

# MAPPING MEDIA FREEDOM 2016



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***JOURNALISTS  
IN JEOPARDY:  
MEDIA WORKERS  
SILENCED THROUGH  
VIOLENCE AND  
ARREST IN 2016  
INDICATES  
JOURNALISM  
IS AT RISK.***

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In 2016, a total of 1,387 reports of threats, limitations and violations to press freedom were verified by Mapping Media Freedom's network of correspondents, partners and other sources based in Europe.

During 2016, nine journalists were killed; 205 were assaulted; 336 were detained or arrested; there were 178 reports of criminal charges and lawsuits; 390 reports of intimidation, which includes psychological abuse, sexual harassment, trolling/cyberbullying and defamation; media professionals were subject to attacks to their property 143 times; journalists or sources were blocked 299 times; and journalists' work was altered or censored 102 times.

"The precarious state of press freedom across the globe is underlined by the volume of verified incidents added to Mapping Media Freedom in 2016. The spectrum of threats is growing, the pressure on journalists increasing and the public right to transparent information is under assault. People who are simply trying to do their job are being targeted like never before. These trends do not bode well for 2017," Hannah Machlin, Mapping Media Freedom project officer, said.

Some of the major themes in the data – and which journalists should be wary of in 2017 – include:

- Violence from right-wing groups
- Dangers faced when reporting on protests and demonstrations organised across the political spectrum
- Impunity: Physical attacks on journalists not properly investigated; government officials intimidating reporters without fear of punishment
- Difficulties reporting on refugees, including denied access and violence
- Silencing journalists by arresting them on ties to terrorist or extremist groups
- Libel laws subjecting media outlets and reporters to high fines and imprisonment
- Economic difficulties leading to the closure or restructuring of media outlets and buyouts by wealthy businesspeople, often leading to job cuts and dismissals
- State of emergency laws being used to detain journalists without charge
- Death threats and smear campaigns disseminated online

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**“Mapping Media Freedom is essential to getting to the bottom of the two biggest issues plaguing media today: violence against members of the media and impunity from prosecution by their assailants.”**

**DUNJA MIJATOVIC,**

OSCE representative on freedom of the media



# About Mapping Media Freedom

Each report is fact-checked with local sources before becoming available on the MMF 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 partially funded by the European Commission – covers 42 countries, including all EU member states, plus Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Turkey, along with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine (added in April 2015), and Azerbaijan (added in February 2016). The platform marked its two-year anniversary in May 2016 and recorded over 2,700 incidents threatening media freedom by the end of the fourth quarter of 2016.

## DEATHS

**Q1** In Turkey, the body of Rohat Aktaş, an editor for the Kurdish-language daily Azadiya Welat, was identified among others in a basement in Cizre – a month after he was shot while covering efforts to help those wounded during clashes between Kurdish separatists and Turkish forces. TV Journalist Gülsen Yıldız was killed during an attack on a convoy of military vehicles in Ankara. Journalist Mohammed Zahir al-Shergat died as a result of gunshot wounds during an attack in Gaziantep, for which IS claimed responsibility.

**Q2** In Turkey, in the city of Gaziantep, journalist Mohammed Zahir al-Shergat died as a result of gunshot wounds. Members of IS have since claimed responsibility for the attack.

**Q3** In Ukraine, Pavel Sheremet, a Belarusian journalist working for online investigative newspaper Ukrayinska Pravda and Radio Vesti, was killed by an explosive device as he drove to his office. As of February 2017, the police investigation had found no suspects. In Ukraine, journalist and founder of news agency Novy Region Alexander Shchetinin was found dead in his apartment in Kiev with a bullet wound in the head. 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. In Turkey, soldiers shot and killed Mustafa Cambaz, a photographer with the pro-government newspaper Yeni Şafak.

**Q4** In the Netherlands, Martin Kok, founder of a blog about the Dutch criminal underworld, was shot dead in his car. Kok had published details about the criminal case against one of the country's most infamous criminals Willem Holleeder.

**NINE JOURNALISTS  
WERE KILLED AS A  
RESULT OF THEIR  
REPORTING IN 2016:**

**ROHAT AKTAŞ**

**GÜLSEN YILDIZ**

**MOHAMMED ZAHIR  
AL-SHERGAT**

**PAVEL SHEREMET**

**ALEXANDER  
SHCHETININ**

**ANDREY NAZARENKO**

**MUSTAFA CAMBAZ**

**MARTIN KOK**

“The fight against fake news industry or propaganda cannot be turned into a new form of harassment against journalists and media workers. Forced registration or accreditation systems are regularly used against journalists to obstruct independent media coverage of events with major public interests. Journalism is a public good and people should defend it to secure fair access to information.”

### **MOGENS BLICHER-BJERREGARD,**

EFJ president

#### **PHYSICAL ASSAULTS AND INJURY**

MMF documented 205 verified incidents of assault and injury, over half of which occurred in Ukraine (42), Russia (39) and Italy (31). In Ukraine, government officials and authorities repeatedly injured reporters, including when Dmytro Solovyov, an assistant for MP Ivan Vynnyk, broke the arm of Nova Kakhovka editor-in-chief Yevhen Kavun, in the city of Nova Kakhovka. In Russia, on the border of Ingushetia and Chechnya, a group of masked men attacked a minibus with six Russian and foreign journalists and activists taking part in a press tour organised by activists from Russian NGO Committee for the Prevention of Torture. In September, lawyers for the NGO filed a complaint, accusing the authorities of performing an ineffective investigation leading to no results, “demonstrating a general trend for impunity for those who attack journalists”, Katya Buchneva, a correspondent from the project said.

#### **THE FAR RIGHT**

Attacks on journalists were perpetrated by individuals believed to be associated with far-right groups or parties. Alleged supporters of right-wing populist Alternative für Deutschland assaulted reporters in Munich and Magdeburg. In Greece, supposed members of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party perpetrated four assaults in 2016, including assaulting journalists covering an anti-refugee

protest on the island of Chios. In Italy, at the end of a church service commemorating the death of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, five journalists from various outlets were pushed and shoved by far-right militants, MMF affiliate Ossigeno per l’Informazione reported.

#### **DEMONSTRATIONS**

Reporting on demonstrations continued to be dangerous for media workers. Throughout France’s main cities from March to June 2016, journalists reporting on protests opposing proposed changes to French labour law were subject to violence in 15 incidents. Media workers said they were targeted by police – using batons, “flash-balls” (a non-lethal weapon that most commonly fires rubber balls), tear gas and stun grenades – and by demonstrators who physically assaulted journalists with rocks. In Croatia, Valeri Baranovic was harassed during a protest by an anti-abortion group in front of the community hospital in the town of Sibenik. In the Netherlands, in two incidents reporters were targeted while covering demonstrations surrounding Black Pete, a controversial Dutch character in blackface. In Russia, a photographer for Kommersant newspaper was assaulted at an LGBT rights protest by counter demonstrators.

# 205

**INCIDENTS OF  
PHYSICAL ASSAULT  
AND INJURY WERE  
VERIFIED IN 2016.**



## 336 JOURNALISTS WERE DETAINED OR ARRESTED IN 2016.



### ARRESTS/ DETAINMENTS

In 2016, 336 journalists were detained or arrested. According to P24, an Istanbul-based platform for independent journalists and a partner on MMF, 225 journalists were detained and 125 of those were arrested on criminal charges in Turkey. Six days after the attempted coup on Turkey's democratically elected government, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared a state of emergency, which became the catalyst for an unprecedented level of attacks on media freedom. Journalists were arrested for links to the alleged organiser of the coup, Fethullah Gülen, and promoting propaganda on behalf of a terrorist organisation. 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 movement. 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. Turkey is the number one jailer of journalists of any country monitored by MMF.

“With so many journalists in jail or out of a job in Turkey, diverse information is sparse, which is a real threat to democracy.”

**MELODY PATRY,** Index on Censorship's head of advocacy

One hundred and eleven journalists were detained, of which 51 were arrested on charges in the other 41 countries the project monitors. In Russia, one journalist was arrested and 26 were detained. In Macedonia, police arrested 28 journalists and photojournalists who were accompanying a group of refugees that were illegally trying to enter Macedonia from Greece. In Belarus, media workers were detained 13 times and five of those were arrested; freelance journalist Kastus Zhukouski was detained four times for working for Belsat, a Polish-backed media outlet, without accreditation. In Azerbaijan, despite the release of some of the key political prisoners in 2016, including top investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova, ahead of President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Washington DC, seven journalists were detained and five were arrested. In Ukraine, five reporters were detained by separatists

in the self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, where two Russian reporters working for independent channel TV Rain were expelled and are now banned from re-entering the region. In Crimea, Alexei Salov, editor-in-chief of online media outlet Argumenty Nedeli, was arrested on a warrant issued by Russian authorities in 2012, which was acted on once the territory was occupied by Russia. In Italy, editor Pasquale Clemente was sentenced to two years in prison for defaming a politician.

<sup>1</sup> This includes Fikrat Faramazoglu, editor-in-chief of jam.az, a website that documents cases and arrests related to the Ministry of National Security, who was given a three-month sentence after being accused of extorting money by threats, and popular blogger Mehman Huseynov, who has reported on the illegal business dealings of top government officials.

### CRIMINAL CHARGES/CIVIL LAWSUITS

There were 178 reports of criminal charges and lawsuits filed to the platform. Charges on links to terrorism and extremism were consistently used to silence journalists. In Turkey, the majority of journalists charged were accused of ties to the Gulenist Terror Organisation (FETO), which officials say orchestrated the failed coup attempt.

Journalists were also arrested as retaliation for their investigative reporting. In the Netherlands, the International War Crime Tribunal in The Hague detained Florence Hartmann, a former journalist for French daily Le Monde, on charges of contempt of court after revealing secret documents on the Srebrenica genocide in a book she wrote in 2007. In Montenegro, Jovo Martinovic, an investigative journalist who exposed criminal networks and war criminals, was charged with belonging to a drug trafficking gang and aiding them. He has been in custody since October 2015.

Seventy-one lawsuits were filed in 2016, with journalists being subjected to steep fines for alleged damages. In Italy, where 18 lawsuits were filed, the president of the Roi Foundation, Gianni Zonin, filed a lawsuit against Giovanni Coviello, editor-in-chief of the dailies Vicenzapiù and Vicenzapiù.com, demanding €1 million in damages to the foundation's reputation. In Spain, the president of Prisa Group Juan Luis Cebrián, publisher of national newspapers El País and sports daily AS, is suing online newspaper El Confidencial for €8.2 million for reporting on his alleged links to the Panama Papers.

Government officials filed complaints or launched investigations into media outlets. In Germany, a national media freedom crisis erupted when a satirist faced lawsuits following a provocative poem about Turkey's president Erdogan – Chancellor Angela Merkel granted permission for the lawsuit to move forward. In Poland, there were several

incidents of high-ranking government or ruling party representatives filing complaints against critical media or issuing threats to sue them. In France, the minister of defense, Jean-Yves Le Drian, launched an investigation into French newspaper Le Monde for “compromising a military secret” following the publication of an article on the presence of French special forces in Libya.

### LEGAL MEASURES

One hundred and thirty laws and court decisions infringing on press freedom were passed. In Turkey, President Erdogan declared a state of emergency in 81 provinces, which led to emergency decrees including prison sentences of up to one year and fines no less than 5,000 TL (1,470 EUR) for “sharing and publishing false news”.

“Exposure to pressure and violence is nothing new for journalists in Turkey, but the crackdown that followed the attempted coup last July is unprecedented in its pace and scope. With so many journalists in jail or out of a job, diverse information is sparse and critical views are squashed, which is a real threat to democracy as the country approaches a crucial referendum vote that would change the constitution and significantly increase the powers of President Erdogan,” Melody Patry, Index on Censorship's Head of Advocacy, said.

Germany and Poland both introduced more extensive surveillance laws. France and the UK passed legislation which could endanger the protection and anonymity of sources.

In Greece, legislation outlined the procedures for granting a limited number of licences for TV channels. In Romania, the TV-Radio licence fee was abolished, turning the public media into a budgetary institution, which an open letter by Active Watch stated “constitutes the last step of a takeover of the public media”.



**178 CRIMINAL CHARGES AND CIVIL LAWSUITS WERE REPORTED IN 2016.**



**LEGAL MEASURES WERE TAKEN AGAINST JOURNALISTS IN 2016.**



# 390

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

## JOB LOSS

Thousands of media workers lost their jobs due to the closure of media outlets following political pressure. In Turkey, P24 estimates that more than 2,500 jobs were lost as a result of the attempted coup, which was followed by the shutting down of private and state media outlets, detaining journalists and revoking press cards. In Russia, a shake-up at RBC media resulted in the dismissal of the outlets' top editors, after management for the news outlet reportedly bowed to political pressure from the Kremlin. In Croatia, Ivica Storic, a long time journalist at the national broadcaster Croatian Radio-Television (HRT), was fired after criticising the ruling Croatian Democratic Union party, HDZ. In Poland, at least 225 media workers were dismissed during the year after the government took control of public TV and radio stations, including TVP, Polskie Radio and 17 regional broadcasters. Redundancies due to restructuring were also documented at news outlets across the continent including France (iTele), UK (Trinity Mirror, Archant Limited, The Telegraph and Vice News), Poland (Gazeta Wyborcza) and Germany (Berliner Zeitung and Berliner Kurier).

## INTIMIDATION

There were 390 incidents of intimidation verified by the project. A large number of incidents occurred in Italy (62), Ukraine (55) and Russia (51). In Italy, people associated with criminal syndicates threatened journalists. Journalist Paolo Borrometi, who lives under police protection, was repeatedly threatened by convicted criminal Giuseppe Cammalleri. In Ukraine, 23 separate incidents of intimidation were documented in the eastern region of the country. Website Myrovets leaked the personal data of 5,412 journalists who were accredited by the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. Those journalists were subsequently threatened. The site continues to operate. In Russia, more than half of the reports of intimidation occurred outside Moscow and St. Petersburg, where alleged crime bosses, government officials and local media outlets targeted the press.

"Threats used to muzzle journalism are occurring at an alarming rate. Incidents outside Moscow and St. Petersburg are frequently underreported, making journalists based there more vulnerable. The climate of impunity and fear has discouraged journalists from reporting these incidents to authorities, who many times are the perpetrators of these threats," Hannah Machlin, project officer for Mapping Media Freedom, commented.

Intimidation tactics were pervasive in the Balkans: Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Slovenia. Government officials consistently defamed and harassed journalists online and off, from calling journalists "worn out prostitutes" to the "enemy's TV station". Outside the Balkans, elected officials defamed reporters in Estonia, Malta and Greece.

## DEATH THREATS

Death threats were sent to silence media workers at least 30 times, with investigative journalists being repeatedly targeted. In Sweden, three death threats were documented, including local crime reporter Skånska Dagbladet who received threats online after writing an article about a convicted criminal. KRIK, The Crime and Corruption Reporting Network in Serbia, received anonymous threatening messages via social media, which they believe are tied to their reporting on hidden assets of government officials. Leonard Kerquki was threatened following the October 2016 broadcast of his documentary about war crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army during the Kosovo war of the 1990s. In Serbia, the president of the Independent Journalist Association of Vojvodina, Nedim Sejdinovic, was targeted, while in Croatia, Sasa Lekovic, president of the Croatian Journalists Association, also received threats.



#### ATTACKS TO PROPERTY

Media professionals were subject to 143 attacks to property. The studios of the national Ukrainian TV channel Inter were set on fire, leading to the evacuation of 30 people during which a journalist was injured. The offices of the Slobodna Makedonija radio station were pelted with stones by anti-government demonstrators, resulting in broken windows and other material damages.

Cars belonging to journalists were set on fire in Ukraine, Cyprus and Italy. Two explosive devices were detonated against Kosovo public broadcaster. Explosive devices were also used to target journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands and Russia.

#### BLOCKED ACCESS

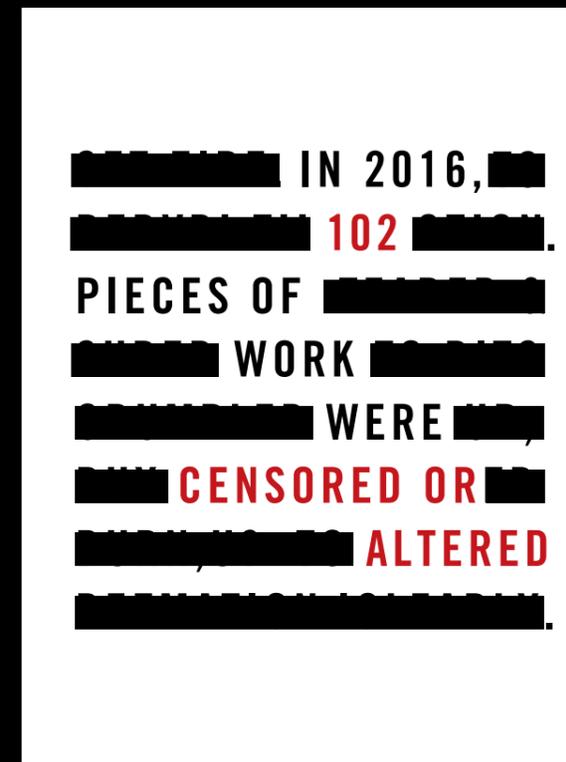
Journalists or sources were blocked 299 times in 2016, with the majority of reports coming from Turkey (54), Russia (52), Ukraine (49) and Belarus. In Turkey, authorities blocked access to news outlets following the attempted coup. From 17 - 18 July, the TİB, Turkey's telecommunications regulator, blocked access to at least five news websites and four TV channels. The conflict in eastern Ukraine has led to attacks on Ukrainian-language outlets. Authorities of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) passed a decree on "informational destabilisation", which led to approximately 113 sites being blocked within the territory.

Journalists were banned from reporting from government buildings in Belarus, Poland, Hungary and Ukraine. In Belarus, journalists were repeatedly barred from reporting on local meetings, the



WERE REPORTED

IN 2016.



electoral commissions and court rooms. In Hungary, an expansive "no go" zone for media in parliament was created. Journalists working for websites hvg.hu, index.hu, nol.hu and 24.hu have been banned from entering the parliament building altogether.

#### WORKS CENSORED OR ALTERED

MMF published 102 reports citing work that had been censored or altered in 2016. Authorities freely shut down media outlets. In Turkey, hundreds of media outlets were shut down following the attempted coup. On 28 July three news agencies, 16 TV channels, 23 radios, 45 newspapers, 15 magazines and 29 publishing houses were closed. In the occupied peninsula of Crimea, Russian state media regulator Roskomnadzor blocked websites four times, including the Crimean edition of Radio Free Europe and StopFake, a project that examines propaganda.

"Threats used to muzzle journalism are occurring at an alarming rate."

HANNAH MACHLIN,  
 project officer for Mapping Media Freedom

Specific content was also censored. Sofia-based Nova TV removed 90 political cartoons and an interview with Bulgarian cartoonist Chavdar Nikolov from its website. Critical remarks on Hungary's Orbán government made by historian János M Rainer were censored from a report on his speech published by the state-run wire service MTI. The Finnish prime minister pressured journalists to censor an investigation on conflict of interest within government investment policies. In France, in the run-up to primary elections, there were attempts to prevent a documentary on former French President Nicolas Sarkozy's alleged illegal campaign financing from airing.

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# CASE STUDY:

## Q4 2016

For each preceding quarter of 2016, Mapping Media Freedom compiled an overall report on data reported to the platform.

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**DEATHS: 1**

One journalist was killed in Q4. Crime blogger Martin Kok was shot in a parking lot. An investigation into the murder and whether or not it was linked to his work is still ongoing.

**ASSAULT/INJURY: 38**

In Q4, 38 incidents of assault and injury were verified by MMF. Reporters were pelted by rocks in Spain and Sweden. Journalists were repeatedly targeted at demonstrations in France, the Netherlands, Spain and Russia. In Italy, Klaus Davi, who was reporting on a lawyer connected to the Pìromalli Calabrian crime syndicate, was assaulted. It was the third time he had been attacked in 2016.

**ARRESTS/DETAINMENTS: 40**

Between 1 October and 31 December 2016, 40 media workers were arrested or detained, a 54 per cent rise from Q4 2015, with almost three quarters of these taking place in Turkey (19) and Russia (10). In Turkey, journalists continued to be detained and arrested on charges of promoting propaganda on behalf of a terrorist organisation. In Russia, nine of the incidents involved foreign or independent reporters.

In this same time frame, authorities in Azerbaijan summoned journalists and bloggers for questioning on their online posts, published articles and other shared material. Among these opposition journalist Zamin Haji from Yeni Musavat and Ziya Asadi from Azadliq were summoned for police questioning as well as blogger Mehman Huseynov. In Belarus, three bloggers were arrested for inciting hatred and now face 12-year imprisonment sentences.

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### CRIMINAL CHARGES/CIVIL LAWSUITS: 40

A total of 40 reports including criminal charges and lawsuits were filed to the platform in Q4. In Turkey, media professionals continued to be arrested on terror-related charges. Cumhuriyet newspaper reported that 13 of its journalists were charged in late October.

Lawsuits were frequently filed on libel charges. In Italy, the mayor of the city of Sakiai, Juozas Bertasius, sued the editor of local newspaper, Sakiu Valscius, for libel. In Serbia, the Interior Minister sued the weekly magazine NIN for defamation over an article blaming him for illegal demolitions in Belgrade. The Serbian high court found the weekly guilty.



### INTIMIDATION: 96

MMF verified 96 incidents of intimidation in Q4, which includes trolling/cyberbullying, psychological abuse, defamation/discredit and sexual harassment. Government officials continued to intimidate media professionals in Slovakia, Ukraine, Italy, Spain, Russia, Poland, Macedonia and Finland. The Finnish prime minister Sipilä sent more than 20 emails to two journalists at Yle, where he accused the journalists of publishing false information about him and for acting unprofessionally, after they had covered an investigation into his conflict of interest in a government investment.

Online intimidating tactics continued to be pervasive. In the UK, private nude photos of journalist Vonny Moyes, a writer for Scottish paper The National, were shared on Twitter without her consent. In Bosnia, Slobodan Vaskovic, a well-known blogger and citizen journalist, announced that he had left the country after receiving death threats.



### LEGAL MEASURES: 29

A total of 29 legal and court decisions infringing on press freedom were passed in Q4. In Russia, Yandex, the country's largest search engine and a major news aggregator, warned the media companies it partners with that it will stop listing articles from media companies that have not registered with the Russian government. In Turkey, legal measures continued to be passed under the state of emergency. An Istanbul court issued a ruling that would confiscate all assets and property owned by 54 journalists and writers, some of whom have been imprisoned as part of the probe into the failed coup attempt.

Many countries saw the introduction of legislation to abolish funding for media outlets. In Romania a draft proposal aiming to abolish the TV-Radio license fee was submitted, which is set to eliminate the TV-Radio license fee. In Poland, the Belarusian-language channel Belsat TV will lose crucial funding from the foreign ministry, which will most likely lead to its closure.



### BLOCKED ACCESS: 72

A total of 72 reports of sources or journalists being blocked from covering a story were verified in Q4, a 30 per cent rise from Q4 2015. Reporters were repeatedly barred from reporting on refugees throughout Europe. In France, Gaspard Glanz, the founder of Taranis News agency, was blocked from documenting the dismantling of the Calais refugee camp. After more than 30 hours spent in custody, Glanz learned there were two legal cases filed against him. In Italy, 10 journalists who were reporting on the arrival of 1,255 migrants into the port of Cagliari were only allowed to work in a small fenced-off area, where it was difficult for them to take photos.

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Covering government officials also proved to be difficult in Q4. In Ukraine, four reporters were locked in a bus and told they were not allowed to report on an event with President Petro Poroshenko. Multiple journalists in Hungary and one journalist in Poland were barred from reporting in their respective parliaments.

Access to information was under threat in Q4. Under the state of emergency, Turkey's government placed media gags on certain content. In Q4, a gag was put into effect after Russia's ambassador to Turkey was assassinated. The order prevented media outlets from covering the incident. Independent media outlets were repeatedly blocked from reporting in Azerbaijan, included Berlin-based Meydan TV, the Azerbaijani service of Radio Free Europe and the online version of Azadliq newspaper.



#### JOB LOSS

In Q4, buyouts by businesspeople and structural changes often led to job cuts and the dismissal of journalists. In Hungary, Mediaworks, which is now owned by Opimus Press Zrt, bought and then shut down publications. Critical journalists were then fired. The prominent left-wing daily Népszabadság was suspended on 8 October. At other media outlets owned by OPZ, journalists were fired at local media outlets as the result of takeovers including five editors-in-chief working for eight local newspapers, and later two journalists working for the prominent Hungarian newspaper Somogyi Hírlap.

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In Poland, the publisher Agora SA, which issues the second most widely read daily newspaper, the left-liberal Gazeta Wyborcza, is set to cut 100 jobs. Another prominent case involved the dismissal of journalist union staff members who had backed protests against a demotion of colleagues at government-controlled Polskie Radio. In Germany, the media group DuMont is merging the editorial departments of two of its papers, Berliner Zeitung and Berliner Kurier, resulting in the loss of 50 jobs – one third of both staffs combined.



#### WORKS CENSORED OR ALTERED: 23

23 works were censored or altered in the fourth quarter. The Turkish government adopted two cabinet decrees which outlined shutting down 10 pro-Kurdish newspapers, two news agencies and three magazines. In Spain, a judge ruled to prohibit publication of a joint investigative consortium referred to as “Football leaks” based on the claim that e-mails and other confidential correspondence and material were taken illegally by hackers. The Spanish daily newspaper El Mundo, which is part of the investigative consortium, kept publishing material claiming it works in public interest.

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# Conclusion and Recommendations

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Mapping Media Freedom's annual report highlights issues still affecting the state of press freedom as we start 2017. During all four quarters of 2016, violence and arrests were consistently used to silence journalists. In 2016, 15 per cent of reports filed to the map were physical assaults and/or injuries, where perpetrators were frequently not prosecuted, reflecting a culture of violence and impunity that does not deter further incidents. A total of 336 journalists were arrested and detained during the year with a spike following the failed 15 July coup and imposition of a state of emergency in Turkey. With 65 per cent of all arrests/detainments verified by the map for the year 2016, Turkey is the top jailer of journalists in the region.

Across Europe, the proliferation of threats and attacks on journalists – including in countries with a historic tradition of press freedom – is hindering media workers

from doing their job to impart information to the public. From legal and administrative measures blocking access to the undermining of anonymity for sources to physical assault and killing, the decline of media freedom in the region calls for immediate action to restore European standards for the protection of journalism, ensure the safety of media workers and safeguard a pillar of democracy.

It is crucial for European leaders to refrain from adopting new legislation restricting journalists' access, introducing penalties on reporting or endangering the protection of sources. The abuse of national security and terror legislation to prosecute journalists must end, with judicial reviews and appropriate training of law enforcement agencies when necessary. Authorities should launch swift investigations into acts of violence and intimidation of media workers.

Index on Censorship encourages media actors and press freedom groups both at the international and national levels to continue to accurately report on violations to press freedom, inform governments and civil society groups of ongoing incidents, and support local initiatives aimed at promoting freedom of expression, strengthening journalistic ethics and fostering solidarity among media workers.

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](https://mappingmediafreedom.org)

