

2024 Press Freedom Report,

International Press and Media Organization Netherlands

Introduction

Amid a rapidly evolving media landscape, the year 2024 has once again underscored the profound challenges facing press freedom worldwide. From escalating legal restrictions and digital censorship to systematic violence against journalists, the journalism profession has become increasingly vulnerable and in urgent need of coordinated international support.

In this context, the International Organization for Press and Media – The Netherlands presents this comprehensive annual report, which monitors the state of press freedom across various regions. It highlights the organization's efforts to strengthen a free and independent media environment, as well as its contributions to training and empowering journalists around the globe.

1. Overview of Press Freedom in 2024

In 2024, press freedom indicators declined significantly in several countries, especially those experiencing political unrest or armed conflict. Anti-terrorism laws and so-called “fake news” regulations continued to be used as pretexts to suppress press freedoms. Journalists were increasingly targeted through electronic surveillance, legal threats, and, in some cases, physical elimination.

On the other hand, some reform initiatives emerged in developing countries aiming to improve journalism frameworks and reduce censorship, supported by international communities and civil society organizations. Additionally, digital journalism and independent platforms played a critical role in challenging state-controlled narratives, despite facing technical and legislative obstacles.

2. The Organization's Role in Supporting Press Freedom

Throughout 2024, the International Organization for Press and Media – The Netherlands intensified its efforts to protect journalists and promote an independent media environment. Key initiatives included:

a. Monitoring Violations:

The organization established an extensive mechanism to monitor violations against journalists, including documentation of arbitrary arrests, threats, cyberattacks, and public incitement against media outlets. More than 1,200 cases across 43 countries were recorded and summarized in reports submitted to the European Union and European Parliament.

b. Diplomatic Intervention:

The organization participated in 18 international advocacy campaigns calling for the release of detained or prosecuted journalists, in collaboration with the EU and various international bodies.

c. Periodic Reporting:

A series of analytical reports was published on media environments in crisis regions (including Yemen, Ethiopia, Venezuela, and Syria), offering actionable recommendations to governments and international institutions to improve press climates.

3. Training and Capacity-Building Programs

Recognizing the critical importance of professional empowerment, the organization launched several innovative training programs in 2024, including:

a. Global Digital Safety Program for Journalists:

Over 800 journalists in 12 countries benefited from this program, which focused on secure communication, data protection, and surveillance avoidance.

b. Independent Journalism Academy:

An online educational platform offering certified courses in investigative journalism, fact-checking, conflict reporting, and journalistic ethics. By the end of 2024, the academy had enrolled over 3,500 journalists.

c. "Women in Media" Initiative:

A regional program targeting the empowerment of female journalists,

especially in the Middle East and North Africa, through professional training, mentorship sessions, and grants for independent content production. The initiative was implemented in 7 countries in partnership with local organizations.

4. Strategic Partnerships for Greater Impact

The organization expanded its partnerships with:

- Kuwait Journalists Association
 - Emirates Media Vision Network
 - Libyan Sports Journalists Association
 - Cleopatra Society – The Netherlands (Civil Society Organization)
 - United Nations Agencies (UNESCO, OHCHR)
 - International funding institutions to support independent media
 - Universities and media institutes to co-develop training programs
 - Tech platforms to enhance digital safety for journalists
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5. Key Challenges Facing Press Freedom

Despite notable progress, several major challenges continue to threaten the path of free journalism:

- **Repressive Legislation:** Ongoing enactment of laws that restrict free expression under the pretext of national security.
 - **Digital Surveillance:** Advancements in spyware targeting journalists' phones and communications.
 - **Political Polarization and Partisan Media:** Escalation of smear campaigns and disinformation.
 - **Funding Crises:** Closure of many independent outlets due to economic pressures.
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6. Recommendations

To confront these challenges, the organization recommends:

1. Urging governments to uphold their international commitments to freedom of expression.
2. Developing legal frameworks that protect journalists and ensure media independence.
3. Increasing financial and technical support for independent media outlets.
4. Enhancing ongoing training for journalists to address digital and security challenges.
5. Encouraging tech companies to provide effective protection tools for media professionals.
6. Establishing global platforms for journalists to report grievances while maintaining confidentiality.

Conclusion

Press freedom is a cornerstone of any democratic society. Today, it stands at a crossroads that demands collective action from governments, civil society, and media institutions.

The International Organization for Press and Media – The Netherlands reaffirms its commitment to defending freedom of expression, empowering journalists everywhere, and building a media landscape that is freer, safer, and more just.

Our efforts will continue in 2025, driven by our deep belief that a free press is not merely a profession—but a safeguard for truth and human dignity.

We will intensify journalist training in advanced technologies and misinformation detection, while strengthening engagement with key stakeholders to provide maximum protection for journalists worldwide.