Media professionals were subject to attacks to their property 49 times. Six arson attacks were carried out in Ukraine, Cyprus and Italy. The studios of the national Ukrainian TV channel Inter were set on fire, leading to the evacuation of 30 people and one journalist was injured. The car belonging to Mario Guido was burned and the following month his home was set on fire. Additional cars belonging to journalists were also set on fire in Ukraine, Cyprus and Italy.

Six explosive devices were used to target journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Netherlands and Russia. An improvised explosive device exploded in front of the home of editor-in-chief of Ljubuski, Tihomir Bradvica, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two explosive devices were detonated at Kosovo's public broadcaster Radio Television Kosovo: one was thrown at the headquarters in Pristina; eight days later another was aimed at the private home of the director. In the Netherlands, crime blogger Martin Kok found an explosive device under his parked car. In another instance, a cameraperson and a reporter for channel SBS6's news programme Hart van Nederland had fireworks thrown at them while covering a shooting in the centre of Amsterdam. In Russia, a Molotov cocktail was thrown into the house of Elena Suslova, deputy editor of the independent newspaper Otkrytaya Gazeta.

In Turkey, on 16 July 2016, soldiers belonging to units attempting to topple the government seized control of the Ankara studios of the state broadcaster Turkish Radio and Television and forced news anchor Tijen Karas to read a televised statement at gunpoint. Other outlets were raided and searched in the months following the failed coup including Meydan newspaper and the headquarters of the pro-Kurdish magazine Ozgur Halk.



“Reporters Without Borders is deeply concerned by the many cases of the use of violent intimidation tactics to silence journalists over the past few months. Acts of violence, and impunity for these acts, has a serious chilling effect on freedom of expression and freedom of information. The increasing use of violence to silence critical voices is part of a global trend of deteriorating press freedom, which must be addressed as a matter of urgent priority.”

REBECCA VINCENT,

UK Bureau Director for
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)

INTIMIDATION

The platform documented a 37% rise of intimidation against journalists over the third quarter totalling 112 incidents, of which 16 occurred in Ukraine and 13 in Italy. Government officials intimidated media professionals in 22 incidents. The Prime Minister of Serbia called media outlets “scum”; the Hungarian mayor of Érpatak and colleagues, including an MP, chased a journalist in a car; the environmental minister of Macedonia threatened a journalist over the phone; and the mayor of Zagreb, Croatia, denigrated a journalist after an interview.

The platform verified 15 death threats directed at media professionals and outlets. These included the Serbian investigative outlet KRIK and the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.

LEGAL MEASURES

A broad range of laws were introduced during the third quarter that infringe on press freedom. In France, the National Assembly passed an amendment where journalists would be subject to up to seven years imprisonment for protecting sources when the case involved revealing the identity of an intelligence officer, divulging classified information or supplying false information. In the UK, the House of Lords

debated what has been dubbed the “snoopers’ charter,” which, as part of the Investigatory Powers Bill, would allow the “relevant public authorities” to obtain journalists’ communications data with the aim of identifying or confirming the identity of anonymous sources. The Albanian parliament drafted an anti-corruption law which would allow any journalist or media organisation reporting on the case pursued by the authorities to face up to three years in prison in order to combat “any inappropriate influence on the work of the special prosecutors”.

In Turkey, an emergency decree introduced prison sentences of up to one year and fines no less than 5,000TL (€1,470) for “sharing and publishing false news”.

A court in Ourense, Spain, ruled that regional daily newspaper La Voz de Galicia and its columnist Jose Manuel Rubin have to pay €5,000 to Miguel Angel Perez de Juan Romero, a politician from ruling center-right Partido Popular party, for “attack on his honour”. Manuel Rubin published a column in La Voz de Galicia on 4 October 2015, when he criticised the politician for doing “nothing” during his mandate in the senate.

112 REPORTS OF INTIMIDATION, WHICH INCLUDES PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, TROLLING, CYBERBULLYING AND DEFAMATION WERE RECORDED IN Q3 2016.

**82 INSTANCES OF BLOCKED ACCESS WERE
REPORTED BY JOURNALISTS IN Q3 2016.**

**JOURNALISTS REPORTED 22 INCIDENTS
OF EMPLOYMENT LOSS IN Q3 2016.**

**30 WORKS WERE REPORTED
CENSORED OR ALTERED IN Q3 2016.**

BLOCKED ACCESS

Journalists or sources were blocked in 82 incidents. During the September Duma elections in Russia, journalists were blocked at least 16 times from reporting from polling stations. Reuters journalists were barred from reporting at polling stations three times in Siberia; a journalist from independent TV channel Dozhd verifying voter fraud was barred and was pushed out of a polling station in Moscow; journalists from multiple media outlets, including the BBC, were kicked out of the Territorial Electoral Commission building in St. Petersburg.

In Crimea, four websites were blocked including Crimea.Realities, a project of Radio Liberty. In Lithuania, three Russian TV channels were taken off the air: Pervyj Baltiskyj Kanal, Lithuania's most popular Russian-language TV channel, along with REN TV and NTV-Mir Lithuania.

JOB LOSS

The platform recorded 22 incidents where journalists lost their jobs (excluding Turkey, where thousands of journalists lost their job in the aftermath of the failed coup. See case study). In Lithuania, the entire staff of Sakai-based newspaper Valscius, consisting of one editor and six journalists, quit after a local well-known businessman took over the paper. La Tribuna de Toledo, a local newspaper

based in the Spanish city of Toledo, fired nine employees due to poor financial results, the management revealed in a note to workers. Reporters also lost their jobs after sharing social media posts on their private accounts. Azerbaijani journalist Farahim Ilgaroglu was fired from APA news agency after sharing a picture on his personal Facebook page from an opposition rally. Vuk Bacanovic, a journalist and columnist for several media outlets, was fired from the Radio-Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for writing alleged racist posts on his personal Facebook account.

WORKS CENSORED

MMF recorded that 30 works were reported censored or altered in the third quarter. In Belarus, state TV channels censored content from oppositional candidates three times in the run-up to the August parliamentary elections. The head of news at France Télévisions, a French public national television broadcaster, delayed a documentary on Nicolas Sarkozy's alleged illegal 2012 election funding from airing on 29 September in the run-up to the elections. In Russia, a leaked audio recording of a meeting which took place between news agency RBC editorial staff and their new editors revealed that journalists were told they must not cross a white line, that is to say not cover a certain type of subjects.

CASE STUDY: TURKEY

On 15 July shots heard inside the General Staff headquarters in Ankara signalled the beginning of the assault against Turkey's democratic institutions. Tanks and fighter jets opened fire on and around parliament and other buildings, resulting in the death of more than 240 people. Officials linked the attempt to preacher Fethullah Gülen, founder of the Gülen movement, who is living in self-imposed exile in the US. Six days later on 21 July, President Erdogan declared a state of emergency in 81 provinces of Turkey, which gave him and his cabinet "sweeping new powers" aimed at rooting out Gülen supporters.

This was the catalyst to an unparalleled level of attacks on media freedom during the third quarter. Almost a third of incidents – a total of 114 – published on MMF in this period occurred in Turkey. The data, which was analysed in collaboration with the Platform for Independent Journalists (P24), indicates that from 1 July until 30 September, 98 journalists were arrested and charged, 133 media professionals were detained, 133 media outlets were shut down and approximately 2,500 journalists lost their jobs.

MEDIA OUTLETS SHUT DOWN

The emergency rule was used to silence media outlets. On 19 July around 20 news sites were blocked by the Telecommunications Authority and Turkey's Radio and Television Supreme Board (RTUK), which monitors and regulates radio and television broadcasts, cancelled the licences of 24 TV and radio channels because of their alleged ties with the Gülen movement.

On 20 July the printing and distribution of prominent satirical magazine LeMan were blocked by police. Two days later the offices of Meydan newspaper were raided and sealed by law enforcement. By 23 July, a total of 30 websites had been blocked. On 27 August RTUK ruled to shut down a further 29 TV stations, claiming they were broadcasting without a proper license. On 28 September more than 20 radio and TV stations were shut down by a court order. All outlets were either Kurdish or Alevi (Alevi constitute the largest religious minority in Turkey).

BY 30 SEPTEMBER, 45 NEWSPAPERS, 15 MAGAZINES, 18 TV STATIONS, 23 RADIO STATIONS, 29 PUBLISHING HOUSES AND THREE NEWS AGENCIES HAD BEEN SHUT DOWN.

ARRESTS/DETAINMENT

Ten times more journalists were arrested, and nine times more detained, in Turkey compared to the other 41 countries MMF monitors. Journalists were detained and charged with being part of the media leg of FETÖ. Arrest warrants were released in waves, which led to formal charges being filed in the courts. Journalists were consistently detained, released and re-detained, creating a climate of fear and uncertainty. As these arrests began, many who worked for opposition outlets fled the country including former Cumhuriyet editor-in-chief Can Dunder and Yavuz Baydar, a founding member of P24.

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A TOTAL OF 
2500
JOB

The first batch of warrants was issued on 23 July by the Antalya Police Department for the arrest of 19 journalists for alleged ties to the Gülen community. On 25 July authorities issued arrest warrants for a further 42 journalists as part of an inquiry into the failed coup. Two days later 47 warrants were issued to former executives or senior journalists of Zaman newspaper which was shut down in March 2016. On 5 August 12 journalists on the warrant list were arrested for “serving the purposes of FETÖ” following a court order. On 11 August 43 employees of Turkish Radio and Television, the national public broadcaster in Turkey, were detained. By 18 August 19 out of 43 detained TRT employees were charged.

JOB LOSSES

Thousands of jobs were lost during the third quarter due to the shutting down media outlets, purging state outlets and the revoking of press cards. On 19 July court-appointed trustees fired the majority of the staff at Cihan news agency: 60 reporters, editors and technical staff; Cihan was seized by trustees after the takeover of the Zaman Media Group in March 2016. On the same day, the Directorate General of Press and Information decertified press cards of 34 journalists over alleged threats to national security. On 21 July over 300 employees for the national broadcaster TRT were suspended from their jobs. By 29 July the total number of revoked press cards reached 330. By 30 September 660 press cards were canceled and a total of 2500 jobs were lost.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Violations to press freedom in Turkey have consistently risen and media freedom has severely deteriorated in 2016. In the first quarter

over half of the arrests occurred in Turkey were launched on terror charges or took place during anti-terror operations. In the second quarter 43% of all arrests in the countries covered by the map took place in Turkey, where there were 18 verified incidents reported. During the third quarter, President Erdogan used the fear surrounding the coup to further clamp down on the press, with opposition and pro-Kurdish outlets being disproportionately targeted.

The post-coup attempt period is considered by many to be a “witch hunt” against alleged Gülenists. The endless seizures of outlets mean “journalists who do not end up in jail find themselves out in the streets” Yavuz Baydar wrote for Index on Censorship in July.

In reaction to this unprecedented attack on press freedom Index on Censorship, the European Federation of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and other organisations took part in an advocacy mission to Turkey coordinated by Article 19 where recommendations on how to address the situation were drafted. We reiterate these recommendations and add on new ones in light of the latest journalists’ arrests and closure of media outlets.

BY THE CLOSE OF THE THIRD QUARTER, 98 MEDIA PROFESSIONALS WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED; 133 WERE DETAINED AND LATER RELEASED. TURKEY IS THE TOP JAILER OF JOURNALISTS OF ANY COUNTRY MONITORED BY MMF.

TO THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT:

- Immediately and unconditionally release all journalists, media workers and others arrested for exercising their right to freedom of expression, unless the authorities can present credible and individualised evidence of involvement in internationally recognised criminal offences;
- Revoke executive decree no. 668 and 675, and reinstate media outlets arbitrarily closed down;
- Guarantee that any restrictions on the right to freedom of expression during the state of emergency are strictly proportionate to the exigencies of the situation, as required under international human rights law;
- Ensure transparency of legal proceedings concerning those being tried on charges related to the involvement in the coup attempt.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- While continuing to condemn the coup attempt, simultaneously condemn the crackdown of independent media and press;
- Support local initiatives aimed at promoting freedom of expression, strengthening journalistic ethics and generation of solidarity among media outlets;
- Continue to accurately report on violations to press freedom;
- Inform governments and civil society groups on the ongoing human rights violations.

Please note these numbers relate to the number of verified incidents reported to the map. Because of the nature of crowdsourced reporting, they should not be taken as representing absolute numbers. For example, although Belarus has less reports than France and Italy over the reported period, it has one of the most restrictive media environments in Europe and ranks 156 out of 180 in Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index. The rise in the number of reports for France is partly due to incidents that took place during several weeks of protests against new labour legislation. Similarly, the number of reported incidents of censorship also appears low given the number of other types of incidents reported to the map. This can be due to an increase of acts of intimidation and pressure that deter media workers from reporting such cases.

mappingmediafreedom.org

