

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

2015



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ON THE COVER

Cover image by KAL.

Press Freedom in 2014

Harsh Laws and Violence Drive Global Decline

by Jennifer Dunham, Bret Nelson, and Elen Aghekyan

Conditions for the media deteriorated sharply in 2014, as journalists around the world faced mounting restrictions on the free flow of news and information—including grave threats to their own lives.

Governments employed tactics including arrests and censorship to silence criticism. Terrorists and other nonstate forces kidnapped and murdered journalists attempting to cover armed conflicts and organized crime. The wealthy owners who dominate private media in a growing number of countries shaped news coverage to support the government, a political party, or their own interests. And democratic states struggled to cope with an onslaught of propaganda from authoritarian regimes and militant groups.

Freedom of the Press 2015, the latest edition of an annual report published by Freedom House since 1980, found that global press freedom declined in 2014 to its lowest point in more than 10 years. The rate of decline also accelerated drastically, with the global average score suffering its largest one-year drop in a decade. The share of the world's population that enjoys a Free press stood at 14 percent, meaning only one in seven people live in countries where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures.

The steepest declines worldwide relate to two factors: the passage and use of restrictive laws against the press—often on national security grounds—and the ability of local and foreign journalists to physically access and report freely from a given country, including protest sites and conflict areas. Paradoxically, in a time of seemingly unlimited access to information

and new methods of content delivery, more and more areas of the world are becoming virtually inaccessible to journalists.

While there were positive developments in some countries, the dominant global trend was negative. The number of countries with significant improvements (8) was the lowest since 2009, while the number with significant declines (18) was the highest in 7 years.* The 18 countries and territories that declined represented a politically diverse cross-section—including Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Serbia, and South Africa—indicating that the global deterioration in press freedom is not limited to autocracies or war zones. Also featured among the major backsliders were Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Honduras, Libya, South Sudan, and Thailand.

In a time of seemingly unlimited access to information and new methods of content delivery, more and more areas of the world are becoming virtually inaccessible to journalists.

The nature of major changes over the past five years is also striking. Since 2010, the most significant score improvements have occurred in countries where the media environment had been among the worst in the world. Tunisia, with a gain of 37 points, not only registered the biggest improvement over this period, but was also the only country with large gains that

* Significant gains or declines are defined as shifts of 3 or more points in a country's score, on a 0–100 scale.

Freedom of the Press **Methodology**

The *Freedom of the Press* report assesses the degree of media freedom in 199 countries and territories, analyzing the events and developments of each calendar year. Each country and territory receives a numerical score from 0 (the most free) to 100 (the least free), which serves as the basis for a status designation of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

Scores are assigned in response to 23 methodology questions that seek to capture the varied ways in which pressure can be placed on the flow of objective information and the ability of media platforms—whether print outlets, broadcast stations, news websites, blogs on public affairs, or social media that carry news content—to operate freely and without fear of repercussions.

Issues covered by the methodology include the legal and regulatory environment in which media operate; the degree of partisan control over news content; political influences on reporting and access to information; the public's ability to access diverse sources of information; violations of press freedom ranging from the murder of journalists and bloggers to other extralegal abuse and harassment; and economic pressures on media outlets and their means of distribution.

The scores reflect not just government actions and policies, but also the behavior of the press itself in testing boundaries, as well as the influence of private owners, political or criminal groups, and other nonstate actors.

For a more detailed explanation of the methodology and scoring process, see pp. 26–28.

maintained a positive trajectory in 2014. While Myanmar and Libya have each earned net improvements of 21 points, both suffered score declines in the past year and remain in the Not Free category. In a disturbing trend, several countries with histories of more democratic practices have experienced serious deterioration. Greece has fallen by 21 points since 2010, as existing structural problems were exacerbated by the economic crisis and related political pressures. Large five-year drops were also recorded in Thailand (13 points), Ecuador (12), Turkey (11), Hong Kong (9), Honduras (7), Hungary (7), and Serbia (7).

In 2014, influential authoritarian powers such as China and Russia maintained a tight grip on locally based print and broadcast media, while also seeking to control the more independent views provided either online or by foreign news sources. Beijing and Moscow in particular were more overt in their efforts to manipulate the information environment in regions that they considered to be within their sphere of influence: Hong Kong and Taiwan for the former, and Ukraine, Central Asia, and the Baltics for the latter.

The year's notable improvements included three status changes, with Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, and Ukraine moving from Not Free to Partly Free. Tunisia maintained its reputation as the success story of the Arab Spring, improving another 5 points in 2014. However, other countries recording gains either made modest, tentative improvements in the wake of civil strife—as in Central African Republic and Somalia—or featured authoritarian governments that have grown more secure and less violently oppressive in recent years, as in Zimbabwe.

Increased use of restrictive laws

Several countries in 2014 passed security or secrecy laws that established new limits on speech and reporting. After a coup in May, Thailand's military government suspended the constitution, imposed martial law, shut down media outlets, blocked websites, and severely restricted content. Aggressive enforcement of the country's *lèse-majesté* laws also continued in 2014, and after the coup alleged violators were tried in military courts.

In Turkey, the government repeatedly sought to expand the telecommunications authority's power to block websites without a court order, though some of the more aggressive legal changes were struck down by the Constitutional Court. Other legislation gave the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) vast pow-

ers of surveillance and unfettered access to virtually any information held by any entity in the country. The amendments also criminalized reporting on or acquiring information about MIT.

A Russian law that took effect in August placed new controls on blogs and social media, requiring all sites with more than 3,000 visitors a day to register with the state telecommunications agency as media outlets. This status made them responsible for the accuracy of posted information, among other obligations.

Detentions and closures under existing security or emergency laws also increased in 2014. Azerbaijan was one of the worst offenders, with nine journalists in prison as of December 1. Over the course of that month, the authorities detained prominent investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova of U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), raided and closed RFE/RL's offices in the country, and interrogated the service's local employees. A number of well-known media advocacy groups were also forced to close during the year.

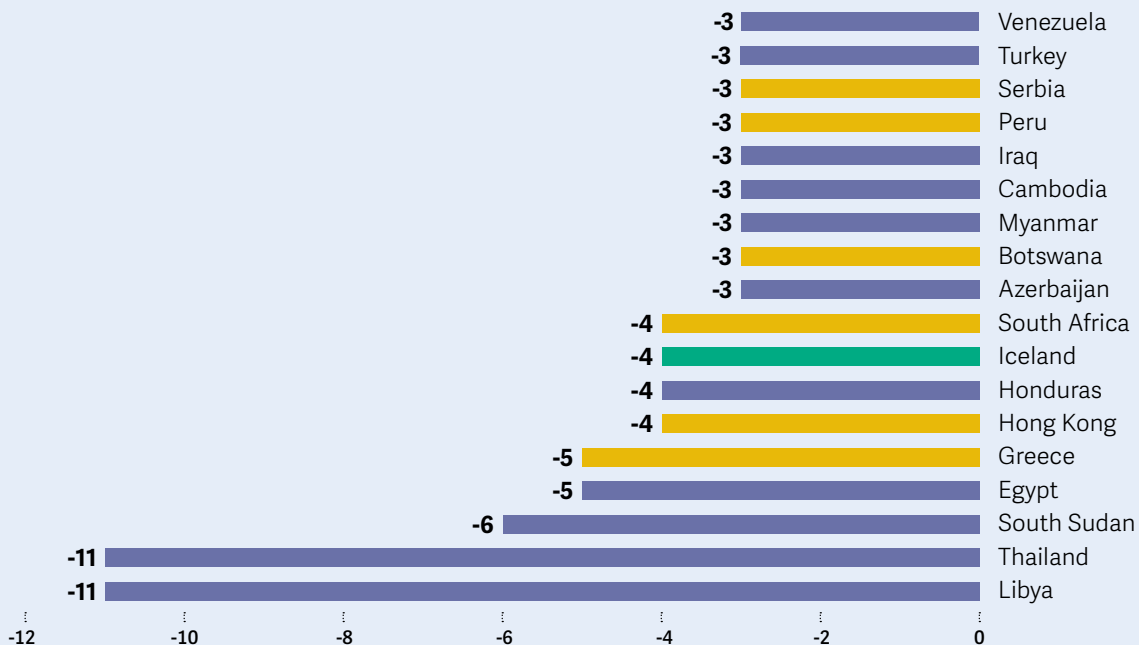
In Egypt, a court sentenced three Al-Jazeera journalists to seven or more years in prison on charges of conspiring with the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood to publish false news. The convictions followed a farci-

cal trial in which prosecutors presented no credible evidence. While all three were freed or released on bail in early 2015, at least nine journalists remain in jail on terrorism charges or for covering the Brotherhood.

Ethiopia's government stepped up its campaign against free expression in April 2014 by arresting six people associated with the Zone 9 blogging collective and three other journalists. In July, they were charged with inciting violence and terrorism. Myanmar, which had taken several positive steps in recent years, suffered declines in 2014 due in part to an increase in arrests and convictions of journalists. In July, four reporters and the chief executive of the *Unity Weekly News* were sentenced to 10 years in prison and hard labor, later reduced to seven years, under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act for reporting on a possible chemical weapons facility.

Such restrictive laws are not only utilized in authoritarian environments. Mexico's new telecommunications law drew widespread objections from press freedom advocates due to provisions allowing the government to monitor and shut down real-time blogging and posting during social protests. South African authorities expanded their use of the apartheid-era National Key Points Act to prevent investigative jour-

BIGGEST PRESS FREEDOM DECLINES IN 2014



nalists from reporting on important sites or institutions, particularly when probing corruption by political figures. In South Korea, President Park Geun-hye's administration increasingly relied on the National Security Law to suppress critical reports, especially regarding the president's inner circle and the *Sewol* ferry disaster.

Physical violence and inaccessible areas

The world's growing number of areas that are effectively off limits for journalists include parts of Syria and Iraq controlled by Islamic State (IS) extremists, states in northeastern Nigeria where Boko Haram is active, much of conflict-racked Libya, and Egypt's restive Sinai Peninsula. In Mexico, Honduras, and other Central American countries, intimidation and violence against journalists continued to soar during the year, as gangs and local authorities sought to deter reporting on organized crime and corruption in their territory.

Seventeen journalists were killed in Syria alone in 2014, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The death toll, coupled with the high-profile murders of American freelance journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff by IS militants, served as a stark reminder that local reporters—who make up the vast majority of the casualties—and freelancers do not have the extensive security safeguards afforded to full-time staff at large news organizations like the *New York Times*. To help address the problem, major outlets and advocacy groups established global safety principles and practices in early 2015.

While some parts of the world are rendered inaccessible mostly by chaotic violence, others are deliberately barred to most reporters by repressive governments. Prime examples include China's Tibet and Xinjiang regions, Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, Russian-occupied Crimea, and certain ethnic minority areas in Myanmar. Citizen journalists, activists, and ordinary residents have managed to disseminate some information about conditions in these regions, but it is no substitute for unfettered reporting by professionals, and it is often easier to send news to the outside world than to reach audiences within the affected area.

Street protests, though less deadly than armed conflicts, frequently proved dangerous for reporters to cover in 2014. During the prodemocracy demonstrations that broke out in Hong Kong in September, journalists faced a sharp rise in violence, including multiple assaults on reporters near protest sites. In

Venezuela, journalists became targets during clashes linked to the widespread social protests that swept the country in the first half of the year. Reporters in Brazil also encountered violence at protests before and during the World Cup; in February, a cameraman died after being hit in the head with an explosive. In Ukraine, in addition to four journalist deaths and other violence associated with the separatist conflict in the east, one journalist was killed and at least 27 others were injured at the height of confrontations between protesters and police in the capital in February.

Pressure through ownership

In Russia and Venezuela, the media sector is increasingly owned by the state, private-sector cronies of the political leadership, or business interests that "depoliticize" their outlets by suppressing content that is critical of the government. In July, Venezuela's oldest independent daily, *El Universal*, was sold to new owners. The move came on the heels of ownership changes at two other major private media companies in the country, Cadena Capriles and Globovisión. In all three cases, respected reporters have left or been suspended since the ownership changes, primarily due to shifts in the editorial line that affected news coverage.

While somewhat more media diversity exists in countries like Turkey and Ecuador, political leaders have steadily tamed once-independent outlets, using various forms of pressure against private owners and creating media sectors that are firmly tilted in the ruling party's favor.

In Greece, the new public broadcaster has faced allegations of political interference in hiring and editorial content. Hungary remained a country of concern in 2014, as the administration of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán continued to exert pressure on media owners to influence coverage. Dozens of media workers protested the dismissal of the editor in chief of *Origo*, a news website, after it published an article on alleged misuse of state funds.

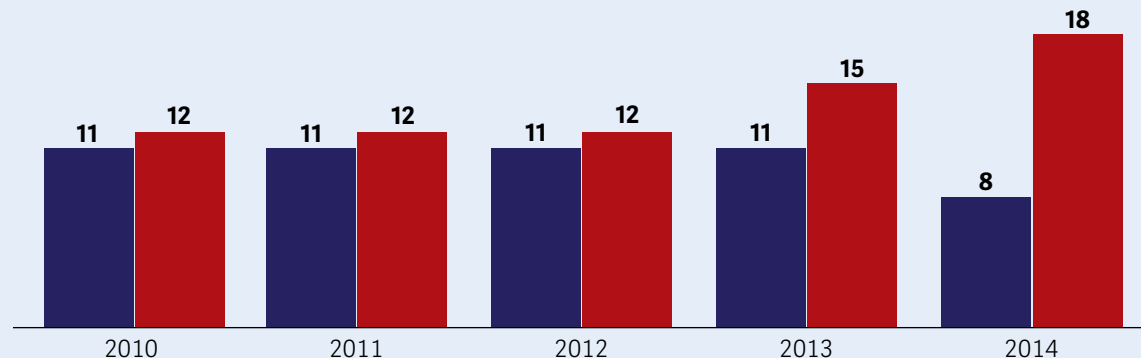
Increased use of propaganda by states and nonstate actors

Among the most troubling trends identified in 2014 was the more active and aggressive use of propaganda—often false or openly threatening—to warp the media environment and crowd out authentic journalism.

This phenomenon was especially pronounced in Russia, where state-controlled national television stations broadcast nonstop campaigns of demonization

COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT DECLINES INCREASINGLY OUTNUMBER THOSE WITH SIGNIFICANT GAINS

■ IMPROVED ■ DECLINED

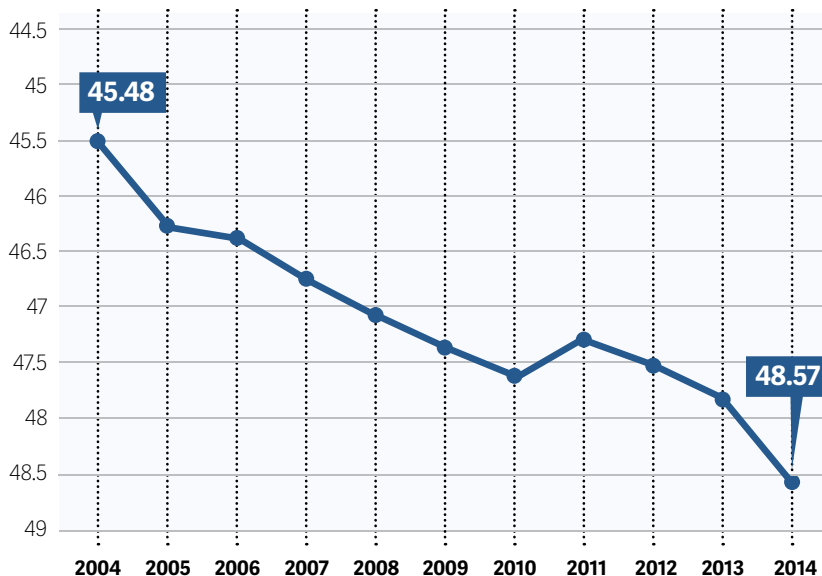


directed at the internal opposition, neighboring countries whose policies have displeased Moscow, and the broader democratic world. Russian media played a major role in preparing the Russian public for war with Ukraine. As Dmitry Kiselyov, head of the Kremlin’s international news enterprise, asserted in April 2014, “Information wars have already become standard practice and the main type of warfare. The bombers are now sent in after the information campaign.”

Neighboring countries have grappled with the problem of Russian propaganda, in some cases resorting to censorship. Ukrainian authorities, facing a military invasion, suspended the retransmission of at least 15 Russian television channels by cable operators. Authorities in Lithuania, Latvia, and Moldova—whose breakaway territory of Transnistria is supported by Moscow—imposed suspensions or fines on some Russian stations for reasons including incitement to war, disseminating historical inaccuracies, and lack of pluralism of opinions in news content. The government of Estonia did not follow suit, instead approving the creation of a Russian-language public channel, set to launch in 2015, as a means of countering Kremlin disinformation with honest reporting. Latvia and Lithuania also signaled plans to expand Russian-language public programming.

Like the Kremlin, China’s Communist Party leaders used state-controlled media to propagate official views and vilify their perceived enemies. State outlets trumpeted the persona and slogans of President Xi Jinping while airing televised confessions and “self-criticisms” by detained journalists, with both phenomena drawing comparisons to the Mao era. To ensure that all media toed the line, the party’s propaganda

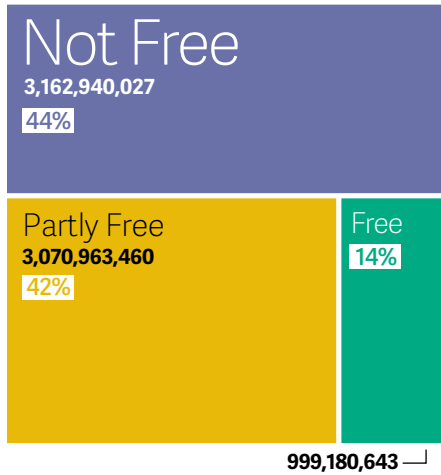
THE GLOBAL AVERAGE PRESS FREEDOM SCORE HAS DECLINED SHARPLY SINCE 2004



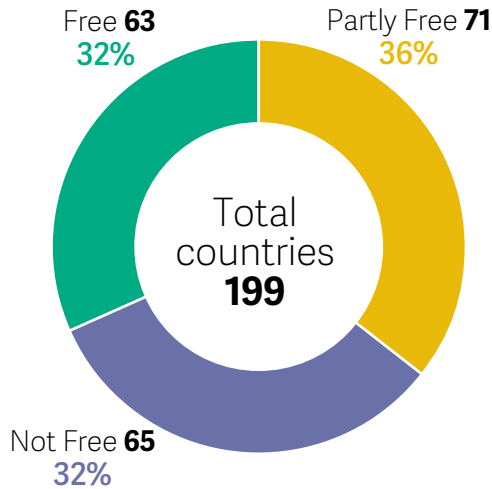
department issued almost daily directives ordering news outlets and websites to use only information from the official Xinhua News Agency for coverage of breaking developments.

Propaganda is not used exclusively by national governments. Militant groups including IS have established sophisticated media operations with potential audiences around the world, taking advantage of popular social-media tools and even satellite television. Democratic governments have been hard pressed to combat messages that openly advocate violence without restricting privacy, freedom of expression, and access to information for their citizens.

GLOBAL: STATUS BY POPULATION



GLOBAL: STATUS BY COUNTRY



Other Notable Developments in 2014

In addition to those described above, four major phenomena stood out during the year:

Hostile conditions for women journalists: Women journalists operated in an increasingly hostile environment in 2014, and the rapid expansion of Twitter and other social media as important tools for journalism has created new venues for harassment. This intimidation has proliferated and threatens to silence women’s reporting on crucial topics including corruption, politics, and crime. Although journalists covering such topics have always been vulnerable, women now encounter particularly vicious and gender-specific attacks, ranging from smears and insults to graphic threats of sexual violence and the circulation of personal information. Turkish journalist Amberin Zaman described the wave of intimidation she has faced in recent years as a “public lynching.”

The impact of the Ebola crisis: The Ebola epidemic in West Africa resulted in several restrictions on press freedom in 2014, although the three worst-affected countries each handled the crisis differently. In Liberia, emergency laws, shutdowns and suspensions of media outlets, and bans on coverage—ostensibly designed to avoid the spread of panic and misinformation—prevented the population from accessing critical information and aimed to hide the shortcomings of the government’s response. In August, a reporter for *FrontPage Africa* was arrested while covering a protest against the state of emergency. In October, the government limited media access to health care facilities, requiring journalists to obtain explicit permission from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare before conducting interviews or using recording equipment on clinic or hospital grounds. Sierra Leone imposed less onerous restrictions on the press, but nevertheless used emergency laws to arrest and detain journalists for critical reporting. In Guinea, a journalist and two other media workers were killed by local residents as they attempted to report on the crisis in a remote town, but the government did not unduly constrain the activities of the press during the year.

Deterioration in the Balkans: A number of countries in the Western Balkans continued to exhibit a worrying pattern of press freedom violations in 2014. These media environments feature several common problems: the use of defamation and insult laws by politicians and businesspeople to suppress critical

reporting; progovernment bias at public broadcasters; editorial pressure from political leaders and private owners that leads to self-censorship; harassment, threats, and attacks on journalists that go unpunished; and opaque ownership structures. Macedonia's score has declined 10 points in the past five years, making it the worst performer in the region. Several opposition-oriented outlets have been forced to close during this period, and journalist Tomislav Kezarovski remained in detention throughout 2014 on questionable charges that he revealed the identity of a protected witness in a murder case. In Serbia during the year, the administration of Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić sought to curb reporting on floods that hit the country in May and directed increasingly hostile rhetoric and harassment at independent journalists; such pressure allegedly motivated broadcasters to cancel major political talk shows. Conditions in Montenegro have deteriorated since Milo Đukanović returned to the premiership in 2012, with independent outlets such as *Vjesti*, *Dan*, and the *Monitor* suffering lawsuits, unprosecuted physical attacks, and hostile government rhetoric.

Persistent concerns in the United States: The United States' score fell by one point, to 22, due to detentions, harassment, and rough treatment of journalists by police during protests in Ferguson, Missouri. Meanwhile, press freedom advocates remained concerned about certain practices and policies of the federal government, including the Obama administration's relatively rigid controls on the information coming out of the White House and government agencies. Although the U.S. Justice Department said in December that it would no longer seek to compel *New York Times* journalist James Risen to reveal a source in a long-running case, the Obama administration has used the 1917 Espionage Act to prosecute alleged leaks of classified information eight times, more than all previous administrations combined. Revelations of surveillance that included the bulk collection of communications data by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the targeted wiretapping of media outlets continued to reverberate in 2014, as fears of monitoring and the aggressive prosecution of alleged leakers made journalists' interactions with administration officials and potential sources more difficult.

The Global Picture in 2014

Of the 199 countries and territories assessed for 2014 (two new territory reports, Crimea and Somaliland, were added), a total of 63 (32 percent) were rated Free, 71 (36 percent) were rated Partly Free,

and 65 (32 percent) were rated Not Free. This balance marks a shift toward the Partly Free category compared with the edition covering 2013, which featured 63 Free, 68 Partly Free, and 66 Not Free countries and territories.

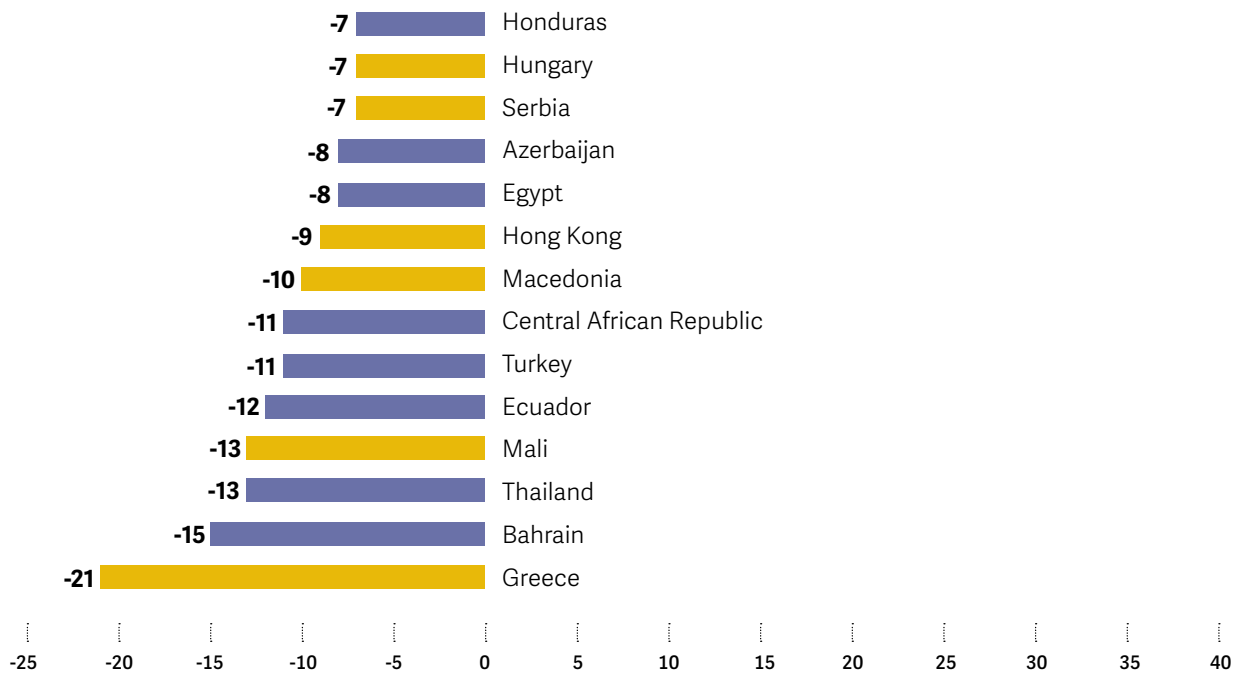
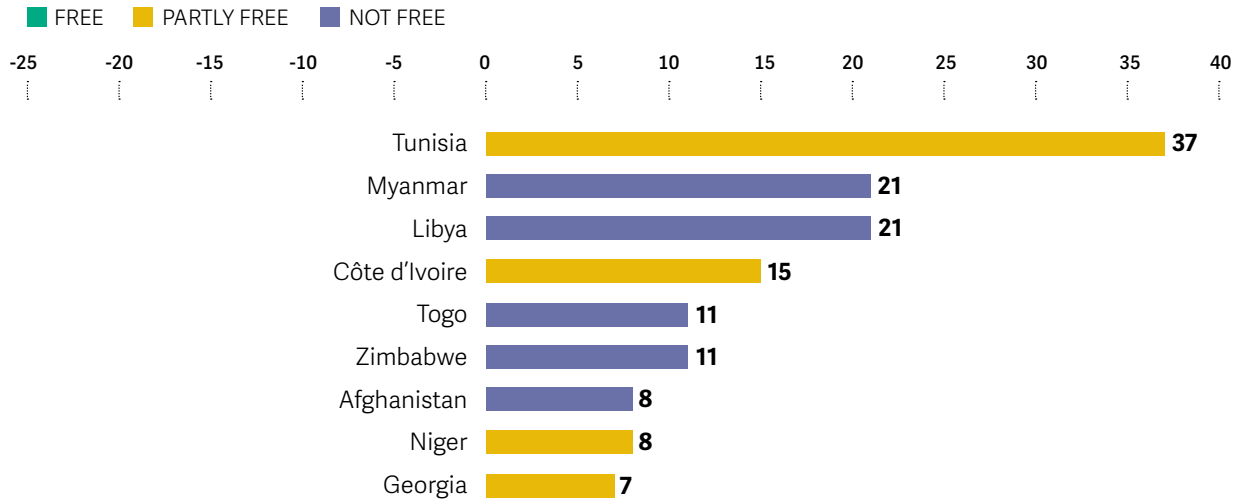
The report found that 14 percent of the world's inhabitants lived in countries with a Free press, while 42 percent had a Partly Free press and 44 percent lived in Not Free environments. The population figures are significantly affected by two countries—China, with a Not Free status, and India, with a Partly Free status—that together account for over a third of the world's more than seven billion people. The percentage of those enjoying a Free media in 2014 remained at its lowest level since 1996, when Freedom House began incorporating population data into the findings of the report.

After a multiyear decline in the global average score that was interrupted by an improvement in 2011, there was a further decline of 0.74 points for 2014, bringing the figure to its lowest level since 1999 and marking the greatest year-on-year decline since 2005. All regions except sub-Saharan Africa, whose average score improved slightly, experienced declines of varying degrees, with the Middle East and North Africa showing the largest net decline. In terms of thematic categories, the drop in the global average score was driven primarily by decline in the legal score, followed by the political score; the economic score showed the smallest amount of slippage.

Worst of the Worst

The world's 10 worst-rated countries and territories, with scores of between 90 and 100 points, were Belarus, Crimea, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Crimea—analyzed separately for the first time in the current edition—and Syria joined the bottom-ranked cohort in 2014. In these settings, independent media are either nonexistent or barely able to operate, the press acts as a mouthpiece for the regime, citizens' access to unbiased information is severely limited, and dissent is crushed through imprisonment, torture, and other forms of repression. Crimea became subject to Russian press laws after its occupation and annexation in early 2014, and its media faced restrictive regulations and widespread violence. Iran continues to earn its place among the Worst of the Worst as one of the world's leading jailers of journalists, including *Washington Post* correspondent Jason Rezaian, who has been detained without charge since July 2014.

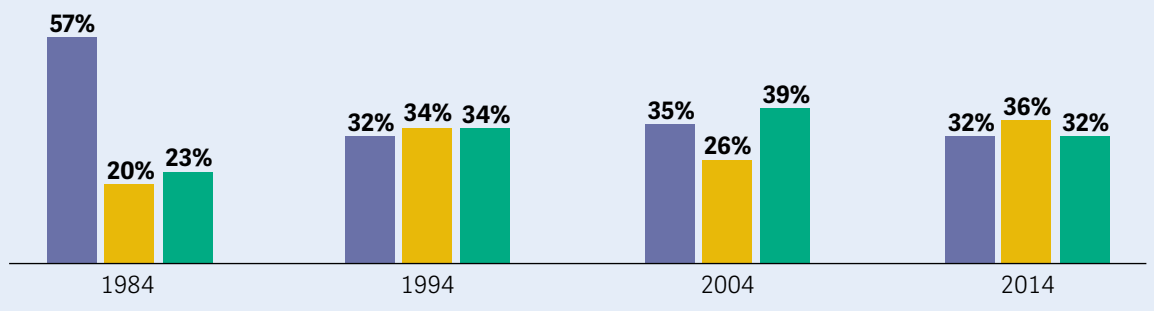
BIGGEST GAINS AND DECLINES, 2010–2014

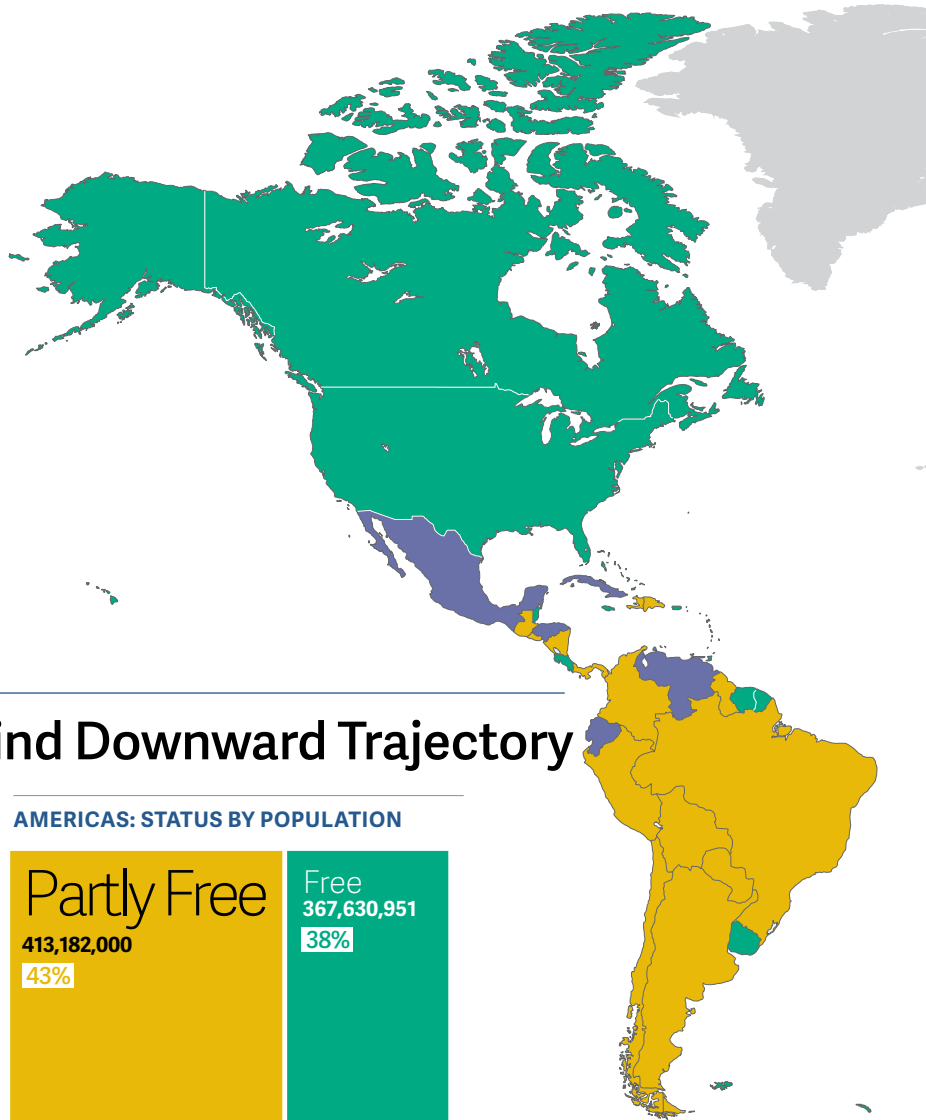


HISTORICAL TRENDS IN PRESS FREEDOM

Percentages of countries in the three press freedom categories

Legend: FREE (Green), PARTLY FREE (Yellow), NOT FREE (Blue)





Regional Trends

Americas

Violence, Intimidation Behind Downward Trajectory

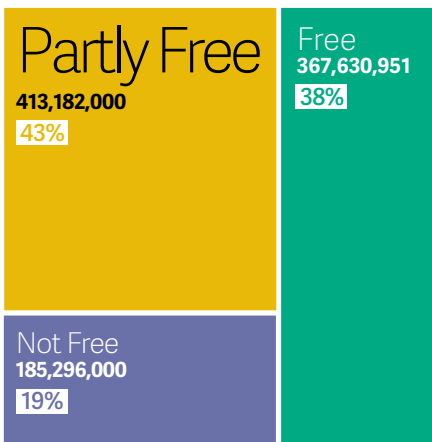
As journalists faced violence and intimidation from both government authorities and criminal elements, several countries in the Americas, including Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, received their worst press freedom scores in over a decade. The regional average score fell to its lowest level of the past five years, with declines across the legal, political, and economic categories.

The overall figures for the Americas are significantly influenced by the open media environments of North America and much of the Caribbean, which tend to offset the less rosy picture in Central and South America. In Latin America, meaning the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking parts of the region, only three (15 percent) of the countries were rated Free, and just 2 percent of the population lived in Free media environments.

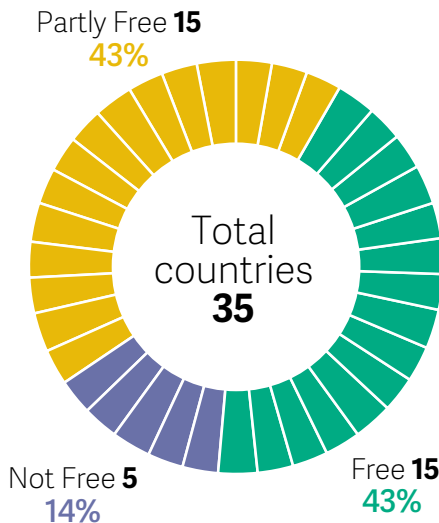
Despite the diplomatic opening between the United States and Cuba and the resulting release of over 50 political prisoners in late December, journalists were still behind bars during 2014, and official censorship remained pervasive, leaving Cuba as the worst performer in the region with a score of 91.

Mexico, already suffering from endemic violence that makes it one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist, received its lowest score in over a decade—falling two points to 63—after the passage of a new law that allows the government to track mobile-telephone users and monitor or shut down telecommunications during protests. In addition, a more onerous registration process has made it more difficult for

AMERICAS: STATUS BY POPULATION



AMERICAS: STATUS BY COUNTRY



community radio stations to obtain licenses.


In Ecuador, hostile rhetoric from the government combined with pervasive legal harassment of journalists and media outlets led to a two-point decline, to 64. The enforcement of the 2013 Communication Law, whose controversial provisions included the creation of two powerful regulatory bodies, added to an environment marked by self-censorship and intimidation. Having been subject to fines and sanctions and publicly denounced by officials, several major outlets reduced the frequency of their production and distribution, modified their editorial lines, or closed entirely, decreasing media diversity.


The relationship between the government and critical press outlets in Argentina remained tense in 2014. Although journalists reported an opening in which some administration officials gave interviews to critical outlets, the threat of harsh legal penalties persisted. Juan Pablo Suárez, editor of the online daily *Última Hora*, was charged with “inciting collective violence” and “terrorizing the population” after he refused to hand over footage of a police officer being arrested.


Brazil’s media face enduring threats from violence and impunity as well as judicial censorship. Four journalists were killed in 2014, and several more were attacked while covering protests against inflation, government performance, and World Cup expenditures. Meanwhile,

courts continued to issue censorship orders, fines, and jail sentences to critical journalists and bloggers.

Significant gains and declines:

 **Honduras’s** score declined from 64 to 68 due to the filing of sedition charges against a reporter covering a political dispute and the passage of a new secrecy law, which is currently suspended. Furthermore, official censorship combined with media owners’ nearly unconditional support for the government, stifling critical journalism and adversely affecting Honduras’s media diversity. Journalists continued to face intimidation and deadly violence in 2014.

 **Peru’s** score declined from 44 to 47 due to an increase in death threats and violence against journalists, ongoing impunity for past crimes, and a lack of political will to address the problem.

 **Venezuela’s** score declined from 78 to 81 due to an increase in the number of threats and physical attacks against the local and foreign press, which hampered their ability to cover the news freely. The transparency of media ownership structures was lacking, and state-exacerbated economic problems, including high inflation and difficulties obtaining foreign currency for purchasing newsprint, have had an adverse effect on the financial viability of print media. Some outlets laid off workers and struggled to secure credit to fill financial gaps.

Asia-Pacific

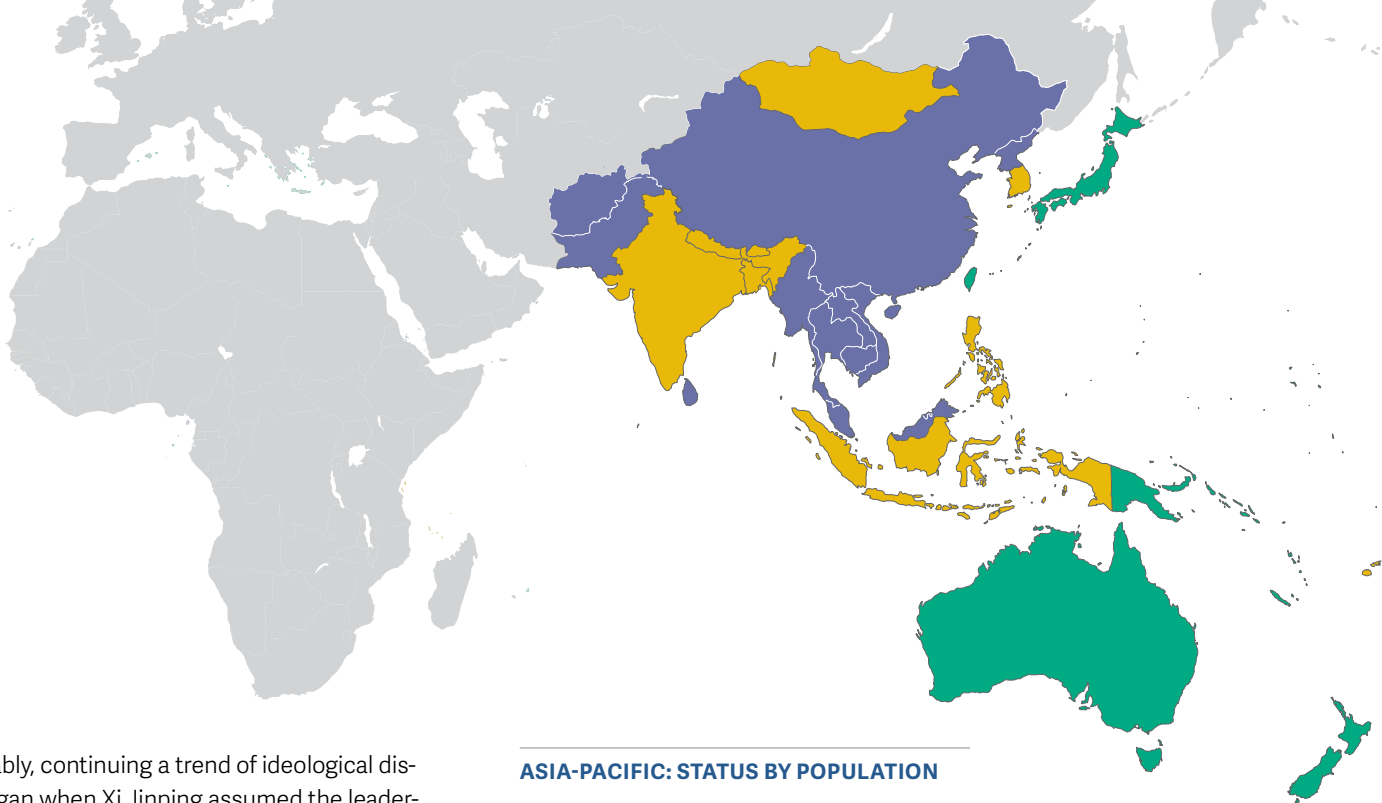
Declines in East and Southeast Asia

The Asia-Pacific region features considerable subregional diversity. The Pacific Islands, Australasia, and parts of East Asia have some of the best-ranked media environments in the world, while conditions in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and other parts of East Asia are significantly worse. Asia includes the world’s worst-rated country, North Korea (97 points), as well as several other highly restrictive media environments, such as China, Laos, and Vietnam. These settings feature extensive state and party control of the press.

Thailand tied with Libya for the greatest net decline (11 points) in 2014 as a result of the May coup d’état. The military junta, known as the National Council for

Peace and Order (NCPO), suspended the constitution and imposed martial law, removing legal protections for journalists. Multiple radio and television stations were shut down, the media were prohibited from covering opposition members, and journalists frequently faced attacks and arbitrary detention.

China, still home to the world’s most sophisticated censorship apparatus, declined from 84 to 86 points, marking the country’s worst score since the 1990s. During 2014, propaganda authorities tightened control over liberal media outlets and alternative channels of news dissemination. Previously existing space for investigative journalism and politically liberal commentary

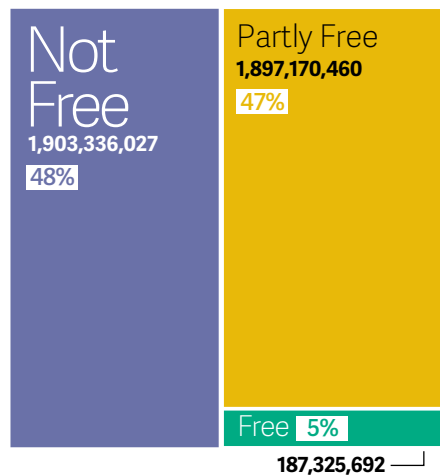


shrank noticeably, continuing a trend of ideological discipline that began when Xi Jinping assumed the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012. For the first time in several years, professional journalists from established news outlets were subjected to long-term detention and imprisonment alongside freelancers, online activists, and ethnic minority reporters. New regulations intensified ideological requirements for journalist accreditation and restricted reporters' ability to publish articles in foreign and Hong Kong-based news outlets, leading to the firing of several journalists during the year. A crackdown on social-media platforms that began in 2013 with increased restrictions on the prominent Sina Weibo microblogging service expanded in 2014 to Tencent's WeChat instant-messaging program, further limiting the ability of ordinary users and journalists to share uncensored information.

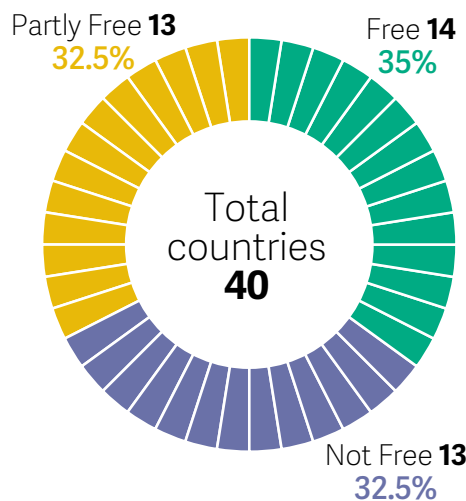
Beijing's influence over Hong Kong was also felt during the year, as foreign and local companies with mainland Chinese business interests felt compelled to pull advertisements from news outlets that were critical of the central government. The website of *Apple Daily*, a popular tabloid that was sympathetic to prodemocracy protesters, suffered several major cyberattacks in 2014, including one of the largest recorded denial-of-service attacks to date. Press freedom in Taiwan was also negatively affected by the attack, as *Apple Daily's* Taiwan edition remained inaccessible to some overseas readers for nearly two months.

In Afghanistan, there was an increase in attacks against media workers as security in the country began to deteriorate following the withdrawal of international combat troops. The media in Pakistan faced greater editorial pressure from the military and

ASIA-PACIFIC: STATUS BY POPULATION





ASIA-PACIFIC: STATUS BY COUNTRY




partisan groups, exacerbating an already challenging and dangerous environment for journalists and pushing the country's score to its lowest level since 2007. India, the world's largest democracy, achieved another peaceful transfer of power through elections in 2014, yet its press freedom score declined to its lowest level in over a decade due to an increase in the use of defamation cases against journalists and a higher level of self-censorship caused by editorial interference from media owners in the lead-up to the elections.


Significant gains and declines:

 **Cambodia's** score declined from 66 to 69 due to the high level of self-censorship by Khmer-language journalists, the lack of access to a diversity of viewpoints in Khmer-language media, and an increase in violence against journalists in 2014.

 **Hong Kong's** score declined from 37 to 41 due to a surge in the number of violent attacks against journalists and other media workers, both during the prodemocracy protests and in retaliation for reporting;

impunity for the organizers of such attacks; and new financial burdens on some media as companies felt pressure to pull advertising from outlets that were critical of Beijing.

 **Myanmar's** score declined from 70 to 73, reversing a three-year trend of improvements, as journalists faced an increased threat of arrests, prosecutions, and closures of media outlets. Many journalists were arrested and received prison terms, and foreign journalists encountered harsher visa restrictions.

 **Thailand's** score declined from 64 to 75 due to the suspension of the constitution and the imposition of martial law by the NCPO. The military government shut down privately owned television and radio stations, which were only allowed to reopen after content restrictions were put in place; used regulatory bodies to monitor media and control content; and prohibited interviews with opposition politicians, activists, and dissidents. The junta was also accused of arbitrarily detaining journalists without access to legal counsel, amid allegations of torture.

Eurasia

Shrinking Space for Dissent

The Eurasia region's average score remained the worst in the world in 2014, with declines in key countries and the addition of a separate assessment for Crimea driving the figure sharply downward. It is notable that four of the 10 worst press freedom environments in the world—Belarus, Crimea, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—are found in Eurasia.

The most dramatic change in the region occurred in Ukraine, which moved from Not Free to Partly Free. The fall of President Viktor Yanukovich's authoritarian government led to decreases in political pressure on state media and hostility toward independent voices. However, these gains were partly offset by the effects of the conflict in the country's eastern regions, which created extensive dangers and obstacles for journalists. At least five journalists were killed in Ukraine in 2014, including one who died during the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv.

The Russian government tightened its grip on news and information in an already constricted media environment. Authorities used a mixture of legislative changes, economic pressure, and strident propagan-

da—especially regarding the conflict in Ukraine—to achieve this end, suppressing independent reporting and deploying state-controlled outlets to attack domestic dissent and foreign adversaries.

Under Russian occupation, Crimea's once-pluralistic media environment was battered by the closure and blocking of Ukrainian outlets and the imposition of restrictive Russian media regulations. There were also numerous incidents of intimidation and violence, contributing to an exodus of journalists from Crimea and perilous conditions for those who stayed.

In Azerbaijan, the government unleashed a major crackdown on independent media, employing threats, raids, restrictive laws, and prosecutions. Journalists and bloggers faced fabricated charges and arbitrary detention, and at least eight remained in prison at year's end, making Azerbaijan the worst jailer of journalists in Eurasia. Economic and political pressures, including the freezing of assets and intimidation, led to the closure of multiple organizations that support journalists' rights, among them the Media Rights



Institute and the local offices of the international advocacy group IREX. Authorities also raided and closed the Azerbaijan bureau of RFE/RL, one of the strongest independent outlets available in the country.

Moldova, which took another step closer to the European Union after signing an Association Agreement in June, remained a country of particular concern in 2014. In addition to problematic regulatory decisions, media ownership is concentrated and opaque, and the year's parliamentary elections, along with the crisis in Ukraine, fueled more partisan news coverage.

Significant gains and declines:

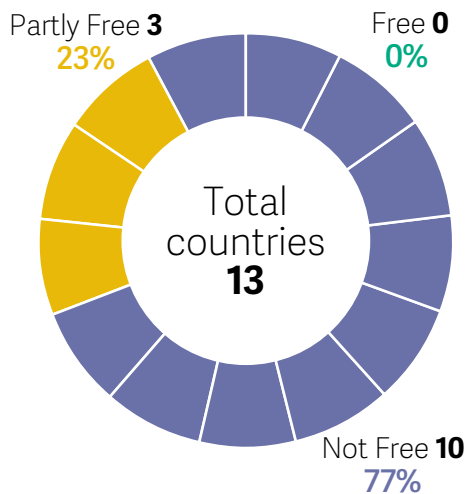
Azerbaijan's score declined from 84 to 87 due to the government's heavy-handed attempts to punish independent journalists through arrest, imprisonment, physical intimidation, and verbal harassment. The government also used raids and arbitrary criminal investigations to impede the operations of or close multiple media organizations.

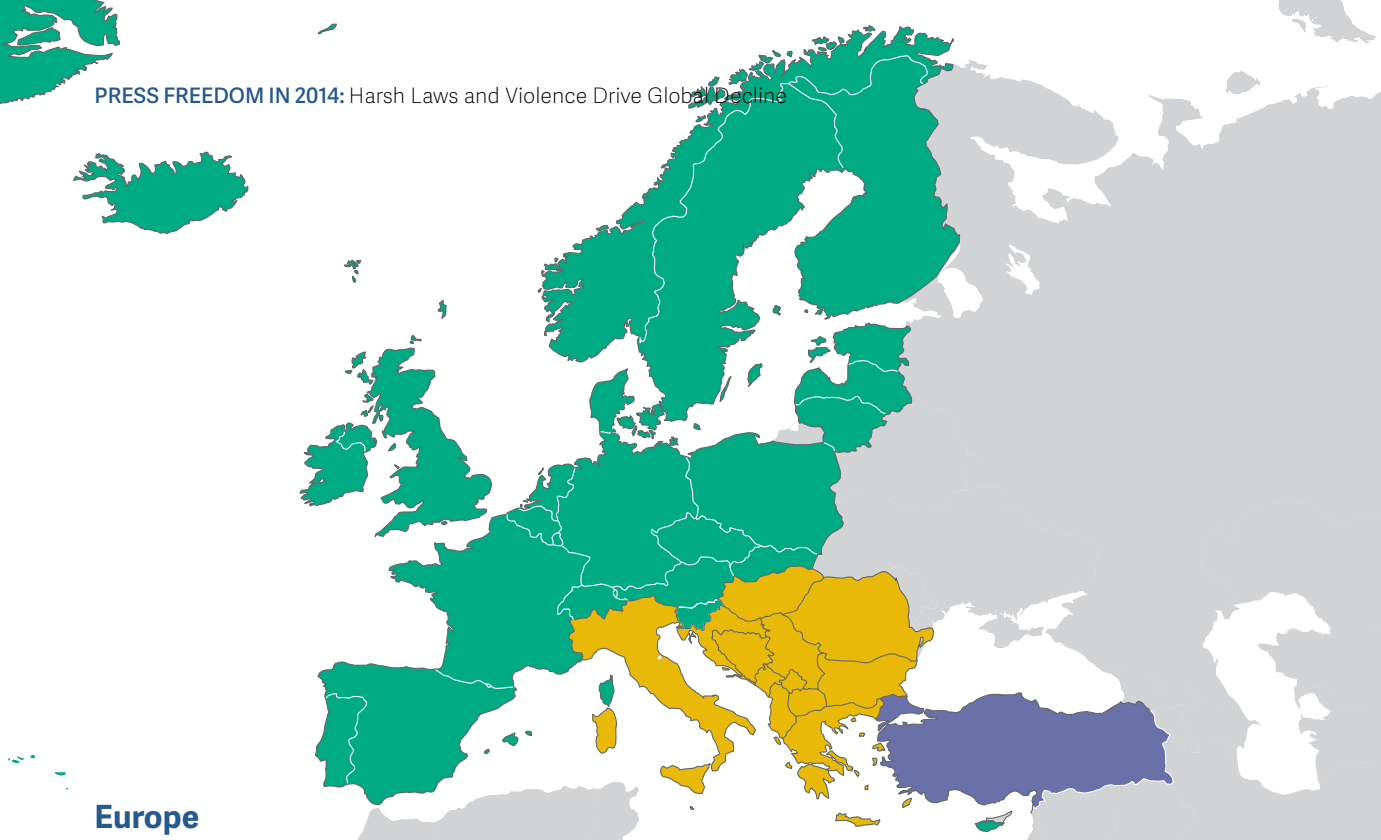
Ukraine's score improved from 63 to 58 and its status improved from Not Free to Partly Free due to a number of positive changes in the media environment after the collapse of the Yanukovich government, despite a rise in violence against journalists associated with the Euromaidan protests and the subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine. The level of government hostility and legal pressure on the media decreased, as did political influence on state-owned outlets. There were also improvements to the law on access to information and in the autonomy of the broadcasting regulator.

EURASIA: STATUS BY POPULATION



EURASIA: STATUS BY COUNTRY





Europe

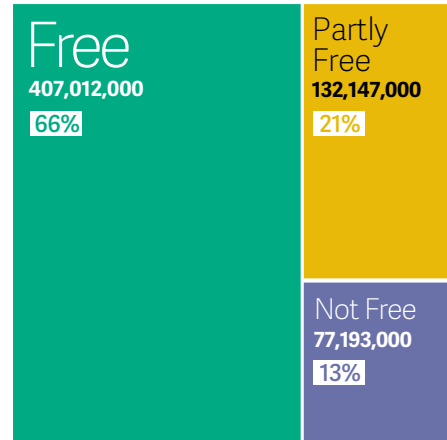
Fraying at the Edges

Europe boasts a concentration of high-performing countries, including Norway and Sweden, the world's top-ranked states with overall scores of 10. These countries provide ample space for independent, diverse voices, and journalists rarely face intimidation or physical attacks. However, they and other high-ranking European nations have struggled in recent years to regulate hate speech without damaging freedom of expression.

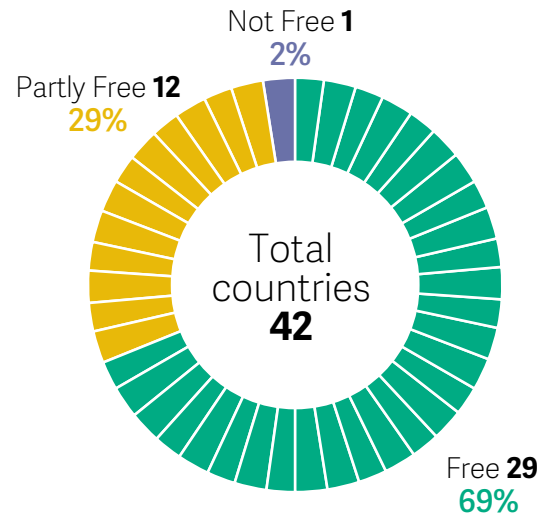
Although Europe retains the highest level of press freedom in the world, its regional average score declined for a second consecutive year in 2014. Over the past decade, incremental erosion of the legal and economic environments, as well as interference with the ability of journalists to cover the news in person, have given Europe the world's second-largest net decline since 2004, after Eurasia.

Greece experienced yet another year of political interference and lack of transparency at the new public broadcaster, New Hellenic Radio, Internet, and Television (NERIT). Changes to broadcasting legislation further barred the media market to new entrants, which are already constrained by the government's refusal to issue new licenses. Also in 2014, DIGEA, a company whose shareholders include major private channels, secured a monopoly on digital broadcast transmissions through a tailored competition.

EUROPE: STATUS BY POPULATION



EUROPE: STATUS BY COUNTRY



Among other problems in Hungary, RTL Klub, one of the two biggest private television stations, was disproportionately affected by an advertising tax. However, a proposed “internet tax,” which would have levied a charge against data transferred online, was defeated in October after opponents mounted large-scale demonstrations.

Political and economic pressures also played a role in a score decline for Iceland in 2014. The state’s dominant position in the broadcast market and tighter control of the public broadcaster, Ríkisútvarpið (RÚV), have weakened the independence of the media sector, as has editorial interference from private owners. Defamation remains a criminal offense in Iceland, despite the government’s recent efforts to make the country an international haven for critical voices.

Expansive national security laws remained an issue of concern in the United Kingdom following revelations of wide-ranging surveillance by the Government Communications Headquarters and a raid on the newsroom of the *Guardian* newspaper in 2013. In France, the far-right National Front party continued to deny access to the investigative outlet *Mediapart*; the year also featured the removal of journalists from political events, the harassment and intimidation of journalists at protests, and cyberattacks on news websites.

The Turkish media environment continued to deteriorate as the government moved more aggressively to close the space for dissent. In addition to enacting new legislation that expanded both government powers for website blocking and the surveillance capability of the intelligence service, officials detained prominent journalists from the newspaper *Zaman* and the Samanyolu Broadcasting Group—which were largely critical of the government and reported on

high-level corruption—on charges of establishing an armed terrorist organization.

Significant gains and declines:



Greece’s score declined from 46 to 51 because of further government and partisan interference in the media, as seen in restrictive legislative changes to the broadcast market, the creation of a monopoly on digital transmissions through a flawed tender, and politically biased news coverage surrounding elections.



Iceland’s score declined from 12 to 16 due to political interference with the work of journalists, who face the threat of criminal defamation charges and the possibility of retaliatory dismissal by employers. Partisanship affects the private media, and the state has exerted increasing influence on the media sector through its dominance in the broadcast market and tighter editorial control of the public broadcaster.

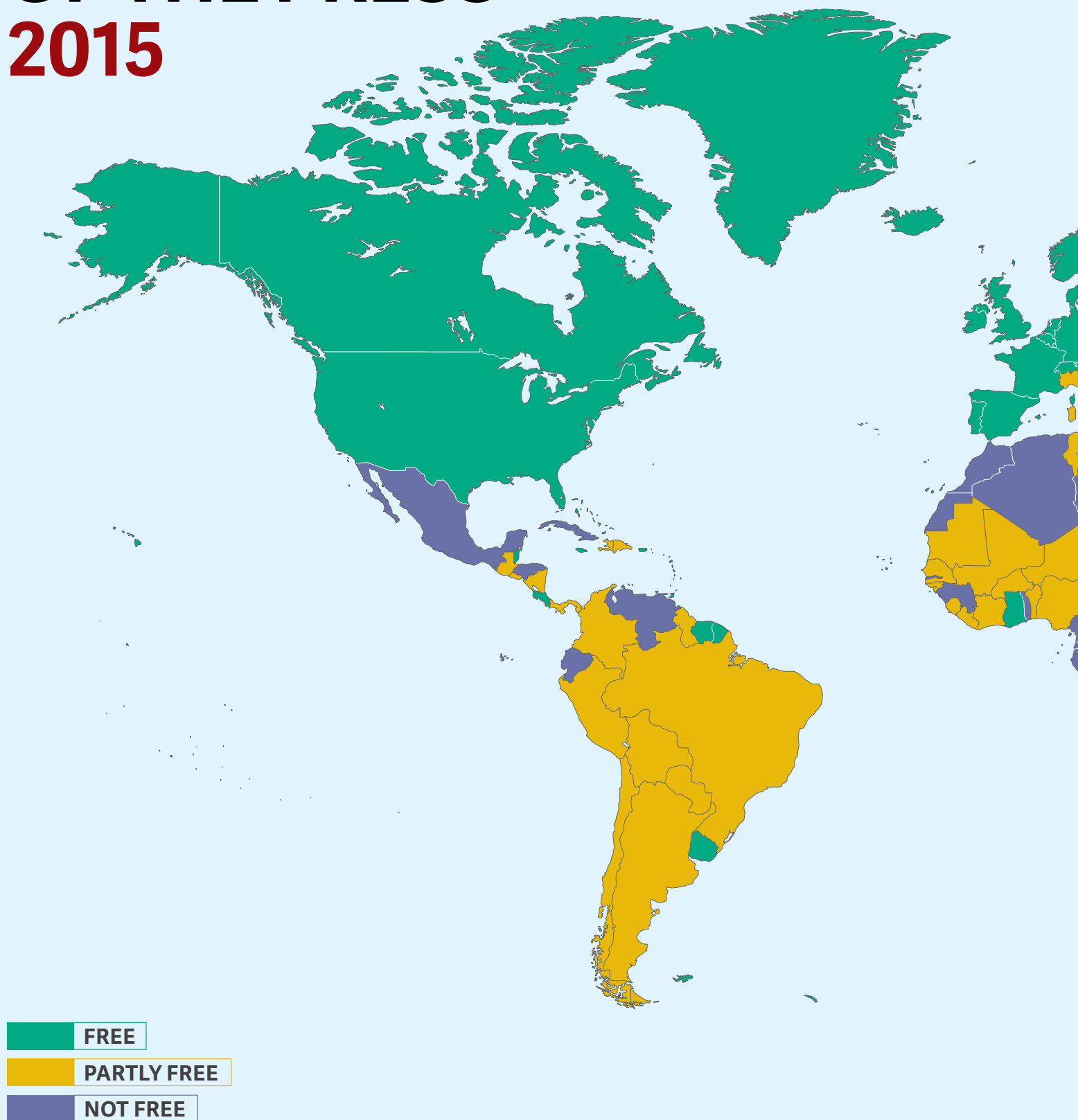


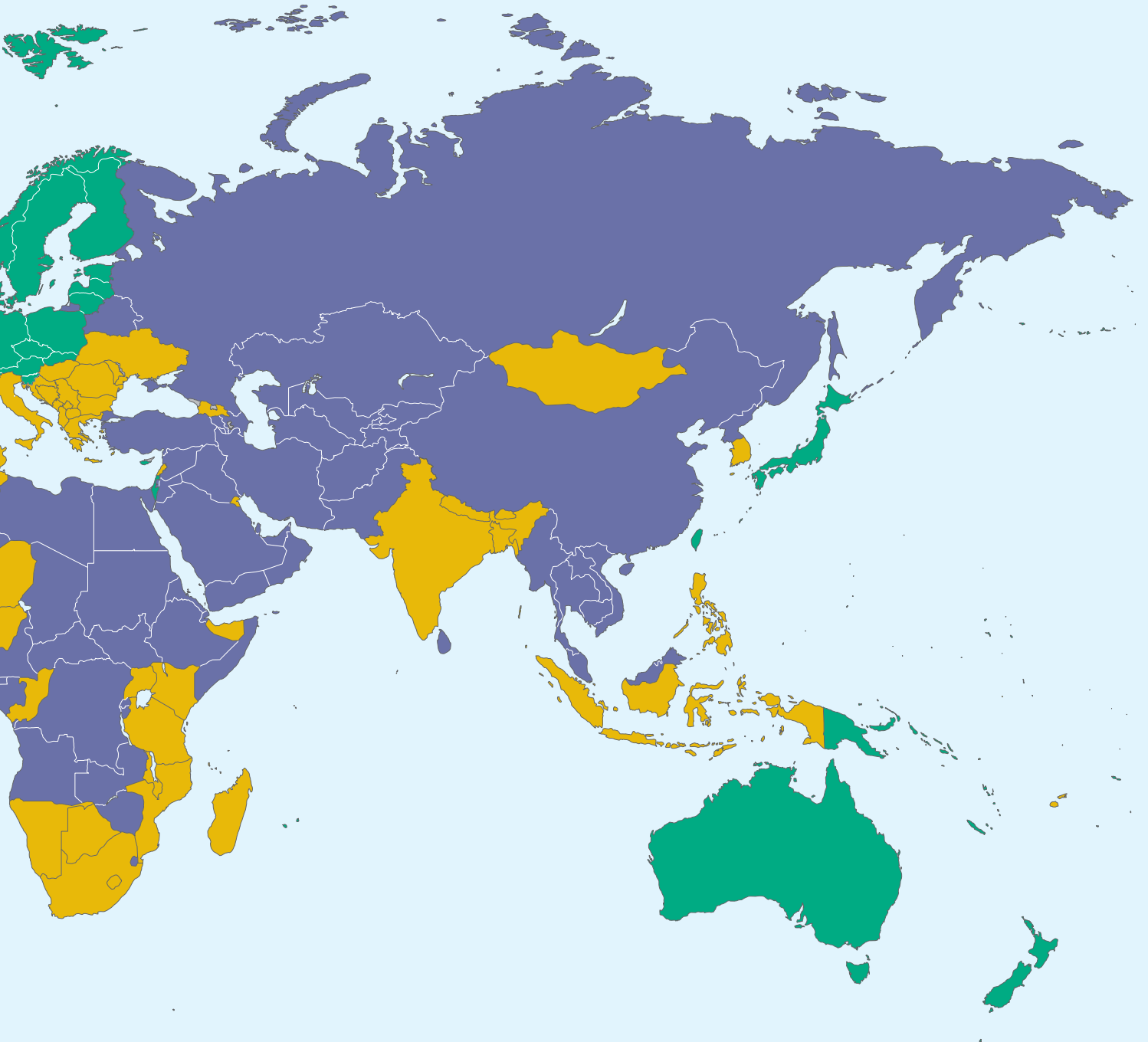
Serbia’s score declined from 37 to 40 due to increased government harassment of journalists and restrictions on their work, as well as a decrease in the diversity of media after the cancellation of major political talk shows.



Turkey’s score declined from 62 to 65 due to a number of legislative changes and continuing state efforts to influence reporting through intimidation and economic incentives. New laws restricted the freedom of journalists to report on national security and empowered the intelligence service to access a wide range of information without oversight, while amendments to the internet law increased authorities’ power to block online content.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2015





Middle East and North Africa

Tunisia Stands Out Amid Violence, Repression

After historic gains in the Middle East in 2011, only one country has continued to make progress toward fulfilling the promise of the Arab Spring. Tunisia registered the best score of any Arab country in over a decade, although it remained Partly Free. Conversely, Egypt and Libya, two other countries that saw dramatic improvements in 2011, maintained a pattern of backsliding. Egypt's score of 73 is its worst in 11 years, marking not only the reversal of gains it made following the ouster of longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak, but also a regression toward the most repressive years of the Mubarak era. Libya's score also continued to drop as a civil war affected the post-Qadhafi media environment.

The long-running conflict in Syria exacerbated conditions in that country and contributed indirectly to declines in Iraq, including through the rise of IS. The war also put pressure on Lebanon, whose score reached a five-year low of 55 due to a marked increase in libel cases against journalists in 2014. Penalties included jail time and exorbitant fines, and many publications faced multiple suits from the same aggrieved party. Moreover, rulings from Lebanon's Court of Publications during the year indicated a reflexive bias against the media and political motives behind many cases.

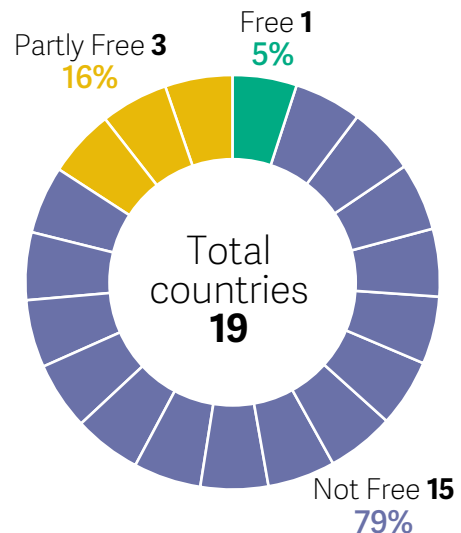
While Israel remains the region's only Free media environment, the score for the West Bank and Gaza Strip declined by two points to 84 as a result of the war in Gaza. Not only were members of the media killed and injured during the conflict between Israel and Hamas militants, but both Israeli and Palestinian authorities restricted journalists' movement in Gaza and the West Bank.

In the Persian Gulf, Qatar passed a new cybercrime law that included onerous penalties for "false news"

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: STATUS BY POPULATION




MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: STATUS BY COUNTRY





and defamation, though there are hopes that a new Open Data Policy will improve transparency and access to government sources. The media in Bahrain continued to suffer from self-censorship and persecution, and citizen journalists who dared to report on ongoing protests through social media increasingly faced government reprisals. The United Arab Emirates remained one of the most repressive media environments in the region, belying its image as a cosmopolitan oasis among conservative authoritarian regimes.


Elsewhere on the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen's score declined two points to 78 as both government and Houthi rebel forces targeted journalists, and the media faced greater pressure to serve political interests. Saudi Arabia's autocratic regime bolstered existing media restrictions with the passage of harsh antiterrorism legislation and increased arrests of critics.


Significant gains and declines:

 **Algeria's** score declined from 59 to 61 and its status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to restrictions imposed on the media during the 2014 presidential election. A January law placed content limitations on privately owned television channels, and government agencies withdrew advertising from media outlets that covered opposition parties. Foreign journalists were denied entry visas, had their visas restricted, or faced obstacles to access on the ground.

 **Egypt's** score declined from 68 to 73 due to arrests of journalists and a number of deeply flawed court cases that resulted in harsh punishments for journalists and media workers. The hostile environment has led to an increase in self-censorship and a drop in media diversity, with many outlets becoming ardent supporters of the regime.

 **Iraq's** score declined from 69 to 72 due to an increase in censorship regarding coverage of IS and Iraqi security forces, including internet blackouts in the summer of 2014. The perilous security environment also made it more difficult and dangerous to report from large parts of the country.

 **Libya's** score declined from 62 to 73 due to the continued deterioration of the security environment, which denied journalists access to many areas. Media workers were vulnerable to attacks, abductions, and assassinations, and they also faced prosecution for defamation and other criminal offenses. Media outlets came under acute pressure to adhere to the views of the dominant militia groups in their area, as the civil war exacerbated political polarization.

 **Tunisia's** score improved from 53 to 48 due to the ratification of the 2014 constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press, as well as incremental decreases in editorial pressure and attacks on journalists.

Sub-Saharan Africa

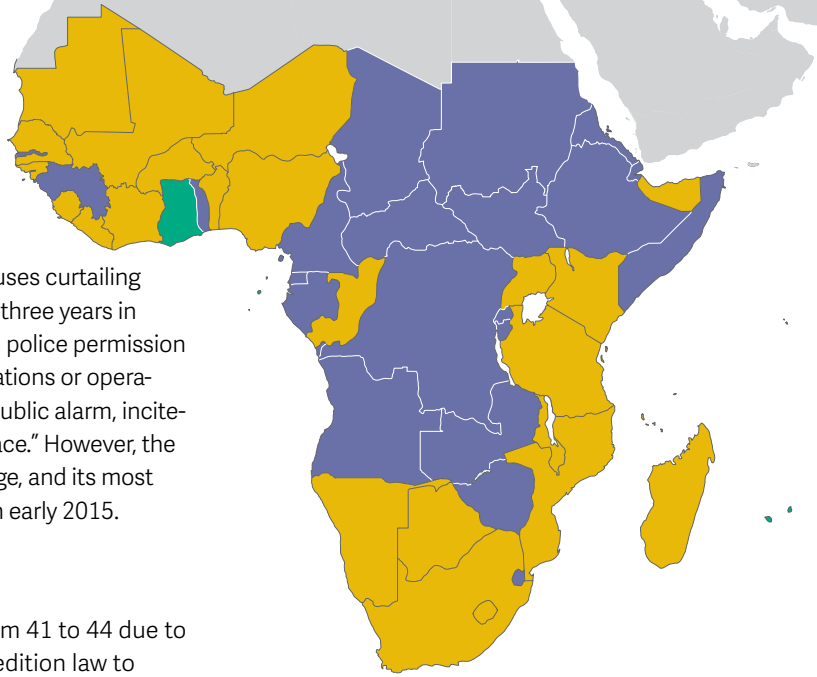
Ongoing Cycles of Repression and Recovery

Sub-Saharan Africa was the only region to show improvement in its average score in 2014, registering a modest quarter-point increase. Most countries that earned improvements started from a low baseline, such as Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. Meanwhile, press freedom conditions remained dire in Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea, which rank among the Worst of the Worst. Their authoritarian governments continued to use legal pressure, imprisonment, and other forms of harassment to suppress independent reporting. Other poor performers in the region—including Ethiopia (83), Sudan (81), and The Gambia (81)—found new ways to constrain the already-limited space in which journalists can operate. Ethiopian authorities stepped up arrests of independent journalists, including the Zone 9 bloggers, leading more than 30 to flee the country during the year, according to CPJ.

In Nigeria, little reporting was possible from areas of the northeast controlled by Boko Haram, and the military increased its efforts to punish critical coverage of its operations against the extremist group. In June, soldiers seized pressruns of several newspapers, including the *Nation*, *Daily Trust*, and *Leadership*, from key distribution points in a coordinated nationwide effort. An army spokesperson said the seizures were a "routine security action."


Four traditionally strong performers in southern Africa—Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa—experienced unusually turbulent years. Increased efforts by governments to limit reporting on sensitive issues, and arrests of and violence against journalists, contributed to declines in their press freedom scores.


In Kenya, security legislation passed in December 2014





contained several vaguely worded clauses curtailing press freedom, including the threat of three years in prison for journalists who fail to obtain police permission before reporting on terrorism investigations or operations, or for coverage “likely to cause public alarm, incitement to violence, or disturb public peace.” However, the law faced an immediate court challenge, and its most onerous provisions were overturned in early 2015.


Significant gains and declines:

 **Botswana’s** score declined from 41 to 44 due to the government’s use of the sedition law to charge an editor and journalist following publication of an article about the president. The incident entailed the jailing of the editor for one night; the journalist has subsequently sought asylum in South Africa. The year also featured increased extralegal harassment of journalists by the Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS), and a spate of physical attacks on media practitioners by strikers, government employees, and private citizens.

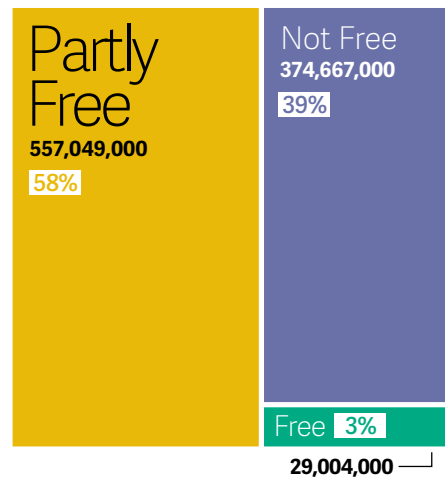
 **Central African Republic’s** score improved from 77 to 72 due to gradual gains for the media environment under the transitional government of Catherine Samba-Panza, including a decrease in arrests, editorial interference, acts of censorship, and self-censorship.

 **Guinea-Bissau’s** score improved from 67 to 59, and its status improved from Not Free to Partly Free, due to strengthened legal protections for the media, the reopening of private outlets, and a reduction in censorship and attacks on journalists in the wake of free and fair elections in April 2014.

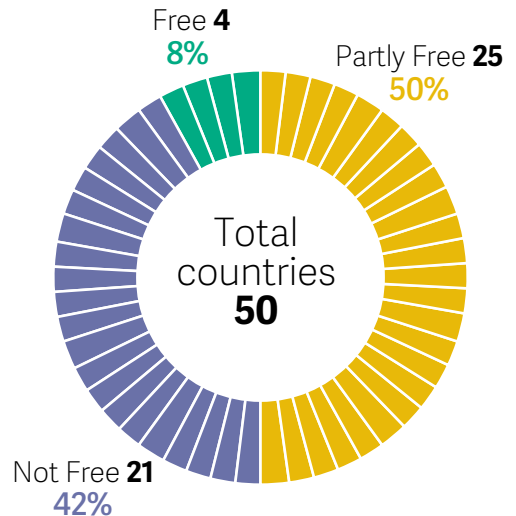
 **Madagascar’s** score improved from 63 to 59, and its status improved from Not Free to Partly Free, due to a more favorable environment for the press after the restoration of democratic rule, including a decline in direct pressure and censorship from the highest levels of government, and a general lack of violence toward journalists in 2014.

 **Somalia’s** score improved from 82 to 79 due to the increased ability of private actors to open media outlets and the greater distribution of media, especially


SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: STATUS BY POPULATION




SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: STATUS BY COUNTRY





radio, throughout the south-central part of the country.

 **South Africa's** score declined from 33 to 37 due to the increased use of the apartheid-era National Key Points Act to prevent journalists from investigating important locations or institutions, particularly when probing corruption involving political figures; the killing of a journalist at a protest in January and the harassment of others in the course of their work; and an increase in extrajudicial attacks, detentions, and harassment directed at the media by the police.

 **South Sudan's** score declined from 62 to 68 due to the government's near-complete disregard for constitutional and legal protections for freedom of

the press in 2014, as well as the lack of such protections in rebel-held areas; a marked increase in restrictions imposed on journalists by the security forces; and heightened censorship, self-censorship, and retaliatory attacks on journalists.

 **Togo's** score improved from 65 to 62 due to a continued opening in the media environment, including an increase in print outlets, leading to a greater diversity of viewpoints.

 **Zimbabwe's** score improved from 73 to 70 due to a positive court ruling on criminal defamation, a reduction in physical attacks on media workers, and eased restrictions on foreign journalists in 2014.

Conclusion

Freedom of information as a pillar of democracy

This year's edition of *Freedom of the Press* documents a surge in threats to independent journalism, from governments that use legal means to control information, armed groups that make basic reporting a potentially life-threatening activity, and media owners who manipulate news coverage to serve personal or partisan interests.

At the same time, there is renewed global interest in the values of free expression following a spate of horrific violence against journalists, notably the IS murders of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and most recently Japanese reporter Kenji Goto, as well as the January 2015 attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. Although the public seems more attuned to the dangers faced by journalists on a daily basis, it is not yet clear what impact these killings will have on the struggle for press freedom, or whether the outpouring of support for free expression will be sustained.

Some early signs are troubling. In France, the government is considering new legislation to crack down on hate speech online—a commendable impulse at first glance, but one that poses a potential threat to free expression and offers no guarantee of reducing the tensions that have led to violence. Indeed, while the worst assaults on global access to news and information come from authoritarian states, militant groups, and organized crime, democratic governments risk adding to the problem with overzealous responses to hate speech and propaganda.

Such responses are misguided. Censorship is ineffective and often counterproductive as an antidote to extremism, and its limited utility cannot justify the infringement of a fundamental democratic value like freedom of expression.

Unfettered access to information—about politics, religion, corruption, and the countless other potentially sensitive topics that have a direct impact on people's lives—is a central pillar of any free society because it enables individuals to evaluate such questions for themselves, rather than through a filter devised by those in power. It allows citizens to demand accountability from their own governments, to debunk propaganda and learn the ugly truth about extremist movements, and to advocate for social change and political reform as they see fit. Restrictions on expression may be a politically expedient way to react to public discontent and insecurity, but a long-term solution demands open debate, the complete exposure and analysis of odious views, the development of persuasive counterarguments, and the implementation of policies to address underlying grievances and social ills.

The wide and growing range of threats to media freedom around the globe presents a stark challenge to democratic values. Responding to this challenge requires a collective acknowledgement that all infringements on media freedom—both the brutally violent and the seemingly mundane or rational—limit the marketplace of ideas that lies at the core of a free and democratic society.

GLOBAL RANKINGS

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status	Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	Norway	10	Free		Tuvalu	27	Free
	Sweden	10	Free	52	Ghana	28	Free
3	Belgium	11	Free		Latvia	28	Free
	Finland	11	Free		São Tomé and Príncipe	28	Free
	Netherlands	11	Free		Solomon Islands	28	Free
6	Denmark	12	Free		Spain	28	Free
	Luxembourg	12	Free	57	Kiribati	29	Free
8	Andorra	13	Free		Papua New Guinea	29	Free
	Switzerland	13	Free		Suriname	29	Free
10	Liechtenstein	14	Free		Tonga	29	Free
11	Monaco	15	Free	61	Israel	30	Free
	Palau	15	Free		Mauritius	30	Free
	St. Lucia	15	Free		Samoa	30	Free
14	Estonia	16	Free	64	Chile	31	Partly Free
	Iceland	16	Free		Italy	31	Partly Free
	Ireland	16	Free	66	Nauru	32	Partly Free
	San Marino	16	Free	67	Namibia	33	Partly Free
18	Costa Rica	17	Free		South Korea	33	Partly Free
	Jamaica	17	Free	69	East Timor	35	Partly Free
	Marshall Islands	17	Free	70	Guyana	36	Partly Free
	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	17	Free	71	Hungary	37	Partly Free
22	Barbados	18	Free		Mali	37	Partly Free
	Canada	18	Free		Mongolia	37	Partly Free
	Germany	18	Free		South Africa	37	Partly Free
	Portugal	18	Free	75	Antigua and Barbuda	38	Partly Free
26	New Zealand	19	Free		Benin	38	Partly Free
27	St. Kitts and Nevis	20	Free		Bulgaria	38	Partly Free
28	Bahamas	21	Free	78	El Salvador	39	Partly Free
	Czech Republic	21	Free		Montenegro	39	Partly Free
	Micronesia	21	Free	80	Croatia	40	Partly Free
31	Australia	22	Free		India	40	Partly Free
	Austria	22	Free		Serbia	40	Partly Free
	Belize	22	Free	83	Hong Kong*	41	Partly Free
	United States of America	22	Free	84	Dominican Republic	42	Partly Free
35	France	23	Free		Romania	42	Partly Free
	Grenada	23	Free	86	Botswana	44	Partly Free
	Malta	23	Free		Burkina Faso	44	Partly Free
38	Slovakia	24	Free		Mozambique	44	Partly Free
	United Kingdom	24	Free		Philippines	44	Partly Free
	Uruguay	24	Free	90	Brazil	45	Partly Free
41	Cyprus	25	Free	91	Bolivia	47	Partly Free
	Dominica	25	Free		Peru	47	Partly Free
	Japan	25	Free	93	Georgia	48	Partly Free
	Lithuania	25	Free		Lesotho	48	Partly Free
	Slovenia	25	Free		Senegal	48	Partly Free
	Vanuatu	25	Free		Tunisia	48	Partly Free
47	Poland	26	Free	97	Albania	49	Partly Free
48	Cape Verde	27	Free		Comoros	49	Partly Free
	Taiwan	27	Free		Indonesia	49	Partly Free
	Trinidad and Tobago	27	Free		Kosovo	49	Partly Free

*Denotes territories.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global developments from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

GLOBAL RANKINGS (continued)

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status	Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
	Malawi	49	Partly Free		Singapore	67	Not Free
	Panama	49	Partly Free	152	Honduras	68	Not Free
103	Haiti	50	Partly Free		South Sudan	68	Not Free
	Mauritania	50	Partly Free	154	Cambodia	69	Not Free
	Seychelles	50	Partly Free	155	Angola	70	Not Free
	Sierra Leone	50	Partly Free		Gabon	70	Not Free
107	Argentina	51	Partly Free		Zimbabwe	70	Not Free
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	51	Partly Free	158	Oman	71	Not Free
	Greece	51	Partly Free	159	Central African Republic	72	Not Free
	Niger	51	Partly Free		Iraq	72	Not Free
111	Fiji	52	Partly Free	161	Egypt	73	Not Free
	Nicaragua	52	Partly Free		Libya	73	Not Free
113	Côte d'Ivoire	53	Partly Free		Myanmar	73	Not Free
	Nigeria	53	Partly Free	164	Burundi	74	Not Free
115	Bangladesh	54	Partly Free		Chad	74	Not Free
	Somaliland*	54	Partly Free	166	Brunei	75	Not Free
	Tanzania	54	Partly Free		Djibouti	75	Not Free
118	Colombia	55	Partly Free		Thailand	75	Not Free
	Lebanon	55	Partly Free	169	Sri Lanka	76	Not Free
	Maldives	55	Partly Free		United Arab Emirates	76	Not Free
	Moldova	55	Partly Free	171	Yemen	78	Not Free
	Nepal	55	Partly Free	172	Congo (Kinshasa)	79	Not Free
123	Uganda	56	Partly Free		Rwanda	79	Not Free
124	Kenya	57	Partly Free		Somalia	79	Not Free
125	Macedonia	58	Partly Free		Swaziland	79	Not Free
	Ukraine	58	Partly Free	176	Sudan	81	Not Free
127	Bhutan	59	Partly Free		The Gambia	81	Not Free
	Congo (Brazzaville)	59	Partly Free		Venezuela	81	Not Free
	Guinea-Bissau	59	Partly Free	179	Tajikistan	82	Not Free
	Kuwait	59	Partly Free	180	Ethiopia	83	Not Free
	Madagascar	59	Partly Free		Russia	83	Not Free
	Paraguay	59	Partly Free		Saudi Arabia	83	Not Free
133	Guatemala	60	Partly Free	183	Laos	84	Not Free
	Liberia	60	Partly Free		West Bank and Gaza Strip*	84	Not Free
135	Algeria	61	Not Free	185	Kazakhstan	85	Not Free
	Armenia	61	Not Free	186	China	86	Not Free
137	Togo	62	Not Free		Vietnam	86	Not Free
	Zambia	62	Not Free	188	Azerbaijan	87	Not Free
139	Mexico	63	Not Free		Bahrain	87	Not Free
140	Ecuador	64	Not Free	190	Equatorial Guinea	90	Not Free
	Guinea	64	Not Free		Iran	90	Not Free
142	Malaysia	65	Not Free		Syria	90	Not Free
	Pakistan	65	Not Free	193	Cuba	91	Not Free
	Turkey	65	Not Free	194	Belarus	93	Not Free
145	Cameroon	66	Not Free	195	Crimea*	94	Not Free
	Jordan	66	Not Free		Eritrea	94	Not Free
	Morocco	66	Not Free	197	Turkmenistan	95	Not Free
148	Afghanistan	67	Not Free		Uzbekistan	95	Not Free
	Kyrgyzstan	67	Not Free	199	North Korea	97	Not Free
	Qatar	67	Not Free				

*Denotes territories.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global developments from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

AMERICAS

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	St. Lucia	15	Free
2	Costa Rica	17	Free
	Jamaica	17	Free
	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	17	Free
5	Barbados	18	Free
	Canada	18	Free
7	St. Kitts and Nevis	20	Free
8	Bahamas	21	Free
9	Belize	22	Free
	United States of America	22	Free
11	Grenada	23	Free
12	Uruguay	24	Free
13	Dominica	25	Free
14	Trinidad and Tobago	27	Free
15	Suriname	29	Free
16	Chile	31	Partly Free
17	Guyana	36	Partly Free
18	Antigua and Barbuda	38	Partly Free
19	El Salvador	39	Partly Free
20	Dominican Republic	42	Partly Free
21	Brazil	45	Partly Free
22	Bolivia	47	Partly Free
	Peru	47	Partly Free
24	Panama	49	Partly Free
25	Haiti	50	Partly Free
26	Argentina	51	Partly Free
27	Nicaragua	52	Partly Free
28	Colombia	55	Partly Free
29	Paraguay	59	Partly Free
30	Guatemala	60	Partly Free
31	Mexico	63	Not Free
32	Ecuador	64	Not Free
33	Honduras	68	Not Free
34	Venezuela	81	Not Free
35	Cuba	91	Not Free

ASIA-PACIFIC

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	Palau	15	Free
2	Marshall Islands	17	Free
3	New Zealand	19	Free
4	Micronesia	21	Free
5	Australia	22	Free
6	Japan	25	Free
	Vanuatu	25	Free
8	Taiwan	27	Free
	Tuvalu	27	Free
10	Solomon Islands	28	Free
11	Kiribati	29	Free
	Papua New Guinea	29	Free
	Tonga	29	Free
14	Samoa	30	Free
15	Nauru	32	Partly Free
16	South Korea	33	Partly Free
17	East Timor	35	Partly Free
18	Mongolia	37	Partly Free
19	India	40	Partly Free
20	Hong Kong*	41	Partly Free
21	Philippines	44	Partly Free
22	Indonesia	49	Partly Free
23	Fiji	52	Partly Free
24	Bangladesh	54	Partly Free
25	Maldives	55	Partly Free
	Nepal	55	Partly Free
27	Bhutan	59	Partly Free
28	Malaysia	65	Not Free
	Pakistan	65	Not Free
30	Afghanistan	67	Not Free
	Singapore	67	Not Free
32	Cambodia	69	Not Free
33	Myanmar	73	Not Free
34	Brunei	75	Not Free
	Thailand	75	Not Free
36	Sri Lanka	76	Not Free
37	Laos	84	Not Free
38	China	86	Not Free
	Vietnam	86	Not Free
40	North Korea	97	Not Free

*Denotes territories.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global developments from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

EUROPE

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	Norway	10	Free
	Sweden	10	Free
3	Belgium	11	Free
	Finland	11	Free
	Netherlands	11	Free
6	Denmark	12	Free
	Luxembourg	12	Free
8	Andorra	13	Free
	Switzerland	13	Free
10	Liechtenstein	14	Free
11	Monaco	15	Free
12	Estonia	16	Free
	Iceland	16	Free
	Ireland	16	Free
	San Marino	16	Free
16	Germany	18	Free
	Portugal	18	Free
18	Czech Republic	21	Free
19	Austria	22	Free
20	France	23	Free
	Malta	23	Free
22	Slovakia	24	Free
	United Kingdom	24	Free
24	Lithuania	25	Free
	Slovenia	25	Free
	Cyprus	25	Free
27	Poland	26	Free
28	Latvia	28	Free
	Spain	28	Free
30	Italy	31	Partly Free
31	Hungary	37	Partly Free
32	Bulgaria	38	Partly Free
33	Montenegro	39	Partly Free
34	Croatia	40	Partly Free
	Serbia	40	Partly Free
36	Romania	42	Partly Free
37	Albania	49	Partly Free
	Kosovo	49	Partly Free
39	Bosnia and Herzegovina	51	Partly Free
	Greece	51	Partly Free
41	Macedonia	58	Partly Free
42	Turkey	65	Not Free

EURASIA

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	Georgia	48	Partly Free
2	Moldova	55	Partly Free
3	Ukraine	58	Partly Free
4	Armenia	61	Not Free
5	Kyrgyzstan	67	Not Free
6	Tajikistan	82	Not Free
7	Russia	83	Not Free
8	Kazakhstan	85	Not Free
9	Azerbaijan	87	Not Free
10	Belarus	93	Not Free
11	Crimea*	94	Not Free
12	Turkmenistan	95	Not Free
	Uzbekistan	95	Not Free

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	Israel	30	Free
2	Tunisia	48	Partly Free
3	Lebanon	55	Partly Free
4	Kuwait	59	Partly Free
5	Algeria	61	Not Free
6	Jordan	66	Not Free
	Morocco	66	Not Free
8	Qatar	67	Not Free
9	Oman	71	Not Free
10	Iraq	72	Not Free
11	Egypt	73	Not Free
	Libya	73	Not Free
13	United Arab Emirates	76	Not Free
14	Yemen	78	Not Free
15	Saudi Arabia	83	Not Free
16	West Bank and Gaza Strip*	84	Not Free
17	Bahrain	87	Not Free
18	Iran	90	Not Free
	Syria	90	Not Free

*Denotes territories.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global developments from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Rank 2015	Country	Score	Status
1	Cape Verde	27	Free
2	Ghana	28	Free
	São Tomé and Príncipe	28	Free
4	Mauritius	30	Free
5	Namibia	33	Partly Free
6	Mali	37	Partly Free
	South Africa	37	Partly Free
8	Benin	38	Partly Free
9	Botswana	44	Partly Free
	Burkina Faso	44	Partly Free
	Mozambique	44	Partly Free
12	Lesotho	48	Partly Free
	Senegal	48	Partly Free
14	Comoros	49	Partly Free
	Malawi	49	Partly Free
16	Mauritania	50	Partly Free
	Seychelles	50	Partly Free
	Sierra Leone	50	Partly Free
19	Niger	51	Partly Free
20	Côte d'Ivoire	53	Partly Free
	Nigeria	53	Partly Free
22	Somaliland*	54	Partly Free
	Tanzania	54	Partly Free
24	Uganda	56	Partly Free
25	Kenya	57	Partly Free
26	Congo (Brazzaville)	59	Partly Free
	Guinea-Bissau	59	Partly Free
	Madagascar	59	Partly Free
29	Liberia	60	Partly Free
30	Togo	62	Not Free
	Zambia	62	Not Free
32	Guinea	64	Not Free
33	Cameroon	66	Not Free
34	South Sudan	68	Not Free
35	Angola	70	Not Free
	Gabon	70	Not Free
	Zimbabwe	70	Not Free
38	Central African Republic	72	Not Free
39	Burundi	74	Not Free
	Chad	74	Not Free
41	Djibouti	75	Not Free
42	Congo (Kinshasa)	79	Not Free
	Rwanda	79	Not Free
	Somalia	79	Not Free
	Swaziland	79	Not Free
46	Sudan	81	Not Free
	The Gambia	81	Not Free
48	Ethiopia	83	Not Free
49	Equatorial Guinea	90	Not Free
50	Eritrea	94	Not Free

*Denotes territories.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global developments from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

Methodology

The 2015 edition of *Freedom of the Press*, which provides analytical reports and numerical ratings for 199 countries and territories, continues a process conducted by Freedom House since 1980. Each country and territory is given a total press freedom score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) on the basis of 23 methodology questions divided into three subcategories. The total score determines the status designation of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Assigning numerical scores allows for comparative analysis among countries and facilitates an examination of trends over time. The ratings and reports included in *Freedom of the Press 2015* cover events that took place between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2014.

Criteria

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

All states, from the most democratic to the most authoritarian, are committed to this doctrine through the UN system. To deny it is to deny the universality of basic human rights. We recognize that cultural distinctions or economic underdevelopment may affect the character or volume of news flows within a country, but these and other differences are not acceptable explanations for infringements like centralized control of the content of news and information. We seek to assess media freedom using common criteria for all settings, in poor and rich countries as well as in countries of various ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

Research and Scoring Process

The report's findings are reached after a multilayered process of analysis and evaluation by a team of regional experts and scholars. Although some degree of subjectivity may be unavoidable, the process emphasizes intellectual rigor and aims for consistent and unbiased judgments.

The research and scoring process involves more than 90 analysts—including outside consultants and members of the core research team headquartered in New York—who prepare the draft ratings and country reports. They gather information from professional contacts in a variety of countries, staff and consultant travel, international visitors, the findings of other human rights and press freedom organizations, regional specialists, the reports of governments and multi-lateral bodies, and a variety of domestic and international news media. We would particularly like to thank the other members of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) network for providing detailed and timely analyses of press freedom violations in a variety of countries worldwide, on which we rely to make our judgments.

The ratings are reviewed individually and on a comparative basis in a set of six regional meetings involving analysts, advisers, and Freedom House staff. The ratings are compared with the previous year's findings, and any proposed changes are subjected to added scrutiny. These reviews are followed by cross-regional assessments in which an effort is made to ensure comparability and consistency in the findings.

Methodology

Through the years, we have refined and expanded our methodology. Recent modifications have been intended to capture changes in the news and information environment without altering the comparability of data for a given country over the 35-year span of the index, or the comparative ratings of all countries over that period.

Our examination of the level of press freedom in each country and territory currently comprises 23 methodology questions and 132 subquestions divided into three broad categories: the legal environment, the political environment, and the economic environment. For each methodology question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher number of points is allotted for a less free environment. A country's final score (from 0 to 100) represents the total of the scores allotted for each question. A total score of 0 to 30 results in a press freedom status of Free; 31 to 60 a status of Partly Free;

and 61 to 100 a status of Not Free.

The diverse nature of the methodology questions seeks to address the varied ways in which pressure can be placed on the flow of information and the ability of print, broadcast, and internet-based media to operate freely and without fear of repercussions. In short, we seek to provide a picture of the entire "enabling environment" in which the media operate. We also seek to assess the diversity of the news and information available to the public in any given country or territory, from either local or transnational sources.

The **legal environment** category encompasses an examination of both the laws and regulations that could influence media content, and the extent to which they are used in practice to restrict the media's ability to operate. We assess the positive impact of legal and constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression; the potentially negative aspects of security legislation, the penal code, and other criminal statutes; penalties for libel and defamation; the existence of and ability to use freedom of information legislation; the independence of the judiciary and official regulatory bodies; registration requirements for both media outlets and journalists; and the ability of journalists' organizations to operate freely.

Under the **political environment** category, we evaluate the degree of political control over the content of news media. Issues examined include the editorial independence of both state-owned and privately owned outlets; access to information and sources; official censorship and self-censorship; the vibrancy of the media and the diversity of news available within each country; the ability of both foreign and local reporters to cover the news in person without obstacles or harassment; and reprisals against journalists or bloggers by the state or other actors, including arbitrary detention, violent assaults, and other forms of intimidation.

Our third category examines the **economic environment** for the media. This includes the structure of media ownership; transparency and concentration of ownership; the costs of establishing media as well as any impediments to news production and distribution;

the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors; the impact of corruption and bribery on content; and the extent to which the economic situation in a country affects the development and sustainability of the media.

Methodology Questions 2015

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT (0–30 POINTS)

1. Do the constitution or other basic laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of the press and of expression, and are they enforced? **(0–6 points)**
2. Do the penal code, security laws, or any other laws restrict reporting and are journalists or bloggers punished under these laws? **(0–6 points)**
3. Are there penalties for libeling officials or the state and are they enforced? **(0–3 points)**
4. Is the judiciary independent and do courts judge cases concerning the media impartially? **(0–3 points)**
5. Is Freedom of Information legislation in place, and are journalists able to make use of it? **(0–2 points)**
6. Can individuals or business entities legally establish and operate private media outlets without undue interference? **(0–4 points)**
7. Are media regulatory bodies, such as a broadcasting authority or national press or communications council, able to operate freely and independently? **(0–2 points)**
8. Is there freedom to become a journalist and to practice journalism, and can professional groups freely support journalists' rights and interests? **(0–4 points)**

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT (0–40 POINTS)

1. To what extent are media outlets' news and information content determined by the government or a particular partisan interest? **(0–10 points)**
2. Is access to official or unofficial sources generally controlled? **(0–2 points)**

3. Is there official or unofficial censorship? **(0–4 points)**
4. Do journalists practice self-censorship? **(0–4 points)**
5. Do people have access to media coverage and a range of news and information that is robust and reflects a diversity of viewpoints? **(0–4 points)**
6. Are both local and foreign journalists able to cover the news freely in terms of harassment and physical access? **(0–6 points)**
7. Are journalists, bloggers, or media outlets subject to extralegal intimidation or physical violence by state authorities or any other actor as a result of their reporting? **(0–10 points)**

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT (0–30 POINTS)

1. To what extent are media owned or controlled by the government and does this influence their diversity of views? **(0–6 points)**
2. Is media ownership transparent, thus allowing consumers to judge the impartiality of the news? **(0–3 points)**
3. Is media ownership highly concentrated and does this influence diversity of content? **(0–3 points)**
4. Are there restrictions on the means of news production and distribution? **(0–4 points)**
5. Are there high costs associated with the establishment and operation of media outlets? **(0–4 points)**
6. Do the state or other actors try to control the media through allocation of advertising or subsidies? **(0–3 points)**
7. Do journalists, bloggers, or media outlets receive payment from private or public sources whose design is to influence their journalistic content? **(0–3 points)**
8. Does the overall economic situation negatively impact media outlets' financial sustainability? **(0–4 points)**

NOTE: Under each question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher number of points is allotted for a less free environment. A complete list of the subquestions used to make the assessments can be found online at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press-2015/methodology>.



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights.

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Freedom of the Press 2015

Country Reports

Afghanistan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 20 / 30

Political Environment: 28 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 67 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	76,NF	75,NF	74,NF	67,NF	66,NF

Conditions for press freedom in Afghanistan have improved in recent years amid greater media diversity, rising professional standards for journalists, and a decline in legal harassment and censorship. However, violence against journalists increased in 2014 as the country suffered from growing insecurity, and the media continued to face legal and other interference from the authorities.

Legal Environment

Article 34 of the constitution allows for freedom of the press and of expression, and the 2009 Mass Media Law prohibits censorship and guarantees the right of citizens to obtain information. However, there are broad restrictions on content that is deemed “contrary to the principles of Islam or offensive to other religions and sects.” Cases involving journalists are supposed to be handled by a commission devoted to media issues, but the legal framework’s ambiguity has led to muddled implementation. Four media laws have been approved since 2002, and journalists lack clarity on how different provisions are meant to be applied. Article 130 of the constitution vaguely stipulates that courts and Islamic jurists can rule on cases “in a way that attains justice in the best manner,” creating leeway for discriminatory or contradictory rulings.

Journalists were subject to legal harassment on a number of occasions in 2014. Pakistani journalist Faizullah Khan was arrested in April and sentenced in July to four years in prison for entering the country illegally, though an initial accusation of espionage was dismissed. Khan was released by court order in September following diplomatic pressure and an intervention by outgoing president Hamid Karzai. In August, the government barred *New York Times* correspondent Matthew Rosenberg from leaving the country and pressed him to identify his sources for an article alleging that certain Afghan officials were threatening to seize power if a dispute over the presidential election results was not resolved. Faced with international condemnation, the government expelled Rosenberg from the country for undermining Afghan national interests. The new president, Ashraf Ghani, who took office in late September, allowed the journalist to return in October.

After a three-year delay and strong advocacy from media and civil society groups, the lower house of parliament adopted the Access to Information Law in June, and it was subsequently approved by the upper house and signed by Ghani in December. The law states that government-held information should be presumed available to the public, except in instances that would threaten national security, compromise privacy, or interfere with a criminal investigation. A new commission on access to information would oversee implementation. Advocacy groups welcomed the law but urged Ghani to enact amendments that will ensure the commission's independence from government officials and clarify the definition of terms like "national security."

The Media Violation Investigation Commission (MVIC) was established in 2005 and tasked with the investigation of alleged violations of Afghan media law. The 2009 Mass Media Law stipulated that the MVIC be dissolved and replaced with a Mass Media Commission (MMC), which was to be composed of experienced journalists. However, the MMC had yet to be formed in 2014, and the MVIC continued to function without representation from journalists and civil society. A media commission linked to the electoral commission was also active during the year, issuing fines to outlets for biased coverage and other alleged violations surrounding the presidential campaign.

Journalists' organizations are able to operate and advocate for the rights and interests of their members, though the law offers few protections for unions and labor rights. In September 2014, a coalition of Afghan journalist groups persuaded incoming president Ghani and his electoral opponent—Abdullah Abdullah, who later joined Ghani in a power-sharing government—to endorse a 12-point pledge of commitment to support free media and journalists. It included promises to investigate and punish violence against journalists, enforce the law on access to information, and introduce a law on job security for journalists.

Political Environment

Media outlets have proliferated in recent years, collectively conveying a diversity of views. The patterns of ownership and funding mirror the country's disparate political and cultural forces, leading to a highly partisan media environment. Major sources of support for and influence over outlets include political parties, ethnic factions, the military, international donors, and foreign governments such as those in Iran and Pakistan. However, some broadcasters, such as Tolo TV, are commercially viable and able to exercise a greater degree of independence in their reporting.

Local authorities have occasionally forced the closure of media outlets in retaliation for reporting on official corruption and other sensitive topics, and journalists face an acute risk of violence from state and nonstate actors in the context of the ongoing military conflict. Women journalists in particular encounter regular harassment and threats, leading some to leave the profession. Journalists often resort to self-censorship to avoid violating cultural norms or offending local sensitivities.

In 2014, in addition to the worsening security situation, the presidential election and a lengthy impasse over the disputed results raised political tensions and related pressure on journalists. For example, unidentified assailants in Kabul shot and injured Azizullah Hamdard of the independent Pajhwok news agency in August, after he reported on alleged electoral fraud.

According to the Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee (AJSC), a total of eight journalists were killed in 2014, and 129 cases of violence were recorded, a substantial increase

over the previous year. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) confirmed that at least three of the journalists' deaths were directly related to their work. Government officials and security forces still perpetrated most of the year's attacks, which included beatings and threats, but the rise in violence was largely attributed to Taliban insurgents, powerful warlords, and other nonstate actors. In March, following a Taliban attack on the Serena Hotel in Kabul that killed Agence France-Presse journalist Sardar Ahmad, his wife, two of their three children, and five other civilians, Kabul-based journalists boycotted coverage of the Taliban for 15 days. Impunity for such violence remains a problem; Afghanistan ranked sixth on CPJ's 2014 Global Impunity Index for failing to solve five murders of journalists over the previous decade.

Conditions for foreign journalists are also perilous, restricting their ability to report in person and exposing them to deadly reprisals. In March 2014, Nils Horner of Sweden's Sveriges Radio was shot and killed at close range in a Kabul attack that was later claimed by a Taliban splinter group. In April, a day before the presidential vote, German photojournalist Anja Niedringhaus of the Associated Press (AP) was shot to death in Khost by a police commander, who also wounded Canadian AP journalist Kathy Gannon. The officer, who offered no motive, was arrested and later convicted of the crime.

Economic Environment

Afghanistan is home to roughly 90 local and national television channels, 174 radio stations, 200 print outlets, and 12 news agencies. The government owns some media outlets, but most are in private hands. Radio is still the main source of news for most Afghans, especially in rural areas, though television is making significant inroads, as ownership of sets has risen. International radio broadcasts in Dari or Pashto—such as those from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty—remain key providers of information for many residents. Newspaper readership is low, mainly due to the nation's poor literacy rate of about 34 percent, but also because of distribution problems and competition from new broadcast options.

Illiteracy and poor infrastructure have similarly hampered internet penetration, with only 6 percent of the population using the medium in 2014. However, blogs and social media are growing in usage and importance, particularly among urban youth. There were nearly 75 mobile telephone subscriptions per 100 people in 2014; the devices increasingly offer access to news updates and enable participation in radio and television call-in shows. Gradual improvements to the mobile network and falling prices have facilitated citizen journalism.

The international community and local media organizations have for the past decade been supporting programs aimed at developing a genuinely independent media sector, and they have been fairly successful in this regard. However, a number of analysts have raised concerns about the possible negative effects of the withdrawal of foreign combat forces—most of which had left Afghanistan by the end of 2014—on both the continuation of donor funding for media projects and the broader economic situation in the country.

Albania

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40
Economic Environment: 17 / 30
Total Score: 49 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	50,PF	50,PF	51,PF	49,PF	49,PF

The media are vigorous and fairly diverse. However, outlets often display a strong political bias, and their reporting is influenced by the economic or political interests of their owners.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees freedom of the press. Defamation remains a criminal offense, though legal reforms enacted in 2012 eliminated prison terms as a punishment, leaving only fines. Civil defamation suits remain common. A 2012 amendment to the civil code set limits on financial penalties for defamation in order to protect the survival of media outlets.

A 1999 freedom of information law was poorly implemented, and the prevailing belief is that information is difficult to access. A new freedom of information law enacted in September 2014 aimed to reduce delays in responding to requests and imposes fines for officials who refuse valid applications. A Commission for the Right to Information will monitor compliance, and government institutions are required to appoint coordinators to handle requests.

The country's broadcast media regulator, the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA), is seen as highly politicized. In October and November 2014, the parliament ended long-standing vacancies at the seven-member body, electing two members and a new chairman. The opposition Democratic Party (PD) boycotted the votes as part of its wider boycott of parliamentary activity since July, and claimed that the appointments were consequently illegal.

Political Environment

Private media outlets typically take an editorial line that suits the interests of their owners, who are often involved in politics or other industries. Self-censorship thus remains a major concern. Partisan bias is especially visible during election periods. Although the media play an important role in exposing political malfeasance, few outlets engage in investigative reporting, and the implicated officials are rarely punished by the courts. Blogs and other online media offer a more independent alternative to mainstream outlets.

Journalists are sometimes physically obstructed from covering specific events, assaulted, or threatened during or because of their work. In June 2014, during a major police raid on a village known for drug trafficking, criminal suspects shot at a television crew from A1 Report; their vehicle was torched and one journalist was briefly held hostage. Several journalists also faced violent attacks and threats by unknown assailants.

Economic Environment

The public broadcaster, RTSH, is financially dependent on the state and typically shows a strong progovernment bias. Two private television stations have national reach, and dozens of smaller television and radio outlets also operate in a poorly regulated environment. There is a

variety of daily and weekly newspapers, but circulation is the lowest in Europe, and distribution networks do not reach some rural districts. Albanians have access to satellite television, foreign radio content, and television broadcasts from neighboring Greece and Italy. There are no government restrictions on the internet, which was accessed by 60 percent of the population in 2014, but access in rural areas remains limited.

Media ownership is reportedly obscured by the use of proxies, which circumvents legal barriers to concentration. There is little foreign investment in the Albanian media market. Most outlets rely on financial support from owners and a few major advertisers. The economic crisis in Albania since 2011 has affected many funding sources, and outlets often delay salaries. Some journalists supplement low salaries with other sources of income that can lead to conflicts of interest in their reporting.

The PD, as the ruling party until 2013, allegedly directed extensive state advertising purchases to politically friendly outlets, and it continued to do so in 2014 through its control of the Tirana city government. The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) found that the Tirana government accounted for 65.4 percent of all print ad spending by state institutions in the first three-quarters of 2014.

Algeria

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 21 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 61 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	64,NF	62,NF	62,NF	61,NF	59,PF

Status change explanation: Algeria declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to restrictions placed on the media during the 2014 presidential election. A January law imposed content limitations on privately owned broadcasters, and government agencies withdrew advertising from media outlets that covered opposition parties. Foreign journalists were denied entry visas, had their visas restricted, or faced obstacles to access on the ground.

Legal Environment

The Algerian constitution guarantees freedom of expression. However, a state of emergency was in effect from 1992 until February 2011, allowing the government to penalize any speech deemed threatening to the state or public order. While the state of emergency has since been lifted, substantial legal restrictions on press freedom remain in place. The threat of criminal and civil defamation charges hinders the press's ability to cover the news. A 2001 amendment to the information code criminalizes writing, speech, and cartoons that insult or offend the president, the parliament, the judiciary, or the armed forces. Bloggers, like traditional journalists, are subject to defamation laws, and several have been fined for posting allegedly

defamatory material. A 2009 cybercrime law gives the authorities the right to block websites deemed “contrary to the public order or decency.”

Restrictive laws continued to be used to prosecute journalists in 2014. In February, cartoonist Djamel Ghanem was charged with insulting the president and fraudulently accessing a computer network after he inserted a political cartoon mocking President Abdelaziz Bouteflika into his newspaper’s computer system. Although the drawing was detected before publication and removed, he faced up to 18 months in prison and a fine of 30,000 dinars (\$380) for his actions. He was initially acquitted in March, but prosecutors appealed the ruling to a higher court, prompting Ghanem to seek political asylum in France.

Journalist Abdelhai Abdessamia remained in pretrial detention as of late 2014 following his August 2013 arrest for facilitating his editor’s escape from the country. The editor had been charged with endangering state security and other offenses after his affiliated papers, the French-language *Mon Journal* and the Arabic *Djaridati*, reported on the president’s waning health. In November 2014, Abdessamia began a hunger strike to protest his detention.

The country lacks legislation that enshrines the right to access official information. A media law that went into effect in January 2012 was hailed by its proponents as an important reform that would enhance media freedom by nominally abolishing prison sentences for press offenses and opening up key media sectors to private ownership. However, the law imposes limitations on coverage of a variety of subjects—including criminal investigations and state security—and steep fines of up to 500,000 dinars (\$6,300) for press-related offenses. Journalists who fail to pay the fines can still be subject to jail time. Furthermore, the law contained strict new eligibility requirements for print periodical ownership, including a minimum of 10 years of media-related experience.

In keeping with the 2012 law, a new law regulating audiovisual broadcasting was passed in January 2014 to formally authorize the creation of privately owned channels, although several had already been operating in Algeria for a number of years, technically in defiance of the law but tolerated by the government. The new legislation sharply limits the extent to which private stations can provide independent news programming, in part by restricting the airtime devoted to news, and mandates the establishment of a new broadcast regulator, with five commissioners chosen by the president and four by the parliament.

Political Environment

State agencies regularly engage in both direct and indirect censorship of private outlets. During the April 2014 presidential election period, the government took measures to limit public access to election coverage and deter journalists from critically assessing the candidates and their platforms, for example by canceling state advertising contracts with targeted outlets. Self-censorship also remains widespread, motivated largely by a fear of defamation charges or other forms of government retaliation.

Foreign media outlets continue to face barriers to free reporting. Officials block distribution of foreign papers when they carry content deemed subversive. Foreign media coverage of issues related to national security and terrorism is considered especially sensitive. The Algeria offices of Qatar’s Al-Jazeera satellite television network remained closed in 2014. During the election period, Algerian authorities either denied visas to foreign journalists or granted access with such a delay that reporters were unable to cover the entire campaign. Visas also imposed strict geographic limitations on journalists, requiring additional authorizations to

report from certain regions, and expired only three days after the election. The Ministry of Information distributed documents to foreign journalists urging them to discuss only the election, not other political or social issues.

Algerian journalists faced various forms of harassment in the course of their work in 2014. In early March, police beat at least one reporter and arrested several others as they attempted to cover demonstrations associated with the election, though all were later released. Also that month, security forces repeatedly raided the privately owned Al-Atlas TV, seized equipment, and successfully pressured its Jordanian satellite carrier to drop its signal. The station still lacked permission to operate at year's end. In April, three journalists from *El-Watan* were chased and threatened by government supporters while reporting on electoral fraud in the northeastern city of Khenchela.

Economic Environment

There are more than 80 newspapers available in the capital, although only six are considered truly independent, as many are owned by private businesses that are closely affiliated with the government or the intelligence services. State-owned television and radio outlets typically broadcast biased information, display favoritism toward the president, and refrain from covering dissenting views. However, most households have satellite dishes that provide access to alternative sources of information. Only about 18 percent of Algerians accessed the internet in 2014, due in large part to poor infrastructure. Nevertheless, the government monitors internet activity and e-mail, and internet service providers are legally liable for the content they host. Social-media use has reportedly increased along with ongoing improvements to mobile telecommunications.

The government has significant economic influence over print media, as most papers are printed on state-controlled presses. The state-owned advertising agency favors content with a progovernment bias by manipulating the placement of ads for state entities and companies, which form the largest source of income for most publications. During the 2014 electoral campaign, the National Agency for Publishing and Publicity canceled all of its contracts with *Algérie News* and *Djazair News*—owned by the same editor—allegedly because they had offered coverage of opposition groups.

Andorra

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 1 / 30

Political Environment: 4 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 13 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	13,F	13,F	13,F	13,F	13,F

Angola

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 30 / 40

Economic Environment: 21 / 30

Total Score: 70 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	62,NF	64,NF	67,NF	68,NF	69,NF

Media in Angola operate in a restrictive environment. Conditions remained poor in 2014, which was marked by defamation cases against journalists and the closure of one of the country's last remaining independent newspapers.

Legal Environment

While the constitution protects freedom of speech and of the press, laws regarding state security and insult hamper the free activities of the media. A 2010 state security law allows for the detention of persons who “insult” the Republic of Angola or the president in “public meetings or by disseminating words, images, writings, or sound.” Defamation and libel are crimes punishable by imprisonment. In 2013, the government introduced a new draft criminal code, expected to be approved in 2015, that would further restrict freedom of expression by broadening the scope of what is considered criminal defamation and insult and retaining imprisonment as a punishment.

The government has used these laws to harass members of the independent media. In August 2014, a group of generals brought a criminal defamation case against Rafael Marques de Morais, claiming \$1.2 million in damages. This was the latest in a series of lawsuits connected to Marques's 2011 book, *Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola*, in which he accused several military officers of engaging in torture and other human rights violations in collusion with private mining companies. Marques was scheduled to appear in court in mid-December 2014, but the court session was postponed due to difficulties in summoning witnesses for court appearances. The same group of generals in 2012 had filed a criminal defamation case against Marques and his Portuguese publisher, Tinta da China, in Portugal; the complaint was dismissed in February 2013, but a separate civil case, filed in Lisbon in March 2013, has yet to be resolved. In another case, in November 2014, William Tonet was charged with defamation and libel over stories on the 2012 assassination of two opposition activists by security forces that were published in the weekly *Folha 8*, of which he is director and owner. The development reportedly marked the 98th time Tonet has faced charges over material published in *Folha 8*.

In February, Queirós Anastácio Chilúvia of the opposition-funded Radio Despertar was held without charge for five days and eventually handed a six-month suspended jail sentence after being convicted of defamation, offending the police, and operating illegally as a journalist. The episode was prompted by a live news broadcast in which Chilúvia had reported on cries for help emanating from a police station; he then entered the station to procure a statement from police and was arrested. The pleas he heard were reportedly from inmates being held at the station, who were seeking help for a prisoner who had fallen gravely ill and who later died.

Angola enacted a freedom of information law in 2002, ostensibly granting citizens access

to government-generated documents. However, accessing information remains extremely difficult in practice for independent journalists and news organizations without government ties, and key parts of the legislation, such as the creation of a monitoring commission, have not been implemented.

Political Environment

President José Eduardo dos Santos's ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) continues to give preferential treatment to state-owned media and has been known to bar access to journalists covering opposition events. Interviews with top politicians and state officials, as well as access to information related to the government, are usually granted only to progovernment or state-run outlets. Such outlets tend to either ignore opposition activities or report unfavorably on them. Outlets openly critical of the government can face pressure. In June 2014, the minister of geology and mines filed a formal complaint with Angola's National Council for Social Communication, an advisory body dealing with media standards, claiming that the weekly *Machete* had implicated him in corrupt behavior without allowing him the right of reply. The council dismissed the complaint in August, but requested that *Machete* permit the minister a column in which he could defend his actions.

Self-censorship by journalists at both state-run and private outlets is commonplace in the coercive environment created by the government and security forces, and has even extended to Portugal, where oil wealth has allowed large Angolan investments in media and other companies.

The sudden closure of *Semanário Angolense* by its unknown new owners in December 2014 leaves *Folha 8* as Angola's only remaining private, independent newspaper with significant circulation.

While harassment, intimidation, and imprisonment of journalists were less common in 2014 than during the previous year, coverage of sensitive subjects like antigovernment protests, human rights violations, or corruption among government officials remains risky. Journalist Sedrick de Carvalho claimed that Angolan police officers, at an antigovernment demonstration held in November 2014, confiscated his phone just before police began to beat the demonstrators. He said the phone was later returned. Separately, journalists operating in the restive northern province of Cabinda, where a separatist movement is active, have faced harassment by security forces in recent years.

No journalists were known to have been murdered in 2014. However, Luanda-based Guinea-Bissau journalist Milocas Pereira, who disappeared in 2012 after reporting on possible Angolan military involvement in a coup in Guinea-Bissau, was still missing at year's end.

Economic Environment

The government both owns and keeps tight control over the largest media outlets in the country. The state-owned newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*, and television channel, Televisão Pública de Angola (TPA), remain the most widely accessed media sources, and together with state-owned Radio Nacional de Angola (RNA) they are the only outlets with a truly national reach. While around a dozen privately owned newspapers operate, most are owned by individuals with connections to the government or ruling party and are distributed primarily in urban areas. Blogs such as Marques's *Maka Angola* and the news portal Club-K also report

critically on the MPLA regime. Privately owned radio stations are not allowed to use repeaters to extend their broadcast signals outside their home province; they must instead open a new station in every province in which they wish to broadcast, making private radio penetration outside Luanda extremely limited. Internet penetration in Angola is rather low, at 21 percent of the population in 2014, largely concentrated in urban areas. Legislation was passed in September for Angola to begin managing its own .ao internet domain beginning in 2015. Currently the domain is managed in Portugal.

Denial of state and private advertising as a method of pressuring independent news outlets continues to be a problem. Authorities and private owners have occasionally seized entire editions of newspapers that carried stories critical of the government.

Antigua and Barbuda

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30

Political Environment: 16 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 38 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	38,PF	38,PF	38,PF	38,PF	39,PF

Legal Environment

The constitution provides for freedoms of speech and of the press, but the government enforces those rights somewhat selectively. Defamation is a criminal offense punishable by up to three years in jail, and cases are occasionally brought against journalists. In 2013, a court ruled in favor of Asot Michael, a member of Parliament, in his defamation case against Caribarena Printing and Publishing, which operates the online news portal Caribarena.com. Michael brought the suit over articles that implicated him in a corruption scandal. At the end of 2014 the court had yet to make a final determination of the damages to be paid by the company and its owner, Ofer Shaked. However, Caribarena had resumed operations by June 2014, after a lengthy hiatus.

The 2004 Freedom of Information Act grants citizens the right to access official government documents and established a commissioner to oversee compliance. Antiguanans have complained of difficulties in obtaining information in practice, though the U.S. State Department has noted that such difficulties might be linked to a lack of government resources rather than intentional obstruction.

Political Environment

The media sector as a whole offers diverse views, but a number of private outlets are aligned with political parties and display a partisan bias.

The state-owned Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Service has been accused of favoring the party in power. A new government led by the Antigua Labor Party (ALP), which unseated the United Progressive Party (UPP) in June 2014 general elections, moved to

restructure the broadcaster. In November, Information Minister Melford Nicholas announced the appointment of a new general manager and other senior staff, and said the broadcasting service would merge with two other state-run media services, the New Media Unit and the Government Information Service, to form one entity under the broadcaster’s umbrella. The change took effect in December.

Physical attacks and harassment directed at journalists occur occasionally. In 2013, a journalist for Caribarena was shot at several times—an unusual event for the country. No similar incidents were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

The islands have one daily newspaper, one biweekly paper, and a number of radio and television stations. These include the Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Service, which runs ABS TV, the only free-to-air television service, and ABS Radio; Crusader Radio, operated by the UPP; ZDK Liberty Radio, whose coverage favors the ALP; and the independent Observer Radio. Most private outlets are owned by firms affiliated with either the UPP or ALP. There is one cable television company, and the country also receives broadcasts from a pan-Caribbean radio network, the Caribbean SuperStation (CSS), based in Trinidad. There are no government restrictions on internet access, and about 64 percent of the population used the medium in 2014.

Argentina

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 51 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	49,PF	51,PF	50,PF	52,PF	51,PF

The climate for freedom of the press in Argentina remained tense in 2014, due in large part to the frayed relationship between the government of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and critical media outlets. Journalists reported that some administration officials were more open to speaking with the critical press and appearing on traditionally critical television programs, but the president herself largely avoided public appearances, and government advertising continued to be skewed toward progovernment outlets. The year also featured harassment of journalists by state and nonstate actors, especially in connection with reporting on official corruption or drug trafficking. The breakup of Clarín Group, a traditionally critical media conglomerate, was set to be implemented in 2015, in keeping with a 2009 media law and a 2013 ruling by the Supreme Court.

Legal Environment

Argentina's constitution provides for freedom of the media and of expression, and restricts Congress from passing legislation that would affect those freedoms. Defamation-related offenses were decriminalized for journalists in 2009 and are no longer punishable by imprisonment. However, fines can still be issued in civil cases.

In 2014, authorities charged Juan Pablo Suárez, editor of the online daily *Última Hora*, under a controversial antiterrorism law. Congress had passed an amendment to the law in 2011 that increased penalties for terrorist acts, and an interpretation by the head of Argentina's Financial Investigations Unit stated that news outlets could be held accountable under the expanded clauses if they published material that "terrorizes" the public. However, the government had in the past stated that the law was not intended for use against the media. Suárez was initially arrested in December 2013 in the northern city of Santiago del Estero on charges of sedition after he refused to hand over footage of a police officer being arrested; he was released nine days later after a media campaign on his behalf. However, in May 2014 he was charged with "inciting collective violence" and "terrorizing the population," and faced up to 12 years in prison if convicted. The charge was sharply criticized by press freedom organizations.

In October 2014, police raided the offices of La Brújula 24, a radio station and news website in the city of Bahía Blanca, after it published recordings of conversations between Juan Ignacio Suris, a local businessman imprisoned on charges of money laundering and ties to drug trafficking, and local police, politicians, and members of the judiciary. Following the raid, the outlet's director, Germán Sasso, was charged with a civil offense for failing to disclose his sources, even though the constitution protects the confidentiality of journalists' sources. In November a court ruled that Sasso was guilty of concealment and ordered him to pay a fine of 200,000 pesos (\$24,000).

In December, Argentina enacted a new telecommunications law, known as Argentina Digital, that replaced legislation from 1972. Critics of the new law noted that it allows phone companies to offer audiovisual media services, such as cable television, which had been prohibited by the 2009 Law on Audiovisual Communication Services, also known as the Ley de Medios (Media Law). The telecommunications law also establishes a minimum internet speed and requires owners of telecommunications infrastructure to grant access to other providers at a price regulated by the state; the aim was to improve competition and service quality, though opponents said it effectively favored larger firms by placing the same obligations on large and small companies.

Argentina remains one of the few countries in the Americas without a federal law on access to information, despite numerous attempts to pass one in Congress. However, some provinces and municipalities have such legislation in place, and the Supreme Court has upheld information requests on constitutional grounds in recent years, including in 2014. The lack of federal legislation is particularly problematic given the government's record of manipulating key economic and other statistics—a pattern that drew the condemnation of the International Monetary Fund in December 2013. In the absence of reliable official statistics, journalists often use estimates from private economists and consultants. In the past, the secretary of commerce has issued fines to journalists who published independent data for "defrauding commerce and industry."

Political Environment

The level of hostility between the government and major private news outlets has created

a highly polarized media climate. Fernández holds few official press conferences; instead, she has made use of *cadenas*—nationwide presidential addresses that preempt programming on all radio and television stations. In some cases she has used them to attack journalists. By law, *cadenas* are only valid as a means of communicating with the public in times of crisis. The president is also an active user of social media, especially her Twitter account, through which she often denounces critical media and the legitimacy of their reporting. The government continues to promote the slogan “Clarín mente” (“Clarín lies”) in its official advertising. In October 2014, La Cámpora, a progovernment group led by the president’s son, created and distributed mock editions of *Clarín* to criticize the paper and opposition politicians.

Nevertheless, Argentine journalists conceded that the situation improved slightly in 2014. A report to the October 2014 General Assembly of the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) found that members of the ruling party were granting interviews to critical print and broadcast outlets that they had previously avoided. Furthermore, the chief of cabinet hosted periodic press conferences, though he often used them to attack perceived opponents in the press.

The media, including the internet, are generally free from official censorship. Argentines are able to express themselves online and access most desired content. There have been some cases of the government taking down or blocking access to websites that facilitate illegal commercial activity or publish copyrighted or defamatory material, but the practice is not pervasive. In November 2014, the ruling party introduced a bill that would require websites to block “the dissemination of messages with discriminatory content ... produced by users,” raising concerns that it could hinder free expression and discussion on the internet if enacted.

A 2014 self-censorship survey conducted by the Argentine Journalism Forum (FOPEA) found that 53 percent of journalists reported the existence of self-censorship at the outlets where they worked. The most affected topics were those related to the national government, human trafficking, and drug trafficking. Many journalists reported editorial pressure from the business departments of their outlets or directly from advertisers.

Extreme violence against members of the press is very rare in Argentina, and no journalists were murdered in 2014. However, FOPEA registered 178 attacks against the media—including threats, assaults, attacks on media facilities, confiscation of equipment, and obstruction of coverage—for the year, 9 percent fewer than in 2013. Journalists sometimes face violence from police or other government officials in the course of their reporting. On December 30, 2013, Brian Palacios, a freelance photographer for *Clarín*, was taken into custody and beaten by gendarmes while covering protests against power cuts in Buenos Aires. He filed a complaint on January 3, but the gendarmes denied involvement, and the case did not move forward. In July 2014 a journalist from Tucumán, Carolina Ponce de León, was beaten by bodyguards of Vice President Amado Boudou after interviewing him, which resulted in two broken ribs. Also in July, journalist Martín Sereno was beaten by the mayor of a town in the northern province of Misiones while interviewing flood victims.

Journalists also face attacks in reprisal for their work—especially coverage of corruption or drug trafficking. In February, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the home of the director of the newspaper *Síntesis* in the province of Santa Fe, though no one was injured. In August, three journalists from Radio Sol in the city of Santa Fe were threatened on air by callers claiming to be policemen, and were later beaten by masked men as they left the station. In September, well-known television host Gustavo Sylvestre of the program *Minuto Uno* had his car torched by an unknown arsonist; the program often deals with issues such as drug trafficking. In November two reporters from *La Nación* received death threats. The first, Leonel Rodríguez, based in

Santiago del Estero Province, reported that a miniature coffin was left in front of his parents' home after he reported on a sex-abuse scandal involving a local official. The second, Germán de los Santos, based in Rosario, received a threatening phone call after reporting on drug trafficking in the province.

Economic Environment

Argentina has a large private media sector, with more than 150 daily newspapers, hundreds of commercial radio stations, and dozens of television stations. However, private ownership remained concentrated as of 2014, with Clarín Group commanding a significant share of the print, broadcast, and internet service markets. Meanwhile, many radio stations operate on temporary licenses pending regulatory reform. Public media are less influential; the country's largest public television, TV Pública, has a much lower audience share than its private competitors. Public radio has also declined in importance since the privatization of the industry in 1980. The internet is widely available, with nearly 65 percent of Argentines accessing the medium in 2014.

Argentina's media industry is being transformed by the 2009 Media Law, which aims to diversify ownership. Many media analysts and international bodies support the law's basic goals, but suspicions that it would be used against the government's media opponents spurred lawsuits that initially hindered implementation. A 2013 report by the IAPA showed that instead of promoting diversity of viewpoints, 96 percent of the new media licenses granted since the law's introduction had gone to government or progovernment entities. The overall legislation took effect in September 2010, but Article 161, which would force certain media companies—most notably Clarín—to relinquish licenses and sell off assets, remained suspended pending a Supreme Court ruling on a challenge filed by Clarín that year.

In its October 2013 decision on the matter, the Supreme Court ruled that "Clarín's freedom of expression is not affected by the law's implementation, because media decentralization and frequency allocation do not endanger the group's economic viability." In accordance with the ruling and the law's cap on the number of broadcast licenses one company may own, Clarín presented a plan in November 2013 for its division into six companies. That plan was rejected by Argentina's Federal Audiovisual Communication Authority in October 2014. The agency's president alleged that conditions attached to the proposed sales and transfers would leave the post-breakup companies dependent on one another, and that their shareholders and executives would retain personal links through various trusts, law firms, and corporate entities. The Argentine state was consequently tasked with overseeing the breakup of the company in 2015.

A 2011 law designated newsprint as a commodity of public interest, making it subject to government regulation. Under the law, the government can increase its minority stake in the only Argentine company that manufactures newsprint, Papel Prensa, in order to produce enough newsprint to satisfy the demand of all newspapers in the country; the rule could lead to eventual government control of the newsprint supply. Since 2010, the government has pursued an investigation into the two private media groups that control a majority stake in Papel Prensa, Clarín and La Nación, alleging that they acquired the shares at a time when the seller was under coercion by the military dictatorship of 1976–83. The investigation, which has been criticized as politically motivated, remained stalled during 2014.

As in past years, the government was accused in 2014 of manipulating the distribution of

official advertising to limit free speech, a form of “soft censorship” that had been institutionalized under the administration of former president Néstor Kirchner, Fernández’s late husband. The problem has persisted despite a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that “the government may not manipulate advertising by giving it to or taking it away from media outlets on the basis of discriminatory criteria.” In February 2014, the court issued a similar ruling against the government in a case brought by Clarín. According to the IAPA, discriminatory allocation of government advertising occurs at both the federal and provincial levels.

Armenia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 22 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 61 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	66,NF	65,NF	65,NF	61,NF	62,NF

Despite constitutional and legal protections, press freedom in Armenia remains restricted. Journalists must contend with violence and harassment; heavy political influence on content; and costly defamation suits. After higher-than-usual levels of political interference with the work of journalists in 2013—an election year—the country’s media environment stabilized somewhat in 2014. Independent outlets continued to take advantage of the country’s relatively open online space.

Legal Environment

The government eliminated criminal liability for defamation in 2010, but the offense remains subject to high monetary penalties. The civil code allows for damages of up to 2,000 times the minimum salary, and plaintiffs—often politicians, businesses, or other media outlets—frequently seek compensation out of proportion to the damage allegedly inflicted. In 2011, the Constitutional Court ruled that media outlets cannot be held liable for “critical assessment of facts” and “evaluation judgments,” and encouraged lower courts to suggest nonmaterial compensation in lieu of hefty fines. Since then, lower courts have indeed been more responsive to claims for disproportionate compensation, often reducing the damages originally requested by plaintiffs. The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression (CPFE), a local nongovernmental organization (NGO), recorded 17 new civil defamation suits against media workers or outlets in 2014—a decrease from the 24 suits launched in 2013.

In March 2014, authorities circulated a draft amendment to the civil code that would make online media outlets liable for defamatory information—including comments—published through anonymous or fraudulent accounts. Local and international media watchdogs criticized the proposal for its broad scope, vague language, and potential to restrict freedom of expression online. Following a parliamentary discussion in late March, consideration of the proposal was indefinitely postponed.

In June 2014, a Yerevan court ruled in favor of Armenia's Special Investigative Service, requiring the *Hraparak* newspaper and the online portal iLur.am to disclose the sources for reports published the previous month about a violent altercation involving a regional police chief and a prominent athlete. The court ruling followed a message, circulated in May by the office of Armenia's prosecutor general, that publishing information about ongoing criminal investigations without prior authorization is a criminal offense, and that prosecutors were prepared to pursue legal action aimed at forcing journalists to disclose the sources of such information. The message was met with heavy criticism from media workers and watchdogs, many of whom saw it as a threat against journalists pursuing investigative reporting. Critics also used the opportunity to point out weaknesses and contradictions in the various laws that protect journalistic sources, noting that the prosecutor's office had invoked rarely enforced and vaguely worded legislation in its message.

Although Armenia passed freedom of information legislation in 2003, the government has stalled in adopting a number of regulations needed to implement the law. In February 2014, the National Assembly introduced a number of amendments that would create mechanisms and establish standards for the law's implementation, but no changes had been enacted by year's end. Although courts have been responsive in recent years in upholding the right of access to information, many government departments still do not willingly respond to information requests, and access to some files—including previously classified Soviet-era data—remains problematic. In September 2014, the local Freedom of Information Center published the first findings of an annual project aimed at assessing the extent to which government bodies fulfill their responsibilities under Armenia's freedom of information legislation. The project found the Ministry of Defense, the National Security Service, the National Assembly, and the Office of the President to be among the poorest performers.

Armenia's licensing and regulatory framework tends to limit media freedom and diversity. Radio and television outfits must obtain operating licenses from the National Commission on Television and Radio (NCTR). Its eight members serve six-year terms; four are appointed by the president and the rest are elected by the National Assembly. Print and online media do not require licenses. The country officially began its transition to digital broadcasting in 2010, following amendments to the *Law on Television and Radio* that were criticized by local and international groups for further restricting media pluralism. The transition is set to be completed by July 2015. Organizations like the CPFE and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have noted pressing problems, including the threat of closure facing more than a dozen regional stations that possess only analog licenses.

The license of television station A1+ remains suspended despite a 2008 European Court of Human Rights ruling that the NCTR had improperly revoked its license in 2002. Although the government paid the compensation ordered by the court, A1+ has been unable to reacquire its license. In 2012, A1+ returned to the airwaves after reaching an agreement with the Armnews television station to broadcast a news program five days a week on the latter's frequency. Separately, the local television station Gala, based in Gyumri, has been under government pressure since it aired speeches by an opposition presidential candidate in 2007. In July 2011, the Court of Cassation upheld a lower court's decision ordering Gala to stop using the Gyumri television tower and to dismantle its transmitter. The station had to relocate its transmitter to another site. Gala has so far been denied a digital license and will most likely face closure by July 2015, when the digital transition is set to be finalized.

Political Environment

CPFE reported 43 incidents of various forms of pressure on media workers during 2014, compared with 57 such cases in 2013. Among the most egregious examples was the prosecutor general's circulation in May of a warning that journalists who report about ongoing investigations without authorization could face criminal proceedings.

Self-censorship is prevalent, owing to continued harassment of and violence against journalists, a climate of impunity, and concerns about reprisals for criticism of the government. Self-censorship is particularly common in the broadcasting sector. Journalists have more freedom to report online, as a growing number of independent online media outlets serve as platforms for diverse, alternative reporting free from editorial lines established by politically connected owners.

CPFE observed 9 incidents of physical violence against journalists during the year—compared with 10 in 2013 and 4 in 2012. During an opposition demonstration in February 2014, a police officer assaulted Ani Gevorkyan, a journalist for the newspaper *Chorrord Ishkhanutyun*. Police also seized video footage from Gevorkyan and an iLur.am journalist, both of whom were detained during the demonstration. An investigation into Gevorkyan's case was launched in February but closed in June, with the Special Investigation Service citing a lack of evidence. Gevorkyan's subsequent challenge of that decision was dismissed.

Economic Environment

Most of the dominant broadcast media are controlled by the government or by government-friendly individuals. Armenia's small print media sector is generally in decline as online news sources rise in popularity and accessibility. Although most print outlets are privately owned, they tend to reflect the political and ideological leanings of their owners, who are often tied to a particular political party or interest. Television is the country's primary medium, and one of the few outlets with national reach is state-owned, though dozens of private stations operate. Russian and minority-language media are widely available. The internet penetration rate was 46 percent in 2014. Online news media and bloggers have played an important role in recent years in providing a diverse range of news and analysis. Ownership of print, broadcast, and online media outlets is frequently difficult to discern. The government does not require registration to access the internet or satellite television, and both are freely available.

Public media outlets receive preferential treatment, enjoying primary access to official news and a high share of government advertising. Small state subsidies are available for private print media, but due in part to high distribution costs, the vast majority of newspapers are not profitable and remain financially dependent on their owners or patrons. In December 2014, the National Assembly approved amendments banning advertisements on public television.

Australia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 22 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	22,F	21,F	21,F	21,F	22,F

Legal Environment

Press freedom in Australia is not constitutionally guaranteed, but the High Court has ruled that language in the constitution implies a right to freedom of expression, and the government generally respects this principle. In the state of Victoria, press freedom is explicitly protected under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

In October 2014, Parliament approved the National Security Legislation Amendment Act, which introduces a 5-year prison sentence for any person who discloses information relating to “special intelligence operations,” and a 10-year sentence if the disclosure would “endanger the health or safety of any person or prejudice the effective conduct of a special intelligence operation.” Media freedom advocates expressed concern that the legislation would discourage journalists from reporting on national security issues.

The 2011 Evidence Amendment Act protects the identity of journalists’ sources and extends this protection to the sources of bloggers, citizen journalists, independent media organizations, and anyone “active in the publication of news in any medium.” However, the Evidence Amendment Act can only be applied in federal cases, and similar protection varies widely at the state level. Lacking nationally uniform protection, journalists remain vulnerable to subpoenas seeking to obtain information on their confidential sources. In October 2014, the state legislature of South Australia voted down proposed shield laws that would have protected journalists and media outlets from being compelled to reveal their sources.

The 2006 Uniform Defamation Laws Reform Act allows only individuals, nonprofits, and corporations with fewer than 10 employees to sue over defamation. Although rarely invoked, criminal defamation laws are still on the books in Australia. Civil cases, which are more common, can result in heavy fines. In May 2014, Treasurer of Australia Joe Hockey sued the publisher Fairfax Media over articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Age*, and the *Canberra Times* that accused him of accepting bribes while in office. The case remained open at year’s end.

The Freedom of Information Act of 1982 provides for access to government documents. In October 2014, the administration of Prime Minister Tony Abbott introduced the Freedom of Information Amendment (New Arrangements) Bill. If passed, it would cut government funding for freedom of information services and eliminate the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), whose core functions would be absorbed by other departments. The legislation would also require individuals to pay an AU\$800 (US\$700) filing fee to appeal any government decision to withhold information. Media freedom advocates and opposition parties criticized the bill as a major impediment to freedom of information and a reversal of reforms passed in 2010. The measure was still under consideration at year’s end.

Political Environment

The government in 2014 continued its practice of restricting media coverage at immigration detention centers. According to these restrictions, journalists hoping to report from

the centers must sign a “deed of agreement” that requires them to be accompanied by an immigration official and comply with all rules set by the immigration department throughout their visit. Communication with detainees remains limited, and any photographs, video footage, or audio recordings are subject to review by department officials.

In February 2014, Immigration Minister Scott Morrison announced that the government would no longer hold weekly press briefings on border control, at which discussion usually revolved around the large numbers of asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia by boat. Instead, Morrison said such briefings would take place on an “as-needs basis,” and that information would otherwise be disseminated in press releases.

Attacks and physical harassment targeting journalists are rare, and no cases were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

While most media outlets are privately owned, ownership is highly concentrated, with the print sector dominated by Fairfax Media and News Corporation. Australia has a strong tradition of public broadcasting. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), although state owned and entirely funded by the government, remains editorially independent. However, in November 2014 the Abbott government said it would cut funding to ABC by over A\$200 million (US\$175 million); the broadcaster said this would result in the elimination of a number of positions and reductions in regional programming.

About 85 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. Internet access is affordable for most Australians, and the government subsidizes satellite telephones and internet connections in rural areas.

Austria

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 22 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	21,F	21,F	21,F	21,F	21,F

Legal Environment

The federal constitution and the Media Law of 1981 provide the basis for media freedom in Austria, and the government generally respects their protections. However, many press freedom advocates have urged the government to revise the country’s stringent civil and criminal defamation laws, as well as restrictive laws on freedom of information.

In February 2014, Vienna’s public prosecutor dropped legal proceedings against Michael Genner, the chairman of the political asylum advocacy group Asyl in Not, who had been charged with unlawfully advocating for criminal acts in the media in connection with an op-ed arguing

that human smugglers perform a public service. The decision to drop the charges followed sharp criticism of the proceedings by press freedom organizations.

In June 2014, the Constitutional Court implemented an April ruling by the European Court of Justice that had overturned a much-debated European Union data-retention law, which required telecommunications companies and internet service providers to store user data for up to six months. The Constitutional Court's move made such data retention illegal in Austria and compelled authorities to delete data that had been stored under the old rule.

The 2010 Terrorism Prevention Law penalizes the preparation and organization of terrorist acts as well as training for terrorist purposes. Critics argue that the law impinges on freedom of expression by stipulating that individuals who incite hatred or contempt against any group will face up to two years in prison, though no cases on such charges led to convictions in 2014. There was no evidence during the year that a contentious 2012 amendment to the Security Police Act, which enables state authorities to monitor, wiretap, film, and locate individuals, had been used to deter journalistic work or intimidate investigative reporters.

Freedom of information legislation is in place. However, the constitution includes a provision on official secrecy, and the country's legal framework on access to information was rated the worst among 93 countries evaluated in a September 2013 study by Access Info Europe and the Centre for Law and Democracy. Advocates have campaigned for a new access to information law in recent years. While the government released a draft bill in 2013, discussion of the issue was stalled in the parliament as of 2014.

The Austrian Communications Authority regulates broadcast licenses and manages frequencies. Since 2010 it has also been responsible for the legal supervision of audiovisual services and the public broadcaster. Its five members are appointed for six years by the head of state on the recommendation of the federal government.

The self-regulatory Austrian Press Council handles complaints regarding content in newspapers and magazines, and on their websites. However, membership in the council is not obligatory for such outlets. In 2014 the Ministry of Justice appealed to the Press Council to rule on an article in the *Heute* newspaper about prison officials accused of involvement with drug transactions, arguing that the article contained identifying information that could put one official at risk. However, the council rejected the appeal in September, holding that there had been no specific threats against the official, and that the story was in the public interest. Separately, in March the council condemned a satirical cartoon published in the newspaper *Zur Zeit* that compared party infighting to the 1938 "Kristallnacht" pogrom. However, the decision did not have any effect, as *Zur Zeit* is not a council member.

Political Environment

Political influence at the Austrian Public Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) remained an issue in 2014. There is no official censorship, though any form of Nazi propaganda or anti-Semitism is prohibited by law, and the authorities restrict access to websites that promote such content. In 2014, the Austrian Federal Court ordered the blocking of two websites used to distribute pirated movies, in a ruling criticized by most parties in the parliament.

Physical attacks against and harassment of journalists are rare. However, an ORF reporter in July 2014 received threats via Facebook after hosting a panel discussion on terrorism and anti-Semitism.

Economic Environment

While daily national newspapers are fiercely competitive, the print sector is characterized by regional newspapers that dominate up to 90 percent of their respective markets. Austria's public broadcasting network operates alongside numerous private outlets. Cable and satellite services are widely available and offer content from both Austrian and German stations, with some of the latter tailoring programming for the Austrian audience. About 81 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014.

Media ownership is highly concentrated. In many regions of Austria, the largest newspaper also owns the only private radio station, despite the fact that Austria's Cartel Court has the authority to monitor the media environment to ensure diversity. The Media Transparency Law, which took effect in July 2012, forced public offices, like governmental departments, to disclose their media advertisements for the first time. A 2013 law on corruption defines ORF journalists as public-service employees and sets strict rules regarding the acceptance of benefits.

The government has provided all daily and weekly newspapers with annual direct payments since 1974, with larger amounts of money going to newspapers that are considered especially important contributors to the diversity of opinion. However, the financial situation of many newspapers remains difficult, with sustainability often reliant on these economic subsidies. In 2014, the government announced plans to focus subsidies on newspapers that employed more than a certain number of journalists, prompting the Austrian Newspaper Association to warn that the cuts threatened media diversity.

Azerbaijan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29 / 30

Political Environment: 36 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 87 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	79,NF	79,NF	80,NF	82,NF	84,NF

Following several years of decline, Azerbaijan's media environment deteriorated more sharply in 2014 as the government pursued a harsh campaign to silence criticism and dissent. The authorities used spurious charges and investigations to shut down media organizations and detain several prominent journalists, bloggers, and freedom of expression advocates. Violence against journalists continued throughout the year, and impunity for attacks remained the norm. The crackdown on freedom of expression and other human rights occurred even as Azerbaijan chaired the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from May to November.

Legal Environment

The rights to freedom of speech and access to information are guaranteed by the constitution, the Law on Mass Media, and the Law on the Right to Obtain Information. However,

these rights are severely restricted in practice. Defamation remains a criminal offense, punishable by up to three years in prison and large fines. Disseminating information that damages the honor and dignity of the president can be punished with up to two years in prison, or up to five years when linked to accusations of other criminal activity. In 2013, laws governing defamation were extended to include internet content.

The government and political elite use defamation charges as one of many legal means of punishing individual journalists and stifling independent and opposition media through financial pressure. The opposition newspaper *Azadliq* has been a frequent target of defamation claims in recent years, and the financial strain caused by associated legal proceedings and penalties contributed to the paper's suspension of its print version in July 2014. In October, a defamation trial began in Baku against investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova, a contributor to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) whose reports have focused on corruption within the government and President Ilham Aliyev's family. The case was based on charges brought by a former opposition leader. Ismayilova has long been a target of harassment by the government and its supporters, including blackmail and online smear campaigns.

Various other criminal laws—including those pertaining to hooliganism, drug and weapons possession, treason, and tax evasion—are regularly used by authorities to suppress and punish critical reporting.

The government has failed to appoint a special information ombudsman as required by 2005 freedom of information legislation, transferring the role instead to an existing ombudsman's office. Authorities at all levels systematically refuse to respond to information requests. Lawsuits filed by media outlets and civil society representatives over state agencies' failure to act on information inquiries generally do not yield any results. After RFE/RL published a series of investigative reports in 2012 that implicated Aliyev and his family in large-scale corruption, the parliament passed several amendments to the Law on the Right to Obtain Information, the Law on the State Registration of Legal Entities, and the Law on Commercial Secrets. The changes allow commercial enterprises to withhold information about their registration, ownership, and structure, severely limiting the ability of investigative journalists to uncover corruption in the corporate sector and identify the private assets of public figures.

The government nominates all nine members of the National Television and Radio Council (NTRC), the country's media regulator, and members' terms may be renewed indefinitely. In 2014 there were only seven active members. The council has been criticized for demonstrating a bias toward state-owned broadcasters in licensing procedures. The process of broadcast licensing is opaque; the NTRC has repeatedly failed to publish the list of available television and radio frequencies, despite its obligation to do so annually. The British Broadcasting Corporation, RFE/RL, and Voice of America have been off local airwaves in Azerbaijan since 2009, when NTRC regulations banned foreign broadcasters from accessing national frequencies, though the services still broadcast online and via satellite. The NTRC also interferes with the editorial policies of domestic media outlets. In 2012, the council banned all foreign television shows from Azerbaijani channels.

Amendments to the Law on Grants and the Law on Nongovernmental Organizations, enacted in February and November 2014, respectively, restrict the ability of local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—including media rights groups—to receive grants and foreign funding.

The Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS) and the Media Rights Institute, Azerbaijan's leading media watchdogs, ceased operations in August 2014 after their offices were

shuttered by security forces, who seized property and equipment as part of criminal investigations. The closures followed weeks of harassment by the authorities, including the freezing of the organizations' bank accounts and allegations of unpaid taxes and fines. One of the most prominent IRFS projects in Azerbaijan was Obyektiv TV, an online news channel that had provided daily coverage of stories related to freedom of expression and human rights since 2010.

Authorities also pressured international organizations, a number of which were forced to close their Baku offices in 2014. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) ceased operations in Azerbaijan in September after its office was raided, its equipment seized, and its bank account frozen in connection with a criminal investigation. IREX had been working to strengthen independent media in Azerbaijan.

Political Environment

Azerbaijan's political environment is dominated by Aliyev and leaders of the ruling party, who exercise extensive control over the news and information content of state-run and state-friendly outlets. The authorities use various methods to censor the media, even though official censorship has been banned since 1998. For example, legal amendments adopted in 2009 restrict the ability of journalists to film or photograph individuals without their consent, even at public events.

In recent years, the government has increased its monitoring of internet activity and harassment of social-media activists, journalists, and bloggers. Media freedom watchdogs have expressed particular concern about the government's surveillance of journalists' internet and telephone communications. While official content blocking is relatively rare in Azerbaijan, authorities actively use offline intimidation to deter online criticism, and some technical interference has been attributed to state agencies. In 2013 authorities reportedly blocked an image-sharing website where leaked documents from the state security services had been posted. Independent media outlets, including *Azadliq* and RFE/RL, have reported denial-of-service attacks in the past.

Following a spate of arrests, eight journalists remained behind bars at the end of 2014, despite a presidential pardon in late December that freed *Nota Bene* newspaper editor in chief Sardar Alibeyli and *Khural* newspaper editor in chief Avaz Zeynalli. Rauf Mirkadirov, a correspondent for the Russian-language newspaper *Zerkalo*, was arrested in Turkey in April and deported to Azerbaijan, where he was charged with espionage and placed in pretrial detention. Officials based the charge on his travels to Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey, accusing him of revealing Azerbaijani state secrets to Armenian authorities. Mirkadirov's pretrial detention was extended multiple times during the year. *Azadliq* reporter Seymur Hezi, known for his criticism of state policies, was arrested in August on a hooliganism charge, accused of assaulting a stranger; Hezi disputed the claim, saying that he was acting in self-defense. Ismayilova was arrested in December for allegedly driving a former coworker to attempt suicide—a charge that was denied by Ismayilova and widely criticized by international watchdogs as spurious. Several bloggers and social-media activists were also jailed during the year, most on trumped-up drug charges. Blogger Elsevar Mursalli, who had been imprisoned for alleged drug possession, was released by presidential pardon in October.

The crackdown on journalists was accompanied by the intimidation and arrest of freedom of expression advocates, and many fled the country or went into hiding out of concern for their safety. Human rights defenders Intigam Aliyev, Rasul Jafarov, and Leyla Yunus were arrested in

July and August on charges including treason, illegal entrepreneurship, abuse of office, and tax evasion. Prior to their arrests, the three had led human rights groups that worked to promote and protect freedom of expression. The operations of these groups—the Human Rights Club, headed by Jafarov; the Institute for Peace and Democracy, headed by Yunus; and the Legal Education Society, headed by Aliyev—were severely impeded after their leaders were arrested. IRFS director Emin Huseynov went into hiding in August to escape charges of tax evasion and illegal entrepreneurship. Prison conditions are dire for journalists and for political prisoners in general, featuring routine ill-treatment and denial of medical care.

The government delivered a major blow to independent reporting in December, when security forces searched and closed the Baku office of RFE/RL in connection with a trumped-up criminal case. Authorities also targeted RFE/RL's journalists individually, visiting their homes and taking them to state facilities for questioning.

Threats and physical attacks against journalists continued in 2014, and impunity for past cases of violence remained the norm. The 2005 murder of *Monitor* magazine editor in chief Elmar Huseynov and the 2011 murder of prominent journalist and writer Rafiq Tagi are still unsolved. In August 2014, independent journalist Ilgar Nasibov was severely beaten in his office in the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan, sustaining a concussion, broken bones, and loss of vision in one eye.

Economic Environment

The print and broadcast media are almost entirely in the hands of the government and its allies, sometimes controlled through nominal intermediaries. The lack of laws to facilitate transparency in the private sector makes it difficult to identify the true owners or beneficiaries of news outlets. There are nine national television stations, including a public broadcaster and three other state-run stations; more than a dozen regional television stations; and about 25 radio stations. More than 30 daily newspapers are registered, and the opposition papers *Yeni Musavat* and *Azadliq* are the most widely read.

The handful of independent and opposition media outlets that continue to operate are struggling for survival. The authorities use economic pressure on distribution, printing, and advertising to control the print, broadcast, and online media industries. In May 2014, *Zerkalo* announced that it would cease publication of a print edition due to financial losses caused by state control of the advertising market and distribution networks. Opposition newspapers were hit particularly hard by the removal of newspaper kiosks owned by the Qasid and Qaya distribution companies from central Baku in 2012. Opposition outlets are also subject to other forms of economic pressure, including exorbitant fines resulting from defamation suits. The allocation of state advertising and state subsidies is not conducted transparently. Most journalists work without employment security or contracts, and receive irregular salaries.

Online media, including internet-based television, have grown in importance in recent years, and internet penetration has risen substantially, to 61 percent of the population in 2014. However, internet access is concentrated in Baku and other major cities. Blogs and social-media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are still used to share critical opinions on the government and illuminate subjects that are often ignored in the mainstream media, but such activity has been effectively deterred in the past few years by legal provisions criminalizing defamation online and the politically motivated arrests of bloggers and activists.

Bahamas

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 21 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	20,F	20,F	20,F	19,F	20,F

Bahrain

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 28 / 30

Political Environment: 37 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 87 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	71,NF	72,NF	84,NF	86,NF	87,NF

Bahraini media workers and citizen journalists continued to operate in a highly restrictive environment in 2014. Since the emergence of a prodemocracy protest movement in 2011, those who disseminate information on antigovernment demonstrations, human rights abuses, or opposition views have suffered repercussions including imprisonment and torture. New arrests and prosecutions were reported throughout 2014, encouraging self-censorship among the country's mainstream media. The government also maintained direct censorship in the form of extensive website blocking.

Legal Environment

Although the constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press, the government uses the 2002 Press Law to restrict the rights of the media. The Press Law allows up to five years' imprisonment for publishing criticism of Islam or the king, inciting actions that undermine state security, or advocating a change in government. Journalists may be fined up to 2,000 dinars (\$5,300) for a list of 14 other offenses. Libel, slander, and "divulging secrets" are criminal offenses punishable by terms of no more than two years in prison or a fine of no more than 200 dinars (\$530). The government also uses counterterrorism legislation to curtail the activities of opposition groups and restrict freedom of expression. In February 2014, the government amended the penal code to specify a prison sentence of one to seven years and a fine of up to 10,000 dinars (\$26,500) for anyone who publicly insults Bahrain's king, flag, or national emblem.

During 2014, a number of journalists, bloggers, and human rights advocates were arrested on speech-related charges, and some remained in detention at year's end. For example, freelance journalist Ali Mearaj was arrested in January and sentenced in April to 30 months in prison for "insulting the king" and "improper use of information technology." He had reportedly posted protest-related articles and photographs on various websites. Several photographers and video reporters who had been arrested in previous years received prison sentences during 2014, and at least two were still serving their terms as of December: Ahmed Humaidan, a freelance photographer who was arrested after covering a violent protest in 2012, was sentenced to 10 years in prison in March, and Hussein Hubail, another freelancer, was sentenced to five years in prison in April after being arrested in 2013 for allegedly inciting protests.

In September, police arrested women's rights activist Ghada Jamsheer on defamation and other charges linked to her tweets about alleged corruption at King Hamad University Hospital. A hospital official, Salman Attiyat Allah al-Khalifa, who is a member of the royal family, filed the complaint behind the arrest. Jamsheer was released on bail in November and then immediately rearrested on charges that she assaulted a police officer while detained. Her several related charges were handled separately in a series of trials, some of which were ongoing at year's end. Nabeel Rajab, a blogger and president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), was arrested in October on charges of insulting the security forces via Twitter. He was granted bail after a month in detention, and his trial was pending at year's end. Rajab had recently completed a two-year prison term on other charges in May.

There is no law guaranteeing freedom of information. The Information Affairs Authority (IAA) has the power to censor and prevent the distribution of local and foreign publications, close newspapers through court proceedings, ban books and films, block websites, and prosecute individuals. Under the 2002 Telecommunications Law, the government has considerable authority to regulate internet activity. All websites are required to register with the IAA, and religious and political content is heavily censored. Website administrators are responsible for all content posted on their sites and are subject to the same libel laws as print journalists.

Political Environment

Prior to the protests of 2011, the Bahraini media's coverage of news and politics was more critical and independent than in most other Gulf countries. Nonetheless, newspapers tended to avoid covering "sensitive" issues such as sectarian tensions, relations with surrounding countries, government corruption, demonstrations, and human rights violations. After the protests erupted in early 2011, media outlets and individual journalists came under increased pressure from the government. Media workers have reported being contacted directly by government representatives and warned not to report on subjects related to the prodemocracy demonstrations or other sensitive issues. Most domestic opposition publications have been shut down. Some, such as *Al-Wasat*, were eventually reopened, but remain targets of legal harassment and public intimidation.

Progovernment media sometimes engage in outright misinformation. A 2014 report from Bahrain Watch found 25 instances from 2011 through 2013 in which the Bahraini press had simply invented quotations from foreign officials to support government positions, without correction or apology. For example, in October 2013, the sister papers *Akhbar al-Khaleej* and *Gulf Daily News* falsely quoted a former U.S. general as saying that the protests in Bahrain were instigated by Iran and formed part of an American conspiracy. When reporting on the arrests of

journalists and activists, the mainstream media typically adhere to the accounts given in official press releases. The exception is *Al-Wasat*, which tends to provide more thorough coverage.

The only alternative space for public expression in Bahrain is online. However, the internet is closely monitored, with the government devoting considerable resources to surveillance and cybersecurity. Various opposition publications have survived on the web but are forced to operate clandestinely from outside the country. Through orders to internet service providers, the government blocks thousands of websites, many of which are targeted for their politically sensitive content. Internet platforms used for video streaming or for holding online seminars are blocked, as are the sites of human rights groups operating within Bahrain. Because the mainstream press self-censors, bloggers and microbloggers have become more active to fill the void, which in turn draws government scrutiny.

The authorities have restricted foreign media access in recent years, particularly during sensitive periods like the anniversary of the landmark 2011 protests and the country's Formula One Grand Prix. Many journalists have been denied entry, and several have been deported for covering antigovernment protests, though no high-profile expulsions of foreign journalists were reported in 2014.

Bahraini journalists who document street demonstrations face physical violence, arbitrary detention, and torture in custody. In addition to defamation and other speech-related offenses, the authorities have used apparently fabricated charges of assaulting police officers to detain news providers and activists, as with Ghada Jamsheer in November. In August, Maryam al-Khawaja of the BCHR was arrested on arrival at Manama airport on similar charges, which she categorically denied. She left the country after being released on bail and was convicted in absentia, receiving a one-year prison sentence in December. Videographer Hussam Suroor was arrested in September and sentenced to 10 years in prison for allegedly attacking an official, participating in demonstrations, and possessing flammable products. Also that month, 19-year-old activist and photographer Mansoor al-Jamri was sentenced in absentia to six months in prison for allegedly attacking security personnel. Among the several journalists who were reportedly abused in custody in 2014 were freelance photographer Sayed Ahmed al-Mosawi, who was arrested in February and remained in detention without charge as of December, and freelance photographer Ammar Abdulrasool, who was arrested July and sentenced in October to two years in prison for allegedly participating in illegal protests and possessing Molotov cocktails.

Economic Environment

Bahrain hosts six privately owned daily newspapers, four in Arabic and two in English. While some of these papers can be critical of the government, only *Al-Wasat* is considered truly independent of government influence, though its editors practice self-censorship. The government does not own any newspapers, but the IAA maintains significant control over private publications. Newspapers rely heavily on advertising revenue to sustain their operations and often tailor coverage to avoid offending advertisers that do not want their businesses associated with critical reporting.

The government maintains a monopoly on domestic broadcast media. Private broadcasting licenses are not awarded despite continued interest from media owners. Foreign radio and television broadcasts are generally received without interference, and the majority of households have access to satellite stations; Qatar's Al-Jazeera and Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya, which is based in the United Arab Emirates, remain Bahraini citizens' main sources of news. The

internet is also widely used as a news and information source. Some 91 percent of Bahrain’s population accessed the internet in 2014.

Bangladesh

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 22 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 54 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	56,PF	54,PF	52,PF	53,PF	54,PF

Bangladesh’s media environment remained relatively open in 2014, despite several problematic legal verdicts, continued attempts to extend state control over online content, and further physical attacks on journalists.

Legal Environment

Although the constitution provides for freedom of expression, subject to “reasonable restrictions,” the press is constrained by national security legislation as well as sedition and criminal libel laws, which are occasionally used to arrest and prosecute journalists in practice. Sedition laws can be applied broadly, and penalties range from fines to life in prison or even the death penalty, if the accused is found to have undermined the constitution. Journalists can also be arrested under the 1974 Special Powers Act—which allows detentions of up to 120 days without trial—for stories that are critical of government officials or policies. Reporters sometimes face contempt of court charges for critical reporting on judicial proceedings or personnel.

The opposition-oriented daily *Amar Desh* has faced a barrage of legal and regulatory threats over the past several years. Acting editor and majority owner Mahmudur Rahman was arrested in April 2013 and his paper was banned during an investigation into charges of sedition and inciting religious tension through the paper’s reporting. He remained in custody throughout 2014, and at year’s end the government upheld the ban on the newspaper’s publication. Separately, after years of inaction, a decade-long case against *Weekly Blitz* editor Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury culminated in January 2014, when he was convicted of writing “distorting and damaging” articles about Islamism and was sentenced to a seven-year prison term. In December, British journalist David Bergman was convicted of contempt of court for his writing on war crimes issues and the proceedings of the country’s International Crimes Tribunal; he was ordered to pay a fine of 5,000 taka (\$65) or serve seven days in jail.

In 2013, amendments to the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act—which covers online crimes including defamation, blasphemy, and other expression-related offenses—were passed through a presidential decree, expanding police powers and increasing the penalties for violations. The amendments upheld the right of law enforcement agencies to arrest and indefinitely detain suspects without bail, and they set no limits on officials’ power during the investigatory period. In addition, penalties for online offenses were set at between 7

and 14 years in prison, regardless of whether the crime is related to defamation or national security.

By February 2014, a case against four bloggers indicted for alleged blasphemy under the ICT Act in September 2013 had been suspended pending an evidentiary hearing. In April, Asif Mohiuddin, the most prominent of the accused, went into exile in Germany. The ICT Act was used to arrest and charge a number of other individuals for online expression in 2014. Moreover, three journalists from the *Daily Inqilab*, an opposition-aligned newspaper, were arrested under the act in January; the paper's offices were raided, equipment was seized, and access to its printing press was barred. The paper was raided again in August, and its news editor, Rabiullah Robi, was held without charge for several days under the law.

Since its passage in 2009, the Right to Information Act has improved government transparency and accountability. It applies to all information held by public bodies, simplifies the fees required to access information, overrides existing secrecy legislation, and grants greater independence to the Information Commission, tasked with overseeing and promoting the law. The act has been used primarily for investigative journalism and by activists, but following promotional campaigns and workshops by nongovernmental organizations such as Article 19 and the Manusher Jonno Foundation, the law's use by ordinary citizens reportedly increased during 2014.

The Ministry of Information controls broadcast licensing for both commercial and community outlets. Television stations have occasionally been closed, ostensibly for being in breach of broadcasting regulations. A comprehensive broadcast policy, intended to simplify the existing patchwork of laws and regulations, has been under discussion for several years by a committee composed of government and industry representatives and other stakeholders. In August 2014, the cabinet approved a draft broadcast policy that was roundly criticized by activists and opposition figures. It contained a range of potentially restrictive provisions, including a prohibition on programming deemed excessively critical of state priorities or threatening to national security and sovereignty. The measure called for the establishment of a nominally independent regulatory commission to oversee its implementation, but also empowered the Ministry of Information to revoke the broadcasting licenses of noncompliant outlets. Parliament had yet to approve the policy at year's end.

Activists expressed concern in late 2012 over proposed regulations for online news portals, including compulsory registration, steep associated fees (an initial fee of around \$6,100, plus annual renewal fees of around \$610), limits on eligibility of applicants, and broad restrictions on content. In 2014, a subcommittee within the Ministry of Information formally submitted the draft regulations to other government entities for consideration, but it was still awaiting approval at year's end.

The government at times interferes with journalistic work through surveillance. Some journalists' e-mail correspondence is reportedly watched by police, and those brought in for questioning have been asked to supply personal internet passwords to intelligence officers.

Political Environment

The Bangladeshi media collectively present an array of views, though political coverage can be highly partisan, and many private outlets are owned by individuals with close political or official affiliations. Private outlets are required to air selected government-produced news segments and official speeches.

Although censorship of internet-based content has become increasingly common in Bangladesh, with periodic blocking of YouTube, Facebook, and high-profile Bengali blogs in recent years, no new cases of such blocking were reported in 2014.

Some journalists practice self-censorship to avoid repercussions when reporting on sensitive topics like the military and judiciary. Tensions have increased in recent years with respect to coverage of the International Crimes Tribunal and the place of Islam in politics and society. Self-censorship can also stem from the interests of media owners. Reporting on labor disputes has become more slanted as businessmen involved in the garment industry have moved into the media sector, buying up both print and broadcast outlets; as a result, coverage often highlights violence or work disruptions initiated by workers rather than underlying labor rights issues.

Journalists continue to be threatened and attacked by criminal organizations, party activists, business owners, and Islamist groups. Three journalists were killed in 2014, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, with one of the murders definitively linked to the reporter's work. On a number of occasions during the year, journalists were assaulted while trying to cover breaking news stories, though conditions improved slightly compared with 2013. Targeted attacks or threats against individual journalists were also recorded; several during 2014 involved cadres of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, a student wing of the ruling Awami League party. Impunity is the norm for those who perpetrate crimes against journalists, and police investigations generally proceed slowly, if at all.

The police and military intelligence agents have also been known to threaten and physically attack journalists. Police brutality toward reporters and photographers attempting to document political protests or other sensitive events remains a concern, as do cases of arrest, detention, or custodial torture of journalists. Some journalists receive threatening telephone calls from intelligence agencies seeking to prevent negative coverage.

Economic Environment

There are hundreds of privately owned daily and weekly print publications. Private broadcasting has expanded in recent years, with more than 40 satellite and cable television stations and two dozen radio stations—including four private FM stations and a dozen community stations—operating as of 2014. According to the Ministry of Information, in the 2013–14 fiscal year the government issued licenses to an additional 16 private television stations, although they had yet to be allocated a broadcast frequency. The state directly owns or influences several broadcast outlets, including the public BTV, which remains the sole terrestrial television broadcaster with national reach.

Political considerations influence the distribution of government advertising revenue and subsidized newsprint, on which many publications depend. Private media owners and corporate interests are also able to influence content through the allocation of advertising.

Access to the internet is generally unrestricted, though the penetration rate was still less than 10 percent of the population in 2014. During the last few years, the number of online news outlets, including news websites and internet-based radio stations, has increased dramatically, as has use of major social-networking sites such as Facebook. The government continues to monitor internet activity. In April 2014, it was reported that the country's notorious Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) security agency had attempted to procure advanced mobile surveillance technology from Neosoft, a Swiss company. In March 2013, an official government committee

was formed to monitor blogs and social-media sites and to identify individuals who produced or posted anti-Islamic content.

Barbados

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 3 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 18 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	19,F	19,F	19,F	18,F	18,F

Belarus

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29 / 30

Political Environment: 36 / 40

Economic Environment: 28 / 30

Total Score: 93 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	92,NF	93,NF	93,NF	93,NF	93,NF

Belarus's media environment remained extremely restrictive in 2014 as the government of President Alyaksandr Lukashenka continued to suppress independent journalism. The regime was facing pressure to move toward European integration as well as political meddling by the Kremlin, and these tensions took on new urgency in light of Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine. Some correspondents for international outlets were denied accreditation to cover the World Ice Hockey Championship, which Minsk hosted in May.

Legal Environment

Despite constitutional provisions for freedom of the press, criticism of the president and the government is considered a criminal offense, and libel convictions can result in prison sentences or high fines. There are no effective legal guarantees of public access to government records. Judges, prosecutors, police officers, tax officials, and bureaucrats from the Information Ministry regularly use politicized court rulings and obscure regulations to harass independent newspapers and websites.

There were roughly two dozen cases during 2014 in which journalists and other media workers were questioned, warned, or fined for offenses such as "illegal production and distribution of media products." Freelancers, bloggers, and citizen journalists are especially

vulnerable to such charges. Several journalists were targeted during the year for contributing without accreditation to foreign media or Belarusian media outlets based in neighboring Poland.

In November, journalist Alyaksandr Alesin of the Minsk-based independent newspaper *Belorusy i rynok* was detained by the State Security Committee (KGB) and later charged with espionage and treason. He was released with travel restrictions in December, and the treason charge was dropped. He had recently written and spoken about military matters related to the conflict in Ukraine.

The Information Ministry serves as the country's media regulator, and its procedures for licensing and registration are opaque and politicized. Under a 2009 media law, all outlets are required to register with the ministry, including domestic and international websites, which face blockage for failure to comply. Many independent publications are forced to use domain names based in neighboring countries. The law has also made it easier for the government to deny accreditation and shutter outlets for coverage that "threatens the interests of the state."

The media legislation was amended in December 2014, allowing the Information Ministry to block websites without court order if they have received two warnings within 12 months. Other provisions of the amended law expanded the range of sites with mass media status and increased their legal responsibility for content, including user comments.

In August 2014, a government decree created a state expert commission, along with similar commissions at the regional level, to evaluate whether informational products contain vaguely defined "extremist" materials. Such content can be banned under a 2007 law on countering extremism.

Political Environment

The state-dominated mainstream media consistently glorify Lukashenka and vilify the political opposition. Most private outlets based in Belarus practice some degree of self-censorship, especially when reporting on the family and business interests of Lukashenka and his closest allies. Bloggers and online journalists produce independent or critical content. However, as internet penetration has increased, reaching 54 percent of the population in 2013, the government has devoted more attention to censoring the medium. The state-owned telecommunications monopoly Beltelecom controls all international data transfers and blocks some critical websites, while the KGB reportedly monitors internet communications.

Independent news websites and social-networking platforms were subject to blocking and cyberattacks on several occasions during 2014. Beltelecom blocked the website of the newspaper *Nasha Niva* in March; the editors speculated that the security services were testing new methods to be used during the presidential election period in 2015. In July, the EuroBelarus website reported a cyberattack that was thought to be related to the platform's coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. Many sites were blocked on December 19, including Belapan.by, Naviny.by, Belaruspartisan.org, Charter97.org, Gazetaby.com, Zautra.by, and Udf.by; the obstructions remained in place at year's end.

The government and its supporters continued to subject both independent and foreign media, as well as press freedom activists, to various forms of harassment and intimidation in 2014. Correspondents for some foreign outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), were denied accreditation to cover the May 2014 hockey championship, ostensibly because the International Ice Hockey Federation favored specialized sports media. A journalist for Britain's Channel 4 who had been accredited

was turned back at the border without explanation. Those who were approved to cover the sporting event were required to obtain a separate accreditation from the Foreign Ministry to cover other topics while in the country.

The family of Aleh Zhalnou, a blogger from the town of Babruysk who actively exposes legal violations by local authorities, again became a target of police pressure in 2014. Prosecutors initiated a criminal investigation of Zhalnou's wife for alleged violence against a police officer during a May raid on their home. In July, the blogger's son was sentenced to three years in an open penal colony and a fine of nearly \$5,000 for alleged violence against a traffic police officer. In recent years, Zhalnou himself had faced over a dozen criminal, civil, or administrative cases, was repeatedly summoned by police for questioning, and had multiple video cameras and other devices confiscated.

Economic Environment

The government maintains a virtual monopoly on domestic broadcast media. Only state or indirectly state-owned television stations broadcast nationwide, and the smaller television and radio stations tend to focus on entertainment. Most print outlets are privately owned, but few produce original journalistic content.

Three independent broadcasters transmit their programming from neighboring Poland: Belsat television, Radio Racyja, and European Radio for Belarus. These outlets have faced various forms of harassment from the authorities. In addition to the spate of fines and other legal pressure on Belsat's journalists during 2014, in September the Supreme Court of Belarus banned the outlet from using its name and trademark when broadcasting to Belarus and on its website. The ruling came in response to a lawsuit by a Belarusian company called Belsat Plus, which sells television equipment but does not compete with Belsat as a broadcaster. The judgment was not expected to significantly affect the television station's operations in practice.

Foreign ownership of media outlets in Belarus is restricted by law. The media law amendments enacted in December 2014 lowered the maximum share of foreign ownership to 20 percent, from the previous 30 percent. The new rule would not apply retroactively.

The state controls the terrestrial broadcasting infrastructure, and private cable companies cannot carry channels without government approval. Independent and opposition newspapers often face restrictions on access to the state-owned postal and kiosk distribution systems, state-owned printing facilities, and state advertising contracts or media subsidies. Such papers are forced to sell directly from their newsrooms and use volunteers to deliver copies, but authorities sometimes harass and arrest the private distributors. Beltelecom controls the internet infrastructure; secondary service providers depend on its network and access speeds. About 59 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014.

Lohvinau, an independent publisher and bookstore, had its license revoked in 2013 and was repeatedly denied registration in 2014 on various technicalities. At year's end it was facing the possibility of a large fine for selling books without a license.

State media are supported by tax exemptions and direct subsidies from the state budget, giving them another significant advantage over potential private-sector competitors. Media outlets reportedly self-censor to please major advertisers that wish to avoid association with any criticism of the president.

Belgium

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30

Political Environment: 4 / 40

Economic Environment: 5 / 30

Total Score: 11 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	12,F	12,F	11,F	11,F	11,F

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is safeguarded under Articles 19 and 25 of the Belgian constitution, and the rights of the media are generally respected in practice. The law prohibits hate speech, including Holocaust denial, which carries a maximum sentence of one year in prison. Defamation is a criminal offense under Articles 443 to 453 of the penal code and is punishable by imprisonment. However, defamatory remarks that are published in the press are seldom brought before a criminal court due to the difficulties and costs of a trial by jury, which is mandated for most press offenses by Article 150 of the constitution. Such violations are thus traditionally adjudicated in civil courts. In two judicial decisions issued in 2012, the Belgian Court of Cassation ruled that communications on the internet fall within the scope of press offenses outlined in Article 150, thus extending the de facto civil treatment to offenses committed online. Journalistic sources are protected under a 2005 law, which also protects reporters from search and seizure. A new law penalizing sexist remarks and conduct, including in mass media and public places, entered into force in August 2014. Legal experts and free speech advocates are concerned that the language of the law is too vague and may be used to limit freedom of expression.

A 1994 law allows individuals to obtain access to official documents held by executive and judicial authorities, and stipulates that public authorities must offer an explanation of the document if requested. The print media are self-regulated by the Federation of Editors, an industry body in which all major newspapers are represented.

Political Environment

Censorship of media content does not generally occur, although authorities continue to block The Pirate Bay and other file-sharing websites on the grounds that they promote copyright violations. Cases of harassment or violence against journalists are rare. However, in November 2014, a photojournalist for the newsgroup Sudpresse was assaulted by a police officer during a demonstration in Brussels. Two photographers with Photo News were also attacked by police during the same demonstration.

Economic Environment

Media ownership is highly concentrated, and a small number of media groups own the country's main newspapers. Ownership and distribution are distinct in Belgium's two linguistic

regions, Flanders and Wallonia. Three major companies dominate newspaper distribution in Flanders, and two in Wallonia. The two regions have completely autonomous public broadcasters—the Radio Télévision Belge de la Communauté Française (RTBF) and the Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie (VRT)—that produce content in French and Flemish, respectively, for both radio and television channels. Each region also has its own private broadcasting networks. The privately owned media company RTL Group has reported a slight decline in the audience share of its RTL-TVI channel, but its family of television channels maintains a lead over other outlets with French-speaking Belgian audiences in share, ratings, and amount of top programming. Access to cable-based and foreign television channels is widespread. In 2014, 85 percent of the population had access to the internet, and there are no government restrictions on its use.

The Belgian media industry has suffered from the economic downturn that began in 2008, as outlets are largely dependent on advertising revenues. Most media companies have sought to reduce staff, by up to a third in some cases.

Belize

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 5 / 30

Total Score: 22 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	21,F	23,F	21,F	22,F	22,F

Benin

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 38 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	33,PF	33,PF	34,PF	34,PF	36,PF

Although Benin still ranks among the better-performing African countries with respect to press freedom, a number of disturbing trends emerged after the 2006 election of current president Thomas Boni Yayi and persisted during 2014. These included increases in the use of laws and regulations to restrict media freedom and intimidation of journalists who criticize the administration.

Legal Environment

Freedom of speech is protected by the constitution and generally respected by the government in practice. The constitution and other laws also provide for freedom of information, but no specific procedures have been created for releasing or obtaining public documents, and journalists typically have difficulty accessing official information. The penal code prohibits civil servants from divulging “professional secrets.” The 1992 act creating the High Authority for Audiovisual Media and Communication (HAAC) also provides for a number of vague exceptions to the right to freedom of expression, citing priorities such as “national defense” and the “safeguarding of cultural identity.”

The 1997 Press Law criminalizes defamation, and although some judges are hesitant to pursue prosecutions, there has been an increase in cases against journalists in recent years. In May 2014, the editor of the daily newspaper *Libération*, François Yovo, was arrested and taken to jail to serve his three-month sentence for a November 2013 defamation conviction. Yovo was allegedly never informed of the verdict, and the handing of the case was criticized by rights groups. Yovo was released the following month after the complaint against him was withdrawn. Also in June, the newspaper *L'Indépendant* was harshly penalized for an article about controversial funding for the president’s foreign travel on the grounds that it offended the head of state. The paper was suspended for three months; the article’s author, Prudence Tessi, was sentenced to two months in jail; and the publisher, John Akintola, received a suspended three-year prison sentence.

During 2014, the parliament debated a proposed bill that would reform the information and communication code. The legislation, which was the subject of controversy in the political establishment and civil society, was intended to clarify Benin’s media regulatory environment, which is currently governed by a diverse and obscure set of laws that observers have criticized as vague and confusing. However, it had the potential to enable further crackdowns on critical reporting, with provisions that would increase prison sentences and fines and expand the power of the HAAC. In a positive sign, legislators actively consulted members of the public and civil society, including the main journalists’ union, about these and other concerns, and the bill remained in the draft stage at year’s end.

The trend of growing state interference in media content has been particularly evident in the behavior of the HAAC. Although it was considered the first independent media regulator on the continent, the authority’s reputation has deteriorated as it has lost autonomy from the government. Théophile Nata, president of the HAAC and a Yayi ally, was replaced by another presidential crony, Adam Boni Tessi, when the former’s term expired in mid-2014. Under the new HAAC leadership, two private television stations, Golf TV and Carrefour TV, were suspended in October 2014 for failing to renew their licenses; regulations require that media outlets submit their applications for renewal to the HAAC three months prior to the license’s expiration. However, this was the first time in the authority’s history that suspensions were issued for this reason. Following a public hearing at the HAAC in early November, Golf TV was allowed to resume broadcasting.

Political Environment

Private media outlets have a history of aggressive reporting on both the government and opposition leaders, and the media environment is generally pluralistic and unrestrained.

However, it also tends to be polarized, with political considerations affecting coverage. The state television broadcaster functions as a tool of the government, which exercises substantial editorial control and bars meaningful criticism from its airwaves.

Although Benin's private media usually operate with few encumbrances, on several occasions the HAAC has reacted to politically sensitive reporting by sanctioning and even suspending critical outlets. No such actions were taken in 2014, and no newspapers or television stations have been suspended by the HAAC for content-related reasons since 2011 and 2012, respectively. Nevertheless, the persistent threat of retaliation has intimidated journalists in the country, and self-censorship is reportedly common, particularly at print outlets.

Physical attacks against journalists are rare in Benin, with the last reported incidents in 2011. Harassment of journalists in the course of their reporting is similarly uncommon, with the most recent incident reported in 2013.

Economic Environment

There are now nearly 100 dailies and more than 50 other periodicals operating in Benin, a particularly high number for a country with such a low literacy rate, though many print outlets are economically vulnerable and do not publish regularly. Radio has the highest penetration of any medium, but most stations are small and serve local audiences.

Most private media enterprises rely on direct funding from their political and corporate backers, and despite the diversity of outlets, concentration of ownership is becoming a concern as "press groups" increasingly operate holdings across multiple platforms.

The state broadcaster is the only outlet with national reach, as it has access to the best transmission equipment. Government influence over content is a particular problem at the state-controlled television station. The state-run radio stations, of which there are now three, and the state-owned newspaper, *La Nation*, are believed to operate somewhat more independently. Journalists in Benin are also susceptible to bribes from politicians and other influential actors, and many provide favorable coverage in return. The government and private companies alike are known to use advertising contracts—and the threat of withholding them—to influence media content, though the government appears to distribute subsidies fairly.

While Benin was the first West African country to obtain internet access, the penetration rate had reached only 5 percent as of 2014, and the internet cannot yet be considered a primary source of news and information for most citizens. Despite the low usage, there has been a notable increase in media activity online in the last year.

Bhutan

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 59 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	57,PF	57,PF	58,PF	58,PF	59,PF

Legal Environment

The 2008 constitution guarantees the right to free speech, opinion, and expression. However, the 1992 National Security Act prohibits criticism of the king, as well as “words either spoken or written that undermine or attempt to undermine the security and sovereignty of Bhutan by creating or attempting to create hatred and disaffection among the people.”

Defamation can be tried as either a civil or a criminal offense. In September 2014, the opposition party Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) brought a defamation suit against Dasho Paljor J Dorji, popularly known as Dasho Benji, a special adviser to the National Environment Commission; the suit concerned a Facebook comment in which Dasho claimed that the party, in power until 2013, had “robbed the country blind.” In November, the DPT said it would withdraw the suit if Dasho Benji apologized, but he refused, and the case remained open at year’s end.

In February 2014, the National Assembly passed a right to information bill, which then went to the National Council, the parliament’s upper house, for review. In May the National Council delayed action on the measure after the chamber’s foreign relations committee said it had been unable to schedule a presentation of the bill by the information and communications ministry, and that as a result it was unable to carry out an effective review. The National Council suggested that interference from the prime minister’s office prevented the bill’s presentation. Meanwhile, critics of the legislation argued that it contained some restrictive provisions.

The Journalists’ Association of Bhutan (JAB) is tasked with upholding the interests of journalists across the country and protecting free expression in the media. However, the organization is not fully independent in practice, notably because it relies on the government-run Bhutan Media Foundation for the majority of its funding.

Political Environment

Criticism of the royal family and of Buddhist clergy is not published, and the mainstream media avoid topics that are considered sensitive, such as national security or the expulsion of Nepali-speaking residents in the 1990s. However, as in much of the world, social media have given citizens, particularly young people, the opportunity to express themselves more freely online. There were no reports of threats or intimidation directed at journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

Bhutan has 10 newspapers, six radio stations, one online newspaper, and a number of magazines. The country’s main print outlet, the state-owned, biweekly *Kuensel*, generally portrays the monarchy in a favorable light, but also addresses societal problems and carries stories that are critical of the government. The public Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) offers radio programming and is the only national television broadcaster, operating two channels. Cable television services carry some foreign programming, but high sales taxes and regulatory obstacles make access costs prohibitive for many people in Bhutan. Internet penetration stood at 34 percent of the population in 2014.

Almost all media outlets are based in Thimphu, the capital. Bhutan’s fragile economic climate continues to pose a challenge for private media companies, many of which are dependent

on advertising revenue distributed by state bodies. Some media outlets have suspended or scaled back operations for financial reasons in recent years.

Bolivia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 47 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	43,PF	46,PF	47,PF	48,PF	48,PF

In 2014, the administration of President Evo Morales continued to use legal, political, and economic means to place pressure on independent outlets. Morales himself repeatedly criticized private media and stated that there was “no independent media” in Bolivia. Meanwhile, the judicial system countered government actions against journalists in two major cases, upholding constitutional protections for freedom of the press. Attacks on journalists were fewer than in recent years.

Legal Environment

Bolivia’s 2009 constitution protects freedom of speech and of the press, but it also allows for some limitations. While Article 21 lays out an expansive right to communicate freely, Article 107 imposes a duty to communicate with “truth and responsibility.” Article 107 also clears the way for content-based restrictions by stipulating that the media must contribute to the promotion of the ethical, moral, and civic values of the nation’s multiple cultures. Defamation remains a criminal offense.

The country’s regulatory framework continues to be used to limit media freedom. In April 2014, the prosecutor general accused journalist Ricardo Aguilar and editor Claudia Benavente at *La Razón* of spying and disclosing state secrets in an article on the Chilean-Bolivian territorial conflict. In May, a court ordered Aguilar to reveal his source, a decision that was overturned on appeal in August. In addition, in April the Supreme Court overturned the 30-month sentence issued two years earlier to Rogelio Peláez, editor of *Larga Vista*, for defamation.

The 2010 Law against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination, which falls under the penal code, attempts to address degrading portrayals of indigenous people in the media and their limited access to media outlets. The law grants authorities the power to fine or shut down news outlets and arrest journalists for published material that is deemed to be racist. Media organizations can face sanctions even if a remark is uttered by a source or interviewee and does not reflect the position of the media organization.

A 2011 telecommunications law established rules for the distribution of television and radio frequencies, the broadcasting of presidential messages, and wiretapping in certain extreme cases. The law allots 33 percent of frequencies to the government, 33 percent to the private sector, 17 percent to social and community-based groups, and 17 percent to “peasant and

indigenous groups.” Local journalist advocacy organizations continue to denounce the law, claiming that it restricts freedom of expression by giving too much control to the government.

Bolivia has no law guaranteeing access to public information. A transparency bill was passed in 2013 but never signed into law. One controversial provision would give police, military, and government authorities the power to declare information classified. Representatives of the National Press Association (ANP) have noted that the government hampers journalists’ access to information.

Political Environment

Bolivia’s political environment is polarized, with strong rivalries between pro- and antigovernment media outlets and sporadic threats against government critics by elected officials. The 2014 presidential elections demonstrated increasing state control over editorial direction of the press and greater partisanship in the media. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which monitors elections, required any company or press outlet to register with the government and report methods and data before releasing any poll results. Press groups argued that the measure was a form of unconstitutional “prior censorship.” State-run television, Bolivia TV, gave unequal coverage to the opposition, for example by broadcasting a soccer match in place of a presidential debate that Evo Morales did not join. Journalists often engage in self-censorship.

The Inter American Press Association (SIP) reported several attacks and acts of intimidation against journalists in 2014. In June, a tear gas grenade was thrown into Canal 33’s studios. However, fewer attacks took place than in past years. Press groups have expressed concern about the lack of progress in investigating past cases against journalists, including a brutal 2012 assault on Radio Popular journalist Fernando Vidal, who was set on fire during a live broadcast. In February 2014, charges were dropped without explanation against the two main suspects in the double murder of two journalists in Aymara in 2012.

Economic Environment

Newspaper readership is limited due to low literacy rates, and radio is the principal news medium, with community radio stations playing a major role. In addition to the state-owned television station, the government operates a news agency, a weekly newspaper, and community radio stations. Internet penetration is limited but expanding, with nearly 40 percent of Bolivians accessing the medium in 2014.

A substantial proportion of Bolivia’s television stations and newspapers are privately owned, but civil society groups have expressed concern over the significant expansion of state-run channels and the conversion of all public media into vehicles for government influence. The ANP and other organizations have highlighted a “silent strategy” to control media through strategic taxation and buyouts. Since 2008, several major media outlets have been sold following targeted tax audits and corruption investigations that press groups claimed drained them of resources and readied them to be bought out by new, progovernment ownership. In April, journalist Raúl Peñaranda and other media groups alleged that the administration used intimidation tactics to lead the television stations ATB, PAT, and Full TV, plus the largest daily newspaper, *La Razón*, to be bought out by government allies in the private sector. *La Razón* has denied the charges, as has the government. Press groups also describe a pattern of government manipulation of the state advertising budget to punish critical outlets and reward friendly ones.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 10 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 51 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	48,PF	48,PF	48,PF	49,PF	50,PF

The constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) guarantees freedom of the press. However, politicians and business leaders exert considerable pressure on journalists, which undermines their independence and negatively impacts their editorial policies. Since the 1995 signing of the Dayton Accords, which ended the country's civil war, BiH has been split into two semi-independent constituent entities: the Federation of BiH, populated mostly by Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and ethnic Croats, and Republika Srpska, whose population consists mostly of ethnic Serbs. Each entity has its own public broadcaster, private media, and political parties.

Legal Environment

Both the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska have regulations prohibiting the incitement of racial, ethnic, or religious hatred. Nevertheless, the use of inflammatory language in the media is common, particularly online. Politicians and other influential individuals sometimes label criticism as hate speech. Libel was decriminalized in 2003, but journalists can face civil penalties for libel complaints. Legally the burden of proof lies with the plaintiff, but this principle is not always respected in practice. Municipal courts are often biased and lack the expertise needed to deal with media-related cases.

Media professionals sometimes face legal pressure for performing legitimate journalistic work. In December 2014, editors and journalists from Klix.ba, BiH's most popular news website, were summoned for questioning by police about the source of an audio recording they released in November, following BiH's general election. The recording featured what sounded like Republika Srpska prime minister Željka Cvijanović describing how her political party, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), "bought" the support of two legislators in order to guarantee an SNSD majority in the Republika Srpska parliament. A week later, Republika Srpska and Sarajevo police raided Klix's newsroom in the capital, seizing documents and copying data from computers. The raid was condemned by media freedom advocacy groups, as well as by Federation prime minister Nermin Nikšić.

Court rulings sometimes silence reporters. In December, a municipal court in Travnik temporarily banned Federalna TV from releasing information regarding three policemen and their alleged connection to drug trafficking after the three policemen in question filed a defamation lawsuit against the station.

The process of obtaining information through the country's Law on Freedom of Access to Information can be cumbersome, and the law is not always heeded by government bodies. These complications discourage journalists from requesting official information.

Broadcast media in both entities are licensed and monitored by the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), which has executive powers to enforce regulations. The agency is financially independent, and while it is often exposed to political pressure, analysts regard its decisions as generally fair. The CRA's director general is appointed by the CRA council, and the appointment must be approved by BiH's Council of Ministers. Due to disputes within the Council of Ministers, the agency has been without a director for seven years. Meanwhile, the government in 2014 proposed a Pre-Draft Law on Electronic Communications that would diminish the CRA's authority, prompting some concern among media freedom advocates that the agency could become more susceptible to politicization.

Print and internet media outlets in both of BiH's entities are self-regulated by the Press Council of BiH, which handles complaints from the public but has no power to fine, suspend, or close down outlets. Instead, it mediates between the complainant and the outlet, often resulting in a retraction or the publication of a response or denial from the complainant.

Political Environment

BiH has two entity-level public broadcasters—Radio-Television of the Federation of BiH (RT FBiH) and Radio-Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS)—which are the largest and most influential broadcasters in the country. There is also a national public broadcaster, Radio-Television of BiH (BHRT). The two entity-level public broadcasters are generally organized along ethnic lines and are effectively under the control of ruling political parties, whose views they commonly reflect. Many Bosnian Croats report that they do not feel their interests are served by any of the existing public broadcasters, and some refuse to pay the subscription fees that fund the outlets. All three public broadcasters face considerable political pressure. The governments of Republika Srpska and the Federation have each taken steps in recent years to increase control of RTRS and RT FBiH, respectively.

Journalists sometimes have difficulty gaining access to government proceedings. For example, politicians and government agencies sometimes restrict access to public events to a few select reporters. Meanwhile, journalists from BN TV and Serbia's Beta news agency are said to be banned from covering Republika Srpska's Presidential Palace.

In 2014, two online media outlets—FENA news agency and *Buka* magazine—as well as the Journalists' Association of BiH were attacked by hackers who interfered with the sites' operations.

Self-censorship is pervasive, as the few journalists and media outlets that engage in critical reporting risk lawsuits, political pressure, and the withdrawal of financial support.

Journalists sometimes face direct interference from police officers while covering the news. Police used excessive force against several journalists covering February 2014 antigovernment demonstrations in Tuzla and Sarajevo. Police allegedly hit Branislav Pavičić of RTV Slon in the head with a baton as he was covering the Tuzla protests; he was wearing a press badge at the time, according to reports. According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Tuzla police also attempted to make another journalist turn over footage of the demonstrations.

Several journalists were physically attacked or threatened in 2014. Sinan Alić, a former war crimes reporter, was attacked in January while walking his dog and sustained head injuries. In June, camera operator Nihad Karić of Federation Television was threatened with a knife while covering the homecoming event of Dario Kordić, a convicted war criminal who had just been released. The same month, writer and columnist Slavo Kukić was attacked by an assailant wielding a baseball bat; Kukić claimed that the attack came in retaliation for an interview he had given to Al-Jazeera in which he criticized Kordić's welcoming party. The Free Media Helpline, a program run by the BiH Journalists' Association, recorded 5 physical assaults and 2 death threats against journalists during the first 11 months of 2014. Impunity for attacks and harassment is common.

Economic Environment

BiH has 9 daily newspapers (most of which are privately owned), 189 weekly or monthly newspapers and magazines, 142 radio stations, 43 television stations, and 8 news agencies; of the agencies, 2 are state-owned, 3 are privately owned, 2 are held by religious communities—the Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops of BiH and the Islamic Community of BiH, respectively—and the remaining agency is owned by the Turkish government. Although public television and radio stations in the two constituent entities are the most influential broadcasters, there are also several private television stations with near-national reach, and recent years have featured an increase in the number of private broadcasters. Despite the numerous media outlets, many residents cannot afford access to multiple news sources. About 61 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014.

BiH's media outlets are strongly divided along ethnic lines, and many are openly affiliated with political parties. The difficult economic situation faced by the media, made worse by the recent recession, has resulted in diminished independence of the media from political and commercial influences. The government of Republika Srpska continues to provide direct financial support to largely progovernment media outlets. Many local media outlets are funded, either directly or indirectly, by municipal administrations, making it risky to criticize local governments. Outlets are often used as platforms to serve their owners' political or business agendas. However, outlet ownership is often unclear, and efforts by the government to address the problem have stalled.

The cozy relationship between progovernment media outlets and the ruling political parties includes financial benefits such as government purchasing of advertising space, and, in some cases, direct budget transfers. Shrinking advertising revenues and advertiser affiliations with political parties compel many outlets to practice self-censorship in order to protect the interests of their advertisers. The law bars community media from drawing funds through advertisements, a provision that has stifled their growth.

Despite the positive impact of Al-Jazeera Balkans and Turkey's Anadolu press agency, both of which are foreign owned, independent, and produce high quality work, professionalism and the quality of journalism remains low, primarily due to economic hardship. Journalists receive lower salaries than many other professionals, despite holding higher degrees on average, and due to the weak financial position of many media outlets salaries are not always paid regularly. Many experienced journalists are seeking better-paying jobs in different fields. As media outlets employ fewer staff, journalists are expected to produce more content. Reporters

frequently present unsupported evidence, or use unreliable sources. Many media outlets, but particularly online outlets, often fail to comply with international copyright standards.

Botswana

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 44 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	39,PF	40,PF	40,PF	41,PF	41,PF

Botswana's relatively diverse media landscape was marred in 2014 by government reprisals for reporting that was critical of President Seretse Khama Ian Khama. Access to information remained a challenge for journalists, and legal harassment of the *Sunday Standard*, a major newspaper, allegedly had a chilling effect on election coverage.

Legal Environment

Although press freedom is not explicitly guaranteed in the constitution, clauses safeguarding freedoms of speech and expression undergird extensive legal protections for media outlets. The constitution contains a number of provisions concerning national security, public order, and public morality that can be used to limit press freedom.

In a highly unusual case, the sedition law was invoked against a journalist in September 2014. Editor Outsia Mokone of the *Sunday Standard* was arrested and charged with sedition after the paper published a story, written by Edgar Tsimane, claiming that President Khama had been involved in a road accident in his private vehicle. The *Standard* had also recently carried multiple articles on alleged corruption at the Directorate for Intelligence and Security (DIS). Tsimane, who received threats, fled to South Africa and secured temporary asylum. The sedition case remained pending at the end of the year.

Civil defamation suits by public officials and others remain a problem for journalists, though some prominent cases have recently been dropped or dismissed. In December 2013, President Khama had announced that individual government officials would be able to use state funds to launch defamation suits against the media. After vigorous objections by journalists in early 2014, the proposal was quietly but unofficially dropped. In April, a 12-year-old defamation suit against prominent media personality Methaetsile Leepile was dropped, and in June Khama dropped a defamation suit against the *Sunday Standard*.

Shortly afterward, however, Khama's sister Jacqueline filed a complaint with the Media Complaints Committee, seeking to have two *Sunday Standard* journalists deregistered. In September, the Directorate on Economic Crime (DEC) took the *Sunday Standard* to court in an attempt to prevent it from reporting on a corruption case that involved allegations against the head of the DIS, Isaac Kgosi. Both Jacqueline Khama's complaint and the DEC–*Sunday Standard* case were pending at year's end.

Access to public information remains a major problem for journalists. The ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) rejected a freedom of information bill proposed by civil society groups and has reportedly drafted its own version in conjunction with a protection of information measure. However, neither bill was introduced in Parliament in 2014.

Parallel media regulatory regimes, one statutory and one self-regulatory, exist in Botswana. The 2008 Media Practitioners Act establishes a statutory media oversight body and requires the registration of all media workers and outlets. If the act were fully operational, the minister of communication would be able to exert significant influence over a new Media Council's handling of complaints against outlets and journalists through control of key committees. Although passed by the legislature, the act has not entered into force due to legal challenges by media outlets, nongovernmental organizations, and trade unions. A final ruling on the law's constitutionality was still pending at the end of 2014. Meanwhile, the Press Council of Botswana operates its own self-regulatory Media Complaints Committee.

The Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) began operating in 2013. BOCRA and its founding act have been criticized for not allowing for the registration of community radio licenses.

Political Environment

The government came under increasing fire in 2014 for using state-owned media to issue rebuttals to claims presented in the private media. State-owned outlets have been accused of acting as mouthpieces for the government, without conducting even basic fact checks.

Relations between the private media and the government have worsened markedly during Khama's tenure as president. As part of the September 2014 sedition case against the *Sunday Standard*, police raided its offices and confiscated computer equipment and files. More broadly, the use of the intelligence services to intimidate and spy on journalists and others is a growing concern. Fear of reprisals for coverage that is critical of the government has reportedly led to increased self-censorship in recent years.

Although the Media Institute of South Africa commended the balance and diversity of reporting on the parliamentary and local elections in October 2014, the organization identified certain transgressions. Reporting by government-funded public media outlets, for example, focused on the BDP and provided less coverage to smaller groups. Some observers have suggested that the legal harassment of the *Sunday Standard* had a chilling effect on journalists covering the election period.

Physical attacks on journalists are generally rare in Botswana, but a number of incidents were reported in 2014, including assaults by public employees on strike and in one case by a prison guard.

Economic Environment

State-owned outlets dominate the broadcast media, which reach far more residents than the print media but provide inadequate access to the opposition and government critics. The private Gaborone Broadcasting Corporation television system and two private radio stations have limited reach, though Botswana easily receives broadcasts from neighboring South Africa.

Internet access is rare outside cities. An estimated 19 percent of the population used the medium in 2014. Penetration, though growing steadily, it is limited mostly by the high cost of connections and equipment.

A free and vigorous print sector thrives in cities and towns, with a range of independent newspapers and magazines published in the capital. The widest-circulation newspaper, the state-owned *Daily News*, is free to readers and is generally the only newspaper available in rural areas. There are currently 13 private newspapers, but they are mainly accessible in Gaborone. High printing costs and limited distribution networks mean that independent papers usually have modest pressruns.

The media rely heavily on advertising, and editorial accommodations are made for major buyers. In December 2014, the media in Botswana reported on a leaked government memorandum that allegedly prohibited all government departments and state-owned enterprises from advertising in a long list of private newspapers and one private radio station. Government officials reportedly denied knowledge of the memo.

Brazil

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 13 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 11 / 30

Total Score: 45 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	43,PF	44,PF	44,PF	46,PF	45,PF

In 2014 Brazil passed the “Marco Civil da Internet,” or Internet Bill of Rights, which protected user privacy, guaranteed freedom of online expression, and enshrined net neutrality in law. However, the year was also marked by rising violence against journalists and several instances of judicial censorship.

Legal Environment

Brazil has strong constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression. Various forms of libel and defamation remain criminalized in Brazil, although most of the numerous lawsuits that arise each year are filed under civil statutes.

Judicial censorship—in which courts bar media outlets from publishing information about prominent politicians and businesspeople, demand the removal of published material, or order journalists to pay hefty fines for disseminating information—remained common in 2014. In September, at the height of campaign season for October presidential and legislative elections, a state court in Ceará banned the distribution of an issue of the national weekly magazine *IstoÉ*. The issue reported on the alleged participation of Ceará governor Cid Gomes in a corruption scandal involving the state-controlled oil company Petrobrás. The magazine appealed to the Supreme Court, which reversed the decision days later. In November, the Federal Police requested access to phone records of journalist Allan de Abreu and the newspaper *Diário da*

Região as part of their investigation into whether the journalist improperly revealed classified information in the stories he wrote about a 2011 Federal Police operation that shut down a corruption scheme in São Paulo. A federal court granted the request, which the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism (ABRAJI) alleged was a ruse intended to give police access to information that would enable them to identify Abreu's source. Since 2009, one of the most important daily newspapers in the country, *O Estado de São Paulo*, has been under a censorship order that prohibits it from publishing news related to a police operation and business dealings involving relatives of former president José Sarney.

While Google Transparency reports show that the Brazilian government made 37 percent fewer requests to remove online content in 2014 than it did in 2013, bloggers continue to face high levels of judicial censorship. In November, a state court ordered reporter José Cristian Góes, from the state of Sergipe, to pay more than \$11,000 in damages to Judge Edson Ulisses de Melo, who argued that he suffered personal injury from a fictional story about political cronyism that Góes had posted on his blog in 2012. In 2013, the journalist had been sentenced to more than 7 months in prison for the same posting; his jail time was commuted to community service.

A highlight of 2014 was the passage of the "Marco Civil da Internet," a bill of digital civil rights. The legislation, which was drafted through a collaborative process involving civil society organizations, telecommunications companies, government agencies, and private individuals, has been celebrated as a model for other countries to follow. The law enshrines net neutrality, the right of privacy, and freedom of expression online. The most significant downside to the law is the requirement that data connection and service providers retain user data for one year; however, the information can only be accessed with a court order. Also in 2014, a working group formed by government officials, media professionals, and citizen journalists to investigate attacks on the press and to generate recommendations to the government released its report. So far, concrete measures have not been taken to adopt the recommendations.

In 2012, Brazil passed a comprehensive freedom of information law, guaranteeing public access to documents from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government at the federal, state, and municipal levels. The law also provides for access to information about private entities that receive public funding. Moreover, the law stipulates that information about human rights violations is not exempt from disclosure.

Political Environment

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), three journalists were killed in direct connection with their work in 2014. In February, Santiago Ilídio Andrade, a cameraman for the national television network Bandeirantes, was hit in the head by large firework-style explosive device apparently thrown by protesters while covering a demonstration against bus fare increases in Rio de Janeiro; he died four days later. Two protesters were arrested and, as of the end of 2014, were awaiting trial for their role in the reporter's death. Also in February, Pedro Palma, a journalist and owner of the weekly newspaper *Panorama Regional*—which published stories about corruption and negligence among local governments in Rio de Janeiro state—was gunned down by two unidentified men in front of his home in Miguel Pereira. In December, blogger Marcos de Barros Leopoldo Guerra was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Ubatuba, a city on the northern coast of São Paulo state. The assailants opened fire through Guerra's kitchen window, killing him inside his home. Guerra, who was also a lawyer, had published articles on his blog *Ubatuba Cobra* criticizing local authorities and accusing them of corruption.

According to several other monitoring organizations, Geolino Lopes Xavier, a journalist and executive at the N3 news portal, was also killed in connection with his work in 2014. In February, while driving a car belonging to N3 in Bahia, Xavier was shot dead by unidentified men in another car.

Journalists were also subject to threats and physical violence throughout 2014, particularly in the first six months of the year, when many were caught up in the wave of protests that swept the country. FENAJ documented 129 incidents of aggression against journalists in 2014, 77 of which occurred during the protests. Law enforcement personnel were responsible for more than 60 percent of the year's attacks.

In September 2014, a court issued a decision in the case of Alexandro Wagner Oliveira da Silveira, a photojournalist who was hit in the left eye by a police rubber bullet while covering a 2000 protest in São Paulo. Silveira lost 80 percent of his sight in the injured eye and successfully sued the state of São Paulo for damages. The state appealed, and the September decision reversed the initial ruling. The judge in the case declared Silveira to be solely responsible for the incident, and asserted that the journalist should have anticipated danger and left the protest area. Moreover, the judge ordered Silveira to pay all legal fees associated with the proceedings.

Impunity for crimes against journalists remains a problem, and Brazil was ranked 11 on the CPJ's April 2014 Impunity Index. However, some progress has been made in prosecuting murderers of media professionals. In February 2014, the gunman who confessed to killing journalist Décio Sá in 2012 was convicted and sentenced to about 25 years in prison; the driver of the motorcycle the killer used to escape the crime scene was sentenced to 18 years. Sá worked for the newspaper *O Estado do Maranhão* and had a popular independent blog. According to the police, he was targeted after posting on his blog a story about the murder of a local businessman who was allegedly involved in illegal activities. In August 2014, former detective Lúcio Lírio Leal was sentenced to 12 years in prison for the murder of journalist Rodrigo Neto in Minas Gerais. The crime occurred in March 2013, while the reporter from *Rádio Vanguarda* and the newspaper *Vale do Aço* investigated the existence of an "extermination group" formed by local policemen who hunted down and summarily executed criminals. In both cases, additional suspects are in jail, awaiting trial.

Economic Environment

Brazil is South America's largest media market, with thousands of radio stations, hundreds of television channels, and a variety of major newspapers. Nearly 58 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. Ownership of mass media continues to be highly concentrated among a few major companies. The Grupo Globo conglomerate dominates the media landscape, controlling Brazil's principal television, cable, and satellite networks as well as several radio stations and print outlets. Another company, Editora Abril, leads Brazil's magazine market. According to the independent media-monitoring group Media Owners (Donos da Mídia), hundreds of politicians nationwide are either directors or partners in over 300 media companies, most of these being radio or television stations.

Media diversity is also hampered by the difficulty of obtaining community radio licenses. It can take up to 10 years to get a license, and only those stations transmitting at fewer than 25 watts qualify as "community" stations, meaning that those transmitting at 25 to 100 watts are often forced to operate illegally. The Brazilian Association of Community Radios (ABRAÇO) is

collecting signatures as part of a popular campaign aiming to democratize the current legislation, which dates from 1998.

Brunei

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 28 / 30

Political Environment: 25 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 75 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	75,NF	75,NF	75,NF	75,NF	75,NF

Bulgaria

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11 / 30

Political Environment: 15 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 38 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	34,PF	35,PF	36,PF	37,PF	39,PF

The constitution protects freedom of speech and of the press, and the government generally respects these rights in practice, but many media outlets are beholden to major advertisers and owners with political agendas.

Legal Environment

In 2014, banking regulators threatened to fine at least two media outlets for disseminating false or confidential information and demanded sources for their reporting on the financial sector, which was shaken by a run on two major banks during the year. Defamation is punishable by large fines, and government officials have filed suits against journalists, but the courts tend to favor press freedom in such cases. While the law on freedom of information is considered fairly robust, state institutions sometimes improperly deny information requests, and courts are not consistently supportive of access rights. The broadcasting regulatory body is subject to pressure from the government, politicians, and large corporate interests.

Political Environment

The media environment remains pluralistic, but editors and journalists routinely shape their reporting to suit the political and economic interests of owners or major advertisers. The New Bulgarian Media Group (NBMG), owned by Irena Krasteva but widely believed to be controlled by her son, parliament member Delyan Peevski, has a history of strongly supporting whichever parties are in power. In June 2014, the group's outlets allegedly spread negative reports about a major bank after Peevski fell out with its owner; the bank temporarily closed after a run on deposits and the exposure of irregularities.

A large portion of the coverage of May 2014 European Parliament and October 2014 national parliamentary elections consisted of paid partisan content, which was often not labeled as such. Some television stations or hosts are explicitly associated with political parties, and those linked to right-wing nationalist factions often carry hate speech aimed at minorities and refugees.

Reporters continue to face pressure and intimidation aimed at protecting economic, political, and criminal interests. Journalists, commentators, and bloggers are sometimes questioned by law enforcement personnel about their activities, and prominent politicians have displayed intolerance for media criticism. There were several reports of harassment, threats, and physical attacks against journalists and media outlets in 2014. In April, the car of television host Genka Shikerova was torched in April for the second time in less than a year. In June, politician Kiril Rashkov and two of his aides threatened and attacked two newspaper journalists when they took pictures of him. Impunity for past crimes against journalists remains the norm, encouraging self-censorship.

Economic Environment

A number of private newspapers publish daily, though most are owned by NBMG and a competitor, Media Group Bulgaria Holding. Foreign media companies own two of the three leading national television stations, bTV and Nova TV; the third is the public broadcaster, Bulgarian National Television (BNT). Like Bulgarian National Radio, BNT generally provides substantive news coverage with a range of nonpartisan viewpoints, but it is vulnerable to potential government interference. Foreign firms have also played an important role in the print and radio sectors. Internet connections are readily available, and online media outlets have proliferated in recent years. The internet penetration rate in 2014 was more than 55 percent. Social media are extremely popular and play a crucial role in civic and political mobilization.

Media concentration remains problematic, and ownership transparency rules are weak and poorly enforced, though a law that took effect in 2014 was designed to restrict ownership of media by companies based in offshore tax havens. Some observers said the measure was aimed at rivals of the NBMG conglomerate, which controls multiple print, broadcast, and online outlets as well as the country's dominant print distribution business.

The shrinking private advertising market has increased the importance of state advertising and other de facto subsidies, especially for local outlets. Individual journalists face decreasing salaries and job insecurity, leading to unethical practices and acquiescence to editorial pressure.

Burkina Faso

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 13 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 44 / 100

Edition	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	41,PF	41,PF	42,PF	42,PF	44,PF

The media in Burkina Faso faced challenges in 2014 as tensions between the government of President Blaise Compaoré and the opposition mounted ahead of a planned 2015 presidential election. Journalists operated in an unpredictable and dangerous environment marked by street protests, a series of suspicious break-ins in newspaper offices, and official efforts to limit coverage of growing dissent. However, Compaoré's pursuit of an unpopular constitutional amendment to scrap term limits provoked a popular uprising in October that ended his 27 years in power. A new transitional government promised advances in media freedom, including an end to years of impunity in the murder of a prominent journalist; however, concrete changes had yet to be seen as of the end of the year.

Legal Environment

Article 8 of the constitution and the 1993 Information Code guarantee freedoms of expression, information, and the press. In 2014, the constitution was suspended for a brief period in early November after Compaoré fled the country; however, it was restored after the transitional government took power in mid-November.

Libel is a criminal offense, and media outlets are prohibited from insulting the head of state and publishing or broadcasting graphic images. In October 2014, the newspaper *Le Citadin* was suspended and its editor fined and sentenced to 12 months in prison for allegedly defaming a local politician in Ouagadougou.

In December, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a landmark ruling in the case of *Konaté v. Burkina Faso*, finding that imprisonment for defamation violated the right to freedom of expression as guaranteed by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international charters to which Burkina Faso was a signatory. The ruling came in the case of newspaper editor Lohé Issa Konaté, who had been convicted of defamation in 2012 and sentenced one year in prison and a fine of \$3,000 for publishing articles in the weekly *L'Ouragan* alleging public corruption. The paper was also suspended for six months. The court ordered the government to amend its laws and compensate Konaté. However, no action toward decriminalizing defamation in line with the court's order was initiated by year's end.

Article 49 of the Information Code grants every journalist free access to sources of information, with exceptions pertaining to the internal or external security of the state, military secrets, strategic economic interests, ongoing investigations or legal proceedings, and anything deemed to undermine the dignity and privacy of Burkinabés. In practice, officials use these exceptions frequently, and the lack of a formal access to information regime makes obtaining government information difficult.

The official media regulatory agency, the High Council of Communication (CSC), is nominally independent. However, of its 12 members, eight are state appointees and only four are

drawn from professional media groups, giving the government outsized influence over media regulation. For years, the CSC has been criticized for inconsistent and mismanaged licensing procedures. The body has the power to summon journalists to hearings about their work and even suspend or ban outlets that violate ethical standards or the law. The CSC actively monitors the media sector to ensure compliance with its dictates. Critics argue that it should focus more on addressing the economic sustainability of the country's media.

Political Environment

Under the Compaoré regime, the national public broadcaster, Radiodiffusion Television du Burkina (RTB), exhibited a progovernment slant and was heavily influenced by the executive branch. It operated under the direct control of the minister of communication, a political appointee who also served as the government's spokesperson. Seven of the nine members of RTB's board of directors were government representatives, and the president's cabinet handpicked its director general. Beginning in 2013, tensions between journalists and the RTB management over editorial freedom led to street protests championed by the main journalists' union, which called for an end to the government's persistent interference in editorial content.

In late October 2014, antigovernment protesters stormed and looted RTB's offices in Ouagadougou during the political uprising that saw Compaoré ousted from power. The attack knocked the station temporarily off the air, forcing Compaoré to issue his resignation speech on a private station, Canal 3. By year's end, an interim director had been installed at RTB; the interim director appointed new heads of the national television and radio services, drawn from the journalism community. A search was also underway to find a new permanent director general to take the lead in transforming the agency into a truly independent public service broadcaster.

Reflecting the more open editorial policy, RTB in December 2014 aired a documentary about slain journalist Norbert Zongo, which authorities had previously blocked and which movie theaters had declined to show in fear of government reprisals. Zongo, a former editor in chief of the weekly *L'indépendant*, was murdered in December 1998 while investigating the brutal murder of a driver for former presidential adviser François Compaoré, a brother of Blaise Compaoré. In 2006, despite intense local and international pressure, the Compaoré regime had dropped all charges against the only suspect indicted in the case. Total impunity in the Zongo case cast fear and self-censorship on the Burkinabè media and society at large. Although Zongo's murderers were never discovered, the new government has publicly pledged to reexamine the case.

A series of unsolved break-ins at three independent newspapers earlier in 2014 drew suspicion. In all three cases, the suspects seized reporting equipment, leaving behind valuables. In February 2014, intruders broke into the offices of weekly *L'Opinion* and stole desktop and tablet computers. In July, a break-in at the leading independent paper *L'Evènement* saw the theft of a reporter's notebook, a USB drive, a computer, and cash belonging to editor in chief Newton Ahmed Barry. And in August, unknown assailants broke into the offices of the bimonthly *Complément d'Enquête* and stole a newsroom mobile phone, a tablet and a laptop computer, and some cash. Police did not make any arrests by year's end.

Cases of harassment and physical violence against journalists are rare. In July 2014, police seized the camera of photojournalist Hippolyte Sama of the independent newsmagazine *Fasozine* and deleted photos he took of relatives of the victims in an Air Algeria plane crash in Mali. In August, Newton Ahmed Barry of *L'Evènement* claimed that earlier in the year his house

had been broken into and his car vandalized in what he believed to be retaliation by the authorities for his reporting.

During the protests and the uprising against Compaoré, most journalists were able to report freely and broadcasts were generally unhindered, except for the brief takeover and disruption at RTB.

Economic Environment

Although private print media are growing, including through the emergence of news magazines, the ownership of print outlets still lacks transparency. The Burkinabé print sector's struggles with interrupted production, low literacy rates, and generally poor economic conditions make the broadcast media the preferred choice for news and entertainment. Whereas there are five national daily newspapers, more than 200 radio and television stations operate in the country. RTB was established as the national broadcaster in 1963, and operated the only television channel for many years, but a handful of private television stations now compete with RTB. Radio is still the most popular medium and source of information. Community radio stations are prevalent throughout the country and play a significant role in local development and community building. Programming in local languages such as Mòoré, Mandinka, and Bambara that address issues of gender equality, reproductive health, and domestic violence has contributed to diversity of content. Foreign radio stations are able to broadcast freely. Insufficient infrastructure and cost has limited internet access, which stood at just 9.4 percent of the population in 2014.

Burundi

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 29 / 40

Economic Environment: 21 / 30

Total Score: 74 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	73,NF	74,NF	72,NF	72,NF	74,NF

Conditions for the press in Burundi remained restrictive in 2014, due in part to a repressive new media law promulgated in 2013. Independent and critical journalists faced attacks throughout the year, including from the youth wing of the ruling party. The general political climate was increasingly tense as the country prepared for elections set for mid-2015, in which President Pierre Nkurunziza was expected to seek a constitutionally prohibited third term.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and of the press, but these rights are not respected in practice and are undermined by the penal code and the country's laws. The 2013 media law, which amended a 2003 version, was a serious setback for press freedom. It prescribes

punishments including high fines, suspensions of media outlets, and the withdrawal of press cards for several broadly worded offenses, such as publishing or broadcasting stories that undermine national unity and public order, or that are related to issues such as national defense, security, public safety, unauthorized demonstrations, and the economy. The law also limited the protection of journalistic sources, required journalists to meet certain educational and professional standards, and increased the enforcement powers of the National Communication Council (CNC), the media regulator, which is widely considered to be controlled by Nkurunziza. In January 2014, the Constitutional Court—ruling on a challenge brought by the Burundian Union of Journalists—reduced some of the high fines provided for in the law, but left the bulk of the legislation intact. In September, the union, with the support of the London-based Media Legal Defence Initiative, challenged the law in the East African Court of Justice; that process was ongoing at year's end.

Media outlets and journalists continued to face arrests and legal harassment in 2014, and the threatening climate fostered a high degree of self-censorship. In April 2014, charges were brought against several reporters after a confidential UN cable alleging the distribution of arms to the youth wing of the ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy—Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) party—known as the Imbonerakure—was leaked to the international media. Eloge Niyonzima and Alexis Nkeshimana, correspondents for the popular independent stations Radio Publique Africaine (RPA) and Radio Bonesha in Bubanza Province, respectively, were charged with undermining state security for reporting on the population's fears about the alleged arms distribution. The two were forced to reveal their sources, and a verdict was expected in early 2015. In May, Alexis Nimubona of RPA was charged with defamation after implicating certain provincial officials in the arms distribution. Other reporters were summoned by prosecutors in connection with the story, including Amisi Karihungu and Alexis Nibasumba of Radio Bonesha. Nibasumba had gone into hiding for more than a week, fearing his potential arrest, and resurfaced only when he received assurances that he would not face criminal charges. Eloge Niyonzima was again arrested in late December on accusations of complicity in the beating of a member of the Imbonerakure. He was provisionally released after several days but remained under investigation.

The lack of a freedom of information law in Burundi facilitates the arbitrary application of media laws, as the government frequently targets journalists for crimes related to vaguely explained state interests. Furthermore, ambiguous legal language is interpreted by a judiciary that lacks independence from political forces.

In March 2014, Nkurunziza appointed several new members to the CNC. The 15-member body is composed primarily of government representatives or journalists from the state broadcaster, reinforcing perceptions that it lacks independence from the executive. Throughout 2014, the CNC continued to issue suspensions, bans, and other sanctions against media outlets and journalists. In May, an RPA broadcast was suspended for airing allegations regarding the existence of training camps for the ruling party's youth militia in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, a prominent Burundian civil society leader, had leveled the accusation and was arrested in May for endangering state security. He fell seriously ill while incarcerated and was provisionally released on medical grounds in September, though the charges were still pending. In the wake of Mbonimpa's arrest, RPA broadcast a jingle with lyrics from a popular song calling for an end to injustice, apparently to protest the detention; the CNC ordered the station not to air it again. Other radio stations began to play protest music in the

following days, leading the CNC to issue a ban on another popular song until the conclusion of Mbonimpa's case.

In November, the CNC filed legal complaints on behalf of the CNDD-FDD and the government against Bob Rugurika, RPA's director, and Gilbert Niyonkuru, an RPA reporter, demanding that they reveal their sources for a story on the activities of a rebel group in the Rukoko nature reserve in Bubanza Province.

Political Environment

The state-owned Radio Télévision Nationale du Burundi (RTNB) is widely perceived as progovernment. Self-censorship is reportedly widespread, especially within the state media and at outlets with close connections to the administration. Despite attempts by the government to restrict independent media, the popularity of stations such as RPA, Radio Isanganiro, Radio Bonesha, and Radio Télé Renaissance allows for the airing of some diverse viewpoints. However, journalists who criticize the government are often accused of being supporters of the opposition. In March 2014, Ildephonse Habarurema, the permanent secretary of the National Security Council, accused some media outlets of broadcasting "subversive messages" and criticized RPA for covering a police raid on the headquarters of the opposition Movement for Solidarity and Democracy.

Although there were fewer incidents than in 2013, physical attacks and harassment directed against independent and critical journalists continued in 2014. The staff of RPA and other independent radio stations are particularly common targets for such intimidation.

Economic Environment

Radio is the primary source of information for the majority of the population. The government maintains a strong hold on Burundi's media industry through the RTNB. The state television station commands the country's largest audience, and the state radio station places second after RPA. The government operates *Le Renouveau*, the only daily newspaper. Private weekly and monthly print publications also circulate. The pressruns of most newspapers remain small, and readership is limited. Similarly, most private broadcast outlets have a limited range. There are approximately 20 privately owned radio stations, though the law prohibits political parties, labor unions, and foreign nongovernmental organizations from owning media outlets in the country. The British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio France Internationale, and Voice of America are available on FM radio in the capital.

The number of mobile-telephone subscribers has increased substantially in recent years, reaching nearly 3 million in 2014. Six mobile networks now operate in Burundi. However, internet penetration remains very low, at 1.4 percent as of 2014, due to the high cost of service, and access remains largely confined to urban areas. Low literacy rates have also restrained the market for online news sources. In early 2014 the country's first fiber-optic broadband network was introduced, and it is expected to lower prices for consumers where infrastructure already allows for internet access.

Cambodia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23 / 30

Political Environment: 27 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 69 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	61,NF	63, NF	63, NF	66,NF	66,NF

Two journalists were killed in 2014, bringing to 12 the total number of journalists killed in Cambodia since 1993. Perpetrators of attacks against reporters generally enjoy impunity.

Legal Environment

Laws regulating the media are vaguely worded and unevenly applied. Article 41 of the 1993 constitution protects the rights to free expression and a free press, but stipulates that these rights may not be abused in a way that compromises national security. A 1995 press law prohibiting reports deemed threatening to political stability is susceptible to arbitrary enforcement.

In April 2014, an unofficial English-language version of a draft cybercrime law was leaked, revealing potential for a new law to restrict Cambodia’s online sphere. Article 28 of the draft law seeks to criminalize online activities that are seen to “hinder the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia,” and penalties outlined in the draft bill are more severe than the offline equivalent in the penal code. While a spokesman for the Council of Ministers said in December that the law had been “scrapped” and was no longer a priority, concerns about increasing government control of the internet remain.

Defamation, which includes written criticism of public officials or institutions, is a criminal offense punishable by large fines, and defamation cases against journalists are not uncommon. Defamation is not directly punishable with jail time, but journalists can be imprisoned if they are unable to pay the associated fines. Among the defamation cases decided in 2014 was one against the Phnom Penh-based journalist and blogger Rupert Winchester, who claimed on his blog that a developer was planning to knock down a historic building in the capital. In July, he was convicted and fined 8 million riel (\$2,500) and ordered to pay an additional 100 million riel (\$25,000) in damages. The violation of laws banning incitement and the dissemination of disinformation can result in jail sentences of as long as three years.

The courts lack independence, as most judges are closely tied to the ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP). Cases sometimes drag on for years, and individuals may be charged arbitrarily or through the retroactive application of new laws. In a somewhat encouraging move, the Ministry of Information signed a three-year agreement in May 2014 with the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Swedish International Development Agency to begin drafting an access to information law. However, progress remains uncertain given the National Assembly’s history of rejecting drafts of such laws—including once in 2013.

Licenses are required for broadcast media, and opposition outlets are often denied radio and television frequencies. In January, the government denied the independent Beehive Radio station the right to boost its signal strength, as well as a television license, on grounds that there

were no available frequencies. According to its director, Beehive has been requesting permission for the expansion since 2005. Separately, in June, Prime Minister Hun Sen offered the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) a television license—the first time for an opposition party—in an attempt to reconcile the party’s boycott of the parliament. However, Cambodia’s information minister in November said that the CNRP would be granted only a digital channel on the grounds that all analog channels were unavailable.

Weeks before national elections in 2013, the government ordered local radio stations to stop rebroadcasting foreign-produced Khmer-language radio content; the ban was reversed four days later following strong local and international pressure. The incident echoed a similar government directive to foreign outlets in 2012 to cease broadcasting prior to communal elections.

A proposed Law on Associations and Nongovernmental Organizations remained in draft form at year’s end. Media freedom analysts have expressed concern that the law, if enacted, could fetter the work of grassroots and nongovernmental organizations and media outlets by creating a complicated and restrictive regulatory bureaucracy.

Political Environment

In Cambodia’s highly politicized media environment, most outlets are openly aligned with a political faction, leaving little space for balanced views and journalism conducted in the public interest. Journalists, particularly those at local outlets, face pressure from politicians to cover issues in a particular manner. In May 2014, the director of National Television of Kampuchea (TVK), a national public broadcaster, resigned days after the station had aired a CNRP advertisement featuring footage of security forces beating demonstrators; media freedom advocates expressed concern over possible political motivation.

Despite low internet penetration rates, the government has become concerned with the internet’s potential as a medium for opposition voices, and censorship of online content is a growing concern. Access to independent websites such as KI-Media is occasionally unavailable on some internet service providers. More broadly, the diversity of viewpoints in Khmer-language news is severely limited.

Physical attacks on journalists in recent years have had a chilling effect on the media community. Self-censorship is prevalent, particularly among Khmer-language journalists. Media workers covering sensitive topics such as land grabs and opposition protests are frequently subject to harassment, equipment seizures, and physical assault. In May, *Voice of Democracy* reporter Lay Samean was severely beaten by district security forces while covering an opposition rally in Phnom Penh. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, two journalists were killed in Cambodia in 2014 for unconfirmed motives, the first to die in Cambodia since Hang Serei Odom was murdered in 2012. In February 2014, local fishermen in Kampong Chhnang province beat to death journalist Suon Chan of the *Meakea Kampuchea* newspaper, an attack that press freedom groups believe might have been linked to his reporting on illegal fishing activities there. In October, journalist Taing Try of the regional newspaper *Vealntri* was shot to death while investigating illegal logging in Kratie province. Perpetrators of attacks against reporters generally enjoy impunity.

Economic Environment

There are 13 daily newspapers in Cambodia. Khmer-language newspapers tend to be either associated with or sympathetic to the ruling party. Editors and owners of Cambodia’s handful of opposition-aligned outlets have been pressured through financial or legal means to close their publications. A few English-language publications, including the *Cambodia Daily* and the *Phnom Penh Post*, continue to operate. All 15 national television stations and nearly all of Cambodia’s roughly 160 radio stations—the main sources of information for many Cambodians—are owned or controlled by either the ruling party or by Hun Sen’s family and associates. Cambodia’s poor economy presents further financial challenges to opening and operating independent media institutions. Due to the low literacy rate and the difficulties of maintaining distribution networks, print media are often unable to attract enough advertising to be financially sustainable. Journalists’ pay is very low, and accepting bribes to run or withhold particular stories is not uncommon.

Owing to infrastructural and economic constraints, only 9 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. Directives issued by the government in 2012 have restricted the permissible locations for internet cafés and circumscribed the activities of users. Café owners are required to register users and maintain surveillance on all internet activity. Nevertheless, online news and commentary, as well as social media use, have been increasing in recent years and continue to offer a space for greater diversity of views.

Cameroon

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 21 / 30

Total Score: 66 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	66,NF	67,NF	68,NF	66,NF	66,NF

Cameroon’s media regulator continued to suspend journalists and outlets for criticizing the government during 2014. Journalists also faced arrests, prosecutions, and the threat of violence in connection with their work. A new antiterrorism law signed in December raised concerns that reporters could be sentenced to lengthy prison terms for “defending terrorism.”

Legal Environment

Although the preamble to Cameroon’s 1996 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press, these rights are not respected in practice. Defamation remains both a civil and a criminal offense, drawing fines and up to six months in prison. The burden of proof is on the defendant in defamation cases, truth is not a defense, and the penal code grants public figures additional “special protections.” The 1990 Law on Social Communication ended prepublication censorship, but Article 17 of the 1996 amended law gives officials the power to ban newspapers that are deemed a threat to public order.

In December 2014, President Paul Biya promulgated a new antiterrorism law that could sharply limit press freedom. Journalists convicted of “defending terrorism,” either in print or on the air, would face up to 20 years in prison and a fine of 25 to 50 million CFA francs (\$51,000 to \$102,000). Moreover, defendants would be tried in military courts.

Several journalists were arrested or punished for their work under existing laws during 2014. In March, Amungwa Tanyi Nicodemus, editor of the English-language weekly the *Monitor*, was sentenced to four months in prison and ordered to pay 10 million CFA francs in damages for criminal defamation; the damages were later converted into an additional two years and three months in prison. The *Monitor* had published several articles on alleged corruption at the Cameroon Co-Operative Credit Union League, a microfinance network. Two other journalists, Zacharie Ndiomo of the bimonthly *Le Zénith* and Guy Nsigué of Radio Sport Info and Mboafotball.com, were arrested in October in separate defamation cases linked to their reports on alleged corruption. While Nsigué was soon released, Ndiomo remained in pretrial detention as of December.

Also in October, Félix Cyriaque Ebolé Bola, president of Cameroon’s National Union of Journalists and a senior reporter at the daily newspaper *Mutations*, and Rodrigue Tongue of the opposition newspaper *Le Messenger* were charged in a military court for allegedly possessing national security information and failing to notify the authorities. Although officials did not publicly specify the nature of the information, a press report said it concerned the president’s health. The two journalists remained under house arrest at year’s end.

The 2010 Cybersecurity and Cybercriminality Law and an electronic communications law include measures that allow the immediate identification of internet users, while failing to include sufficient protections against abuse of power and invasion of privacy, both of which can affect journalists and their sources.

While there is no specific law on freedom of information, the 1990 Law on Social Communication does confirm the “right to know.” However, the government does not make documents or statistics freely available to the public or the media in practice.

Radio and television stations must be licensed, which requires a difficult application process and expensive annual fees. Rural nonprofit radio stations are exempt from licensing fees but barred from discussing politics.

The country’s media regulator, the National Communications Council (CNC), was created by a presidential decree in 1991 and given powers extending from frequency allocation to arbitration on libel and defamation cases. In 2012, another presidential decree authorized the CNC to impose sanctions including bans on media outlets. The council has increasingly exercised this authority in the past two years.

In late November 2014, the CNC banned several journalists from “exercising their profession.” The anchor of Vision 4 TV’s *Major Issues* program, Parfait Eyissi, was suspended for allegedly insulting Martin Belinga Eboutou, the head of Biya’s civil cabinet. Three other Vision 4 TV presenters—Ernest Obama, Ernest Belinga and Romeo Mbida—were indefinitely banned from journalism after their shows carried criticism of the Biya government. The CNC also issued a warning to Eric Kwamo of Equinox Television for broadcasting pictures of a boy with congenital defects. And it banned journalist Jacques Blaise Mvie and his weekly publication, *La Nouvelle*, for allegedly failing to respect professional ethics. In May, the CNC had imposed a six-month suspension on the newspaper *La Scene* and its publisher for allegedly defaming Côte d’Ivoire’s communications minister.

Political Environment

A number of independent newspapers report critically about the government, and radio call-in shows and television debate programs often feature strong criticism of the administration and individual officials. However, media outlets operate under the constant threat of prosecution or regulatory sanctions, leading many journalists, particularly in the broadcast media, to self-censor.

Reporters are occasionally harassed or detained by security forces while attempting to cover sensitive stories. In April 2014, the car of Denis Nkwebo, an editor at *Le Jour*, was destroyed in an explosion outside his home. In recent articles, Nkwebo had scrutinized security forces' efforts to curb attacks by Boko Haram in the north.

Economic Environment

Cameroon's only national newspaper is the state-owned *Cameroon Tribune*, which is published in French and English and has a daily circulation of about 20,000. Several hundred other newspapers and periodicals operate sporadically throughout the country; regular publication can be challenging due to cost and irregular enforcement of government regulations. A number of the dailies with the largest circulations are openly critical of the government, but they are relatively expensive and are not well distributed outside urban areas.

The state-owned broadcaster, Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), is widely viewed as progovernment in its news coverage. Owners of mainstream private broadcast media, including private television stations, are also reportedly under the government's influence. Radio is the most important medium for the majority of the population, though most of the country's privately owned stations, of which there are about 200, are in large urban areas. Only major international broadcasters—the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Radio France Internationale, and Africa No. 1—air across the entire country; Cameroon's private radio stations have local or regional reach.

While there are no official restrictions on the internet, usage was limited to about 11 percent of the population in 2014. Online media are expanding rapidly, driven in large part by mobile internet access. However, users continue to endure slow connections and high fees at internet cafés; Cameroon is burdened with some of the highest bandwidth charges in West and Central Africa, despite its access to a submarine cable, SAT3, which links the region to Europe.

Corruption in the media is considered pervasive, with contributing factors including low wages for journalists, lack of formal training, and lack of familiarity with the profession's ethical standards.

Canada

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 7 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 18 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	19,F	19,F	19,F	20,F	19,F

Legal Environment

Canada’s 1982 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The government may legally restrict free speech with the aim of ending discrimination, ensuring social harmony, or promoting gender equality, but the definition of hate speech, which is punishable by law, remains vague. In a 2013 ruling, the Supreme Court narrowed the legal definition of “hatred” but upheld the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code’s concept of hate speech as any representation or expression “that exposes or tends to expose” certain groups to hatred. The ruling was highly controversial, with most media outlets condemning it as a threat to freedom of expression in Canada.

In July 2014, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), alongside the *Toronto Star* and production company White Pine Pictures, brought a case against the federal government, challenging the denial of journalists’ access to Canadian citizen Omar Khadr—a former detainee at the U.S. military detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, who had been incarcerated in Canada since his 2012 transfer. The media outlets alleged that by blocking media access to interview Khadr, the government was violating the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press and the public’s right to know. Detained since 2002, Khadr had never been allowed to speak with the media, despite giving consent to be interviewed. The case remained pending at year’s end.

In the wake of a deadly terrorist attack on Canada’s Parliament Hill in late October 2014, the Conservative Party government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper introduced Bill C-44, the Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act. The bill had been drafted before the attack, but it was subsequently portrayed by the government as an urgent priority. It proposed to broaden the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and journalists expressed concern about provisions that would increase the agency’s surveillance authority. The legislation had yet to be adopted at year’s end.

Also in October 2014, the controversial Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, Bill C-13, passed into law. While the measure was presented as an attempt to combat cyberbullying, press freedom advocates argue that its language is vague, and that it allows internet service providers and telecommunications companies to voluntarily give customer information to the government without the latter having to produce a warrant. Its approval was rendered more contentious by the June release of a Supreme Court decision requiring law enforcement agencies to obtain a warrant in order to access such information from service providers.

A provincial labor law passed in Alberta in December 2013 has been criticized as a threat to media freedom and free expression. Opponents of the measure claim that its Section 4 can be read as a ban on encouraging or advocating a strike.

Defamation remains a criminal offense, punishable by up to five years in prison. A 2009 Supreme Court ruling allows journalists to avoid liability for alleged defamation if they are able to show that they acted responsibly in reporting a matter of public interest, even if the statements are found to have been untrue. A criminal defamation case filed by fashion mogul Peter Nygard against the CBC remained unresolved at the end of 2014; Nygard alleged that a 2010 CBC documentary about him had been defamatory.

There are no specific laws that protect confidential sources, and the courts often decide whether to respect source confidentiality on a case-by-case basis. Source confidentiality was threatened when Bill C-461, an amendment to the Access to Information Act (ATIA), was introduced in Parliament in February 2013, but the bill was rejected in February 2014. The legislation would have compromised the CBC's ability to safeguard the identity of its sources.

Efforts to obtain information from the federal government typically involve long waits, and requests are hampered by federal agencies' ability to grant themselves extensions on requests. The Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) watchdog group reported in 2012 that only half of the requests for official information were being fulfilled within the statutory 30-day deadline. In a separate hindrance on access to official information, the Supreme Court in 2011 upheld Quebec court rules that prohibit media outlets from broadcasting the audio recordings of court proceedings or using cameras and recording equipment beyond designated areas of courthouses. In June 2014, the information commissioner, who had pressed for reform of the ATIA, publicly criticized the access to information framework and expressed concern over the federal government's growing secrecy. A new bill to strengthen the ATIA was introduced in Parliament that month, earning praise from press freedom advocates. It had yet to win passage at the end of 2014.

Political Environment

Canadian news media, including the public broadcaster CBC, are free to express diverse views. Journalists rarely face physical violence or harassment, and there were no notable incidents during 2014. Police have been criticized in recent years for mistreatment of the media during major protests and high-profile events, but journalists and photographers were able to report on the October 2014 terrorist attacks in Ottawa without hindrance.

Economic Environment

The Canadian media sector includes a variety of privately owned print and online outlets, and commercial broadcasters compete with the public CBC, which airs programming in French and English on multiple television and radio stations. Broadcasting rules stipulate certain percentages of Canadian content on different types of stations, and encourage the creation of original local programming. Internet use is widespread and unrestricted, with nearly 87 percent of the population accessing the medium in 2014.

Concentration of private media ownership remains an issue. Four corporations—Bell Canada, Shaw, Rogers, and Quebecor Media Inc.—account for about two-thirds of television revenue. Bell Canada, the country's largest telecommunications company, also has important stakes in radio broadcasting, wireless internet, and mobile services. In June 2013, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission approved Bell's C\$3.27 billion (US\$3.17 billion) takeover of Astral Media, giving Bell control over 36 percent of the English-language television market and 23 percent of the French. Bell's bid was approved with the requirement that the company divest many of its existing television and radio assets, but the deal still entailed a high level of vertical integration and media concentration.

Cape Verde

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 27 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	28,F	27,F	27,F	27,F	27,F

Cape Verde has historically been among the freest media environments in both Africa and the broader Lusophone world, and it maintained this status in 2014.

Legal Environment

The constitution directly provides for freedom of the press as well as confidentiality of sources, access to information, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. A 1999 constitutional amendment excludes the use of freedom of expression as a defense in defamation cases, but no such cases have been brought against journalists since 2002. Government officials broadly adhere to Cape Verde's access to information law.

The law requires broadcasters to obtain operating licenses, and government approval is needed to establish new newspapers and other publications. In 2011, the parliament approved the creation of a Regulatory Authority for the Media, whose goal is to protect press freedom and ensure that a diversity of opinions can be expressed. In February 2014, lawmakers delayed a decision that would have formally installed the authority's members, in a move connected to political disputes between the ruling party and the opposition. It was unclear whether the media regulator was operational at year's end.

Political Environment

The government respects press freedom and generally does not restrict access to or content on the media that it controls. Self-censorship, a somewhat underdeveloped journalistic cadre, and an incomplete incorporation of local Creole dialects into the country's media prevent Cape Verde from further improving the freedom and diversity of its information landscape. Intimidation of journalists in Cape Verde is rare. No attacks on media workers were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Many media outlets are state owned, though there are some private publications and broadcast outlets. The state runs the primary television channel, TCV, and a radio station, Radio Nacional de Cabo Verde. A number of independent and community-run radio stations broadcast regularly. Print media include a government publication and a handful of independent weeklies—including *A Semana*, the largest paper, as well as *Expresso das Ilhas* and *A Nação*—and monthlies, such as *Artiletra*. Portuguese and Brazilian newspapers are also available.

Geographic barriers in the country, which is made up of several islands, constitute

impediments to the distribution of newspapers and other media products. This has contributed to the importance of the community radio sector. Difficulties raising funds and a lack of specific regulations governing community radio have been identified as major challenges for the sustainability of this sector, and community radio advocates have called for new legislation and government help with operating costs.

Internet usage has risen dramatically in recent years, from 8 percent of the population in 2007 to more than 40 percent in 2014. There were no reports that the government restricted or monitored internet use.

Central African Republic

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 21 / 30

Political Environment: 29 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 72 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	61,NF	61,NF	62,NF	62,NF	77,NF

The press freedom situation improved somewhat after Michel Djotodia, leader of the Séléka rebel movement that seized power in 2013, resigned as president in January 2014 under domestic and international pressure. He was replaced by former Bangui mayor Catherine Samba-Panza, who formed a transitional government that displayed greater respect for media independence. However, violence in the country remained rampant, with media outlets and journalists caught between warring parties or forced to self-censor to avoid retaliation.

Legal Environment

The 2004 constitution of the Central African Republic (CAR) guarantees freedom of the press, and a press law that took effect in 2005 abolished imprisonment for many offenses, such as libel and slander. However, criminal penalties remained in place for some defamation charges, incitement of ethnic or religious hatred, and the publication or broadcast of false information that could “disturb the peace.”

The new government under Samba-Panza was generally more respectful of journalists’ rights and imposed fewer restrictions than its predecessor. For example, a special police force created under Djotodia, tasked in part with monitoring the media, was apparently discontinued in 2014. Nevertheless, some legal harassment persisted. In April 2014, the editors of two newspapers were arrested on various insult charges after publishing stories that were highly critical of President Samba-Panza. A warrant was issued on similar grounds for a third journalist, who evaded capture but was forced into hiding. Media advocates expressed concern not only over the arrests but over the specific charges, several of which were decriminalized in 2005. After more than a week of detention, the two editors were granted bail and were awaiting trial at year’s end.

The absence of a freedom of information law makes accessing official information in the CAR challenging for journalists. The High Council for Communications (HCC), tasked with granting licenses and promoting press freedom, is nominally independent but has extremely low levels of institutional capacity. By the end of 2013, it was totally nonoperational following political and military turmoil under the Séléka regime. In May 2014, Samba-Panza named nine new members to the transitional HCC, including four women, with the goal of revitalizing the body. The government initially tried to block the appointment of the nominee chosen by the country's print sector, which is allowed to select a representative for the council. After significant pushback from national journalist unions and press groups, the authorities relented and confirmed the nominee. Nevertheless, the HCC remains weak and unable to consistently enforce the country's regulatory framework for the media.

There are several professional groups for journalists, including the Union des Journalistes de Centrafrique (UJCA) and the Observatoire des Medias Centrafricains (OMCA), which are active despite their fairly low level of capacity.

Political Environment

The new government in 2014 interfered less with news content, allowing more space for critical and investigative journalism. Several local outlets were able to report without reprisal on accusations that President Samba-Panza and her daughter were involved in massive corruption. However, in June the government blocked the transmission of text messages, citing vague security concerns. Journalists complained that the move hampered their ability to gather information and communicate with sources. Service was reportedly restored after one month.

Journalists also remained exposed to harassment and physical violence, and general insecurity in the country seriously hampered newsgathering. In April, two local journalists, Désiré Sayenga of the newspaper *Le Démocrate* and René Padou of the Protestant radio station *Voix de la Grâce*, were killed in their homes, allegedly by armed Muslim residents. It was unclear whether these journalists were specifically targeted for their work. Weeks later, in May, the French photojournalist Camille Lepage was killed while traveling with a Christian "anti-balaka" militia when their convoy was ambushed by a rival group.

Economic Environment

All newspapers, including six dailies published in French, are privately owned. Low literacy levels, high poverty rates, and the lack of a functioning postal service in rural areas limit the reach of print media, which have small circulations and are largely restricted to Bangui. There are no local printing presses, and newspapers are often produced using standard computer printers and photocopiers.

Radio is the most important medium for news consumption and is much more popular and professionally run than print. The state owns Radio Centrafrique, the only station with national reach, though its coverage is mostly limited to government activities. More than a dozen community radio stations serving rural areas were broadcasting prior to 2013, but most have suspended operation due to looting and damage to their equipment during the political unrest. Only one local commercial station exists, supported by a Swiss nonprofit organization, though many international outlets such as the British Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of America

are available. The state owns the sole television station, which does not broadcast outside of Bangui. Much like state radio, it serves mainly to publicize government activities.

Financial problems and the lack of an organized advertising market continue to plague newspapers and radio stations, and some journalists are motivated by poverty to accept bribes to cover certain stories, as many are not paid regularly for their work. Most journalists are poorly trained, although a journalism department was established at the University of Bangui in 2009.

Infrastructural constraints have also limited internet penetration, which stood at only 4 percent in 2014. Some websites, such as the Network of Human Rights Journalists, provide strong coverage of local events, but they remain inaccessible to the vast majority of the population.

Chad

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22 / 30

Political Environment: 30 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 74 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	77,NF	75,NF	75,NF	76,NF	75,NF

Legal Environment

Chad's constitution allows for freedom of expression and of the press, but authorities routinely use threats and legal prosecutions to curb critical reporting. In 2008, the High Council of Communication (HCC), Chad's media regulatory body, banned reporting on the activities of rebels and any other information that could harm national unity. While a 2010 media law abolished jail time for defamation, judges have continued to hand down prison sentences for such offenses. In April 2014, the publisher of the Arabic newspaper *N'Djamena al-Djadida* was arrested on defamation charges in connection with a series of articles that accused the country's grand imam of being a foreign spy. He was released the next day, but the case remained pending at year's end. The 2010 media law also introduced sentences of one to two years in prison and fines from \$2,000 to \$6,000 for inciting racial, ethnic, or religious hatred, and for "condoning violence."

Chad has no law establishing the right to access official information, and access remains difficult in practice.

Permission from the prosecutor's office, the HCC, and the Ministry of Commerce is required to establish a newspaper. Radio licenses are granted by the HCC, which is considered to be subject to strong influence by the government and also reportedly monitors and controls radio content. The licensing fee for commercial radio stations remains prohibitively high, at a reported \$5,000 per year. Private radio stations' transmitters are also limited to a strength of 1,000 watts or less, making them incapable of broadcasting nationally, and thus leaving them unable to challenge state-owned outlets.

Officials periodically threaten to shut down media outlets or fine journalists for

“irresponsible” reporting. In October 2014, the private radio station FM Liberté was reprimanded by the HCC and warned against further transgression after it publicized a call from local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for popular protests against fuel shortages. Also in October, HCC President Moustafa Ali Alifei, in a meeting with several journalists, warned them that they could face severe sanctions for failing to operate in an ethical and professional manner.

Political Environment

Although criticism of the government is generally permitted within certain boundaries, some reporters and editors practice self-censorship to avoid reprisals. Many of Chad’s most prominent news outlets are either state-owned or controlled by those with close ties to the government, thus limiting their editorial independence.

Journalists risk harassment and physical violence as a result of their reporting. In November 2014, a reporter with the private radio station Dja FM was arrested in N’Djamena while conducting interviews on the street; he was reportedly beaten by police before being released later in the day.

Economic Environment

The state-run Chad Press Agency is country’s only news agency. The government subsidizes the daily newspaper *Le Progrès* in exchange for its support, and owns the biweekly *L’Info*. While private periodicals—including the opposition-oriented *N’Djamena Bi-Hebdo* and *Abba Garde*—have an established readership in the capital, their impact is minimal in the largely illiterate rural interior. Some newspapers use printing facilities outside the country for financial reasons, and distribution is difficult due to poor infrastructure. There are three television stations operating in Chad: the state-owned TeleTchad, the private Al-Nassour, and the private Electron TV. The government does not interfere with the reception of popular foreign channels, such as Al-Jazeera and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Arabic. Radio is the primary means of mass communication, and apart from the state-owned Radiodiffusion Nationale Tchadienne, which operates several stations, there are over a dozen private and community-run stations on the air, many of which are owned by religious organizations.

Advertising is scarce, but it is the main source of revenue for media outlets, as government subsidies and other alternatives are even less reliable. Mobile phone access is low compared to other countries, with official estimates at 40 percent penetration. Internet penetration remains low, at just under 3 percent in 2014. There are no reports that the government restricts access. Though the internet infrastructure remains state-owned, the government announced in February 2014 that it would attempt to privatize 80 percent of the state-owned telecommunications company, the Société des Télécommunications du Tchad.

Chile

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 31 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	30,F	29,F	31,PF	31,PF	31,PF

Chile continued to host a relatively open environment for press freedom and journalism in 2014. As in previous years, debate centered on the lack of media diversity, particularly in the print and radio sectors. Despite these shortcomings, Chile remained unique in the region for providing reporters with working conditions that are generally free of violence, intimidation, and harassment.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and of the press are guaranteed under Chile's constitution. Many of the weaknesses in the media environment stem from press laws and ownership structures that originated during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973–90), which governments in the democratic era have been unable or unwilling to reform. Criminal defamation and *desacato* (insult) laws have been used to silence journalists sporadically since the country's return to democracy, often leading to public outcry. However, there were no convictions of journalists under these laws in 2014.

Chile's Law on Transparency of Public Functions and Access to Information, enacted by President Michelle Bachelet in 2008, continues to serve as a useful tool for investigative journalists, who report that government agencies generally respond to requests for information in a satisfactory manner.

The community radio sector is significantly weakened by Article 36B of the General Telecommunications Law, a legal provision that criminalizes the operation of unlicensed community media. Although the law was originally passed in 1982, Article 36B was not added until 1994. The law imposes fines and imprisonment for broadcasting without a legal frequency, a condition that applies to most community media operators, and has been used to arrest or harass station operators. Community radio stations in southern Chile—an area primarily populated by the indigenous Mapuche people—have frequently been singled out due to their role in protests against commercial forestry and hydroelectric projects in the region.

In 2010, the Community Radio Law was passed to create a legal framework for the operation of the sector. Although the law was criticized as privileging media with outside funders, such as evangelical church groups and municipal governments, it was seen as a positive step because it established a legal category for community media and amplified the permissible wattage for low-power stations. Implementation of these regulations has been held up in part by the failure of Chile's largest commercial radio network, Iberoamericana Radio Chile, to cooperate with the communications regulator, the Subsecretariat of Telecommunications (Subtel), on the reallocation of frequencies. The World Association for Community Radio Stations (AMARC) states that there are no public tenders for community stations, and that 90 percent of the spectrum is in private hands.

In May 2014 the Digital Television Act was adopted after five years of debate. The law had been approved by the Senate in October 2013, but then president Sebastian Piñera attempted to block it with a veto, which was eventually overturned. The act aims to diversify the media landscape, reserving 40 percent of the television spectrum for community, local, and regional

operators. It also gives the public Televisión Nacional (TVN) a second regional frequency intended to broadcast a mix of TVN and locally produced content with a cultural and educational focus. The Interamerican Press Society (SIP) noted with some concern that under the new law, the National Television Council has more regulatory authority and the ability to influence editorial policies, since it can demand a certain amount of airtime for cultural programming. The switchover to digital broadcasting will be implemented over the next five years.

Political Environment

While the state does not exert political control over the media or engage in censorship of content, some journalists and outlets have at times practiced self-censorship or displayed political bias on sensitive topics, such as social protests or the human rights violations that occurred under Pinochet.

Although Chilean reporters are rarely subject to violence and intimidation by state agents, the militarized *carabineros* police force has been known to target photographers and reporters during street protests. There were few complaints about mistreatment of reporters in 2014, but in December 2013 journalists in the southern province of La Araucanía accused police of assaulting three reporters in confrontations outside a courthouse. Several officers were punished for the incidents in February 2014.

Economic Environment

The economic viability of independent media is challenged by the concentration of private ownership and advertising, as well as de facto government support—in the form of state advertising purchases—for a commercial newspaper duopoly. Lack of diversity remains a particular problem in the print sector, in which a significant share of political and policy debate occurs. In July 2013, Reporters Without Borders reported that 95 percent of print titles are controlled by two privately held commercial groups, El Mercurio and Copesa, which also receive the bulk of state advertising expenditures.

In January 2014, the government-owned newspaper *La Nación* was sold to the private company Comunicaciones Lanet SA. Journalists had objected to the sale, arguing that the paper had provided a contrasting voice to the commercial press duopoly. The historical archive of *La Nación* was transferred to Diego Portales University, an act that was criticized by journalists and experts who wanted the records to remain public. The newspaper had shut down its print edition in 2010, and reporters had proposed a new business model, but the administration of President Piñera, whose term ended in March 2014, rejected the idea and proceeded with the sale. Journalists challenged the decision in court, and the case was pending at year's end.

The Spanish-owned Prisa Group, which operates Iberoamericana Radio Chile, controls roughly half of the radio market. Many press watchdogs view the implementation of the Community Radio Law and the addition of measures to ease the technical requirements and application process for new outlets as an indispensable step toward increasing the plurality of voices in Chilean media.

The recent passage of the Digital Television Act could also have the effect of increasing media competition, though the television system in general already features some ownership diversity among the seven free-to-air channels, including the autonomous TVN, which by law is pluralistic and self-financed to ensure its independence.

There are no government restrictions on internet access in Chile. The usage rate is high and growing, reaching 72 percent in 2014.

China

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 86 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	84,NF	85,NF	85,NF	83,NF	84,NF

China is home to one of the world's most restrictive media environments. The already limited space for investigative journalism and politically liberal commentary shrank during 2014, continuing a trend of ideological tightening since Xi Jinping assumed the leadership of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2012. For the first time in several years, professional journalists from established news outlets were subjected to long-term detention, sentencing, and imprisonment alongside freelancers, online activists, and ethnic minority reporters. Also during 2014, a crackdown on social-media platforms that began the previous year—with increased restrictions on the prominent Sina Weibo microblogging service—expanded to Tencent's WeChat instant-messaging program, further reducing the ability of ordinary users and journalists to share information and political news without prepublication censorship.

Nevertheless, as internet access via mobile devices continued to climb, reaching over half a billion people during the year, the censorship system was unable to completely stop the circulation of unfavorable news. Dedicated users continued to employ circumvention technology and other, more creative tactics to defy and bypass restrictions on free expression.

Legal Environment

Article 35 of the constitution guarantees freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and publication, but such rights are subordinated to the discretion of the CCP and its status as the ruling power. Moreover, the constitution cannot, in most cases, be invoked in court as a legal basis for asserting individual rights. Judges are appointed by the CCP and generally follow its directives, particularly in politically sensitive cases. There is no press law that governs the protection of journalists or the punishment of their attackers. Instead, vaguely worded provisions in the penal code and state secrets legislation are routinely used to imprison Chinese citizens for the peaceful expression of views that the CCP considers objectionable. Criminal defamation provisions are also occasionally used to similar effect.

During 2014, for the first time in years, mainstream print journalists were formally arrested or sentenced to prison; such treatment had long been more common among internet-based writers, ethnic minority journalists, and freelancers. According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 44 journalists were behind bars in China as of

December 2014, the largest national total in the world. The overall number of Chinese citizens jailed for offenses involving freedom of expression, especially on the internet, was much higher.

Several journalists faced questionable charges of bribery, defamation, “leaking state secrets,” or “spreading false rumors” in 2014. Gao Yu, a prominent dissident journalist, was detained in April, charged with “leaking state secrets,” and forced to give a televised confession in May. At year’s end she faced a possible sentence of life in prison. In August, Liu Hu, an investigative reporter for the Guangzhou-based *Modern Express*, was released on bail after being held for nearly a year on trumped-up charges of defamation. He had been detained in August 2013 after urging the authorities to investigate a Chongqing vice mayor for not carrying out his duties.

Freelance journalists, writers, online activists, and a range of other Chinese citizens continued to be sentenced to prison or administrative detention, particularly for disseminating information online or sending it to contacts outside China. Beijing lawyer and reform activist Xu Zhiyong was sentenced in January 2014 to four years in prison for “assembling a crowd to disrupt order in a public place,” having organized small protests to urge officials to disclose their assets and circulated photographs of the demonstrations online.

Members of religious and ethnic minorities are subject to particularly harsh treatment for their online activities, writings, or efforts to disseminate information that departs from the CCP line. Several of the journalists serving the longest prison terms in China are Uighurs and Tibetans. In addition to journalists, ordinary Tibetans, Uighurs, and Falun Gong practitioners have been imprisoned for accessing, possessing, or transmitting banned information. In January 2014, Ilham Tohti—a prominent Uighur scholar and founder of the Uighur Online website, which was dedicated to improving interethnic understanding—was arrested along with several of his students. Tohti was sentenced in September to life in prison on charges of separatism, and at year’s end a number of the students also remained in custody, with some in undisclosed locations.

Also in January, nine Falun Gong practitioners, detained in July 2012 and held in custody in Dalian, were reportedly sentenced to prison terms ranging from four to six years and subsequently denied access to their lawyers and the opportunity to appeal. They were charged with distributing and installing satellite dishes that enabled people to view international channels like Cable News Network (CNN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and New Tang Dynasty Television (NTDTV), a New York–based station run by Falun Gong practitioners that frequently reports on CCP infighting and human rights abuses in China.

A joint legal interpretation issued in September 2013 by the country’s highest judicial authorities expanded the scope and severity of criminal offenses covering online speech, including alleged “online rumors.” The interpretation also allowed prosecutors to initiate criminal defamation cases when online expression “seriously harms” public order or state interests. Under the guidelines, a user can receive up to three years in prison for posting content that is deemed false or defamatory if the circumstances are considered “serious,” meaning the post was viewed more than 5,000 times or reposted more than 500 times. In April 2014, in the first reported conviction under the new rules, microblogger Qin Zhihui was sentenced to three years in prison for alleged rumors he disseminated about celebrities and a former minister of railways.

Agencies responsible for media regulation took new restrictive actions during 2014, including canceling two crucial licenses of the internet giant Sina due to a small amount of lewd content on its site, barring Chinese journalists from collaborating with foreign or Hong Kong

media, and banning puns and wordplay from broadcast media and advertisements. In February, state media reported on the establishment of a new CCP body to coordinate work on cybersecurity and internet management, known as the Central Internet Security and Informatization Leading Group. The group appears to have full authority to coordinate decisions on the entire online sector, including cybersecurity, the urban-rural digital divide, and content regulation. It is headed by President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, and longtime propaganda chief Liu Yunshan.

Since open-government regulations took effect in 2008, many agencies have become more forthcoming in publishing official documents. However, courts have largely hesitated to enforce information requests, and government bodies routinely withhold information, even regarding matters of vital public concern.

Journalists and other media workers are required to hold government-issued press cards in order to be considered legitimate, though some report without one. In December 2013, regulators announced a plan requiring Chinese journalists to pass a new ideological exam in early 2014 in order to receive or renew their press cards. Those who violate content restrictions risk having their press-card renewals delayed or rejected, being blacklisted outright, getting fired, or facing criminal charges.

Political Environment

The CCP maintains direct control over news coverage through its Central Propaganda Department (CPD) and corresponding branches at lower administrative levels that determine the boundaries of permissible reporting. Routinely forbidden topics include calls for greater autonomy in Tibet and Xinjiang, relations with Taiwan, the persecution and activism of the Falun Gong spiritual group, the writings of prominent dissidents, and unfavorable coverage of CCP leaders. In addition to these standing taboos, the CPD and provincial censors issue secret directives on other subjects that are communicated almost daily to website administrators and periodically to traditional media editors. Directives issued during 2014 barred or “guided” reporting on a range of newsworthy events, including antigovernment protests in China, the prodemocracy Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, an activist’s death in custody, and high-level cases of official corruption.

CCP leaders use control of the media to propagate positive views of the party and government, while vilifying those deemed to be their enemies. In 2014, the authorities also continued to employ more subtle means to influence news coverage. In many cases they proactively set the agenda by allowing key state-run outlets to cover potentially damaging news in a timely but selective manner, then required other media to restrict their reporting to the established narrative. The aim is to preempt less favorable coverage by bloggers, foreign journalists, and the more aggressive commercial news outlets.

Restrictions on print media tightened during the year, as did pressure on investigative journalism and liberal media outlets. Journalists who attempted to investigate or report on controversial issues, question CCP rule, or present a perspective that conflicted with state propaganda directives faced harassment, dismissal, and abuse. In May, online journalist Zhang Jialong was dismissed from his position at the internet giant Tencent as apparent punishment for his comments about censorship during and after a February meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his publication of propaganda directives online. In July, journalist Song Zhibiao was dismissed from *China Fortune* magazine—reportedly on orders from propaganda officials—

for contributing an article to a Hong Kong news website. This was the first known case of the authorities enforcing the new ban, issued earlier the same month, on mainland journalists collaborating with outside media organizations.

The government has developed the world's most sophisticated and multilayered apparatus for censoring, monitoring, and manipulating online content. It is capable of a range of interventions, including localized internet blackouts during periods of unrest. On at least one occasion in 2014, local authorities completely shut down telecommunications in the Xinjiang city of Kashgar amid reported clashes between Uighur protesters and security forces.

Nationwide technical filtering restricts internet users' access to uncensored information hosted outside of China. One of the most important functions of the filtering system has been to permanently block international services such as the video-sharing site YouTube, the user-generated online encyclopedia Wikipedia, the social-networking site Facebook, and the microblogging platform Twitter. In 2014, starting around the June anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, a range of Google services that were previously available began being blocked, with restrictions on the Gmail e-mail application growing tighter toward the end of the year. In July, the authorities blocked Yahoo's Flickr photo-sharing service as well as messaging applications operated by Japanese and Korean firms—Line and Kakao, respectively.

With such services out of reach, domestic equivalents have gained popularity, but they are legally liable for content posted by users and risk losing their business licenses if politically sensitive information is circulated widely. The firms consequently employ automated programs and thousands of human censors to screen user-generated content and delete relevant posts in compliance with CCP directives.

Some foreign internet companies have also cooperated with the Chinese government on censorship enforcement. After launching a Chinese-language version in February 2014, the professional social-networking site LinkedIn reportedly began blocking dissemination of posts in accordance with the Chinese authorities' strict censorship standards. The blocking affected users inside and outside China so long as the post originated there, including content posted by foreign journalists based in the country. Following international criticism, LinkedIn executives announced in September that they would reevaluate the censorship policy, particularly regarding content shared outside of China.

Sina Weibo, a popular domestic microblogging service, has carried less public debate—particularly on politically sensitive topics—since a sweeping 2013 crackdown that roughly coincided with the new legal guidelines issued in September of that year. Throughout 2014, public figures with large microblog followings, such as blogger Li Chengpeng and cartoonist Wang Liming, continued to face pressure in the form of deletions, locked accounts, and selective arrests and interrogations.

Many Weibo users have shifted to Tencent's WeChat, an application organized around closed communities that is therefore less conducive to viral dissemination of news and nationwide public discussion. However, the social-media crackdown was extended to WeChat during 2014. In March, at least 39 public accounts used by journalists, activists, and internet portals to disseminate articles on current affairs were shut down or suspended. In April, the first closure of an activist's personal account was recorded, targeting U.S.-based blogger Bei Feng. In May, Tencent reportedly intensified efforts to verify the real identities of users behind public accounts, affecting nearly 6 million account operators. And in August, restrictions on such accounts were formalized when the State Internet Information Office prohibited instant-messaging accounts from posting or reposting political news without official approval. Despite

the censorship and monitoring, WeChat remained a popular and convenient means for activists to coordinate and share information among themselves, and for ordinary users to engage in a wide range of apolitical or commercial activities.

China's robust censorship system was unable to completely stop the circulation of unfavorable news in 2014, as technological advancements and the dedication of domestic and overseas activists have made the suppression of information more difficult. Chinese internet users routinely employ homonyms, homophones, and other creative tactics to defy censorship on domestic microblogging sites, and information sometimes spreads among users before censors are able to deem it "sensitive" and intervene. To circumvent the more rigid restrictions on their formal outlets, journalists have increasingly turned to personal microblog accounts to share sensitive information that might otherwise go unreported, though such channels are increasingly being scrutinized and blocked by censors.

In addition to censorship, the authorities have taken steps to actively guide user discussion online. Since 2004, CCP and government officials at all levels have recruited and trained an army of paid web commentators. Their tasks include posting progovernment remarks, tracking public opinion, disrupting or diverting criticism, and participating in public online chats with officials to provide the appearance of state-citizen interaction.

Conditions for foreign media in the country remain highly restrictive. Harassment of foreign reporters, including occasional physical attacks, and intimidation of their Chinese sources and staff continued during 2014. The authorities used website blocking and the threat of visa denials to retaliate against foreign journalists and news organizations that they deemed objectionable. One *New York Times* correspondent, veteran journalist Austin Ramzy, was forced to leave the country in January and report from Taiwan after the government refused to issue him a visa. *Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof reported in November that he too was being denied a visa. However, in a departure from the previous year, the authorities by late 2014 had issued hundreds of annual visa renewals to resident journalists from most outlets, including the *New York Times*. The websites of Bloomberg News and the *New York Times* have been blocked since 2012, when they reported on the wealth of top leaders' families, and other foreign news outlets experienced temporary blocking during 2014.

Since 2007, foreign journalists have been free of internal travel restrictions in most areas and allowed to conduct interviews with private individuals without prior government consent, but the looser rules do not apply to correspondents from Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan. In addition, travel to Tibet and other politically sensitive regions still requires prior approval and close supervision by authorities. In 2014, access for foreign journalists to Xinjiang and Tibetan areas was especially restricted, making it very difficult to report independently on violent clashes between Uighurs and security forces in Xinjiang and ongoing self-immolation protests in Tibet.

Violence against journalists and online whistle-blowers remained a concern during 2014, as did arbitrary detention and abuse in custody. In May, two detained journalists—Gao Yu and Xiang Nanfu—appeared in televised "confessions" that were apparently given under duress and without due process. The tactic had been revived in 2013, drawing comparisons to the Mao Zedong era.

Harassment of ordinary citizens by security forces sometimes touches on freedom of expression issues. In January 2014, a Tibetan worker was reportedly detained and abused in custody after police found photos and audio recordings of the Dalai Lama on his mobile phone during a random check of personal devices; such checks have become an increasingly common occurrence in Lhasa.

Economic Environment

Media outlets are abundant in China, with approximately 2,000 newspapers and hundreds of radio and television stations operating in 2014. Reforms in recent decades have allowed the commercialization of outlets without the privatization of ownership. Most cities feature at least one official newspaper published by the local government or CCP branch, as well as more commercialized subsidiaries. Some publications have private investors, but the government is required by law to retain a majority stake. The state-run China Central Television (CCTV) remains the only licensed national broadcaster, and all local stations are required to air its evening news programs.

Although the Chinese authorities continue to jam radio broadcasts by U.S. government-funded services such as Radio Free Asia and Voice of America (VOA), dedicated listeners access them online with the use of circumvention tools.

China is home to the largest number of internet users in the world, with the figure surpassing 600 million, or approximately 49 percent of the population, as of 2014. According to official statistics, over half a billion people access the internet via their mobile devices. The vast majority of users have an account on at least one of several microblogging or instant-messaging services, though the number of regularly active users is smaller. A growing number of Chinese use online circumvention tools and proxy servers to evade internet restrictions and access banned content.

Most media revenue comes from advertising and subscriptions rather than government subsidies, even for many party papers. Some observers argue that commercialization has shifted the media's loyalty from the party to the consumer, leading to tabloid-style and sometimes more daring reporting. Others note that the reforms have opened the door for economic incentives that serve to reinforce political pressure and self-censorship.

In 2014, the combination of political and economic pressures threatened the quality and market positions of two influential liberal publications. In January, Beijing's municipal propaganda department purchased a 49 percent stake in the *Beijing News*, supplementing an existing ownership stake held by a party mouthpiece, the *Guangming Daily*. The move increased direct official control over the paper, and some observers described it as a blow against the process of media commercialization. Separately, in the wake of a January 2013 strike by journalists and related public protests against censorship at the *Southern Weekly*, numerous editors and journalists have left the publication, disillusioned by the continuation of heightened censorship. These changes have decreased the prevalence and quality of the paper's investigative stories, reportedly reducing its influence among elite readers and its attractiveness to advertisers.

The regime remains alert to economic, technological, and social changes that are weakening CCTV's influence. As internet use spreads and provincial television stations gain viewers, fewer young people in particular turn to CCTV as their primary news source. Media regulators have responded in recent years with a string of new rules that restrict entertainment programming, especially during primetime, and starve provincial stations of related revenue. In 2014, these types of restrictions expanded to online video content. In March, officials announced that internet video service providers would be required to obtain licenses for video streaming, hire government-approved censors to manage program content, and verify the identities of users who upload files to their sites. Providers who did not comply would face penalties ranging from warnings and fines to a five-year ban from streaming content. The following month, the media

regulator ordered leading video-streaming sites, including Youku and Sohu, to remove four popular and properly licensed U.S. television shows from their services: *The Big Bang Theory*, *The Practice*, *The Good Wife*, and *NCIS*.

Corruption among Chinese journalists and media outlets persisted in 2014, due in part to financial difficulties emerging from conflicting political and commercial pressures. It remained common for public-relations firms to pay reporters for attending press conferences and for favorable news coverage, and some observers noted that payments to news websites to remove negative coverage had become institutionalized. Several media personalities were investigated and arrested in the context of the CCP's broader anticorruption campaign. Prominent CCTV anchor Rui Chenggang was detained in July, weeks after Guo Zhenxi, his longtime patron and head of the broadcaster's financial news channel, was detained for allegedly accepting bribes.

Colombia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12 / 30

Political Environment: 27 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 55 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	60,PF	56,PF	55,PF	53,PF	54,PF

The press in Colombia continued to work under dangerous conditions in 2014. Although the government has made attempts to strengthen protection mechanisms for journalists in recent years, security concerns still pose a serious challenge. Revelations of illegal surveillance during January peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebel group further complicated matters for journalists, whose communications with FARC sources were reportedly intercepted.

Legal Environment

The 1991 constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of information, but defamation remains a criminal offense. Media outlets also face civil lawsuits related to their coverage of sensitive topics, such as organized crime and corruption. Although most suits are eventually dropped, fighting them in court requires substantial financial resources and time, meaning they can have a deterrent effect.

In January 2014, the Constitutional Court validated the 2012 Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information, and President Juan Manuel Santos duly enacted it in March. The law, which entered into force in September, buttresses existing information rights guaranteed by both the constitution and the 1985 Law Ordering the Publicity of Official Acts and Documents. It requires that government agencies make documents related to contracts, budgets, and personnel available to the public. It also reduces the maximum period that such information can be kept confidential from 30 to 15 years, though the government may extend this period for an additional 15 years under certain conditions. Before ratifying the law, the Constitutional Court required that

key passages be reworded in order to limit the scope of information the government can withhold for reasons like national security. While these changes satisfied some of the objections expressed by press groups, the law stops short of designating a single agency to implement its provisions, raising concerns about its effectiveness.

Two official bodies are responsible for regulating and licensing Colombia's broadcast media. The Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications regulates the licensing of radio outlets, while the nominally independent National Television Authority (ANTV) regulates television licensing. In May 2013, the ANTV issued Resolution 0433 to bolster the community television sector. Although the resolution lengthens operating licenses and provides channels with access to government resources necessary for expansion, critics contend that other provisions, such as a limit on the maximum number of subscribers, are actually intended to stifle the sector. No licensing is necessary for print media.

The confidentiality of journalistic sources is protected under the constitution and by judicial rulings, but illegal surveillance has presented an ongoing challenge in Colombia, with dozens of journalists filing complaints against the administration of President Álvaro Uribe (2002–10) and distrust peaking after a series of 2010 phone-tapping scandals. In February 2014, the Miami-based television network Univision reported on allegations of illegal Colombian government surveillance during peace talks between the Colombian authorities and the FARC rebel group that were held in Havana in January. The revelation centered on the interception of some 2,600 e-mail messages between representatives of the FARC and both foreign and Colombian reporters.

Political Environment

Independent and privately owned print and broadcast media are generally free to express a variety of opinions and cover sensitive issues without official restrictions. However, journalists throughout the country, particularly in rural areas, face harassment from various actors, including paramilitaries, local criminals, drug-trafficking groups, guerrilla movements, and the government. Sensitive topics include corruption, organized crime, drug and human trafficking, land conflicts, indigenous rights, and extrajudicial executions. A pervasive climate of fear has led to self-censorship, particularly in rural settings and during election periods. The government operates an extensive program that provides protection to scores of journalists, although reporters have criticized the program's effectiveness.

Harassment often comes in the form of death threats. In January 2014, threats were issued to Erika Londoño, Gustavo Chicangana, and Jorge Ramírez, three radio journalists working for Caracol Radio Guaviare, after they reported on a vote to recall José Octaviano Rivera from office as Guaviare's governor. They reportedly received protection from the National Protection Unit (UNP). In May, the authorities warned journalist Gonzalo Guillén that there was a credible threat to his life. Guillén has been subject to slander, threats, and harassment since he investigated links between Kiko Gómez, a former governor of La Guajira currently serving time in prison, and a crime syndicate; he had already been forced to flee the country twice over the previous year due to death threats.

In August, journalist Javier Osuna was the victim of targeted vandalism at his home in Bogotá, resulting in the destruction of 18 months of research he had carried out on victims of paramilitary violence in Norte de Santander. In September, a gang called Los Rastrojos threatened to kill 24 people in Montería in northern Córdoba state, including two journalists who

report on local criminal activity—Leiderman Ortiz Berrío of the newspaper *La Verdad del Pueblo* and Edgar Astudillo of Radio Panzenú. Both received police protection. In October, threats intensified against Gustavo Rugeles, editor of the Bogotá-based news website *Las 2 Orillas*. Although the police protection afforded to Rugeles—who has faced threats since he began investigating links between neo-Nazi groups, paramilitaries, and local authorities three years ago—had recently been reduced due to a perceived decrease in risk, he remained an active target of intimidation.

In at least two cases during 2014, individuals who had received threats while working in the media were murdered, though it was unclear whether they were killed in connection with their journalism. In February, television cameraman Yonni Steven Caicedo was shot to death in Buenaventura. He had begun receiving death threats after reporting on a murder in mid-2013, and had subsequently left the city for seven months and refrained from working as a journalist. He was murdered by two assailants after returning in early 2014. In August, Luis Carlos Cervantes Solano, director of radio station Morena FM, was killed in Antioquia state. Cervantes had been receiving death threats since 2010, when he began covering stories about local corruption and alleged ties between authorities and paramilitaries. Although he had been under police protection for a time, he left journalism to focus on musical programming in late 2013, and his security detail was removed in July 2014.

Several other journalists fled the country or relocated within Colombia because of harassment and threats during 2014. In January, for example, Cartagena-based freelance journalist and animal rights activist Eva Durán went into hiding after receiving threats of physical harm and death in relation to her work. In August, freelance photographer and indigenous rights activist Juan Pablo Gutiérrez was forced to flee his home in central Colombia after receiving death threats from the Águilas Negras paramilitary group. Gutiérrez, who sought protection from the UNP, became a target of harassment after he published work that drew attention to threats against the indigenous Nukak tribe in the Colombian Amazon. The same paramilitary group later issued a series of threats against 14 journalists and 12 media organizations in December. Separately, Amalfi Rosales, a reporter for the Barranquilla-based paper *El Herald* and a correspondent for the Bogotá-based independent news network *Noticias Uno TV*, fled her home in northern La Guajira state in September after she received death threats and gunmen fired shots at her residence. Rosales began to be targeted in 2013 after reporting on ties between local authorities and criminal groups.

Impunity for those who threaten, attack, or kill members of the press continues to prevail in Colombia. While a 2010 reform extended the statute of limitations for violent crimes against journalists and human rights defenders from 20 to 30 years, the extension applies only to crimes committed after 2000. The few murders classified by the attorney general as crimes against humanity have no statute of limitations, however. In September 2012, it was announced that the torture and sexual assault of journalist Jineth Bedoya—who was kidnapped in 2000—constituted crimes against humanity. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) accepted Bedoya's case against the Colombian state in July 2014 and began investigating allegations that authorities were involved in the crimes against her. In August, President Santos designated May 25, the anniversary of the attacks on Bedoya, as a “national day of dignity” for victims of sexual violence during the decades-long civil conflict.

Although those who harm or murder journalists are rarely held accountable, one other recent case stands as a positive example. In December 2014, a court sentenced Hugo Daney Ortiz, the former deputy director of operations for the Administrative Security Department

(DAS), the Colombian national intelligence service that was disbanded in 2011, to 11 years in prison for carrying out a campaign of “aggravated psychological torture” against investigative journalist Claudia Julieta Duque and her daughter. Duque was investigating the involvement of DAS in the 1999 murder of journalist Jaime Garzón when the harassment began; it caused her to flee the country three times between 2003 and 2004. Several other former DAS officials have been accused of participating in the harassment; one of them, Jorge Armando Rubiano Jiménez, pleaded guilty in March 2014.

Economic Environment

Media ownership is concentrated among a few groups of private investors, and television is the dominant news medium. All print media in Colombia are privately owned. The government operates three public television stations, but the two private free-to-air networks dominate the ratings. The pattern in radio is similar, with the two public national radio stations attracting a small audience share. There are hundreds of community radio stations, which have sometimes faced pressure from the government and armed groups. Local media depend heavily on advertising by regional and municipal government agencies to stay in business, encouraging collusion among media owners, journalists, and officials.

As of 2014, the country’s internet penetration rate reached nearly 53 percent. The public is making increasing use of social-networking websites such as Facebook and other digital tools, all of which are providing a new arena for journalists to cover sensitive topics like corruption and organized crime.

Comoros

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 49 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	50,PF	48,PF	48,PF	49,PF	49,PF

Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 25 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 59 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014

Total Score, Status	54,PF	54,PF	55,PF	56,PF	57,PF
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Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is recognized by the Republic of Congo's 2002 constitution and its laws, but is restricted in practice. A 2001 law made Congo Republic one of the first African countries to decriminalize libel. However, certain types of speech, such as inciting violence or ethnic hatred, are criminalized and carry the potential for prison sentences as well as monetary penalties. Such charges are rarely brought against individual journalists, and no cases were reported in 2014.

Although the constitution guarantees access to information, there is no implementing legislation, nor is there a specific law mandating public access to official information. Government officials often delay releasing information.

Media outlets are required to register with the High Council on Freedom of Communication (CSLC), whose 11 members are chosen by representatives of Parliament, the Supreme Court, and the executive branch; the president selects the director. In practice, only a small percentage of print and broadcast outlets are formally registered, though the vast majority operate unhindered. The government retains the right to revoke the accreditation of journalists at government and foreign-owned media outlets if their reporting reflects badly on the image of the government, ruling party, or its leaders.

Political Environment

The CSLC may suspend or ban media outlets that allegedly violate media regulations. Since the 2012 appointment of its new head, former minister of energy Philippe Mwouo, such orders have increased in number. In February 2014, the body issued a four-month suspension to the newspaper Talassa for refusing to answer a CSLC summons. Talassa had faced a similar suspension in 2013. In November 2013, the CSLC suspended three independent weeklies for nine months each for defamation, and in December of that year, it banned three other privately owned newspapers—La Griffé, Le Nouveau Regard and La Vérité—for an indefinite period for violations including defamation and manipulating public opinion.

The potential for legal action and the revocation of credentials leads many journalists, particularly at state-run outlets, to practice self-censorship.

Reporters occasionally face intimidation and threats, but physical attacks against journalists are unusual. In September 2014, the Interior Ministry expelled two reporters from the country. In early September, Elie Smith of Cameroon, a reporter for progovernment broadcaster MNTV, was attacked in his home for his coverage of an opposition meeting. After pressing the police to more thoroughly investigate the incident, he was accused of seditious acts and working for foreign powers, and was deported in late September. Also that month, freelance journalist Sadio Kante Morel, born in Brazzaville to foreign parents, was accused of illegal residence, drug consumption, and disturbing the peace. She was the first journalist to cover the attack on Smith and reportedly angered authorities with her criticisms of the investigation, leading to her expulsion to Mali.

Economic Environment

There is one government-run newspaper, La Nouvelle République, which has a circulation of about 5,000 and publishes irregularly. The privately owned Dépêches de Brazzaville, the only professionally produced daily paper, is known to be close to the government. There are more than 100 private print publications, but their circulations are generally quite low and they are not distributed widely beyond the main cities. Most are supportive of the government, but a few can be critical of the authorities up to a point, and on occasion publish letters from opposition leaders and cover corruption allegations. Costs for print publications are high, particularly for paper purchased from abroad.

Most Congolese get their news from television and radio. There are some 95 radio stations in Congo, and about two dozen television stations; of these, only the state-run Tele-Congo and Radio Congo have nationwide reach. Almost all broadcast outlets are privately owned, though often by government officials and their relatives, and they usually lack financial stability. The main private broadcast company, DRTV, was founded after the government opened up the media to more competition in 2001, and currently owns a radio station and two television stations. Rebroadcasts from the British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio France Internationale, and Voice of America are also available.

There are no controls on the internet and satellite television, but only about 7 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. Connectivity is expected to improve with the arrival of the submarine fiber-optic West Africa Cable System. Consumption of internet-based news and use of social media is increasing, particularly among the youth and in urban areas.

Congo, Democratic Republic of (Kinshasa)

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 31 / 40

Economic Environment: 24 / 30

Total Score: 79 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	81,NF	81,NF	83,NF	83,NF	79,NF

Conditions for the press in the Democratic Republic of Congo remained poor in 2014. A journalist was killed for the first time in more than six years, and restrictive laws were frequently used to prosecute journalists in connection with their work. Ongoing conflict in the east of the country made reporting there extremely difficult.

Legal Environment

Although the 2005 constitution and various laws provide for freedoms of speech, information, and the press, these guarantees are seldom enforced. The government's control over the courts hinders impartial adjudication of cases against journalists, and verdicts often reflect political bias.

Criminal defamation laws were frequently used to detain and intimidate journalists in

2014. In August, for example, Senator Francis Kaniki filed a complaint against journalists Michael Mukebaya and John Tshingombe of *Congo News* over an article that accused the senator's brother, Cardinal Laurent Pasinya, of illegally soliciting funds. Later that month, police arrested Mukebaya, while Tshingombe went into hiding; Mukebaya remained in detention at year's end. According to the Observatory of Freedom of the Press in Africa (OLPA), other journalists detained for defamation during the year included Michel Tshiyoyo of *Espérance* in June, Achico Ngaya Madingama of *Nouvelles du Soir* and Daniel Safu of *Points* in July, Eric Masimo Matuka of *C-News* in November, and Luron Nyamuinga of E-Radio in December—all of whom published investigative work pertaining to the government. In a positive development in April, authorities granted amnesty to Patrick Palata of *Canal Congo Télévision*, who had been detained for three years for “participating in an insurrectionist movement.”

Media outlets are regulated by the High Council for Broadcasting and Communication (CSAC), which has the power to temporarily suspend outlets for hate speech and other serious ethical transgressions. The council has been criticized as politically biased and indifferent to press freedom concerns.

In August 2014, the Ministry of Information declared 75 newspapers defunct for not publishing over the previous three years, and banned another 61 newspapers for lack of registration. Observers questioned the ministry's authority to ban newspapers, noting in part that while the 1996 press law requires papers to register, they do not need a permit to publish. Moreover, many of the papers in question denied lacking registration or failing to publish in the last three years.

Political Environment

Many media outlets display political bias. State-owned broadcasters reportedly favor President Joseph Kabila's party, though other ruling political parties are occasionally given airtime. Private outlets owned by partisan figures and affiliated businessmen are often used for political propaganda rather than objective reporting. The only independent radio network with nationwide reach, Radio Okapi, is funded by the United Nations and Switzerland-based Fondation Hironnelle.

Journalists and media outlets face censorship and harassment from government officials, members of the security forces, and nonstate actors, though the little-used internet remains unrestricted. The government continued to suspend broadcasts and shutter outlets for their reporting in 2014.

In October, Sébastien Impeto, the acting governor of Équateur Province, ordered the suspension of Radio Equateur after he faced criticism from its hosts. In November, Information Minister Lambert Mende ordered the shutdown of the community radio stations Télévision Graben Beni, Liberté Beni, Télévision Rwanzururu, Ngoma, and Furu for alleged affiliation with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group. Journalists at the outlets denied the charges. Six days later, Mende publicly accused Radio Television Lubumbashi Jua of incitement and insurrection and called for its closure. The decision was reportedly a reaction to the station's criticism of a government proposal to amend the constitution and allow Kabila to seek a third term.

Among other instances of content-based restrictions, for nearly three weeks in January, authorities shut down Manono Community Radio in Katanga Province for “disturbing public order.” In May, an official in Kolwezi, Katanga, prohibited media outlets from “initiating or

sharing declarations of a political or administrative nature from traditional leaders, including information about mining companies, international organizations and NGOs working in their administrative subdivisions, without the area administrator's stamp or signature of approval." In June, officials banned local media in Likasi from broadcasting political information. In July, the CSAC banned reporting on Muslim communities in North Kivu Province that were celebrating Eid al-Fitr, in order to foster "peace and peaceful cohabitation."

Journalists and their outlets faced threats and actual violence on several occasions during 2014. In June, army officer Dido Bilali reportedly threatened Radio Liberté for its reports about his alleged abuses. A day later, the National Intelligence Agency threatened a journalist after he reported that the governor of Bandundu Province had embezzled 11 million Congolese francs (\$12,000). In July, police beat journalist Fabrice Yembo and cameramen Delo Demolo and Girèsse Mabiala as they reported on a protest. Yembo and Demolo sustained injuries in custody, and their equipment was confiscated. Cameraman Rubens Belengel of Antenne A TV was arbitrarily detained while covering a protest the following week.

Arbitrary detention, extrajudicial questioning, threats, and kidnapping are widespread in the country's conflict-plagued east. Following the January assassination of Colonel Mamadou Ndala in Beni, officials obstructed coverage of the incident, notably by threatening reporters including freelancer Alain Wandimoyi, Austere Malivika of Voice of America, and Keny Katombe of Reuters. In May, armed men intimidated South Kivu-based radio journalists David Munyaga and Bienvenu Malega for informing media in Burundi about the Burundian army's alleged training of a paramilitary youth wing of Burundi's ruling party on Congolese soil. In November, the governor of Orientale Province, Jean Bamanisa, issued a number of threats against Bunia-based Radio Okapi journalist Jean-Paul Bisila.

Two journalists were killed in 2014, and another was badly wounded. In February, ADF rebels ambushed a Congolese army vehicle in Oïcha, killing embedded Radio Télévision Muungano journalist Germain Muliwavyo, while two of his colleagues sustained injuries. Muliwavyo was the first journalist killed in connection with his work in the country in more than six years. In October, a man shot and wounded cameraman Philémon Gira of Congolese National Radio and Television (RTNC) in the eastern city of Goma and stole his camera and tapes. In December, two men shot and killed radio reporter Robert Chamwami of RTNC, also in Goma; their motive was unclear.

Economic Environment

According to Ministry of Communication data from 2012, there were 134 television stations, 463 radio stations, and 445 newspapers registered in the country. The hundreds of privately owned radio and television stations operate alongside three state-owned radio stations and a state-owned television station. The British Broadcasting Corporation and Radio France Internationale are available in several cities on FM radio. Given its low literacy rates and deep poverty, the population relies largely on radio broadcasts to receive news. Only a few stations, including the state broadcasters and internationally funded Radio Okapi, have nationwide reach. While internet access has spread in urban areas thanks to the proliferation of private and affordable internet cafés, only about 3 percent of the population used the internet in 2014. Journalists at major media outlets are usually poorly paid and insufficiently trained, leaving them vulnerable to bribery and political manipulation.

Costa Rica

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 7 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 17 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	19,F	18,F	19,F	18,F	18,F

Costa Rica continues to enjoy a free press backed by strong legal and political institutions. In 2014, the Supreme Court bolstered media freedom by ruling against law enforcement agencies that had monitored a journalist's telephone calls as part of a leak investigation.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees press freedom, and this right is generally upheld. However, punitive press laws, particularly concerning defamation, have occasionally been used to restrict the operations of the media. Provisions from the country's 1902 printing press law that imposed prison sentences for defamation were in effect until the Supreme Court struck them down in 2010. In December 2011, the Costa Rican courts created an appeals process for overturning criminal libel sentences. There were no active defamation cases against journalists in 2014, with the last one resolved in 2012, when an accused journalist agreed to publish a correction to the offending article. However, despite these advances and calls for further reform, journalists remain vulnerable to criminal charges for defamation, which can result in excessive fines and the placing of one's name on a national list of convicted criminals. The constitution reserves for readers the right of reply to newspapers in response to information that the readers deem incorrect or egregious.

In a positive ruling for media freedom, the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court found in March 2014 that law enforcement agencies' secret monitoring of a journalist's telephone calls was unconstitutional. In January, the San Jose-based *Diario Extra* newspaper had accused the Judicial Investigation Agency (OIJ) and the office of the public prosecutor of recording its reporter's public and private calls during most of 2013. The agencies subsequently admitted to conducting the surveillance as part of an investigation into a suspected whistleblower within government. Despite the government's claim that it was targeting a state official and not the reporter with whom he communicated, the Supreme Court instructed the OIJ to destroy the records related to the monitoring and never repeat such tactics.

Existing laws have established procedures for obtaining public information, with which the government generally complies. However, Costa Rica has no comprehensive framework for access to information, and a lack of enforcement mechanisms under current law undermines the efficacy of the process. The Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom Bill, originally introduced in 2002, would provide a stronger legal foundation for freedom of information, but it has been repeatedly postponed. The election of President Luis Guillermo Solís in April 2014 did little to advance the bill beyond the steps already taken by previous administrations.

In August 2014, the Legislative Assembly’s Social Affairs Committee approved a bill intended to enhance press freedom by prohibiting managers and editors of media outlets from obstructing the investigative work of their journalists, pressuring them to adhere to a particular editorial line, or manipulating their writing through dishonest editing. Although seemingly benign, the bill was criticized by press freedom advocates for subverting the overall independence of the press, interfering with management and the editing process, and prohibiting ordinary decisions that may be necessary for space, quality, or other legitimate reasons. The full assembly had yet to pass the bill at year’s end.

Political Environment

While fear of legal reprisals encourages some self-censorship, media outlets are generally free to cover a range of sensitive political and social issues and to openly criticize the government.

Journalists rarely face physical threats or violence in Costa Rica, and there were no reports of such attacks in 2014.

Economic Environment

Costa Rica has a vibrant media sector, with numerous public and privately owned newspapers, television outlets, and radio stations. Private media ownership is highly concentrated, however, and tends to be politically conservative. There are nine major newspapers, and cable television is widely available. Radio is the most popular medium for news dissemination. The internet serves as an additional source of unrestricted information and was accessed by 49 percent of the population in 2014. Access to high-speed internet service remains surprisingly low compared with other countries in the region, but the situation is improving.

Côte d’Ivoire

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 53 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	66,NF	68,NF	70,NF	61,NF	55,NF

The media environment in Côte d’Ivoire was notably more open in 2014 than in the past, as the country maintained many of the gains achieved since President Alassane Ouattara took office following the disputed November 2010 presidential election and a related civil conflict. More diverse news content has become available to citizens, journalists have much greater freedom to cover important events, and violence against journalists has fallen dramatically. Further progress during 2014 included the implementation of a new freedom of information law and a continued reduction in violence.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and of the press are protected in the constitution and the country's laws, though there are prohibitions on speech that incites violence, ethnic hatred, or rebellion. In October 2014, the Ministry of Communication began public consultations on revising the 2004 press law, with the aim of "further liberating and professionalizing" the media and online media in particular. Press offenses cannot result in prison sentences, but defamation carries a fine of up to 15 million CFA francs (\$30,000), and libel against the head of state or other state institutions is punishable by fines of up to 20 million CFA francs (\$40,000). In February 2014, the National Press Council (CNP) suspended the newspaper *Le Monde d'Abidjan* for three months for "insults of extreme gravity" against the president.

A new law on freedom of information was passed in December 2013. In March 2014, the government announced that it would form a new Commission on Access to Information to monitor the law's effectiveness and implementation, and in December the Council of Ministers appointed members of the commission. An existing government web portal allows the public to freely access some official information, with regular updates of communiqués from council meetings and other documents.

Under former president Laurent Gbagbo, media regulatory bodies such as the CNP were frequently used to control critical journalism, and this pattern persisted during President Ouattara's first two years in office, with Gbagbo-aligned outlets as the targets. In 2013 and 2014, the CNP's activities appeared less politically motivated, but the body has been strict in suspending journalists and publications for perceived violations of professional ethics. Among other cases in 2014, the opposition-aligned paper *Le Quotidien d'Abidjan* received a two-month suspension for publishing articles "bordering on invention"; Valence Kouamé Sibahi, a reporter at *Notre Voie*, was suspended for one month over a story about a CNP suspension that did not take place; and the president of the journalists' union and manager of *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, Moussa Traore, received a six-month suspension for allegedly trying to bribe the manager of a satirical newspaper to censor a story about the minister of finance. The CNP's broadcast counterpart, the High Authority for Audiovisual Communications (HACA), did not issue any such suspensions during the year, partly because there are very few private outlets in the broadcast sector.

In 2012, Ivoirian journalists, in collaboration with the Media Foundation for West Africa, adopted a new code of ethics that met international standards. Entry into the profession of journalism is open and does not require a particular degree or background. In October 2014, the commission responsible for administering press cards, under the auspices of the HACA and the CNP, distributed nearly 970 cards, of which about 700 were renewals; 114 applications were rejected.

Political Environment

The media landscape is relatively polarized, with most outlets taking editorial lines that support one of the country's political factions. Nevertheless, the severe restrictions on access to independent news sources that were imposed during the postelection crisis were largely lifted in 2012, and have not been reinstated since. International media, including Radio France Internationale (RFI) and the UN radio station Onuci FM—both of which were banned under

Gbagbo—have operated freely since Ouattara took office. The president has even pointed to Onuci FM as a model of independent broadcasting. Members of the local press have also observed an easing of restrictions on their ability to cover the news, and the government did not block websites or constrain internet access in 2014. The government continued to express its desire to ensure that state media were accessible to all political parties, and though many outlets still seemed to favor the Ouattara administration, they covered opposition political events more regularly and with less bias than in the past.

While conditions improved in the south, particularly in Abidjan, access to news and information in the north, where some districts are largely controlled by local warlords, remained limited. Abidjan-based outlets are expanding their networks of reporters in the north, but progress is slow.

The minister of communication drew criticism from press freedom groups in May after she asked her counterpart in Benin to suspend two television programs that carried partisan criticism of the Ivoirian government, despite Ouattara's public commitment to a more open media environment.

Physical attacks against journalists were a serious problem in Côte d'Ivoire in the past, particularly under the Gbagbo regime, but only one minor incident was reported in 2014. In May, a journalist with *Le Temps* was assaulted by a bodyguard when he attempted to join other reporters in the home of an opposition politician. Unlike in 2013, no journalists were detained or jailed by police during the year.

Economic Environment

The media sector in Côte d'Ivoire is vibrant and growing, though the state still controls the largest radio stations, including the only one with national reach, as well as *Fraternité Matin*, the largest-circulation daily newspaper; a news agency; and the national television broadcaster, Radiodiffusion Télévision Ivoirienne (RTI). In 2012, the government opened up the television and radio industries to private broadcasters after more than two decades of promises to liberalize the airwaves. Under the 2004 media law, the few authorized private radio stations had been limited to entertainment and cultural programming, and no private television stations were permitted. Although private broadcast outlets can now legally cover political events, no private television outlets had opened as of 2014. This may be a result of the particularly high fees—over \$3 million for a commercial television station. However, private radio stations now offer some coverage of public affairs.

The independent press in Abidjan has equal access to modern printing facilities, and a variety of news producers are able to reach the public through popular satellite services and the country's many print vendors.

Nearly 15 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014, and urban, literate Ivoirians are increasingly turning to online sources for news and information. Online news sites, like Abidjan.net, are beginning to rival print news in terms of both professionalism and breadth of coverage, and the government is keen to develop regulations to govern online press.

As the private media market continues to expand, lack of funding has become a more urgent problem, with a larger number of outlets competing for limited advertising revenues. The government does not explicitly give financial aid to any private media outlets, but backdoor financing from political actors is not uncommon. Independent outlets that provide investigative reporting sometimes have difficulty securing advertising from the government or private

businesses. Ivoirian media in general suffer from a lack of professionalism and limited logistical capacity. Journalists are poorly trained, and salaries are low, leaving many media practitioners vulnerable to corruption.

Crimea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 38 / 40

Economic Environment: 26 / 30

Total Score: 94 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	--	--	--	--	94,NF

The media environment in Crimea was transformed in February 2014, when Russian forces occupied the peninsula. The move came after the collapse of the Ukrainian government of President Viktor Yanukovich, which had failed in its attempt to crush a protest movement calling for his resignation, anticorruption reforms, and European integration. The occupation authorities in Crimea quickly engineered a March referendum calling for union with Russia, and Moscow formally annexed the territory, imposing restrictive Russian media laws and taking other steps to control the work of the press.

The aggressive efforts by Russian and Russian-installed local authorities to establish control over what had been a fairly pluralistic media landscape meant that conditions in 2014 were worse than in Russia itself. Independent outlets were forcibly shut down, transmissions of Ukrainian stations were switched to broadcasts from Russia, and many journalists fled Crimea to escape harassment, violence, and arrests.

Legal Environment

After the March 18 annexation, which was not recognized internationally, the occupation authorities began enforcing Russia's constitution and federal laws. A local constitution based on the Russian model was imposed the following month. Although the Russian constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, a variety of restrictive laws and a politicized judiciary curb media independence in practice. Journalists are subject to trumped-up criminal charges for defamation, "extremism," and other offenses. A 2009 Russian law on freedom of information has not been effective in reducing government secrecy and bureaucratic obstructions. Federal regulators have broad discretion in enforcing media registration and licensing rules and blocking online news outlets.

In addition to the restrictions it imposed, the Russian legal system failed to protect journalists, activists, and others from abuses by security forces and paramilitary "self-defense" units, which engaged in unlawful detentions and physical assaults during 2014.

In the months after the annexation, the occupation authorities harassed pro-Ukraine media outlets, shutting down some and threatening others with closure. All mass media—including online outlets—were given until January 2015 to register with Roskomnadzor, the

Russian federal media regulator, and to obtain a license; editors were repeatedly warned by officials that they would not be allowed to register if they disseminated “extremist” materials. Criticism of the annexation or calls for Crimea’s return to Ukraine could also be deemed violations of a December 2013 Russian law against inciting separatism, which carries penalties of up to five years in prison.

Media outlets operated by the Crimean Tatar community, which generally opposed the occupation, were the main targets of this harassment. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the chief editor of the Crimean Tatar newspaper *Avdet*, Shevket Kaybullayev, was questioned in June by the public prosecutor’s office and received an official warning over “extremist content,” based on the paper’s coverage of opposition activities and even the use of terms like “occupation.” In September, *Avdet*’s office was raided and searched by unidentified members of the security forces, who did not show a warrant. The office was then sealed, and the paper’s bank accounts were frozen. The Federal Security Service (FSB) gave Kaybullayev an official warning that he could face five years in prison for extremism if *Avdet* continued to report on calls for a boycott of the September regional elections.

ATR, the Crimean Tatar television station, received an official warning from prosecutors in May after it reported on a Tatar protest. In September, the Interior Ministry demanded a range of documents from the station and said it was suspected of inciting extremism and distrust toward the authorities. An ATR deputy director told HRW that the station received regular calls and visits from FSB agents who applied editorial pressure backed by threats of closure.

Like other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), journalists’ associations and groups dedicated to press freedom and freedom of expression became subject to onerous Russian laws, including measures restricting foreign funding. Many human rights and civic activists reportedly relocated to mainland Ukraine to escape legal restrictions as well as extralegal harassment, detentions, and intimidation in Crimea.

Political Environment

Crimea featured a relatively pluralistic media environment while under Ukrainian control, but the occupation authorities immediately began cutting off access to Ukrainian news outlets and replacing them with Russian alternatives. Television retransmission facilities were seized by armed men, and the signals of Russian state-owned broadcasters were substituted for those of the main Ukrainian stations. Local cable companies gradually dropped all but a few entertainment-themed Ukrainian channels.

Several local media organizations, including the nonprofit Center for Investigative Journalism and the independent television and radio company Chornomorska (Black Sea), reestablished themselves in mainland Ukraine after encountering official pressure in Crimea. Chornomorska was initially forced off the air in March, and the authorities seized its equipment and offices in August on the grounds that the station had failed to pay fees to a state broadcasting agency.

Individual journalists also joined the activists and others who fled Crimea due to intimidation by the authorities and self-defense forces. A popular anti-annexation blogger, Yelizaveta Bohutskaya, left in September after her home was raided by police, who confiscated equipment and detained her for six hours of questioning about her political views.

Many journalists and media workers were obstructed, detained, questioned, and had equipment seized or damaged while reporting in Crimea, including correspondents for Polish and

mainland Ukrainian outlets. Some were also physically assaulted, including multiple employees of Crimean Tatar outlets. In one of the more severe cases, self-defense forces in June stopped Sergey Mokrushin and Vladen Melnikov of the Center for Investigative Journalism on a street in Simferopol for singing an anti-Putin song. The men were detained and badly beaten, then transferred to the police, who eventually released them. Self-defense units generally enjoyed impunity for their actions throughout the year.

Also in June, Ruslan Yugosh, one of the founders of the news website Sobytiya Kryma (Crimean Events), was summoned for questioning by police, but he refused, explaining that he was not in Crimea. The next day, the police instead interrogated the journalist's 73-year-old mother, threatening her with possible repercussions for her son if he continued to damage Crimea's reputation.

Economic Environment

The changes imposed by the occupation authorities during 2014 left Russian outlets, particularly state-owned television stations, with a dominant position in the Crimean media market. In addition to the exclusion of most Ukrainian broadcasters, distribution of Ukrainian print outlets was obstructed by Russian and Russian-backed Crimean officials; Ukraine's postal agency announced in September that it could no longer make deliveries of Ukrainian publications to the peninsula.

The Crimean Tatar outlets, including ATR, *Avdet*, and the news agency QHA, were among the last independent media operating in Crimea at year's end. Others continued to function after relocating to mainland Ukraine, and they generally attempted to reach Crimean audiences via the internet. U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty created a service offering Crimean news in Russian, Ukrainian, and Tatar.

Future access to non-Russian websites was threatened by Russian government efforts to gain control of all internet traffic on the peninsula. The state-owned telecommunications firm Rostelecom installed a submarine cable across the Kerch Strait and began providing service in July. Beginning in August, mobile service from Ukrainian carriers was disrupted, and they were replaced by Russian companies.

The broader economic environment in which the media operated was affected by a variety of other factors related to the occupation, including widespread and irregular expropriations by Russian-backed local authorities, Russian government subsidies, obstacles to trade and communications with mainland Ukraine, and international sanctions.

Croatia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30

Political Environment: 16 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 40 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	40,PF	41,PF	40,PF	40,PF	40,PF

Legal Environment

The constitution recognizes freedom of the press as well as the right to information. Nevertheless, there are a number of legislative restrictions on press freedom, and the state has tolerated harassment of journalists and taken legal action against critical media outlets. Hate speech carries a maximum prison sentence of five years. Under the criminal code, insulting the “Republic of Croatia, its coat of arms, national anthem, or flag” can lead to a three-year prison sentence.

Libel remains a criminal offense, although the parliament removed imprisonment as a possible punishment in 2006. In September 2014, the Zagreb Municipal Civil Court found the television station RTL guilty of slander and ordered it to pay 50,000 Croatian kuna (\$8,400) to Zagreb mayor Milan Bandić; the case was related to a 2013 RTL broadcast in which Zoran Milanović, Croatia’s prime minister, had accused Bandić of corruption. According to the Croatian Journalists’ Association (CJA), there were more than 40 pending criminal defamation and insult cases against journalists as of April 2014 alone.

Amendments to the criminal code introduced in 2013 defined “shaming” as a criminal offense punishable by significant fines, even if the claims in question are proven true. In April 2014, Slavica Lukić became the first journalist to be convicted of the offense after reporting that the medical company Medikol faced financial distress despite receiving substantial funding from the state. She was fined 26,000 kuna (\$4,700). Following criticism by media professionals and watchdogs, the parliament began considering changes to the amendments in question, including the possibility of allowing individuals to defend themselves against the offense of shaming by proving their statements to be true, or establishing reasonable grounds for publishing them. Discussions continued throughout the year, although no legislative changes were made.

In 2013, Croatia adopted the Law on the Right of Access to Information. The legislation includes a proportionality and public-interest test designed to determine a balance between reasons for disclosing information and reasons for restricting it, and establishes an independent information commissioner to monitor compliance.

The Agency for Electronic Media, an independent regulator, licenses broadcast outlets. Journalists have criticized nontransparent practices by the body, and have noted that licenses have been denied due to a poor understanding of Croatia’s media sector among the agency’s staff—particularly of the role of internet-based broadcasters. There has also been some concern regarding the agency’s use of funds meant for the promotion of commercial television and radio productions. There is no licensing requirement for media that do not use the broadcast frequency spectrum. Print media must register with the Chamber of Commerce.

The CJA is considered a model for the region. It holds journalists to a highly professional code of ethics, and its Council of Honor is responsible for reviewing complaints. However, membership in the CJA continued to decline in 2014, partly due to a decrease in the number of journalists operating in Croatia’s difficult economic environment as well as in the number of working journalists interested in joining a union.

The state-owned public broadcaster, Croatia Radio-Television (HRT), is funded through advertising revenue and licensing fees. It is often seen as representing political interests, especially since its director general, board members, and administrators are appointed by the parliament. In recent years, the broadcaster has been criticized for censoring and suspending

programs without explanation, politicizing personnel decisions, lacking transparency, and failing to respect professional standards.

Political Environment

Journalists, especially those covering corruption, organized crime, and war crimes, continue to face harassment as a result of their work, although physical violence against journalists has significantly decreased in recent years. These risks, as well as the risk of losing advertising contracts over critical reporting or coverage of sensitive topics, encourage self-censorship.

Journalists experienced interference from the authorities on several occasions in 2014. In March, government officials tried to discredit journalist Danka Derifaj after she reported on alleged nepotism in the local administration of the town of Jastrebarsko. In May, authorities scrutinized the news website Index.hr in the wake of its critical reporting on financial issues in Croatia, prompting concern from media freedom advocates that the attention was punitive. Also in May, the South East Europe Media Organization, an advocacy group, reported that the mayor of Split had been reluctant to inform journalist Dragan Miljus of Index.hr about local government affairs after Miljus published articles critical of Split's administration.

In March, some attendees of a carnival in Omis burned an effigy of journalist Vinko Vuković, who had reported on corruption in the town prior to the incident. In June, Drago Pilsel received a death threat after he published an article about Drako Kordić, a convicted war criminal who had recently been released from prison. In August, several assailants attacked journalist and rights activist Domagoj Margetić near his home in Zagreb.

Economic Environment

Dozens of private television and radio stations, both local and national, disseminate a variety of views. Cable and satellite television access is also common. While private media owners must be registered, the records are not easily accessible to the public and often do not clearly or fully indicate owner identities. Many private media owners hold interests in other industries, creating commercial and political pressure that can reduce critical news coverage of the government or influential commercial entities.

Croatia's largest business conglomerate accounts for the bulk of advertising share in the country and also owns Tisak, the nationwide newspaper distributor. Zagreb-based Europa Press Holdings and Austria's Styria control most of the print media market, raising concerns about concentration. Dwindling newspaper circulation and a decline in advertising revenue due to the global economic crisis have left many media outlets financially weak, leading to a blurring of the lines between journalism, advertising, and public relations, and making it difficult for outlets to publish content critical of their advertisers. A number of media outlets are controlled by the banks that hold their loans or the advertising companies that provide much of their revenue. A significant percentage of local media outlets are partially owned by their local governments, jeopardizing independent reporting of local politics.

Journalists' salaries have experienced declines since 2008, forcing many reporters to take second or third jobs. Some journalists have reported that they do not get paid regularly. Professional standards have declined, as journalists compete for a decreasing number of jobs and rush to produce content quickly.

The government does not restrict access to the internet, which was used by 69 percent of the population in 2014. Croatians have access to a relatively large number of online media, and readership of online sources of news and information is steadily climbing. Online news outlets, which are not as reliant on advertising as traditional platforms, can in some cases facilitate more independent reporting. However, online outlets also face the challenge of inadequate funding. Inconsistent standards for reporting and a lack of sustainable business practices remain pervasive problems among internet-based news outlets, many of which copy content from other portals.

Cuba

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 28 / 30

Political Environment: 35 / 40

Economic Environment: 28 / 30

Total Score: 91 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	93,NF	92,NF	91,NF	92,NF	90,NF

In 2014, the Cuban government continued to suppress dissent, including harassing, intimidating, and detaining independent journalists. At the same time, the country eased some restrictions on expression, allowing previously taboo topics to be aired in the national media and certain opposition voices to be more widely heard.

Legal Environment

Cuba has the most restrictive laws on freedom of expression and the press in the Americas. The constitution prohibits private ownership of media outlets and allows free speech and journalism only if they “conform to the aims of a socialist society.” Article 91 of the penal code prescribes lengthy prison sentences or death for those who act against “the independence or the territorial integrity of the state,” and Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba’s National Independence and Economy imposes up to 20 years in prison for acts “aimed at subverting the internal order of the nation and destroying its political, economic, and social system.” Cuba’s legal and institutional structures are firmly under the control of the executive branch. Laws criminalizing “enemy propaganda” and the dissemination of “unauthorized news” are used to restrict freedom of speech under the guise of protecting state security. Insult laws can carry penalties of three months to one year in prison, with sentences of up to three years if the president or members of the Council of State or National Assembly are the objects of criticism. The 1997 Law of National Dignity targets independent news agencies that send their material abroad by authorizing prison sentences of 3 to 10 years for anyone who, in a direct or indirect form, “collaborates with the enemy’s media.”

In recent years the government has undertaken a number of small gestures that indicate potential for a narrow media opening. In January 2013, the country removed exit visa requirements for citizens traveling abroad. Since then, several prominent Cuban opposition journalists and bloggers have traveled out of the country—most notably Yoani Sánchez, who has

made multiple trips abroad. Nevertheless, passports are still issued at the government's discretion and have been withheld from select journalists for state-defined "reasons of public interest." In particular, journalists who formerly served jail time for antigovernment activities have been denied the right to exit Cuba. Further, some journalists who have traveled abroad, including Roberto de Jesús Guerra, founder and director of independent news agency Hablemos Press, have complained of harassment and confiscation of documents upon their return.

Political Environment

For years, independent or critical Cuban journalists and bloggers have suffered harassment for their reporting on topics deemed sensitive by the government. Such harassment has taken the form of arbitrary short-term detentions, beatings, threats against journalists and their family members, internal deportations, house arrest, "public repudiations," and demotions. Government attempts to silence dissidents intensified in 2014, particularly during events that drew international attention to the island. In late January, more than three dozen journalists and opposition activists were preemptively detained prior to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit, held in Havana. During the summit, cell phone service was blocked for activists trying to report events surrounding the meeting to the outside world. In December, following the announcement that the United States and Cuba would reestablish diplomatic relations after nearly 54 years, the government again cracked down on dissidents, with detentions and house arrests of opposition journalists including Reinaldo Escobar, the editor in chief of the news website 14ymedio.com and the husband of Yoani Sánchez.

In April, independent journalist Juliet Michelena Díaz of the Cuban Network of Community Journalists (RCCC) was taken into custody after photographing an operation of the Havana police. She was originally charged with "threatening a neighbor," but the charges were elevated to *atentado* (terrorism) following the publication of her photographs and an accompanying report. In November, a judge declared Michelena innocent of all charges and she was released, having served six months in jail. In September, another independent journalist and former political prisoner, Bernardo Arévalo of the publication *El Cubano Libre, de Hoy* was twice detained by police and told to leave the country or face prison time. Many journalists from the independent news agency Hablemos Press also continued to be subject to harassment in the form of short-term detentions. The organization's founder and director, Roberto de Jesús Guerra, was briefly detained in April; in June he was attacked by unknown assailants who appeared to have ties to the Cuban Department of State Security.

At the end of 2014, three journalists were serving prison sentences in Cuba. In March, independent opposition journalist Yoeni de Jesús Guerra García of the Yayabo Press agency, detained since October 2013, was sentenced to seven years in prison on charges of illegally slaughtering cattle—charges he claims were fabricated due to his reporting. Two journalists sentenced to prison in previous years also remained incarcerated: José Antonio Torres and Ángel Santiesteban Prats. Torres, a former correspondent for *Granma*, has been detained since 2011 and was sentenced in July 2012 to 14 years in prison for espionage after he published a 2010 article denouncing irregularities in the management of an aqueduct project in Santiago de Cuba and a 2011 article critiquing the instillation of fiber-optic cable between Cuba and Venezuela. Santiesteban, a writer and blogger, began serving a five-year prison sentence in 2013 for assault and trespassing. He alleged that the charges were fabricated by the authorities in retribution for

his blog, *Los Hijos Que Nadie Quiso (The Children Nobody Wanted)*, which was critical of the government. Both Guerra and Santiesteban say they have been tortured in prison.

Economic Environment

The government owns virtually all traditional media except for a number of underground newsletters. It operates three national newspapers, five national television stations, six national radio stations, and one international radio station, in addition to numerous local print and broadcast outlets. All content is determined by the government. In October 2013, new editors who were considered less hardline were assigned to head the country's two major newspapers, *Granma* and *Juventud Rebelde* (the paper of the Communist Party's youth wing), as part of the Cuban government's self-described process of promoting generational renewal to modernize the country's newspapers and to reduce censorship and secrecy in the national media. Press reporting has shown itself to be more critical of problems in the country, though outright criticism of the government or political system is not seen. Reporting on foreign events is filtered through the lens of the Cuban government's foreign policy objectives, with events in countries such as Russia, Syria, or Venezuela receiving sympathetic coverage in Cuban state media. In January 2013, the government permitted the broadcasting of Venezuelan news channel Telesur on the island. While the channel does not criticize the Cuban government, it does give viewers a look into the outside world. Cubans do not have the right to possess or distribute foreign publications, although some international papers are sold in tourist hotels. Private ownership of electronic media is also prohibited. A number of publications associated with the Roman Catholic Church are occasionally critical of the government and have emerged as key players in debates over the country's future, including *Espacio Laical*, *Palabra Nueva*, and *Convivencia*.

Cuba has one of the lowest internet connectivity rates in the world. The majority of users can reach only a closely monitored Cuban intranet consisting of e-mail addresses ending in ".cu" and a few government-controlled and approved websites. The penetration rate for real access to the global internet is estimated to be around 5 percent, and continues to come mostly through outdated dial-up technology. There is almost no broadband service on the island, and despite the activation of the \$70 million ALBA-1 fiber-optic cable project between Cuba and Venezuela in 2013, connection speeds remain extremely slow for all but the most privileged users. Faster internet connections are available at tourist hotels and foreign embassies, which many independent journalists take advantage of, though this is technically illegal.

Recent developments have significantly expanded internet access on the island, however. In addition to activating the ALBA-1 cable, in 2013 the government opened 118 "internet salons" that provided a place for users to access the medium—though rates were set at \$4.50 an hour, prohibitively expensive in a country where the average monthly salary is \$20. In addition, users at the salons must show identification and sign a pledge not to engage in "subversive" activities online. The government prefers that internet use be conducted in public locales; home access is available to foreigners and to members of select professions who pay a premium for the privilege. But this too might be changing. In 2014 the state-owned state owned Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba (ETECSA) began providing access to email via cell phone, and activated 565,000 new mobile lines. Further, a new U.S. policy announced in December permits American telecom providers to offer equipment and services in Cuba, if the Cuban government allows freer competition and greater diversification in its telecommunications and internet services.

Despite recent developments, many users rely on black-market channels to access the internet. These include unauthorized “mesh” networks that use private Wi-Fi networks to communicate and share information, alternative methods of tweeting, and the underground distribution system of digital files known as *el paquete* (the package). There is also a small but increasingly vibrant blogging community, with more than 70 independent bloggers working in the country. In May 2014, Yoani Sánchez launched the country’s first independent digital news site—14ymedio.com—though it was blocked by the Cuban government three hours after its launch. The regime threatens anyone accessing the internet illegally with five years in prison, and the sentence for writing articles deemed “counterrevolutionary” for foreign websites is up to 20 years. However, the authorities do not have the means to engage in systematic filtering. Twitter is accessible to a small number of Cubans via mobile phones or so-called speak-to-tweet platforms, in which residents may anonymously call a phone number in the United States and leave a message that will be turned into a tweet. However, this platform costs about \$1.20 per tweet.

Cyprus

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 25 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	22,F	22,F	22,F	25,F	25,F

Czech Republic

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 21 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	18,F	19,F	19,F	19,F	20,F

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is constitutionally guaranteed, though the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms prohibits speech that might infringe on national security, individual rights, public health, or morality; speech that may evoke hatred based on race, ethnicity, or national origin is also prohibited by law. Libel remains a criminal offense, but prosecutions are rare, and

offenders have received only suspended sentences in recent years. A 2005 Constitutional Court ruling clarified the libel law, stating that value judgments are legally protected. Political satire has a long history in the country, and when such material prompts lawsuits the courts often side with the media, protecting caricature as a valid form of criticism. In an April 2014 decision involving the wife of former prime minister Jiří Paroubek, the Constitutional Court protected the right of the weekly *Reflex* to publish a caricature, and stated that public figures' right to privacy can only trump freedom of expression in very serious cases. The Press Law provides a sound basis for independent journalism, and media protections have been bolstered by Constitutional Court and other institutional rulings. Freedom of information is provided for under the law.

Broadcast media are regulated by the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RRTV), while the public-service station Czech Television (CT) is regulated by its own council. Print media are largely self-regulated.

Political Environment

Media outlets are generally free from political interference. However, in March 2014, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Andrej Babiš issued a veiled threat toward the independent online news portal Echo24, whose journalists had criticized him; Babiš noted his position as finance minister and said he hoped the portal's financier had filed tax documents properly.

Paid political advertising is prohibited in the electronic media. Some degree of self-censorship is present among Czech media workers, particularly at outlets whose owners have significant links with business or politics. Physical attacks and harassment aimed at journalists or media outlets are rare.

Economic Environment

National print media are all privately owned and consist of a variety of daily newspapers, weeklies, and magazines representing diverse viewpoints. A few broadcasters operate at the national level, including the public CT. The change to digital broadcasting in 2012 resulted in a more diverse media sector, featuring the launch of several new television channels. Most electronic media outlets are privately owned. Media advocates have expressed concern that while public media are widely respected, their financial sustainability is being undermined by tighter control of public funds and increasing restrictions on advertising. Television remains the main source of information, but the internet continues to develop rapidly as a news source, with 80 percent of the population enjoying regular and unrestricted access in 2014.

Media-related legislation includes minimal ownership restrictions, and none on foreign ownership. Many private outlets do not disclose their ownership structures. The industry had been characterized by a very high share of foreign ownership, but this has changed in recent years with the entry into the market of Czech business tycoons. The restructuring of ownership culminated in 2013 with the purchase of the two largest publishing companies—MAFRA, and a joint venture of Ringier Axel Springer—by Finance Minister Babiš and the influential Czech entrepreneurs Daniel Křetínský and Patrik Tkáč, respectively. Together they own more than 60 percent of the newspaper market; Babiš also controls Radio Impuls, the biggest player in the country's radio market. These developments reflect increasing concentration of ownership and influence, and critics have warned of “oligarchization” and “Berlusconization”—that is,

powerful individuals' use of media assets to influence politics—after the success of Babiš's party in the 2013 parliamentary elections.

The economic crisis that began in late 2008, as well as changes in media consumption, has had a lasting effect on the media market, leading to several consecutive years of decline. Observers have pointed to a recent decline in the depth and quality of reporting in Czech news media, due in large part to economic difficulties within the media sector. The trend has been accompanied by an increase in live news coverage, tabloid-style content, and so-called Google journalism that is not based on primary sources. There is, however, a strong tradition of investigative reporting at many Czech newspapers, and a few continue to fund substantial investigative projects.

Denmark

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30

Political Environment: 5 / 40

Economic Environment: 5 / 30

Total Score: 12 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	11,F	13,F	12,F	12,F	12,F

Legal Environment

Freedom of speech is protected in Section 77 of the constitution, and the government generally respects this right in practice. However, legal restrictions exist for libel, blasphemy, and racism. In May 2014, an appeals court imposed more than \$41,000 in criminal fines on four journalists with the Danish Broadcasting Corporation for a 2009 radio broadcast in which they criticized a Danish housing association. The charges sparked concern from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In 2013, the Copenhagen-based international satellite television station Roj TV filed for bankruptcy after the Eastern High Court upheld its hefty fine of 10 million kroner (\$1.8 million). Roj TV was found guilty of “promoting terrorism” by the Copenhagen City Court in 2012 because of its connection with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a separatist militant group in Turkey that is regarded as a terrorist organization by the European Union and other entities. In February 2014 the Danish Supreme Court upheld the 2013 ruling, which is expected to be challenged by the European Court of Human Rights.

A new access to information law was ratified by the parliament in 2013. The controversial law prevents access to documents that are shared between ministers and their advisers. The OSCE expressed concern over provisions that may limit transparency in government and legislative proceedings. The law went into effect on January 1, 2014, amid demonstrations involving thousands of protesters.

In May, journalists Kjeld Hansen and Nils Mulvad were sentenced to fines of 2,500 kroner each (\$460) for violating the criminal code by disseminating private, health-related information about individuals when they published a story on MRSA infections in Danish pig farms and named the infected farms. The journalists had requested further information on

infected farms from the National Health Board, and in June 2014 the Danish Ombudsman said that the information should be released. However, a farmers' interest group has prevented disclosure by initiating a court case against the state and demanding the names be kept secret. By year's end, the journalists were still awaiting a trial date.

Print, online, and broadcast media are regulated by the Danish Press Council, whose eight members are jointly appointed by the president of the Supreme Court and journalists' associations. Participation is mandatory for broadcast media and print outlets that publish at least twice a year. Online media that choose to register receive the legal protections afforded to traditional journalists. If an outlet is found to have committed an ethical violation, the council can order it to publish the ruling; failure to do so can result in a fine or up to four months in jail, though these sanctions are rarely imposed.

Political Environment

The aftermath of the 2005 controversy over cartoons of the prophet Muhammad still affects the Danish media, both in terms of direct threats made against journalists and media houses and through a considerable chilling effect on coverage of related issues. The cartoonist at the center of the controversy, Kurt Westergaard, continues to receive round-the-clock protection by the authorities after a failed assassination attempt in 2010. In 2012, two Muslim residents of Norway were found guilty of planning a bomb attack on the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, which originally published the controversial cartoons. A Danish citizen was arrested in Turkey in April 2014 for allegedly attempting to assassinate free speech advocate and former newspaper editor Lars Hedegaard in 2013; pending extradition to Denmark, the suspect was allegedly released by Turkey in October in exchange for 47 hostages held by the Islamic State militant group. By year's end no official explanation had been given and there was no indication of the whereabouts of the alleged assailant.

Economic Environment

The private print media are vibrant, though many papers have clear political sympathies. Two of the three largest daily newspapers, *Politiken* and *Jyllands-Posten*, are owned by the same company, though they have separate editorial boards and journalistic staff and different political leanings. The third, *Berlingske*, also runs the state-funded public service channel Radio24syv. Government subsidies and a value-added tax (VAT) exemption are vital for the press, and state support is available for struggling newspapers. The public broadcaster DR (Danmarks Radio), dominant in both radio and television, is financed by a license fee. TV2 is a privately run but government-owned television network, while the private station TV3 broadcasts from England due to advertising regulations. Satellite and cable television are also available, as are a variety of internet-based news outlets. In 2014, 96 percent of the population had access to the internet.

Djibouti

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 28 / 40

Economic Environment: 23 / 30

Total Score: 75 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	73,NF	73,NF	74,NF	74,NF	75,NF

The media environment in Djibouti is one of the most restrictive in Africa, and journalists continued to face arrests and detentions in 2014.

Legal Environment

Djibouti's laws and constitution provide for freedoms of speech and of the press, but in practice the government imposes serious curbs on independent media. The penal code and the 1992 Freedom of Communication Law allow criminal penalties, including jail time and heavy fines, for media offenses such as libel and distributing false information.

Djibouti does not have a law guaranteeing access to public information. The Freedom of Communication Law imposes citizenship, residency, and age requirements on those holding senior positions at media outlets. The National Communication Commission, tasked with issuing private radio and television broadcasting licenses, accepted its first application in 2012, though it has yet to respond and has never authorized a private broadcast outlet.

Political Environment

The official media, which account for almost all of the country's outlets, practice self-censorship and do not criticize the government. Journalists generally avoid covering sensitive issues, including human rights. The economically important U.S. military presence in Djibouti creates additional pressure to self-censor, as journalists are discouraged from reporting on soldiers' activities. Social media are closely monitored for plans of demonstrations or criticism of the government. The Association for Respect of Human Rights in Djibouti and La Voix de Djibouti, a Europe-based radio station, claim that their websites—the main sources for independent views in the country—are regularly blocked. La Voix de Djibouti's shortwave radio broadcasts are also allegedly disrupted.

Journalists are subject to detention without charge, intimidation, and violence, which further contributes to self-censorship. La Voix de Djibouti website technician and journalist Maydaneh Abdallah Okieh, who had been detained previously for posting Facebook photos of police brutality, was arrested and beaten by police in January 2014 while covering the release of a prominent rights activist from jail. Okieh was arrested again in March for covering an opposition meeting and jailed for nearly three weeks before being released. Mohamed Ibrahim Waiss, a La Voix de Djibouti reporter who had been arrested by authorities at least twice before, was detained in August for covering an opposition protest and denied medical treatment for injuries sustained during his violent arrest; he was released two weeks later.

Economic Environment

The domestic media sector is very limited. Because of high poverty levels, radio is the most popular news medium. The government owns the principal newspaper, *La Nation*, as well

as Radio-Television Djibouti, which operates the national radio and television stations. Community radio, which has gained great popularity across Africa, is nonexistent, and Djibouti is one of the few countries on the continent without any independent or privately owned newspapers. Djiboutian law technically permits all registered political parties to publish a newspaper, and opposition groups and civil society activists are able to distribute written materials that are critical of the government. Printing facilities for mass media are government owned, making it difficult to print criticism of the government for wide circulation.

While there are no private radio or television stations in the country, foreign radio broadcasts are available from the British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America, and Radio France Internationale, offering alternative sources of information to the public. La Voix de Djibouti started broadcasting in 2010 as a clandestine independent radio station operating from abroad. Despite Djibouti's location at the intersection of a network of undersea fiber-optic cables, less than 11 percent of the domestic population was able to access the internet in 2014, and the only internet service provider is owned by the government.

Dominica

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 25 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	23,F	23,F	24,F	25,F

Dominican Republic

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 42 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	39,PF	40,PF	41,PF	40,PF	41,PF

Legal Environment

The 2010 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and access to public information, but some laws and government actions undermine these rights in practice. Criminal defamation laws remained a major concern for journalists in 2014. Conviction for defamation or insult of the head of state can result in penalties of up to one year in prison and the loss of basic rights, such as voting or standing in elections. Liability for defamation is shared at various levels: Newspaper

editors hold the greatest liability, followed by journalists, printers, and then vendors and distributors. Newspaper owners must assume the financial damages against editors and journalists. Defamation and libel are criminalized both in the penal code and in the Law on Expression and Dissemination of Thought.

In July 2014, the country's largest newspapers—*El Día*, *Listín Diario*, *Diario Libre*, *El Nacional*, *Hoy*, *El Nuevo Diario*, and *El Caribe*—published a petition calling on the Constitutional Court to repeal the country's defamation laws, arguing that they result in self-censorship in the media and penalize normal journalistic activities. They also asked for the elimination of the laws that make editors primarily responsible in cases of defamation or libel. The papers had originally filed the petition in February 2013, and the government expressed its intention to eliminate prison sentences for such crimes, but no action had been taken by year's end.

Journalists in 2014 continued to be brought to trial on accusations of defamation against politicians or private citizens. In July, a judge cleared television journalist Marino Zapete, who has programs on the news network SIN as well as the channel Teleradio America, of charges brought by the president of the National Unity Party (PUN), Pedro Corporán. Zapete had reported on financial irregularities at a government agency headed by Corporán. An appellate court confirmed the initial verdict in November. Separately, the Supreme Court ruled against radio journalist Juan Taveras Hernández on a procedural matter in September, as part of an ongoing case brought by Senator Félix Bautista, whom Taveras had accused of corruption. Bautista demanded \$1.16 million in damages. In the Supreme Court appeal, Taveras had sought authorization to present evidence that he said would prove the truth of his original allegations. In another case that month, radio reporter Rosendo Tavárez of Z-101 was sued by Celso Marranzini, a former head of the Dominican Society of Electric Companies, who charged that Tavárez had sullied his character. A verdict was pending at year's end.

The Dominican Republic enacted a freedom of information law in 2004, making it one of seven countries in the Caribbean region that currently have such laws in place.

Political Environment

Media outlets sometimes face political pressure from government officials, and journalists at privately owned newspapers or broadcast stations have an incentive to engage in self-censorship to avoid damaging the owners' political or business interests. President Danilo Medina declared in 2014 that his government fully supports freedom of expression, but some papers complain that the administration has held few press conferences. An October editorial in *Hoy* said reporters covering the executive branch encountered bureaucratic obstacles when attempting to interview senior officials.

Attacks and intimidation against the press by both state and nonstate actors continued to be problems in 2014, especially for reporters investigating corruption and the drug trade. Members of the media experience episodic police brutality, arbitrary detentions and inspections, equipment confiscations, threats, and verbal and physical harassment in both urban and provincial areas.

In June, journalist Gerardo de Jesús Abreu had his camera and mobile phone confiscated by officers from the Dominican National Directorate for Drug Control while attempting to cover a drug raid in the central province of La Vega. He was told by police that he needed a "good beating" for interrupting police activity. Later that month, Pedro Fernández, a correspondent for

El Nacional, had his car attacked by unidentified gunmen while driving through the town of San Francisco de Macorís, though he escaped unharmed. The shooting followed an tear-gas attack on his home a week earlier, and a note warning him to cease investigating the drug trade in the region. Fernández reported in January that a local drug dealer was plotting to kill him.

Three days after the attack on Fernández, unidentified gunmen fatally shot cameraman Newton González of Canal 25 in the northern city of Santiago in broad daylight. The police discarded robbery as a motive, as nothing was taken, but it remained uncertain whether the crime was linked to the victim’s work. In September, three television journalists, Yaniris Sánchez and José Cruz, both from Telenoticias Canal 11, and Silvino da Silva, from Canal 9 National Information Service, were struck with stones and bottles during a clash between Haitian protesters and police in the capital. In October, the daily *Diario Libre* alleged that an armed mob detained some of its vehicles, apparently in connection with a lawsuit against the paper by radio commentator Raúl Pérez Peña.

Economic Environment

The Dominican Republic has several major daily newspapers, scores of radio stations, and over 60 terrestrial and cable television stations. However, ownership of many of these stations and the country’s newspapers is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful individuals and companies. There are two state-owned television stations and one state-owned radio station. Community radio and television stations, as well as news websites, are becoming increasingly active. Approximately 50 percent of the population used the internet during 2014, and there were no reports of government restrictions on access. Several online news sources produce content in English and Spanish, and the use of social-networking websites is growing rapidly.

East Timor

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 35 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	35,PF	35,PF	35,PF	35,PF	35,PF

East Timor’s Parliament passed a new Media Act in May 2014, but criticism from prominent Timorese journalists, human rights activists, and the international media development community prompted a constitutional review, and the measure was returned to Parliament for revision. The final version enacted in November retained a number of problematic provisions, though its effects on media independence remained to be seen at year’s end.

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press and expression are protected under Articles 40 and 41 of the constitution. However, as the Timor Leste Journalist Association (AJTL) has noted, “the absence of a press law for Timor Leste has led to the use of the penal code to settle disputes in media reporting, which can endanger press freedom.” Although the 2009 penal code decriminalized defamation, misuse of Article 285, which covers “slanderous denunciation,” still threatens journalists. Where domestic laws did not exist, the 1999 Indonesian Press Law governed media issues.

To address this legal gap, Parliament approved the Media Act in May 2014. President Taur Matan Ruak sent the law to the Court of Appeal in July for a constitutional review, as the AJTL and international press freedom advocates objected to many of its provisions. The court rejected a handful of articles, mostly pertaining to the applicability of fines for violations, and Parliament amended them before approving the final version in October. The president signed the law the following month, and it took effect in late December.

Despite the revisions, many of the elements that had drawn criticism remained in the legislation. For example, the law creates an official Press Council, described as a government-funded “independent administrative entity” with the power to “grant, renew, suspend, and revoke” journalists’ credentials under a new licensing system, and to impose a code of ethics for the profession. Prospective journalists are required to complete training periods of six to 18 months, depending on their prior education. The Press Council also has authority over the registration and accreditation of foreign correspondents in the country. Of the council’s five members, two are elected by journalists, one by media outlets, and two by Parliament. In addition, the Media Act lists a series of vague “duties” and “functions” of the media, including the obligation to “promote the national culture,” “encourage and support high-quality economic policies and services,” and “promote peace and social stability, harmony and national solidarity.”

The Media Act acknowledges in general terms a right to public information, which had only been nominally established in Section 40 of the constitution. However, the law offers no details on government obligations or enforcement. Journalists in the country frequently report problems with access to information, as the process lacks established mechanisms, depends on scarce resources, and is often arbitrarily blocked by the government.

Political Environment

While most public officials pay lip service to freedom of the press, not all are comfortable with its actual practice, and there is a sense among many—including some international advisers—that journalism should ideally be linked with the process of nation-building.

A culture of deference and respect for hierarchy continues to pervade journalism in East Timor, and news content often features verbatim accounts recorded during organized press conferences, which journalists are frequently paid to attend. The local nongovernmental organization La’o Hamutuk reported that soon after Parliament approved the Media Act for the first time in May, the secretary of state for media invited media organizations to sign agreements to receive subsidies from the government, creating the appearance that they were being paid to acquiesce to the new law. *Tempo Semanal* and the Timor-Leste Press Union refused, but other media groups were set to receive \$5,000 to \$20,000 each.

Journalists are generally able to cover the news freely in terms of physical access, and they are rarely subject to harassment or assaults.

Economic Environment

A handful of daily and weekly newspapers operate on a regular schedule in Dili, and several more appear sporadically. Circulations are very small and are hampered by the high price of papers relative to low consumer purchasing power, illiteracy, and a lack of distribution outside the capital.

After the country gained independence in 2002, broadcast media became dominated by public radio and television outlets, but community radio stations—many with international funding—also play an important role in the media landscape. According to the most recent estimates, there are approximately 20 community radio stations across the country, along with one national and three commercial stations. There is one national and one private television station. However, technical difficulties limit the reach of many broadcast media outlets in rural areas, leaving some residents without access to any media.

Internet access was limited to just over 1 percent of the population in 2014 due to poverty and inadequate infrastructure. More households have mobile phones, and they are becoming an important communication tool, especially in Dili, where nearly every home has access to at least one device.

The presence of internationally funded media-assistance organizations has had mixed effects on journalism in East Timor. These organizations have made significant financial contributions, thereby decreasing the importance of funding from the state and arguably increasing journalistic independence. At the same time, evidence suggests that they have contributed to what some Timorese journalists call a “project mentality,” in which news organizations become excessively dependent on grants from nonstate actors.

The new Media Law requires outlets to disclose their owners and limits foreign ownership in Timorese media organizations to 30 percent stakes. The Court of Appeal’s review of the legislation had raised objections to the foreign ownership cap, but it was nevertheless included in the final bill.

Ecuador

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23 / 30

Political Environment: 26 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 64 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	47,PF	52,PF	58,PF	61,NF	62,NF

Conditions for the media in Ecuador continued to decline in 2014, as President Rafael Correa and his administration openly disparaged and attacked private outlets and journalists. The enforcement of a 2013 Communication Law that enabled more intrusive regulation of the media continued to threaten freedom of expression and added to a hostile environment characterized by

self-censorship, intimidation, and legal sanctions. Four newspapers shut down their print editions in 2014, decreasing diversity in the press.

Legal Environment

While the constitution provides for freedoms of speech and the press, these rights are curtailed in practice. The president and other government figures regularly undermine legal protections and contribute to a hostile environment for the press by targeting journalists and media outlets with aggressive rhetoric. In November 2014, during one of his national television broadcasts, Correa tore up a copy of the newspaper *La Hora* and denounced what he called the “corrupt press.” It was the sixth time the president had torn up a newspaper on television since 2011.

Correa has filed several criminal and civil defamation cases against critical journalists in recent years. In 2013, a judge imposed 18-month prison sentences on opposition assembly member Cléver Jiménez and journalist Fernando Villavicencio, and a reduced sentence of six months on activist Carlos Figueroa, for allegedly defaming the president. The court also ordered a published apology to Correa and \$140,000 in compensation. In December of that year, police seized computers from the homes of both Jiménez and Villavicencio; Correa publicly admitted that he had ordered the searches. The prison sentences were upheld on appeal in March 2014, and arrest warrants were issued for the defendants. Figueroa was arrested in July and began serving his sentence, while Jiménez and Villavicencio went into hiding.

The legal environment became more restrictive in 2014 as enforcement of the 2013 Communication Law gained momentum. Among other provisions, the legislation created powerful media and telecommunications regulatory bodies—the Superintendency of Information and Communication (SUPERCOM) and the Council for the Regulation and Development of Information and Communication (CORDICOM). These two agencies began formally monitoring the media for legal compliance during 2014. The 2013 law imposed a range of vaguely worded content restrictions, codified a right to receive information that is “verified, contrasted, precise, and contextualized,” and introduced the concept of “media lynching”—defined as the repeated dissemination of information intended to harm a person’s reputation or credibility. It also requires journalists to possess professional qualifications. Finally, the law distributes broadcasting licenses equally between private, community, and public stations, but there are no guarantees of public broadcasters’ independence from government influence.

SUPERCOM became involved in a high-profile case in January 2014, after the independent daily *El Universo* published a cartoon in December satirizing the government’s recent search of Villavicencio’s home, prompting Correa to call the cartoonist, Xavier Bonilla (Bonil), an “ink assassin” in a televised speech. In late January, SUPERCOM determined that *El Universo* had violated Article 25 of the Communication Law, which prohibits media from taking a position on the guilt or innocence of people involved in lawsuits. The paper was fined 2 percent of its revenue for the previous three months, and was given 72 hours to run a correction.

Over the course of 2014, a number of other press groups were fined or sanctioned for failing to comply with the 2013 law. The local press freedom organization Fundamedios recorded a total of 113 cases of judicial or administrative harassment of the media in 2014, including sanctions imposed by SUPERCOM. In May, complaints were filed against four newspapers for failing to report in sufficient detail on Correa’s official visit to Chile. The coverage allegedly violated an article of the Communication Law that bans “prior censorship.” In

November, *Diario Extra* was sanctioned for the fifth time, for failing to avoid “morbid” content when it reported on a Malaysian airliner destroyed over Ukraine. Later that month, the newspaper *Expreso* was fined 2 percent of its quarterly revenue on the grounds that an apology it published for an earlier infraction—regarding coverage of financial losses at an oil refinery—was inadequate. In addition, when *Expreso* covered the *Diario Extra* sanctions, SUPERCOM demanded a correction, saying the paper misrepresented the exact reasons for *Extra*’s punishment.

Observers noted that SUPERCOM did not appear to enforce the 2013 law as strictly when progovernment media were the subjects of complaints. A series of complaints filed against the state-owned newspaper *El Telégrafo* were reportedly dismissed.

A new criminal code that took effect in August 2014 included provisions that could limit freedom of expression, such as restrictions on social protests; broad privacy protections that prohibit the unauthorized dissemination of personal information, with no exception for issues of public interest; and a ban on disseminating false information about the economy that may cause “economic panic.”

Access to information is guaranteed in the constitution and by the 2004 Transparency and Access to Public Information Law, but critics have found that government officials often fail to adhere to the law. A new monetary and financial code passed in July 2014 granted an oversight board the authority to designate various types of information as confidential and established penalties for disclosure, prompting media groups to warn that it contradicted the access to information law.

The National Telecommunications Council (CONATEL), the broadcast licensing body, lacks independence from the political leadership. It is part of the Telecommunications Ministry, and the telecommunications minister doubles as the head of CONATEL.

A June 2013 presidential decree granted the government new powers to intervene in the operations of civil society organizations, including the authority to forcibly dissolve them; observers saw the decree as a potential threat to media watchdog groups, among others. In January 2014, SUPERCOM used the decree to assume administrative supervision of Fundamedios and request extensive financial records from the group. Separately, the Ecuadorian government has consistently questioned the independence and pushed to reduce the funding of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) special rapporteur for freedom of expression.

Political Environment

Privately owned stations are encouraged but not required to air Correa’s weekly television and radio broadcast. In practice the program is widely transmitted, and the president routinely uses it as a platform to rebuke critics and independent media. Separately, private outlets are obliged by law to disseminate official statements and programs—called *cadenas*—for up to one hour a day, often interrupting news programming. *Cadenas* were repeatedly used to discredit specific journalists during 2014. In July, the National Secretariat of Communication (SECOM), an executive agency, began issuing a series of short *cadenas* in which citizens critiqued prominent reporters or news anchors. The broadcasts closed with the phrase, “This is the true freedom of expression.”

The president and other government officials have limited their exposure to media outlets perceived as unfriendly or disloyal. During an August 2014 appearance in the city of Loja, Correa reportedly rebuked a journalist for asking a question that was not approved in advance.

The threat of legal and administrative actions has resulted in rising self-censorship by the media. Official censorship has also increased, particularly online, as a number of critical journalists have moved to internet-based outlets in recent years. Fundamedios reported at least five cases of prior censorship and 17 instances of online censorship in 2014. Online censorship spiked near the end of the year with the suspension of Twitter accounts and deletion of online content, including videos and photographs posted on social media. Freedom of expression advocates have noted the involvement of Ares Rights, a Spanish company that has exploited copyright law and the takedown policies of international social-media platforms to suppress critical content about the Ecuadorian authorities, apparently on their behalf.

Under the Communication Law, to avoid liability for user comments, media outlets are required to either set up mechanisms for commenters to register their personal data or create systems to delete offensive comments. The law also prohibits outlets from using information disseminated by anonymous sources via social media.

Diversity of opinion in the media was further reduced in 2014 with the closure of four print outlets—*Hoy*, two regional editions of *La Hora*, and *El Meridiano*. They continued to operate online. *Hoy* and *La Hora* cited government pressure and eroded press freedom under the Communication Law as contributing factors in their decisions to cease production. Days after *Hoy*'s announcement, SUPERCOM punished it with a \$57,800 fine for failing to publish the number of copies in circulation over the previous two months.

The frequency of intimidation, harassment, and attacks on journalists and media outlets rose sharply in 2014. Fundamedios documented 254 incidents of verbal, physical, or legal harassment of the media by authorities and ordinary citizens during the year 2014—the largest annual number since the group began counting in 2008 and a 46 percent increase from 2013. Of these, 15 cases were physical in nature. Some 125 cases of harassment toward media outlets were reported, with 110 targeting private media and 10 aimed at government-owned outlets. Fundamedios reported 60 cases of harassment against individual journalists and media workers. Correa, other public officials, and state or judicial entities were the “principal aggressors,” according to the organization, accounting for nearly all of the year’s incidents.

Economic Environment

The majority of media outlets, both print and broadcast, are privately owned. A total of 61 media outlets are recognized as national, with a reach beyond their immediate locality. However, the government controls, directly or indirectly, a growing share of the media sector, including television and radio stations, print outlets, and a news agency. The internet, an increasingly important news medium, was accessed by about 43 percent of the population as of 2014, with most users living in urban areas.

Ownership concentration within the private media is a problem. In December 2014, it was reported that Mexican media mogul Remigio Ángel González was buying *El Comercio*, Ecuador’s oldest and most recognized newspaper. González already owned 13 television channels and radio stations in Ecuador and was expected to change the editorial tone of *El Comercio*, which has been critical of the government. Foreign ownership of communication outlets was initially illegal under the Communication Law, but Correa passed an implementing

regulation in late 2013 that revised the relevant article and allowed foreigners from countries that had signed certain cooperative agreements with Ecuador to own national media. Journalists and outside watchdog groups expressed concern that the sale of *El Comercio* would further limit media diversity.

The government is the country's largest advertiser and generally grants ad contracts to outlets that provide favorable coverage. In 2012, Correa directed his press secretary to withdraw public advertising from what he called "mercantilist" media outlets, including the newspapers *Hoy*, *El Comercio*, *El Universo*, and *La Hora*, and the television stations Teleamazonas and Ecuavisa. The intrusive regulations and sanctions associated with the Communication Law have made it even more difficult for independent media to achieve financial sustainability and retain advertisers. Analysts say that businesses do not want to be associated with media targeted by the authorities, as they could lose state contracts or face government audits in reprisal. A 2011 antimonopoly law and the Communication Law also limit ownership and investment in media by nonmedia businesses.

Egypt

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 73 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	60,PF	65,NF	57,PF	62,NF	68,NF

Conditions for the media in Egypt grew worse during 2014 as Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the army chief who overthrew President Mohamed Morsi in a July 2013 coup, consolidated his power. A new constitution adopted in January contained a number of press freedom guarantees, but these were undermined by important exceptions as well as existing legal restrictions that remained in effect. In practice, the authorities sought to purge the media of any critical voices, especially those deemed sympathetic to Morsi's banned Muslim Brotherhood, in part by prosecuting journalists in the politicized courts. Journalists also faced violence when covering protests, and most media outlets increasingly displayed a strong progovernment bias, with self-censorship contributing to the broader loss of pluralism and diversity of opinion.

Legal Environment

In January 2014, Egyptians voted on a constitution drafted under the supervision of an interim government established after the 2013 coup. The new document, which passed the referendum with 98 percent of the vote amid 39 percent turnout, replaced a charter that had been ratified under Morsi in December 2012 and suspended by the coup. During the campaign period for the referendum, the authorities effectively banned all expression of opposition to the new constitution.

The 2014 constitution contains several encouraging provisions regarding freedom of expression, access to information, and the media. Article 65 guarantees freedom of thought, opinion, and the expression thereof. Article 68 declares that all official state documents and information are the property of the people, who have the right to access such materials in a timely and transparent manner. Articles 70, 71, and 72 all govern the press, providing for many of the rights that support a free media environment. They guarantee the freedom of the print, broadcast, and digital sectors; enshrine the right to establish media outlets; ban all forms of media censorship, including the suspension and closure of outlets; ban prison terms for press crimes; and declare the independence and neutrality of all state-owned media outlets. The constitution also calls for the establishment of independent regulatory bodies tasked with supporting and developing both private and state-owned media and administering all relevant regulations.

However, these positive elements are seriously undermined by a variety of exceptions and ambiguities. Article 71 authorizes media censorship “in times of war or general mobilization.” The same article, which ostensibly eliminates jail terms for media offenses, leaves room for imprisonment for crimes related to incitement of violence, discrimination, and defamation. The constitution notably fails to specify the composition and appointment procedures for regulatory bodies, meaning future legislation could create structures that enable political influence.

Moreover, the existing press laws and penal code remained in place, including an array of articles that can be used to imprison journalists. For example, defamation is a criminal offense, and sentences of up to five years in prison can be imposed for blasphemy, or “exploiting religion in spreading, either by words, in writing or in any other means, extreme ideas for the purposes of inciting strife, ridiculing or insulting [the Abrahamic faiths] or a sect following it, or damaging national unity.”

The authorities continued to arrest and prosecute journalists in practice during 2014, subjecting them to deeply flawed legal proceedings that disregarded their fundamental rights. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 12 journalists were behind bars in Egypt as of December, nine of whom had been in custody since 2013. The most prominent case was that of three employees of Qatar’s Al-Jazeera television network—Peter Greste, an Australian citizen, Mohamed Adel Fahmy, a dual Canadian-Egyptian citizen, and Baher Mohamed, an Egyptian national. They were arrested in late 2013 and sentenced in June 2014 for supposedly spreading false news and aiding the banned Muslim Brotherhood. Greste and Fahmy received seven-year prison terms, and Mohamed was sentenced to 10 years due to an additional charge of possessing ammunition. Despite an international campaign for their release and complaints that no incriminating evidence had been presented at trial, the three remained in prison at year’s end. Three other foreign journalists, two British and one Dutch, were convicted in absentia on similar charges.

Some journalists with actual links to the Muslim Brotherhood faced criminal charges during the year. Samah Ibrahim, a reporter for the Brotherhood’s *Freedom and Justice* newspaper, was sentenced to a year in prison in March on charges including “disturbing the peace,” having been arrested in January while photographing a Brotherhood protest. Her sentence was later reduced to six months on appeal. In April, two reporters for a Brotherhood-sponsored news website were arrested and charged with various crimes related to their journalistic activity and political affiliations. One, Abdel Rahman Shaheen, was sentenced to

three years in prison in late June, while the other, Ahmed al-Ajos, was released on bail in September, though his charges were still pending.

At least two of several other journalists arrested during 2014 remained in detention as of December. Ahmed Fouad, a reporter for the news website *Karmoz*, was arrested in January while covering a Brotherhood protest in Alexandria. Ayman Saqr of the news website *Almesryoon* was arrested in November after covering an Islamist demonstration in Cairo.

Al-Sisi, who won a tightly controlled presidential election in May 2014 and ruled without a legislature for the rest of the year, made no progress on draft freedom of information legislation that was under debate in 2013. In November 2014, the cabinet took up consideration of a draft law that would prohibit the publication of information pertaining to the armed forces by print, radio, and television outlets, as well as on social media. The ban applied to analysis and investigative work, any statistics or data on military assets and strategy, and “any other information that might harm the security of the members of the armed forces.” Violations would carry prison sentences of six months to five years and fines ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 Egyptian pounds (\$1,400 to \$7,000)—penalties that would be magnified during a state of emergency or declared war.

The new constitution calls for an independent Supreme Council for the Regulation of Media, but the necessary legislation had yet to be enacted in 2014. Consequently, the existing Ministry of Information continued to operate during the year. When a new cabinet was named in June, following al-Sisi’s election as president, no information minister was named. Instead, the prime minister appointed the head of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), Egypt’s public broadcaster, to serve as interim leader of the ministry.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to protecting journalists’ rights and freedom of expression have long been subject to restrictive laws that apply to all civil society groups. In September 2014, al-Sisi signed a decree that amended the penal code to ban the receipt of foreign funding for activities that “harm the national interest,” potentially affecting NGOs. Violations of the law can be punished with life imprisonment and fines of nearly \$70,000, and the death penalty would apply if the offender is a public servant or linked to terrorism.

The government was working to augment its electronic surveillance capabilities during 2014, adding to concerns about privacy and the confidentiality of journalists’ sources and activities. By September, according to some reports, officials and private contractors had begun extensive monitoring of social media and other online communications platforms.

Political Environment

Following the July 2013 coup, the authorities began to purge the media of any support for Morsi or the Muslim Brotherhood, which was declared a terrorist organization late that year. This process continued in 2014 as the new regime consolidated its authority.

As in previous years, state media generally displayed a progovernment bias. In January 2014, a Supreme Press Council created shortly after the coup named new chairpersons for the country’s state-owned newspapers. Although the new constitution called for independent bodies to oversee state media assets, they had yet to be established.

Private media also showed a strong allegiance to al-Sisi’s government during the year, partly because Islamist television networks had been shut down following the coup, leaving anti-Morsi stations in a dominant position. Many high-profile media personalities voiced

unambiguous support for al-Sisi's May presidential bid, and in October, following a militant attack that killed at least 31 soldiers in the restive Sinai Peninsula, the chief editors of 17 private and state-owned newspapers pledged to refrain from criticizing the government, the army, or other national institutions. Hundreds of journalists denounced the pledge on social media.

Throughout the year, journalists at both state-owned and private outlets who expressed even the slightest criticism of the regime suffered repercussions from the government or their employers. In March, the state television program *Revolutionaries All the Way* was suspended for criticizing the government, and seven journalists were summoned for investigations by the station's legal affairs department after they expressed support for the show. Also that month, state-owned Radio Masr's *Om el-Donia* program was suspended over its coverage of the upcoming presidential election. In June, the well-known satirist Bassem Youssef was forced to cancel his popular program *Al-Bernameg* after he and the private broadcaster MBC Masr experienced sustained political pressure and threats; the show had already been suspended by another station in late 2013. In October, popular talk-show hosts Wael Ibrashi of Dream TV and Mahmoud Saad of Al-Nahar TV saw their programs pulled from the airwaves when they carried remarks that were considered antigovernment or unpatriotic.

In addition to editorial pressure and censorship, journalists faced physical attacks and restrictions on their movement in 2014. On January 25, journalists covering demonstrations on the anniversary of former president Hosni Mubarak's 2011 ouster reported dozens of cases of physical assault by both civilians and security forces. Many were also detained, searched, and had their equipment confiscated by police. In late March, Mayada Ashraf, a journalist for the daily *Al-Dustour*, was shot and killed while covering clashes between police and demonstrators protesting al-Sisi's announcement that would run for president. Two weeks later, two journalists were shot and wounded while covering a demonstration by a student group opposed to the 2013 coup. Several journalists were beaten or briefly detained during August protests marking the anniversary of a deadly crackdown on Brotherhood demonstrators in 2013.

Many of the journalists in detention during the year were held for long periods without charges and reported mistreatment in custody. Mohamed Badr, an Al-Jazeera cameraman released in February after seven months of detention, alleged regular beatings and psychological torture. Mahmoud Abu Zied, a freelance photojournalist held without charge since August 2013, has reported similar abuse. Some journalists launched hunger strikes to protest their treatment, including Al-Jazeera's Abdullah al-Shami, who was ultimately released on medical grounds in June after 10 months of detention without charges.

Economic Environment

Egypt has more than 500 newspapers, magazines, journals, and other periodicals, and the state retains ownership of several important titles. ERTU remains the only terrestrial broadcaster and controls a range of regional and specialty channels. However, several privately owned Egyptian satellite television channels and major pan-Arab stations have attracted wide viewership.

Some 32 percent of Egyptians accessed the internet regularly as of 2013, and nearly 70 percent had access to mobile telephones. Social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, play an important role in diffusing news and information. By early 2014, well over 16 million Egyptians were on Facebook, accounting for more than 25 percent of all Facebook users in the Middle East.

The authorities occasionally interfere with media production and distribution. In June 2014, police seized a press run and printing equipment from the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), which produces the newspaper *Wasla*. No formal explanation was provided.

Trends in media ownership, spending, revenues, and advertising are difficult to assess given the industry's opacity. The government supports state media directly and through advertising subsidies, although it is unclear what types of advertising subsidies exist. The country's weak economy has forced both state-owned and private newspapers to slash their budgets, but no major newspaper or broadcast station went out of business in 2014.

El Salvador

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30

Political Environment: 16 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 39 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	43,PF	42,PF	40,PF	41,PF	39,PF

Legal Environment

El Salvador's constitution protects press freedom, and Salvadoran journalists are generally able to report freely. Critical coverage of the government and opposition parties is for the most part permitted. Imprisonment for slander, libel, and defamation was abolished in 2011, but such offenses are still adjudicated under the penal code, which prescribes fines and possible job suspensions of between six months and two years for journalists convicted of insult crimes.

A new press law that went into effect in September 2013 requires media outlets to publish or broadcast word-for-word "responses" from anyone who feels coverage of them was inaccurate or offensive. This Special Law for the Right to Rectification or Response allows for jail sentences of one to three years for journalists with media outlets that fail to publish verbatim letters of response within a certain time frame. In February 2014, outgoing President Mauricio Funes called on three newspapers that had reported on a legal complaint filed against him to provide space for his response, though he later dropped the demand. In December, the president of the Legislative Assembly, Sigfrido Reyes, demanded that the newspaper *La Prensa Gráfica* give him space for a response, but it refused on the grounds that Reyes had been sought unsuccessfully for comment prior to publication of the story in question. Ultimately, few demands for responses under the law were made in 2014, and by the year's end no cases had gone to court over an outlet's refusal to comply.

The Access to Public Information Law was approved in 2011, but some journalists say that it has not been properly enforced. In February 2014 the Supreme Court of Justice refused to provide information a citizen had sought about the dismissal of court employees, arguing that fulfilling the request would threaten the court's security. No resolution was achieved by year's end; the case is expected to be heard before the Constitutional Court. Additionally, according to the Salvadoran

Association of Journalists (APES), the government refuses to disclose certain information, such as anything related to the corruption proceedings against former president Francisco Guillermo Flores Pérez, and the travel and publicity expenses of Funes, whose term ended in June 2014. In October, the national police service issued guidelines restricting the types of information it would release to the media, ostensibly for reasons relating to public security.

The 1997 Telecommunications Law does not recognize community media outlets, making it all but impossible for such stations to obtain operating licenses. In 2014, a coalition of journalists' organizations, community media, academics, and civil society organizations continued to press the government to approve new laws regulating community broadcasters and public media. Separately, the Superintendent of Electricity and Telecommunications (SIGET), the regulatory body for broadcast media, sparked controversy in April 2014 when it transferred the signal of TV Red—a company linked to Mexican media mogul Ángel González—from channel 37 to channel 11, which has a much stronger frequency. The decision prompted competing television companies to file legal complaints, and in August SIGET's board, under a new director, ordered TV Red to return to channel 37. TV Red appealed that decision, and a court order issued in October allowed the station to continue using channel 11 until a final verdict was reached, though none was by year's end. It later emerged that the official at SIGET who authorized the transfer in April 2014 was a new employee who had previously worked at TV Red, and had continued to hold his appointment there during his first two months at SIGET, a conflict of interest SIGET officials later said appeared to be prohibited by law.

Political Environment

Journalists in El Salvador sometimes face harassment and interference while performing their jobs. According to the Inter American Press Association, government ministries often request that certain media outlets complete unnecessary bureaucratic tasks. Meanwhile, the newspaper *La Prensa Gráfica* has reported more than 30 visits by state authorities in recent years. In June 2014, an employee of the Court of Auditors was sentenced to two years in prison for intimidation and aggression against *La Prensa Gráfica* journalist Jéssica Ávalos in 2011, though the prison sentence was later converted to a community service order; Ávalos had been attacked while attempting to film state employees allegedly holding a party during working hours. In July, Oscar Martínez of the online news site *El Faro* said police had unlawfully detained and harassed him in connection with his recent journalistic work. The Ministry of Public Security committed to an investigation of the incident, but no resolution was achieved by year's end. APES documented 28 cases of attacks on journalists or against freedom of expression in 2014, up from 8 the previous year; the incidents ranged from obstruction of journalists' activities to death threats against media workers.

Acts of violence against journalists take place occasionally. In July, cameraman Carlos José Orellana of Canal 99 in Usulután was murdered outside his home by unknown assailants. Journalistic organizations have called on authorities to investigate his killing to determine whether it was related to his work as a journalist.

Economic Environment

Concentration of ownership is an obstacle to a diverse and broadly representative media landscape. There are four daily newspapers, but the print sector is dominated by two powerful families that publish the leading dailies and numerous smaller periodicals. Most of the country

depends on privately owned television and radio networks for news, and ownership in the broadcast sector is also highly concentrated. The Telecorporación Salvadoreña (TCS) owns three of the five national television networks, in addition to a host of radio stations. Community radio has been stifled by the restrictive provisions of the Telecommunications Law. Some 30 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014, and there were no reported government restrictions on the medium. Online newspapers such as *El Faro* and *ContraPunto* are known for their independent investigative journalism.

However, a lack of resources inhibits many media outlets' operations, and reporters often exercise self-censorship to avoid offending media owners, editors, and government officials. This problem is particularly pernicious in connection with government press advertising. Although exact figures are unknown, government advertising represents a substantial percentage of outlets' revenue, creating an incentive for publishers to avoid antagonizing officials.

Equatorial Guinea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27 / 30

Political Environment: 36 / 40

Economic Environment: 27 / 30

Total Score: 90 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	90,NF	90,NF	91,NF	91,NF	90,NF

The government of longtime president Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo maintained a tight grip on both domestic news media and foreign journalists in 2014.

Legal Environment

Although freedoms of expression and the press are legally guaranteed and acknowledged by Obiang in public declarations, these rights are ignored in practice. The government relies on its extensive powers under the 1992 Law on the Press, Publishing, and Audiovisual Media, which authorizes official prepublication censorship, to severely restrict journalistic activity. Libel and defamation are criminal acts, and journalists face prison time if convicted. As a result, self-censorship in both print and electronic media is pervasive.

There are no laws guaranteeing freedom of information. Only representatives of the state-owned media typically have access to official information, and they are subject to dismissal if their reporting runs afoul of state censors.

Local journalists and private publications are required to register with the government through an extremely complex and bureaucratic process. Two associations for journalists—the Press Association of Equatorial Guinea and the Association of Professional Journalists—are registered in the country, but they are governed by members of the ruling party.

Political Environment

Almost all local coverage is orchestrated or tightly controlled by the government, and state media do not cover international news unless the president or another senior official travels abroad. Coverage of the Arab Spring, subsequent unrest in Mali, the ongoing conflict in Syria, and the 2014 ouster of longtime Burkina Faso president Blaise Compaoré have all been prohibited.

Opposition parties are generally denied access to state media. In the past few years, journalists have been allowed to voice vague or mild criticisms of government institutions, but the government has no tolerance for criticism of the president, his family, other high-ranking officials, or the security forces. For example, the media are unable to report on the multiple international criminal investigations into alleged money laundering by the president's son.

According to the U.S. State Department, the internet has become the primary medium for opposition views, particularly from the exile community. The government has apparently responded by blocking opposition websites in recent years. Online versions of foreign Spanish-language newspapers, such as *El País*, have also reportedly been blocked.

Journalists who cross the line into impermissible reporting typically suffer reprisals, including being blacklisted, losing their jobs, or having their programs canceled; at least two such dismissals were reported in 2014.

Few international journalists are granted access to the country. Those who are allowed in require special press accreditation that is approved on a case-by-case basis; inside the country, their movements are monitored and they face routine censorship, particularly on coverage of poverty and the oil sector. In January 2014, two reporters for the *Financial Times* who had government-issued press credentials were arrested and held for three hours. The laptops, digital recorders, and notebooks of the paper's Africa editor, Javier Blas, and one of its senior writers, Peter Chapman, were confiscated.

Economic Environment

Radio is the most influential medium in the country, and all domestic radio and television stations are owned by the government or members of the president's family. The state broadcaster, Radio-Television Equatorial Guinea (RTVGE), operates directly under the Ministry of Information, Press, and Radio. The only private television and radio broadcaster is Asonga, owned by the president's son. Applications to open other private radio stations have been pending for several years but remain unapproved.

Uncensored satellite television broadcasts from abroad are increasingly available to those who can afford the service. International radio stations, including Radio France Internationale and the British Broadcasting Corporation, are also accessible. Less than 19 percent of the population used the internet in 2014.

The government operates at least two newspapers, while a handful are published irregularly by nominally independent figures or members of the small political opposition. *El Lector*, which claims to be an independent newspaper, was launched at the National University of Equatorial Guinea in 2012 and maintains a Facebook page. However, the paper's articles tend to praise the Obiang government.

The country has little of the infrastructure necessary for independent print media to operate and be disseminated widely, such as printing presses and newspaper retailers. The only publishing facility for print media is located at the Ministry of Information, which enables the government's prepublication censorship. Newspapers are generally unavailable in rural areas. In

addition, the lack of a well-developed local private sector hinders the ability of media outlets to raise revenues through advertisements.

Eritrea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 40 / 40

Economic Environment: 24 / 30

Total Score: 94 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	94,NF	94,NF	94,NF	94,NF	94,NF

Eritrea continued to rank among the most repressive media environments in the world in 2014 under the harsh authoritarian regime of President Isaias Afwerki. It has lacked any form of privately owned media since 2001, when the government banned the once-vibrant private press. Key editors and journalists were imprisoned, and the crackdown later extended to state-employed journalists.

Legal Environment

The Eritrean constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and of the press, but these rights are ignored in practice. The 1996 Press Proclamation Law mandates that all newspapers and journalists be licensed. It also stipulates that publications must be submitted for government approval prior to release, and prohibits reprinting articles from banned publications. In 2013, there was an attempted mutiny when 100–200 junior army officers struggled to take over the Ministry of Information, locally known as “Forto.” They forced the station’s director to read a statement over the government channel EriTV calling for the implementation of the constitution—which allows for multiparty competition—and the release of political prisoners and those who had been arrested attempting to leave the country. While the attempted coup was quickly put down, it demonstrated the fragility of the state and the degree of discontent with the secretive regime.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 23 journalists were imprisoned in Eritrea as of December 1, 2014, one of the largest numbers in the world and the most in Africa. Nine have been in prison since 2001, and almost all are being held incommunicado. The most recent jailings came in 2011, when four journalists working for the government radio and television station, Dimtsi Hafash, were arrested and imprisoned; the government has yet to disclose the charges against them. There is little information on the condition of those imprisoned, though unconfirmed reports indicate that several jailed journalists are in very poor health or have died in detention.

The year 2014 saw thwarted attempts on the part of lawyers to press Swedish courts to investigate crimes against humanity, torture, and abduction in the well-known case of the Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak, who was imprisoned without charge in 2001. The case was closed when the Swedish prosecutor claimed that it would not be worthwhile to pursue

because the Eritrean authorities were unlikely to cooperate. While there have been reports that Isaak died in detention in 2011, this could not be confirmed, and he was reported to be alive in 2013, renewing international initiatives to release him. This included efforts to bring a case on his behalf before the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights.

Political Environment

Most independent or critical journalists have left the country due to intimidation and arbitrary imprisonment, and those who remain engage in self-censorship. Although Eritrea has one of the lowest internet penetration rates in the world, the government makes an effort to block many websites managed by Eritrean exiles. Authorities are believed to monitor e-mail communications, and some users suspect that government informants track users' activity in internet cafés.

Ali Abdu, the minister of information and a close confidant of Isaias, fled into exile in late 2012 while on a trip to Germany, and in early 2013 began to speak out about the brutal tactics used against journalists. Media professionals who seek refuge abroad, especially in Sudan, have come under continued pressure, as have their families. For example, after Ali Abdu fled, his father, teenage daughter, and brother were reportedly arrested.

Foreign journalists are not able to freely enter the country and are generally not welcome unless they agree to report favorably about the regime. There have been occasional reports from journalists operating undercover, and Isaias has granted interviews to foreign broadcasters such as Sweden's TV4 and the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera. However, in 2013 the Eritrean government blocked Al-Jazeera for 11 days and issued a decree forbidding the provision of access to the station. The station was reportedly censored due to its coverage of demonstrations outside diplomatic missions in cities such as London, Rome, and Stockholm by Eritreans in the diaspora who were supporting the 2013 mutiny.

Economic Environment

The government controls all media in the country, including a newspaper published in three languages, a television station, and three radio stations. A permit is required to print a publication or to distribute a foreign publication. However, individuals are allowed to purchase satellite dishes and subscribe to international media. Several radio stations run by Eritreans abroad are attempting to reach listeners in Eritrea, including Radio Erena, which broadcasts via satellite and over the radio from Paris, and opposition-aligned stations broadcasting from Ethiopia. Radio Erena has been repeatedly jammed in recent years.

Access to internet technology is extremely limited, as Eritrea has one of the lowest rates of internet access—1 percent—and mobile phone use—5.6 percent—in the world due to high costs and government restrictions. The government requires all internet service providers to use state-controlled internet infrastructure, and almost all connections remain dial-up and extremely slow.

Estonia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30
Political Environment: 4 / 40
Economic Environment: 7 / 30
Total Score: 16 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	17,F	18,F	18,F	16,F	16,F

Legal Environment

The constitution provides for freedoms of speech and of the press, and the government respects these rights in practice. Libel is not a criminal offense, but journalists can be sued for civil defamation. Legal amendments enacted in 2010 contained provisions that many observers regard as threats to freedom of speech, including a measure that would allow courts to imprison journalists for refusing to disclose their sources in cases involving major crimes.

The news website Delfi remained embroiled in a legal case in 2014 involving media outlets' responsibility for reader comments. In 2009, the Supreme Court of Estonia had ruled that online portals could be held liable for comments posted by their readers. The case was referred to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR upheld the Supreme Court ruling in 2013, stating that holding online portals liable for comments was a justifiable restriction on freedom of expression given the offensive nature of the comments in the particular case, the portal's financial gain for publicizing them, and the fact that the Estonian court imposed a reasonable fine for damages. Many free speech organizations found the ruling to be a potential threat to freedom of expression online, as it could lead websites to suppress legitimate user comments. In January 2014, Delfi requested that the case be referred to the Grand Chamber of the ECHR; the request was accepted in February, and the case was ongoing at year's end.

The principle of access to information is outlined in the constitution, and the Public Information Act establishes mechanisms for access and obliges authorities to assist citizens in the process. Estonia is a signatory to the Council of Europe's Convention on Access to Official Documents, which establishes the right of anyone to request information held by public authorities at no charge.

There are two press councils in the country. The Estonian Public Broadcaster (ERR) is supervised by the Public Broadcasting Council (RHN), whose members—by law, four media professionals and one representative from each parliamentary faction—are elected by Parliament. In 2012, after the terms of the four media professionals expired, the ruling coalition replaced them with its own appointees without a public debate.

Political Environment

The country's numerous media outlets carry a wide variety of views, generally without government interference. In 2012, however, Prime Minister Andrus Ansip questioned the integrity of some journalists as he responded to media criticism of his environment minister. Several politicians have also criticized the ERR in the past, calling for stronger regulation of journalistic activities and a greater government presence in the RHN.

In 2013, Minister of Culture Rein Lang announced that he would resign following a scandal involving a leadership change at *Sirp*, a publicly owned newspaper. It was alleged that

Lang used his political power to influence the paper's decision to hire Kaur Kender as the new editor in chief. Lang denied the allegations, but chose to resign after it became clear that it would be difficult for him to effectively continue his work as minister of culture.

In the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, there was considerable debate in Estonia about politically motivated journalism by Russian progovernment outlets. During the year, the Ministry of Culture convened a committee of media professionals and experts to examine issues related to Russian-language media in Estonia, where Russian speakers comprise approximately a quarter of the population. In May, the committee proposed establishing a new Russian-language channel, in addition to strengthening existing programming. The new channel is expected to launch in 2015.

In December, authorities detained Italian journalist and former European Parliament member Giulietto Chiesa shortly after his arrival in Estonia for violating an entry ban issued days earlier. Chiesa had traveled to the country to participate in an event organized by a media club that Estonian authorities had linked to Russian foreign intelligence forces. He was released the same day and ordered to leave Estonia. Violence against journalists is rare, and no major incidents were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

The Estonian-language print media landscape includes four major dailies with national reach—*Postimees*, *Õhtuleht*, *Eesti Päevaleht*, and *Äripäev*—in addition to several regional, municipal, and weekly papers. A small group of private companies owns most newspapers, though some small publications receive aid from regional or municipal governments. Circulation of most newspapers continued to decline in 2014. ERR operates two television stations (ETV and ETV2) and five radio stations. There are two primary national commercial television stations—Kanal2 and TV3—and a large number of private radio stations and cable and satellite services. For the country's sizable Russian-speaking population, there are television and radio programs in Russian (including on public channels), Russian-language newspapers, and access to broadcast and print media from Russia. Estonia remains among the leading countries in the world regarding internet penetration, with approximately 84 percent of the population accessing the medium in 2014. All major newspapers have gone online in recent years, and several online-only news portals have extensive readership.

Ownership in Estonia's small media market is concentrated among a few companies, with competitors Ekspress Grupp and Eesti Media controlling most of the sector; cross-media ownership also persists.

Many commercial broadcasters have struggled financially in recent years even as cable operators have continued to earn profits. In 2012, Parliament amended legislation governing "must-carry" rules, clarifying that free-to-air broadcasters have the right to charge "reasonable" fees to cable operators that rebroadcast their content; the amendments did not provide guidelines for calculating such fees. As a result of the country's 2009 economic crisis, a number of print outlets ceased publishing, while others cut staff and salaries and reduced their output. The crisis also led to significant declines in the advertising market. However, the sector has shown signs of recovery, and the decline in advertising revenues has since slowed or reversed.

Ethiopia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 28 / 30

Political Environment: 36 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 83 / 100

Survey Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	78,NF	78,NF	81,NF	82,NF	81,NF

Press freedom in Ethiopia declined in 2014 as the government launched a crackdown on journalists and bloggers ahead of the May 2015 elections. Among those arrested were six members of the Zone 9 blogging collective who regularly wrote on issues of human rights and governance. The government of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn continued to use the draconian antiterrorism law to stifle dissent, targeting both print and online journalists, with some prosecuted in absentia. Others faced charges such as defamation. With 17 journalists behind bars as of December 1, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Ethiopia was the second-worst jailer of journalists in Africa, after Eritrea.

Legal Environment

While the constitution guarantees freedom of the press, the 2005 criminal code contains many provisions that limit this right, including restrictions on “obscene” communication, defamation, and criticism of public officials. In April 2014, the state-owned broadcaster—the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA)—was found guilty of defaming the opposition Unity for Democracy and Justice party in a multipart documentary. The court ordered ERTA to air a correction, though an ERTA journalist who served as a presenter for the film was acquitted. In October, Temesghen Desalegn, the former editor and owner of the now-defunct independent weekly *Feteh*, was sentenced to three years in prison for incitement, criminal defamation, and false publication related to 2012 articles that criticized the government’s repression of student activists and ethnic minorities.

The 2009 antiterrorism law, ostensibly designed to address crimes related to armed insurgencies, has been used extensively against journalists. Most journalists prosecuted under the law have been accused of collaboration with government-designated terrorist organizations simply for publishing information about such groups or conducting interviews with their leaders. In February 2014, Somali journalist Mohamed Aweys Mudey was sentenced to 27 years in prison on terrorism charges. He had been arrested in November 2013 and detained for four months for allegedly possessing information about the operations of Somali extremist group the Shabaab in Ethiopia. In April 2014, six bloggers associated with the Zone 9 collective were arrested along with three independent journalists. The nine detainees were charged in July with receiving aid and instructions from terrorist groups with the intention to destabilize the country. In August, the government also brought criminal charges against five magazines—*Lomi*, *Enqu*, *Fact*, *Jano*, and *Addis Guday*—and the weekly newspaper *Afro-Times*. They were accused of “encouraging terrorism, endangering national security, repeated incitement of ethnic and religious hate, and smears against officials and public institutions.” The publishers of three of the magazines fled the country, but they were convicted in absentia and sentenced to over three years

in prison. At least five other journalists were already serving sentences or in pretrial detention for alleged terrorism offenses, while two Eritrean journalists have been imprisoned without charge since 2006, also for suspected terrorist activities. Several additional journalists have been convicted in absentia.

Other restrictive laws that impede the practice of journalism include the 2008 Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation, which imposes onerous licensing and registration requirements and harsh sanctions for violations, and the 2012 Telecom Fraud Offences Proclamation, which prescribes significant fines and up to eight years in prison for those convicted of using the telecommunications network to disseminate a “terrorizing message.” The latter law also criminalizes the use of popular voice over internet protocol (VoIP) communications software such as Skype for commercial purposes, or to bypass the telecommunications monopoly of state-owned Ethio Telecom.

The government’s selective enforcement of the laws and the lack of an independent judiciary mean that journalists have few guarantees of due process or a fair trial. Charges are often filed arbitrarily in response to personal disputes. Court cases can continue for years, and many journalists have multiple charges pending against them.

Ethiopia has one of the continent’s most progressive freedom of information laws, but access to public information is largely restricted in practice, and the government has traditionally allowed only state-owned media outlets to cover official events.

The 2009 Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies has crippled the ability of nongovernmental organizations to monitor and advocate for media freedom and other human rights issues, in part by restricting foreign funding and imposing rigid and intrusive spending rules.

In April 2014, a staff member of the international advocacy group Article 19 was detained upon arrival in Ethiopia from Kenya, held without access to a lawyer for more than a day, and deported with a warning not to return. He had been scheduled to provide journalists with security training. International organizations and activists have mounted public campaigns on behalf of jailed Ethiopian journalists, but they have had little concrete effect. Eskinder Nega, a journalist and blogger who was sentenced to 18 years in prison in 2012 for his critical reporting, was named as the recipient of the 2014 World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) Golden Pen of Freedom Award. The Zone 9 bloggers received significant international support after their arrest, particularly on social media. Nigerian and Tanzanian bloggers organized the first Africa-wide “tweetathon” to call for their release, and legal petitions were submitted to the African Union and the United Nations.

Political Environment

Censorship and self-censorship are routinely practiced. Many private newspapers report that officials attempt to control content through article placement requests and telephone calls to editors about stories that are critical of the government. In June 2014, 20 journalists from the state-owned Oromia Radio and Television Organization were fired with no formal explanation. The journalists said the mass dismissal could be linked to their views on a student protest movement that challenged a government plan to cede parts of Oromia State to the federal capital region of Addis Ababa.

The government obstructs access to numerous websites, including independent and international news sites, opposition websites, and the sites of groups designated as terrorist

organizations. Controversial political blogs, many of which are based abroad, are blocked, preventing important voices from contributing to the local political debate. Tor, a software package that allows users to circumvent internet filtering and browse the web anonymously, has been blocked since Ethio Telecom adopted deep packet inspection (DPI) to control internet traffic in 2012. In 2013, employees of the independent Ethiopian Satellite Television Service (ESAT), a satellite broadcaster run by diaspora journalists operating abroad, were targeted with sophisticated spyware that can be used to copy files, obtain passwords, and intercept Skype calls and instant messages.

Media outlets face significant restrictions on coverage of mass protests, particularly those by the Muslim community against policies that threaten their religious freedoms, which began in 2012. Journalists who cover the demonstrations have faced arrests and harassment. In July 2014, photojournalist Aziza Mohamed of *Addis Guday* was arrested and held without charge for supposedly inciting protesters to violence. The editor and the managing director of the defunct Muslim weekly *Ye Muslimoch Guday* were similarly arrested for coverage of the protests in 2012 and 2013, respectively, and their trials on terrorism charges were ongoing in late 2014.

Harassment and intimidation of critical journalists in Ethiopia remains a common practice among law enforcement officials. A 2013 Human Rights Watch report documented dozens of cases of abuse and mistreatment of inmates at the Maekelawi detention center—a key federal facility for journalists and other political prisoners in Addis Ababa—including unlawful interrogation tactics and denial of access to basic needs, as well as to family members and lawyers, in order to obtain coerced confessions. Growing concerns about politically motivated charges and possible imprisonment have led a record number of Ethiopian journalists to flee abroad. According to CPJ, more than 30 journalists left the country during 2014, twice as many as in the previous two years combined.

Economic Environment

The number of print outlets covering politics decreased significantly after 2005, while weekly papers and magazines on business and lifestyle topics—catering to the growing urban middle class—are proliferating. The state operates the only national television station and owns almost all radio outlets, the primary sources of information for Ethiopians. State-controlled media are biased in favor of the government and the ruling party. Broadcasting law prohibits any political, religious, or foreign entities from owning stations, though the owners of the few private radio stations are generally seen as friendly to the authorities. The signals of international broadcasters such as Deutsche Welle and Voice of America (VOA) have occasionally been jammed, reportedly with technical support from the Chinese government.

Fear of prosecution and heavy taxes on the publishing process have effectively concentrated the printing industry in the hands of the largest state-run printer, Berhanena Selam Printing Press. In 2012, Berhanena Selam introduced a revised “standard contract” that allows it to refuse distribution of content deemed to be contrary to state interests. Publishers must submit to the contract or risk losing their printing privileges. The printer voided agreements with *Feteh* and the opposition daily *Finote Netsanet* that year, effectively putting the former out of business. By giving the state enterprise the power to vet and review articles before printing them, the new contract essentially reestablished official prepublication censorship in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia and neighboring Djibouti, which has a population of less than a million, are the only countries in Africa to maintain a complete monopoly on telecommunications, including

provision of internet service. With the support of the Chinese government, Ethio Telecom managed to raise mobile connectivity to nearly 29 percent of the population in 2013. However, internet connectivity remained at a meagre 3 percent in 2014. The government’s control of the telecommunications sector has allowed it to contain the potential of new communication technologies to enable civic and political mobilization, but it continues to invest massive resources in these technologies to support its own state surveillance apparatus and development agenda.

Fiji

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 22 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 52 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	54,PF	57,PF	58,PF	56,PF	54,PF

There were some improvements in Fiji’s media environment in 2014, particularly in connection to the general election held in September—the first democratic poll since a military coup in 2006. The Fiji First party won a decisive electoral victory, and Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, leader of the military-backed interim government, took office as Fiji’s democratically elected prime minister; international observers deemed the election to be credible. Local media were open to a wider range of discussion and opinion during the electoral period than in the years since the 2006 coup, and foreign journalists were able to travel to Fiji to cover the election with fewer restrictions than in the past.

Legal Environment

Although the 2013 Constitution provides some nominal safeguards for a free press and freedom of information, it also allows for the curtailment of such rights at the government’s discretion. Section 17 provides for the “right to freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication,” including “freedom of imagination and creativity.” However, the section also states that the law “may limit, or authorise the limitation of” these freedoms in the interests of national security, public safety, public order, public morality, public health and other circumstances, including for mitigating “ill will between ethnic or religious groups” or defending “the right to be free from hate speech, whether directed against individuals or groups.” Media watchdogs have criticized the document for undermining freedom of expression with excessively broad restrictions.

Defamation is a civil offense in Fiji, as outlined in the country’s legal code, and fines may not exceed the cost of damages caused to the plaintiff, except in extraordinary circumstances.

In 2012, the government ended official censorship and opened wider public debate by lifting the 2009 Public Emergency Regulations (PER), which had allowed authorities to directly

ensor news content. However, a climate of self-censorship has prevailed due to the chilling effect of the 2010 Media Industry Development Decree (MIDD). Tough penalties under the decree deter media outlets from directly criticizing the government. However, critical reporting became more robust during the election campaign in 2014, and opposition politicians received considerable coverage. Ahead of the Universal Periodic Review conducted under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council in October 2014, several media watchdogs condemned the MIDD and called for a revocation of the decree and the adoption of a self-regulatory media framework. The groups also called for the enactment of freedom of information (FOI) legislation. Fiji does not have an FOI law, and access to government information can be difficult.

The Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) was established through the MIDD and has the power to enforce the decree and to investigate possible violations. The MIDD also established a separate media tribunal to hear cases referred by the authority, and to impose penalties on journalists whose work is deemed to be against the “public interest or public order.” Violations are punishable by a fine of up to FJ\$1,000 (US\$530) or imprisonment of up to two years for journalists; the penalty for any media company that breaches the decree may be as high as FJ\$100,000 (US\$53,000). In April 2014, the MIDA ordered the private broadcaster Fiji TV to apologize and retract a story containing quotations that the agency deemed to be hate speech; no fines or charges were brought against the outlet or the source. MIDA chairman Ashwin Raj publicly rebuked local and international media for their coverage of the September election but appeared more conciliatory after the vote.

Political Environment

Coverage of the 2014 election period was robust, with 450 journalists and media workers—including 37 working for foreign news groups—reporting on the vote. Observers noted a slight opening of the media environment for discussion of political issues in the lead-up to the polls, a departure from the atmosphere of pervasive self-censorship in the post-coup years. Nevertheless, there were reports of abuses. In May, broadcast journalist Anish Chand of Fiji TV was dismissed under pressure from the government after advocating for balanced coverage of the election. A two-day media blackout was imposed on election coverage immediately before the vote in September, with penalties for violations including heavy fines and several years’ imprisonment. However, there were no reports of media workers being charged under these provisions. Local media accused Bainimarama of violating the blackout with a road safety billboard in Suva that featured his image and his party’s logo.

Journalists working for foreign or international media were able to travel to Fiji to cover the 2014 elections with fewer restrictions than they had faced in previous years. Bainimarama’s interim government had continuously barred foreign journalists from entering the country, in addition to expelling a wide number of correspondents. Media workers and outlets may face harassment in connection with their work, although cases have become rarer, in part because of the substantial roles already played by legal restrictions and self-censorship in limiting controversial coverage. Jyoti Pratibha, an editor for the *Fiji Sun* newspaper, and Vosita Kotoiwasawasa, a journalist for the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, received death threats after reporting on the cancellation of a political debate in September.

Economic Environment

Fiji's media landscape contains both public and private outlets. There are two privately owned English-language dailies, the *Fiji Times* and the *Fiji Sun*, and a small number of weekly and monthly publications that are either private or community-owned. Two major media companies, the Motibhai Group and the CJ Patel Group, control the majority of commercial print outlets. The private radio network Communications Fiji Limited operates several multilingual stations and competes with the public broadcaster, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, which operates one public television channel and six radio stations. An independent station, Mai Television, also competes with the long-standing outlet Fiji TV. Although Fiji TV is technically in private hands, its majority owner is a government-controlled company, and the broadcaster is known to be subject to state pressure in both editorial and administrative capacities. Approximately 41 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. Social-networking websites and underground blogs—particularly the *Fijileaks* blog, published by a prominent local journalist—continued to provide important platforms for dissenting voices throughout the year.

Under the MIDD, foreigners can hold no more than a 10 percent stake in Fijian media outlets. This provision led to the sale of the *Fiji Times*, the country's oldest and most influential newspaper, in 2010. The newspaper—wholly owned by the Australian branch of Rupert Murdoch's U.S.-based News Corporation—had been the most critical media opponent of the interim regime and the strongest voice for a return to democracy since the 2006 coup. Following the enactment of the MIDD, the *Fiji Times* was sold to the Motibhai Group, and has since shown some signs of self-censorship. Meanwhile, the progovernment *Fiji Sun* has benefitted from a virtual monopoly on state advertising in recent years, although the government did run limited advertising in the *Fiji Times* in 2014. Despite overall economic improvements in Fiji, media outlets continue to rely in large part on state advertising revenue.

Finland

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 3 / 40

Economic Environment: 4 / 30

Total Score: 11 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	10,F	10,F	10,F	11,F	11,F

Legal Environment

Finland continued to rank among the freest media environments in the world in 2014. Freedom of expression is protected by Article 12 of the constitution and the 2003 Act on the Exercise of Freedom of Expression in Mass Media. Although journalists and media outlets are generally allowed to operate freely, defamation is considered a crime, and the government actively pursues incidents of defamation of religion or ethnicity. Finnish courts have traditionally treated libel cases as a dispute between the journalist and the subject, without taking into consideration the public's right to receive information on matters of public importance. This practice has been repeatedly contested by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and the Finnish courts

are beginning to adjust their rulings accordingly. In an October 2013 judgment, the ECHR found that television journalists Juha Arvo Mikael Ristamäki and Ari Jukka Korvola had been unfairly convicted of defamation for referring to a well-known Finnish businessman standing trial for economic offenses during a current-affairs program in 2006.

The constitution provides for the freedom of access to information, and the 1999 Act on the Openness of Government Activities created mechanisms for the granting of access to information in the public domain, setting a timeline of two weeks for government bodies to respond to requests. The act includes restrictions on access to information related to foreign affairs, criminal investigations, and national security. In 2009, Finland was among the first countries to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents, which sets legally binding minimum standards for access to official documents held by public authorities.

The self-regulatory Council for Mass Media (CMM) is responsible for upholding ethical standards across print, broadcast, and online media. The CMM, which is empowered to accept and adjudicate complaints, consists of representatives of the media as well as the public. The maximum sanction in its power is a reprimand that must be published or broadcast immediately. Participation in the CMM is voluntary, but all major media outlets have signed on. Annual membership fees are the basis of CMM funding, although the body may also accept government subsidies to support its operations.

The Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (FICORA), a branch of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, monitors radio and television actors, grants broadcasting licenses, and supervises compliance with regulations. In November 2014, the parliament approved the Information Society Code, which unifies and updates a number of existing laws governing the operation of telecommunications, security in electronic communications, and the media market. The code contains provisions for the promotion of competition in the media sector, as well as more efficient and secure telecommunications systems. It also expands the powers of FICORA to grant programming licenses to radio and television stations, whereas under previous legislation, the government held the bulk of responsibility for issuing licenses. The code will go into effect in 2015.

Political Environment

The case of Markus Pentikäinen, a photojournalist who was arrested in 2006 while covering a demonstration that had been disbursed by police, continued throughout the year. In 2009, the Finnish Supreme Court had upheld a 2007 conviction against Pentikäinen, finding that he had disobeyed police orders by remaining in the demonstration area. In February 2014, the ECHR ruled in favor of the Finnish Supreme Court. Pentikäinen was granted a further appeal, however, and the Grand Chamber of the ECHR heard the case in December; deliberations were ongoing at year's end.

Physical harassment of or threats against journalists are extremely rare.

Economic Environment

Despite recent decreases in the circulation of print media, Finland maintains high newspaper readership, ranking first in the European Union and third in the world. Most newspapers are privately owned. Media ownership became concentrated after several mergers in the late 1990s, with Sanoma and Alma Media controlling the majority of newspaper distribution.

Sanoma owns the largest daily newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, and the tabloid *Ilta-Sanomat*, as well as a number of television channels and dozens of publications. Alma Media's portfolio includes the major daily newspaper *Aamulehti* and the tabloid *Iltalehti*. The government grants discretionary subsidies to newspapers and online publications written in minority languages.

The first digital television broadcasts began in Finland in 2001, and the digital switchover was finalized in 2007. The transition was accompanied by the removal of a frequency restriction that had previously limited the number of available channels, and the television landscape has since grown to include a wide range of public and commercial channels. Currently, there are more than 50 commercial channels in addition to four public channels operated by the Yleisradio Oy (YLE), the public service broadcaster. YLE is funded by a public service broadcasting tax, must be accessible to all Finnish citizens regardless of income or place of residence, and provides broadcasting and internet services in the minority languages of Romani, Russian, Sámi, and Swedish, as well as in Latin. There is a high level of diversity in the content produced by both public and private television outlets. However, in August 2014, the Ministry of Transport and Communications reported that the share of Finnish programming has decreased in recent years, while North American television programs have increasingly gained viewership.

In addition to six public radio channels with a national reach, YLE also operates 28 regional stations, and there are dozens of commercial stations with national, regional, or local reach. In November 2014, MTV Radiot was launched to handle the media sales of Radio Nova, NRJ, and Nostalgia with the aim of improving the reach of these radio stations to their audiences. The creation of the company was not intended to affect the independent operation, production, or content of the three stations.

Decreasing advertising spending continues to pose a challenge for the media sector, especially for print publications. In July 2014, the government announced a three-year funding program to help media outlets adapt their practices and services to the digital age. The program, which will be administered by the public funding agency Tekes, aims to encourage innovation and help outlets contend with the financial challenges facing the media sector at large.

The internet is open and unrestricted, and more than 92 percent of citizens had access in 2014. Legislation approved in 2010 gave every Finn the right to access a 1Mbps broadband internet connection. In 2008, the government launched the Broadband for All 2015 project with the aim of expanding internet access in Finland, particularly by extending coverage to people living in remote areas. A progress review in November 2014 revealed potential financial difficulties in reaching the coverage target of 99 percent by the end of 2015; the project was ongoing at year's end.

France

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 23 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	23,F	24,F	22,F	22,F

Legal Environment

The constitution and governing institutions in France support an open media environment, although certain laws limit aspects of press freedom and freedom of expression in practice. Strict defamation laws impose fines on those found guilty, and the French penal code also punishes efforts to justify war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as incitement to discrimination and violence. Holocaust denial is a crime under the 1990 Gayssot Act. In July 2013, a provision of the press code that mandated a €45,000 (\$61,000) fine for insulting the president was repealed after the European Court of Human Rights found that it violated freedom of expression. However, the repeal did not affect a provision—which remained in place in 2014—that applies the same penalty to defamation of public officials.

Defamation laws are often used to pressure journalists. In April 2012, then president Nicolas Sarkozy sued the online journal *Mediapart* for running a story alleging that he had accepted millions of dollars in campaign funds in 2007 from former Libyan leader Mu’ammar al-Qadhafi. Sarkozy claimed that the letter *Mediapart* cited was forged, but graphologists confirmed the document’s authenticity in November 2014. In 2013, the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF) filed charges against *Le Figaro* journalist Ivan Rioufol for making allegedly discriminatory comments on a radio program; the case remained open as of the end of 2014.

Several high-profile defamation cases arose in 2014, the most notable involving current president François Hollande’s chief of staff, Jean-Pierre Jouyet, and former prime minister François Fillon. In a book, two *Le Monde* journalists, Gérard Davet and Fabrice Lhomme, alleged that Fillon had encouraged Jouyet to expedite an investigation into Sarkozy—who was accused of misappropriating party funds—in order to derail Sarkozy’s campaign for the 2017 presidential election. Both Fillon and Jouyet denied the allegations until *Le Monde* printed excerpts from a recorded conversation between the two men. Fillon filed three separate counts of libel against Jouyet, as well as the journalists and the paper itself. Fillon also sued the journalists to obtain access to the recorded conversation that substantiated the report—in violation of source-protection regulations. The cases remained unresolved at year’s end.

Also during 2014, the tabloid magazine *Closer* paid a €2,000 (\$16,000) fine to Valérie Trierweiler, Hollande’s former partner, for violating her privacy; the magazine was also assessed a suspended fine on similar grounds for its reporting on actress Julie Gayet, who had an affair with the president. Front National (National Front) deputy leader Florian Philippot sued the tabloid for defamation after an article indicated that he was gay; in December, *Closer* was fined €20,000 violating his privacy. In November, satirical weekly *l’Agglo-Rieuse* was forced to pay exorbitant damages for a 2010 story about legal actions against businessman Robert Garzillo; the journalist and publisher were fined a total of €1,200 (\$124,000).

France’s hate-speech laws came under scrutiny 2014, as French comedian Dieudonné M’bala M’bala, known as Dieudonné, was forced to cancel shows for allegedly inciting anti-Semitism with the “quenelle,” a hand gesture that many argue is an inverted Nazi salute. The comedian owes over €65,000 in fines related to his numerous hate-speech convictions in recent years. In February, he was forced to remove two controversial segments from a YouTube video of one of his performances for alleged racial defamation and Holocaust denial. He was dismissed from a separate hate-speech trial in June for content in the same video.

A counterterrorism bill approved by parliament in November 2014 came under fire for its ambiguous provisions that could limit free speech, especially online. It removed the criminal offenses of publicly inciting or “glorifying terrorism” (“*apologie du terrorisme*”) from the 1881 press law and added them to the criminal code; accordingly, those broadly defined crimes would incur a punishment of up to seven years in prison and a €100,000 (\$136,000) fine if committed online. The offenses, if committed offline, were subject to five years in prison and a €75,000 fine. The new law also authorizes the authorities to ask internet service providers to block sites for glorifying terrorism, and allows the police to use online monitoring and surveillance to detect violators.

The 2011 Law on Guidelines and Programming for the Performance of Internal Security (LOPSSI 2) allows sites suspected of containing child pornography to be blocked without a court order. It also allows police to install or remove spyware under judicial oversight. A new military programming law passed in December 2013 gives extensive rights to government agencies to monitor the internet and phone usage of French citizens in real time. The law requires no judicial supervision, and provides for broad grounds on which to justify surveillance of an individual. Among other problems, the law potentially jeopardizes the confidentiality of journalists’ sources.

A January 2010 law strengthened protection of sources in France, mandating that journalists can only be compelled to reveal sources necessary for the investigation of a serious crime. In March 2012, the Paris court of appeals cited a procedural technicality in rejecting a case in which former prosecutor Philippe Courroye was accused of illegally obtaining the telephone records of journalists at *Le Monde* in 2010. However, after an appeal, the case was allowed to move forward in 2013; Courroye was summoned to testify in front of the High Audiovisual Council (CSA), France’s regulatory body for electronic media, in mid-November 2013. In February 2014, it was ruled that no action would be taken against Courroye. In obtaining the journalists’ records, Courroye had sought information about the so-called Bettencourt affair, in which then president Sarkozy and Labor Minister Éric Woerth were accused of receiving illegal funding from L’Oréal cosmetics heiress Liliane Bettencourt.

Accusations of illegal campaign contributions originated in another high-profile media-freedom case related to the Bettencourt affair. In 2010, the center-right newsweekly *Le Point* and *Mediapart* had come into possession of audio recordings of conversations between Bettencourt and her financial manager, taken by her butler without their knowledge. Both outlets published excerpts of the recordings as well as articles based on their revelations, and Bettencourt sued both that year for violations of her right to privacy. After losing their case in July 2013, *Mediapart* appealed the ruling but again lost in July 2014 in the country’s highest appeals court. *Mediapart* plans to challenge the ruling in the European Court of Human Rights.

In September 2010, the High Authority for the Dissemination of Creative Works and Protection of Rights on the Internet (HADOPI) began operation. Under the 2009 law that created it, users who illegally download copyrighted material could face penalties including fines of up to €1,500 for violations. However, in 2013 the provision of the law under which users faced the possibility of having their internet access suspended was removed.

In May 2014, the European Court of Justice ruled that Google Inc. can be forced to remove links that lead to content about an individual, enshrined in what is referred to as the “right to be forgotten.” As of November, users in France reportedly had submitted more such removal requests than any other nation in the European Union.

Although legislation guarantees access to information, rights hinge on the protection of a third party’s reputation, and requests for information are sometimes denied.

In October 2013, the National Assembly passed a law giving greater independence to the CSA. The law reduced the number of council members from nine to seven and gives these members the power to name the presidents of the three public audiovisual societies in France. Further reinforcing the CSA's independence, the law stipulates that the nation's president will appoint only the president of the council and not two constituent members, as was previously the case.

Political Environment

France's media are robust and express a wide range of opinions, largely without restriction. Journalists generally do not face obstacles to coverage, but in September 2014 a journalist from *Mediapart* and another from *Le Petit Journal* were denied access to the far-right National Front's "summer university" after having already received official accreditation. *Mediapart* is routinely denied access to National Front events. In November, Network Vision cameraman Michel Lecomte was forcibly removed from a city council meeting in the southern town of Montauban, and was subsequently hospitalized for the resulting injuries. Two other reporters who filmed the incident were accosted by administrators and forced to stop reporting.

Media outlets and journalists are occasionally subject to raids and attacks. Website *Rue89* endured numerous cyberattacks from hacker Grégory Chelli after journalist Benoît le Corre published a profile of Chelli in July. These included distributed denial-of-service attacks (DDoS) attacks, which disabled the site; le Corre's family also received threatening phone calls. *Mediapart*, *Libération*, and *Arrêt sur Images* have also reported similar cyberattacks.

Journalists reported increased violence against the press at protests across France during 2014. These incidents occurred at a "Day of Anger" protest against Hollande in Paris in January, pro-Israel and pro-Gaza demonstrations in the summer, and a November rally in opposition to the Sivens Dam in southern France. Attacks included both verbal and physical assaults against journalists and photojournalists, in most cases by demonstrators.

Economic Environment

Most of France's newspapers are privately owned. There are an estimated 1,000 radio stations, and since the state monopoly on radio ended in 1982, private stations have flourished, although public broadcaster Radio France continues to be popular. Nearly 84 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014.

Many outlets have yet to recover from the financial downturn that began in 2008. In July, the CSA did not grant cable television news channel LC1, owned by the TF1 group, free-to-air status, placing it under financial jeopardy. In September, the newspaper *Libération* reduced its workforce significantly through layoffs and voluntary departures, reoriented its focus toward its web presence, and issued contracts prohibiting the remaining staff from publicly criticizing the newspaper. Often, private media outlets—print and broadcast—are owned by companies with close ties to prominent politicians and defense contractors.

In 2009, advertisements were eliminated on the five public channels during prime time. The lost income was to be made up through higher taxes and licensing fees. However, revenue from taxes has fallen short of expectations, putting financial strain on the public channels.

Gabon

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 70 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	71,NF	69,NF	70,NF	71,NF	70,NF

Legal Environment

Gabon's constitution guarantees both freedom of expression and freedom of the press, but these rights are restricted in practice. The 2001 media law currently in effect does not meet international standards for freedom of expression. Libel and defamation can be treated as a criminal offense, though there were no reports of criminal cases in 2014. Gabon has no freedom of information law.

The nine members of Gabon's media regulatory body, the National Communications Council (CNC), are appointed by the president and the heads of the two legislative chambers, who are members of President Ali Bongo Ondimba's Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG). In March 2014, Bongo appointed former interior minister Jean François Ndongou as the new CNC president. While independent in theory, the CNC is subject to political interference by the ruling party and the ministry of communications, to which it reports. In May 2014, the council issued warnings to several opposition-oriented newspapers for publishing graphic images of violence and discussing politicians' nationalities. The following month it imposed a six-month suspension on *Le Verbe de Ngomo* for an article claiming that the president was not a natural-born Gabonese citizen.

Political Environment

Most media outlets are affiliated with the government, the PDG, or opposition parties, leading to politically biased reporting. The media carry some criticism of the government and ruling party, but self-censorship is widespread, especially regarding the president. In September 2014, two opposition weeklies, *La Loupe* and *L'Aube*, temporarily suspended publication after claiming that the government had replaced their latest issues on newsstands with fake versions carrying progovernment content. A presidential spokesperson denied the charge.

Journalists occasionally face physical attacks and harassment in the course of their work, though no incidents were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

There are two daily newspapers: *L'Union*, a former government-owned daily that has been privately held since 2000 but is still closely affiliated with the ruling party, and the government-owned *Gabon Matin*, which ceased publishing in September 2014 due to a lack of state funding. The country's roughly 30 private weeklies and monthlies publish sporadically due

to financial constraints, a lack of advertising, and government-ordered suspensions. The ownership of private media is opaque, though it is usually tied to an individual or family in the political elite, either from the PDG or an opposition party.

There are more than 40 private and community radio stations and some two dozen television stations. The government owns two television stations and three radio stations. Foreign publications are readily available. Satellite television is also available to those who can afford it, and foreign radio broadcasts are widely accessible.

Less than 10 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. In February, Gabon signed an agreement with the World Bank to help fund the extension of the African Coast Europe (ACE) fiber-optic cable across the country. Gabon Telecom, whose majority owner is Morocco's Maroc Telecom, began offering 4G mobile service in October.

The Gambia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 81 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	81,NF	81,NF	81,NF	83,NF	83,NF

Legal Environment

Although Article 25 of the constitution provides for freedom of expression and of the press, the government does not respect these rights in practice. Defamation is a criminal offense, as is sedition and the dissemination of false information. The Information and Communications Act was amended in 2013 to introduce a 15-year jail term and a fine of 3 million dalasi (\$77,000) for anyone using the internet to spread false news or make derogatory statements, incite dissatisfaction, or instigate violence against the government or public officials. There are broad restrictions on any content that is considered contrary to the principles of Islam or offensive to other religions.

Journalists are frequently arrested and detained on flimsy and superficial charges. However, 2014 saw three journalists acquitted. In September, Alhagie Jobe, the former deputy director of the progovernment *Daily Observer*, was acquitted of sedition charges after spending a year in jail, where he was allegedly tortured. The charges against him came in connection with an incident in which he was found with an allegedly fictitious news article in his possession. In November, a court dismissed charges against Musa Sheriff and Sainey Marenah of the triweekly newspaper the *Voice*, who had been on trial for 11 months on charges of publishing false news and conspiring to commit a felony. Those charges were connected to a 2013 *Voice* article stating that a number of members of the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) had joined the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP).

There is no law guaranteeing access to public information. The 2004 Newspaper Amendment Act expanded the 1944 Newspaper Law to the broadcasting sector and exacerbated

the media registration process, extracting excessive bonds to register media institutions and increasing penalties for media outlets that fail to register.

Political Environment

Despite a 2005 press law that guarantees the right of citizens to obtain information and prohibits censorship, reporters from news outlets that are perceived to be critical of the government are routinely denied access to public information and excluded from official events. There have been several instances of overt censorship of media outlets in recent years. However, in January 2014, the government lifted bans on the community radio station Teranga FM, which was shuttered in 2012 for disregarding a government order to stop broadcasting a particular program, and on the independent *Standard* newspaper, which was shut down in 2012 for criticizing a presidential decree. A ban against the *Daily News*, a privately owned newspaper shut down at the same time as the *Standard*, remains in place. Many journalists self-censor due to the risk of being harassed, fined, or arrested in connection with their work.

Efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice in Abuja, Nigeria, to hold the government accountable for past mistreatment of journalists have borne little fruit. The case of Deyda Hydera, a prominent journalist who was murdered in 2004, resurfaced in June 2014 when the ECOWAS Court ruled that the Gambian government was in breach of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS for failing to sufficiently investigate the murder; the court additionally awarded Hydera's family \$50,000 in compensation plus an additional \$10,000 for legal costs. The court pointedly accused the Gambian government of fostering a climate of impunity in the country, and noted its failure to comply with previous court rulings related to the cases of journalist "Chief" Ebrimah Manneh, who was arrested in 2006 by state security agents and has been missing since, and Musa Saidykhan, an exiled journalist who in 2006 was held by the government for three weeks and was allegedly tortured. Many journalists remained in exile in 2014, due to government threats and harassment.

Economic Environment

The government owns the *Gambia Now* newspaper, a national radio station, and the only national television station. Political news coverage at these outlets generally toes the official line. There are several private newspapers and private radio stations. Private media outlets are subject to official pressure, and many have toned down coverage of the opposition. Businesses often avoid advertising with private media outlets for fear of government reprisals. A premium television network operates as a locally based satellite station. Foreign news services are rebroadcast on several local radio stations. Although the government rarely interferes with foreign cable or satellite television news broadcasts, most Gambians do not have access to the technology necessary for viewing them.

About 16 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. Gambia's media landscape includes a substantial number of online news sites and blogs, many of which are based overseas and operated by Gambian expatriates, among them exiled journalists. The government sometimes blocks access to websites that are critical of the government, as well as foreign blogs and news websites, limiting the diversity of information and viewpoints available to the country's residents.

Georgia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 48 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	59,PF	55,PF	52,PF	49,PF	47,PF

Georgia continues to have the freest and most diverse media environment in the South Caucasus, though political polarization and the close links between media companies and politicians have historically plagued the industry. While none of the country's major providers of news are known to be directly owned by a politician, strong ties remain between media outlets and political parties or interests. A crisis stemming from political disagreements over the board of the public broadcaster, which has suffered from multiple vacancies in recent years, persisted in 2014.

Legal Environment

The constitution protects media freedom, and Georgia has some of the most progressive legislation in the region. Article 19 of the 1995 constitution and the Law on Freedom of Speech and Expression contain protections against censorship. Legal cases are rarely brought against journalists. However, legislation is at times slowly implemented, and enforcement is occasionally influenced by political concerns. Government officials sometimes undermine legal protections through hostile public rhetoric toward the press. Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, like many of his predecessors, has criticized journalists in public appearances, accusing Rustavi 2, Maestro TV, and other outlets of biased coverage of public affairs.

The government decriminalized libel in 2004 as part of an effort to bring Georgian media laws into line with European standards. Amendments to the Law on Broadcasting in 2013 expanded the mandate of the "must carry/must offer" rule beyond preelection periods, establishing it as a permanent fixture in Georgian media legislation. The rule obliges cable operators to carry all television stations, preventing politically motivated suppression of certain channels.

Georgia adopted freedom of information legislation in 1999, although implementation remains problematic. The Georgian Dream government elected in 2012 has appeared responsive to calls by civil society organizations and media watchdogs to improve access to information. In 2013, as part of Georgia's commitment to the standards set by the Open Government Partnership, the government refined regulations governing access to information by requiring public agencies to establish websites, publish certain public information online, and accept electronic requests for information. According to the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, the vast majority of agencies required to publish public information online complied in 2014. Efforts to unify the facilitation of electronic information requests and expand disclosure of public data continued during the year.

The Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC), which regulates and licenses the country's telecommunications and broadcast media, has been accused of lacking independence. Parliament elected two new members to the GNCC in 2014, one of whom was chosen as the commission's chair. The previous two chairs—one of whom resigned in 2013, while the other was impeached later the same year—had faced criticism for cultivating commercial or political ties that constituted conflicts of interest.

There have been signs of political influence in Georgia's regulatory environment for licensing. Some progovernment outlets have been allowed to operate without licenses in the past, and media watchdogs have noted that licenses are sometimes awarded based on an outlet's political affiliations. In 2011, the GNCC renewed the issuance of broadcast licenses after a three-year delay, and the Constitutional Court ruled in 2012 that television stations would no longer require a license to broadcast via cable networks. However, licenses are still required for satellite broadcasts.

Political Environment

Political influence over private media, particularly television outlets, from both the opposition and the ruling party has traditionally been a major problem. However, polarization in the television sector, historically driven by partisan alliances, has declined in recent years, and broadcasters have increasingly focused on producing competitive news content. Monitoring of broadcast media coverage of the 2014 local elections showed lower levels of political bias compared with the parliamentary elections in 2012 and the presidential election in 2013. Print and radio outlets typically enjoy editorial autonomy. The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, a self-regulatory body, continued to make efforts in 2014 to encourage accountability and integrity in reporting. Nevertheless, challenges to the independence of media outlets persist. In December 2014, a group of journalists and other media workers resigned from Maestro TV to protest the firing of a popular program presenter, citing perceptions of influence on the outlet by progovernment figures.

Political influence at the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) remains a concern. Competition between the government and the opposition over the outlet culminated in a serious leadership crisis in 2013, when the GPB's director was dismissed and several positions on its 15-member board became vacant. The 2013 amendments to the Law on Broadcasting made key changes to the governance structure of the GPB with the aim of resolving the crisis. Previously, members of the board were approved by the president, and the GPB's main television channel, 1TV, was widely perceived as biased in favor of the pre-2012 United National Movement government. The new regulations reduced the size of the GPB's board and made appointments more competitive and politically neutral, excluding the president from the process. Parliament held multiple rounds of selection in 2013 and 2014, but failed to fill all vacant seats. The crisis continued in 2014 amid legal complaints launched by serving and former members of the GPB board. Media watchdogs criticized the failure to fill the vacancies and restore the board's operations, and raised concerns about general political interference with the board.

The level of violence and harassment aimed at journalists has been a serious problem in the past, particularly during election periods. Although no major incidents of violence were recorded during the local elections in 2014, journalists continue to face intimidation, harassment, and occasionally assault. Zaza Davitaia, a journalist for the *Asaval-Dasaval* newspaper, was assaulted twice in October. One of the founders of the Rustavi 2 television broadcaster, Erosi

Kitsmarishvili, was found dead with a gunshot wound at his home in July; an investigation was ongoing at year's end, with little information available about whether the death was a homicide or connected to Kitsmarishvili's media role.

Economic Environment

A large number of private print outlets operate in the country, but they have very limited circulation. There are also more than 70 radio stations. Leading television stations include the GPB's 1TV and the privately owned Rustavi 2, Imedi TV, Maestro TV, and Kavkasia TV. The expansion of the "must carry/must offer" rule has widened the reach of many channels, and a series of ownership changes since 2012 have altered the landscape of the industry and reduced polarization. In February 2014, the government published the strategy for Georgia's digital broadcasting switchover, which was projected to be completed in June 2015. As part of the strategy, authorities made plans to subsidize digital receivers for socially vulnerable households. Approximately 49 percent of Georgians accessed the internet in 2014. Numerous newspapers and several television stations produce online content, and social-networking websites play a growing role in spreading news and information.

A long-standing lack of transparency in media ownership, especially of television stations, was partially alleviated in 2011 with the adoption of amendments to the Law on Broadcasting that require the full disclosure of ownership structures. The Coalition for Media Advocacy, established by local journalism and human rights organizations, was actively involved in negotiating the amendments, which also include a ban on the ownership of broadcast media by offshore companies. Concerns about the concentration of media ownership remain unresolved. Although individuals and entities are prohibited by law from owning more than one television or radio license in any one area, no explicit mechanisms are in place to prevent individuals from holding shares in the companies that own the broadcast licenses.

The 2013 amendments to the Law on Broadcasting resolved the issue of state ownership of and support for Adjara TV, establishing the station as a public broadcaster and removing it from the control of authorities in the autonomous republic of Adjara. The amendments also introduced a measure for increasing transparency in advertising revenues, requiring broadcasters to disclose funding sources to the GNCC. A group of broadcasters lodged a complaint against the GNCC in 2013, claiming that its financial reporting forms required broader disclosure than stipulated by law. Discussion of the issue continued in 2014.

In October, Parliament passed legislation obliging private broadcasters to allot 90 seconds of free airtime every three hours for public-service announcements, or "social advertising." Broadcasters and media watchdogs expressed concerns that the law contained vague definitions and gave the GNCC excessive control over enforcement of the costly obligation.

The advertising market in Georgia shows some signs of political influence. Advertisers have traditionally favored progovernment media, although the government has in recent years begun allocating advertisements and subsidies more fairly. Print media are especially challenged by low advertising income and a lack of financial resources. In 2014, the Finance Ministry sparked controversy after it requested that the television audience measurement company TVMR GE provide the locations of the households where the company hosts "people meters," devices that record audience viewing habits. Critics decried the request as politically motivated, and TVMR GE suspended operations for several months following the request.

[The scores and narrative for Georgia do not reflect conditions for the media in the separatist territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.]

Germany

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 4 / 30

Total Score: 18 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	17,F	17,F	17,F	17,F	17,F

Legal Environment

The media in Germany remained relatively free and vibrant in 2014. The German constitution and basic laws guarantee freedom of expression and of the press, but there are provisions banning hate speech, Holocaust denial, and Nazi propaganda. Although defamation and insult are criminal offenses, no journalists were convicted during the year. An antiterrorism law that gives the police greater power to conduct covert surveillance took effect in 2009. It permits remote and secret searches of computers, telephone lines, and homes of suspected terrorists. Journalists continue to be concerned that this law will limit their ability to keep sources confidential. In May 2014, journalist Marie Delhaes revealed that state police in Baden-Württemberg had threatened her with a fine if she did not testify against a source suspected of Islamic extremism; the police reportedly took the suspect into custody after monitoring Delhaes's communications with him. The case was unresolved at year's end.

A number of rulings from German and European Union (EU) courts, as well as declarations from officials, signaled changes in the climate for data protection and privacy in Germany in 2014. In April, the EU Court of Justice overturned the controversial Data Retention Directive, which had required telecommunications companies and internet service providers in member states to store user data for up to six months. The government of Germany, where the Constitutional Court had rejected domestic enforcement of the directive, stated its intentions to draft a new federal law on data retention following the EU verdict. In a case between Facebook and a German consumer group, a Berlin appeals court ruled in February that the social media company must comply with Germany's data protection laws. In June, EU justice ministers issued a declaration that foreign companies operating in member states must abide by EU regulations on data protection. The ministers' declaration followed a May ruling by the European Court of Justice on the "right to be forgotten," by which EU citizens can request the removal of "inadequate or irrelevant" information from search engines like Google. The German government had not implemented legislative solutions to the issue of data protection at year's end.

Freedom of information legislation that took effect in 2006 established that information held by public authorities should be open and available, but it contains numerous exceptions. Requests must be processed by the government authority that receives them within a month, and information can be given orally, electronically, or in writing. Although basic information is provided free of charge, the Ministry of the Interior has set fees for certain types of requests. Use of the law has been limited, hampered by the weakness of supporting legislation and infrastructure at the regional level. In 2011, a coalition of freedom of information organizations launched a website, *Frag den Staat*, to ease the process of submitting requests and encourage the exercise of the right to information. Since its inception, the site has helped to launch some 5,000 information requests.

Political Environment

The German media generally enjoy editorial independence. A few cases of political and economic actors attempting to interfere with news coverage were revealed in 2012, but the issue was not significant in 2014.

Nazi propaganda and accessing online child pornography are illegal in Germany, and laws prohibiting incitement to hatred are often applied to denial of the Holocaust. Although there are no prepublication censorship regulations, the German courts and other authorities have attempted to remove web content, citing defamation, privacy, security, and hate speech, according to Google's Transparency Report. In late 2012, German police successfully petitioned Twitter to remove tweets posted by extreme right-wing group, *Besseres Hannover*, for inciting racial hatred.

Violence against journalists, though generally rare, increased in 2014, including threats and harassment against journalists and outlets covering activities of far-right groups. In April and December, a photojournalist faced arson attacks on his car after receiving anonymous threats with neo-Nazi rhetoric. A similar attack was carried out against a Berlin-based tabloid columnist in March. The office of the Brandenburg-based *Lausitzer Rundschau*, known for its monitoring of neo-Nazi activity in the region, was vandalized twice with xenophobic and extremist graffiti in September.

Economic Environment

There are more than 300 daily and over 20 weekly newspapers in Germany. While local and regional newspapers have the greatest influence, there are seven major nationally distributed titles, in addition to a number of smaller publications that circulate nationally. Germany is host to the biggest newspaper market in Europe, and the increasing accessibility of the internet—about 86 percent of Germans used it in 2014—has maintained a medium for serious journalism and diverse views. Nearly two-thirds of Germans continue to read newspapers regularly, and many newspapers have successfully adapted to the “paywall” model to maintain revenue, making Germany among the most successful and vibrant media environments in Europe. Nevertheless, financial strains have had an impact on the resources and capacity of many publications. In late 2012, the *Financial Times Deutschland* newspaper went out of business. The owners of another national daily, the left-leaning *Frankfurter Rundschau*, announced bankruptcy in 2012, but the newspaper was jointly purchased by conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and a media house the following year, and has continued publication.

In October 2012, the German parliament passed an amendment to the Act against Restraints on Competition in an attempt to facilitate the merger of print outlets. Provisions of this amendment stipulate that smaller transactions between press companies will not be subject to merger control. The amendment went into effect at the end of June 2013. Although advocacy groups argued that the new rules could harm media diversity, there was no evidence to this end in 2014.

Germany's television market is among the most competitive in Europe, and more than 90 percent of households have cable or satellite television. There are nine regional public-service broadcasters for the country's 16 states, plus the national public-service channel ZDF and two national public radio stations. All of these outlets are financed primarily by license fees and managed by independent bodies. In addition, a number of private broadcast outlets operate throughout the country. Germany is home to some of the world's largest media conglomerates.

Ghana

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 28 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	26,F	26,F	28,F	28,F	28,F

The environment for press freedom in Ghana remained generally stable in 2014. Some progress was made toward advancing a bill for the implementation of the right to information, although the legislation had not yet passed at year's end. Media watchdogs noted a significant increase in attacks against journalists in 2014 as compared to the previous year.

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is legally guaranteed, and the government typically respects this right in practice. Criminal libel and sedition laws were repealed in 2001, but Section 208 of the 1960 criminal code, which bans publishing false news with intent to "cause fear or alarm to the public or to disturb the public peace," remains in force and is occasionally used against journalists. Current and former public officials, as well as private citizens, sometimes pursue civil libel suits with exorbitant compensation requests against media outlets, which can encourage self-censorship. In 2014, the *Daily Guide* and the *Informer* newspapers were each fined approximately \$100,000 in two separate civil libel cases. In February, a court in Accra ruled in favor of a former chair of the state power company, who had sued the *Daily Guide* for publishing allegations that he had embezzled public funds for personal use. Also in February, the same court ruled against the *Informer* in a case brought by a timber company; the newspaper had published an article alleging the company's collusion with corrupt state authorities and involvement in tax evasion.

The 1992 constitution provides for freedom of information, but there is no legislation to implement this guarantee. After more than 10 years of consultation between Parliament and civil society organizations, progress on a right to information (RTI) bill has been slow. In 2014, however, a number of important steps were made. In September, following months of discussion and significant input from civil society, a parliamentary review committee approved a draft RTI bill. Journalists and media advocacy groups—most notably the Right to Information Coalition of Ghana, an alliance of 80 nongovernmental organizations—had been critical of numerous weaknesses in the initial version of the bill, noting broad exemptions to information disclosure and a lack of independent oversight in enforcement. The revised bill received praise—including from the Right to Information Coalition—for addressing the problems of exemptions and oversight, and for shortening processing times for requests. A full legislative vote is expected in 2015.

The National Communications Authority (NCA) has been criticized for slow licensing procedures and bias. The National Media Commission in Ghana was established in 1993 in accordance with the 1992 constitution and is charged with monitoring the media's performance and adherence to professional ethics, but it has historically lacked enforcement power due to inadequate funding. Poor pay and unprofessional conduct, including the fabrication of sensationalist news stories, remain problems in the media sector.

Political Environment

While the state-run Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) is protected from government interference by the constitution, political parties attempt to influence coverage. Private media face a degree of editorial pressure from their owners, particularly those with political connections, and some journalists practice self-censorship for political or financial reasons. Government bodies and political parties occasionally boycott media outlets or programs that they perceive as biased.

Journalists sometimes face intimidation and physical attacks, and reports of such incidents significantly increased in 2014. The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) noted at least nine physical assaults on journalists during the year, in addition to several arrests and detentions by security forces. In January, police raided the offices of the SunGmale FM radio station during a program broadcast, arresting and detaining the host and two panelists; the three individuals were later released on bail. In March, a *Ghanaian Times* photographer was attacked by a military officer while attempting to photograph a confrontation between state security officials and local youth. Several other media workers faced interference or physical harassment by security forces during the year. A culture of impunity for such attacks prevails in Ghana, and perpetrators are rarely held accountable.

Economic Environment

Dozens of newspapers, including two state-owned and two private dailies, publish regularly, and there are close to 30 television stations in operation, most of which are free-to-air. Radio is the most popular medium, with approximately 300 operational FM stations nationwide, of which nearly 40 are state-run. The first community radio station, Radio Ada, was launched in 1999 and became a founding member of the Ghana Community Radio Network. As of the end of 2014, there were approximately 60 functioning community radio stations, according to the NCA.

Economic sustainability is a challenge for both public and private media. The GBC receives inadequate funding from the government and must sell advertising to support operations, which leave the outlet dependent on the large corporations that can afford its rates.

Use of the internet is growing and remains unrestricted, but the level of penetration remains low—approximately 19 percent of the population accessed the medium in 2014. Various civil society organizations have called on the government to improve access to the internet in Ghana. Active blogging and usage of social-networking websites have increased in urban centers, most notably in Accra.

Greece

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 51 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	29,F	30,F	30,F	41,PF	47,PF

Existing protections for press freedom continued to erode in 2014 due to the ongoing economic crisis and related political and societal tensions. In December, Parliament failed to choose a replacement for retiring president Karolos Papoulias, triggering parliamentary elections scheduled for January 2015. A number of analysts predicted a victory by the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) party, which pledged to end austerity policies and demand debt forgiveness from Greece's creditors.

The year's setbacks in the media environment included the questionable independence of the newly launched public broadcaster, New Hellenic Radio, Internet, and Television (NERIT); the granting of a nationwide monopoly to one company, Digea, for the operation of the country's network of digital television transmitters; and several instances of interference with content by politicians and media owners. The financial crisis continued to strain the resources and capabilities of private outlets, and political and legal pressure on journalists continued, especially regarding coverage of the government's controversial austerity policies.

Legal Environment

The constitution and various laws include provisions for freedom of speech and the press. However, there are some legal restrictions, particularly on speech that incites fear, violence, and public disharmony, as well as on publications that are obscene, offend religious beliefs, or advocate violence against the political system. Defamation and insult are criminal offenses, both carrying imprisonment as a possible punishment. Politicians and private actors launched a number of proceedings, including lawsuits, against journalists and other media workers in 2014. Following her publication in February of a blog post about the country's coast guard aiding police in guarding sensitive terrestrial sites, journalist Popi Christodoulidou was investigated under several articles of the military's penal code for publishing "sensitive information,"

although she claimed that she had published only publicly available information. In December, the Council of State—Greece’s highest administrative court—upheld a fine against privately owned Alpha TV for content in a satirical program that was found to be too “extreme” and therefore not protected by the constitution.

The independence of the judiciary from political pressure was called into question following a number of rulings on politically sensitive issues in 2014. In May, the Council of State published a decision that the closure of the country’s previous public broadcaster, the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT), in 2013 was constitutional. Nevertheless, critics maintained that the closure of ERT by ministerial decree was characterized by a number of procedural irregularities, claiming that the court did not thoroughly consider these factors in its judgment. There were a number of lower court decisions in favor of ERT’s former employees throughout the year, including rulings that invalidated dismissals. None of the decisions were enforced by the government in 2014.

The constitution establishes the right of access to information as stipulated by law, and a 1999 addition to the country’s Administrative Procedure Code guarantees mechanisms for individuals to access documents created by public agencies, with some exceptions. Access to documents can be denied or restricted if they include information about national security, criminal investigations, or the personal lives of individuals.

There were few changes to Greece’s murky regulatory environment for broadcasting in 2014, despite a number of Council of State rulings in recent years on unconstitutional practices in the field. The most recent licensing tender was held in 2002 for radio stations and in the late 1990s for television stations; these licenses have since expired. The government has instead issued successive one-year extensions of the licenses. In December 2014, extensions were again given to Athens-based radio stations and to television stations nationwide. This practice has continued despite a 2011 decision by the Council of State declaring it unconstitutional. In lieu of a license, many stations rely on a “certificate of legality” that can be revoked at any time, while others operate without any legal status. Radio stations with a certificate are forced to operate on the same frequencies they utilized in 1999, even if state broadcasters or stations from neighboring countries have occupied the frequency. In October 2014, a new Council of State decision declared that Greece’s private radio stations are operating illegally.

A law passed in August permitted radio stations that are registered as news stations to change their legal classification to “non-news.” However, there are no legal pathways for non-news stations to change into news stations. Because of the lack of new licenses, this development has created major hindrances to the establishment of news stations, effectively preventing any new news stations from opening in the current licensing environment. The law also has the potential to insulate existing news stations from competition.

The law empowers the National Committee of Radio-Television (NCRTV) to regulate broadcasting; its seven members are appointed by Parliament. The terms of several members of NCRTV, including its president, ended in 2012, but they have remained in their positions despite the Council of State’s 2013 declaration that this situation is unconstitutional. The body has been accused of lacking impartiality and implementing regulations and penalties unevenly across media outlets, often based on the political connections of the outlet’s owners.

Political Environment

Political influence on content published by private and public outlets was apparent on numerous occasions in 2014, a year marked by the ongoing financial crisis, elections to the European Parliament in May, and preparations for legislative elections in January 2015. NERIT officially launched in May 2014, replacing interim broadcaster Dimosia Tileorasi (DT). The operations of NERIT, as well as of DT, were characterized by a number of irregularities and scandals over the course of the year, including what critics saw as the undue involvement of the Ministry of State in the broadcasters' operation and administration. A law passed by Parliament in August stripped away NERIT's administrative independence, granting the government the power to name its supervisory body, which is empowered to choose the broadcaster's president. This action resulted in a complaint from the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to the Greek government, as well as complications in the processing of NERIT's EBU membership application.

Government influence at NERIT was observed on several occasions. In September, Greek media reported about accusations that, following intervention by government officials, NERIT blocked the airing of a speech by SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras at the Thessaloniki International Trade Fair, a traditional annual venue of major political speeches. A number of top officials from NERIT and its supervisory board subsequently resigned from their positions, citing excessive government interference in the affairs of the broadcaster. On multiple occasions throughout the year, NERIT gave extensive coverage to Prime Minister Antonis Samaras and his New Democracy party, including by airing political speeches and covering the party's meetings. There were also a number of hiring scandals at NERIT, with reported cases of journalists gaining positions despite failure to meet the criteria set forth in the broadcaster's hiring procedures. Furthermore, there were claims that NERIT received preferential legal treatment from the authorities in 2014. The broadcaster outsourced the operation of two of its four radio stations to private contractors, although private radio stations are prohibited from doing the same.

In addition to NERIT, a number of private television stations, radio stations, and newspapers also presented largely progovernment coverage of political news over the course of the year. Prior to the European Parliament elections in May, ANT1 TV featured reports or text warning viewers of the negative consequences of not voting for the status quo through the parties of the existing government coalition.

There were reports of censorship, attempted censorship, and political interference in news reporting and journalism at a number of private outlets in 2014. In February, a Greek court attempted to prevent television station Mega TV from airing information about a shipwreck near the island of Farmakonisi that led to the deaths of a number of undocumented migrants; the court citing the need to preserve the integrity of an ongoing investigation. In April, media reported of accusations that the Greek government had directly intervened to change the language of a wire report from the Athens News Agency about an official state visit by German chancellor Angela Merkel to Greece. The report, based on a translation of a statement by the German Embassy in Athens, was reportedly altered to replace the phrase "austerity measures" with "consolidation measures."

There were several attacks against media outlets and journalists in 2014, including incidents in which extremist groups or security forces assaulted journalists who were covering protests or other newsworthy events. In July, supporters of the far-right Golden Dawn party assaulted two photojournalists covering the trial of a Golden Dawn member in Athens. In June, journalist Tatiana Bolari was attacked by riot police while covering a protest near the Ministry of Finance in Athens. In September, a police officer received an eight-month suspended sentence

for an attack against Bolari during demonstrations in Athens in 2011. In November, an arson attack took place against the offices of the weekly newspaper *Athens Voice*; an anarchist group claimed responsibility for the incident. In most cases of attacks against the media, impunity remains the norm.

Economic Environment

The audiovisual sector includes NERIT, more than 100 private television stations (including five major stations with national reach), and hundreds of private radio stations. The print sector has grown smaller in recent years, as circulation has fallen dramatically and many outlets have been forced to shut down due to financial strain. Major public and private outlets in Greece tend to report with a progovernment or partisan bias. There are several independent publications and websites, including some that portray the government unfavorably. However, many media owners have a close relationship with political actors, including members of the government, and this is often reflected in a lack of critical commentary on key issues.

Following the ERT shutdown in 2013—which resulted in numerous job losses—many former employees staged a sit-in at ERT facilities throughout Greece and continued some radio and television broadcasts. Some former employees continued this practice in regional facilities in 2014. Electricity cuts to one such location in Rhodes took a major transmitter off the air in December; shortly afterward, the facility was looted.

A 2007 media law requires that the main language of radio stations be Greek, and that radio stations keep certain funds in reserve and hire a minimum number of full-time staff. This places a disproportionate burden on smaller and municipally owned stations. The same 2007 law permits stations owned by political parties with representation in Parliament to operate without a license. An NCRTV decision in 2013 allowed Art TV, owned by the LAOS political party, to remain on the air because the party maintained a presence in the European Parliament, even though it was no longer represented in the Greek Parliament. After the May 2014 European Parliament elections, however, LAOS lost its European representation. Art TV nevertheless remained on the air in 2014, with no regulatory action as of the end of 2014. There are no distinct legal provisions for low-power, university, or community radio stations to be licensed and to operate, and over the course of 2014, state and university authorities were reported to have attempted to shut down multiple student-run radio stations.

Although information on the ownership of radio and television outlets is available to the public, the exact structure of ownership is veiled by the holding companies and little-known entities listed in official records, and no ownership information is provided for print or online media. High concentration of ownership—including cross-media ownership—has also negatively affected media independence, as the media sector is dominated by wealthy businessmen with interests in shipping, telecommunications, and other industries. Six large multimedia companies dominate the sector—the Antenna Group, Lambrakis Press Group, Pegasus Press Group, Skai Group, Alpha Media Group, and Vardiniogiannis Group.

The company Digea was the winner of a government tender announced in 2013 for a nationwide license to operate the country's network of digital television transmitters. There was no other bidder in the process, which was heavily tailored to favor Digea. This has effectively created a monopoly, and any television station wishing to broadcast must pay monthly fees to Digea in order to utilize its transmitters, at a time when the media sector faces enormous financial and regulatory difficulties. Critics have noted that Digea, which is co-owned by

Greece's largest private national television stations, has achieved this status despite a law prohibiting a network provider from also being a content provider.

The financial crisis and the resulting decline in circulation and advertising continue to adversely impact Greece's media sector. Numerous media outlets have shut down, reduced staff and salaries, scaled down or eliminated news departments, or failed to pay wages. Strikes, usually due to unpaid wages, have been frequent in recent years. At the end of 2014, many former ERT employees had still not received severance pay, while others were disqualified from receiving any or faced severance reductions.

There are significant barriers in the media market, especially in broadcasting, as the country's licensing and regulatory problems leave purchasing an existing station as the only way to enter the sector. Despite a 2012 law that permits unpaid employees at radio stations to take over station operations, and several decisions granted by the NCRTV in employees' favor in such cases, the government had not validated these decisions by the end of 2014. Sharply rising utility costs and prohibitive music licensing fees further contributed to the economic difficulties facing the media. Many outlets reportedly owe large sums in unpaid taxes and contributions to banks and the state, including for employee insurance funds. Nevertheless, the media sector is one of the few able to receive loans at a time when Greek banks have had to be recapitalized and when lending is highly selective. In 2013, Mega Channel, the largest private television station in the country, received a €8 million (\$128 million) loan from a consortium of banks.

This financial relationship connecting media outlets to banks and the government is one of the factors affecting not only content but also, reportedly, the placement of advertisement. Clientelism influences the allocation of state advertising, which is often issued based on political favoritism, rather than audience size, while the associated business ventures of major media owners are often favored for the awarding of public contracts and public works projects. Political parties also tend to advertise with outlets that provide favorable coverage; for example, *Hot Doc* magazine, which strongly and openly favors SYRIZA, is a major beneficiary of advertising from that party. In 2014, television stations were again exempted from a 20 percent tax on advertising revenues, which has not been collected since its introduction in 2010.

Nearly 63 percent of the population accessed the internet regularly in 2014, and access is generally not restricted. Many journalists and citizens utilize the internet to disseminate independent or alternative viewpoints.

Grenada

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 5 / 30

Total Score: 23 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	24,F	24,F	24,F	23,F	24,F

Guatemala

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 60 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	60,PF	59,PF	60,PF	59,PF	60,PF

International organizations expressed concern in 2014 over increasing press freedom violations in Guatemala and the government's disturbing use of the courts to target journalists and media organizations. However, in contrast to past years, no killings of journalists took place.

Legal Environment

Freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 35 of the constitution and in general is respected by the government, though not without complications. The Guatemalan press is subject to several legal restrictions, including Article 41 of the Radio Communications Law, which prohibits transmissions "offensive to civic values and the national symbols" and programs "contrary to morals and good etiquette." Libel and defamation remain part of the criminal code, with penalties of up to five years' imprisonment, and business and political leaders increasingly used these provisions in 2014. Repeating another person's defamatory statement is also a crime, with similar penalties. As such, authorities, politicians, business elites, and others often use the courts in an effort to silence the press. In particular, the newspaper *ElPeriódico* and the magazine *ContraPoder* came under attack in 2014. Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina and Vice President Roxana Baldetti have filed numerous libel suits against *ElPeriódico* editor José Rubén Zamora, who in January was prevented from leaving the country and had his bank accounts frozen. Although the president withdrew his criminal complaint (he has threatened to pursue the case in civil court), Baldetti's lawsuit still stands. In July the president of the Guatemalan Social Security Institute, Juan de Dios Rodríguez, filed more than 30 criminal complaints against Zamora and other *ElPeriódico* editors. He also urged "all the regulatory bodies" to take action against Zamora, via the courts or taxation. In April, the editor of the magazine *ContraPoder*, Juan Luis Font, was accused of criminal libel by six members of the political party Libertad Democrática Renovada (LIDER). Font had written an article in March questioning the support for the LIDER presidential candidate, Manuel Baldizon. Despite a public apology and published correction, the legal complaint—demanding \$3.8 million in damages—was expanded to include the entire magazine's staff. *ElPeriódico* was also subject to tax audits in 2014 that press organizations considered an additional means of silencing oppositional voices.

Guatemala passed an access to information law in 2008, but obtaining information remains difficult in practice, especially for journalists covering corruption in regions outside the capital. Moreover, the law is weakened by a lack of sanctions for noncompliance. In a 2014 investigation, online news site Plaza Pública found that 46 percent of government institutions were not in compliance with a regulation requiring them to submit annual reports on how they responded to the public's information requests. Of those not in compliance, about 49 percent were municipal development entities and 28 percent mining extraction companies.

Throughout 2014, community radio stations and international organizations continued to protest the General Telecommunications Law, which went into effect at the end of 2012. Advocates of community radio stations argue that the law's perfunctory license renewal process constrains community radio operators from gaining access to broadcast frequencies. As a result, community radio stations are vulnerable to being shut down. For example, two community stations in the western department of Quiché—Estéreo Luz and La Voz de Sonora—were closed in April after armed police raids. Police had no warrants and no reason was given for the stations' closures. There is no independent media regulation or licensing body, and the government controls the allocation of airwaves through public auctions that require bidders to meet technical and financial benchmarks. As such, community radio stations are at a particular disadvantage, and are not even recognized as broadcasters under the law.

Political Environment

During a vice presidential press conference in September, a reporter and a photographer from *El Periódico* were attacked verbally and physically by security agents, who also broke the photographer's equipment. The incident occurred two days after the newspaper accused the government of spying on it. In September, police arrested *Prensa Comunitaria* journalist Norma Sut Sansir as she was on her way to cover a protest in the southern department of Chiquimula.

A 2014 report from the Center for Informative Reports about Guatemala (CERIGUA) documents 199 violations of freedom of expression from 2010 to 2014, 54 of which took place in 2014. Numerous other journalists reported assault, harassment, or detaining. Although much of the violence is attributed to criminal gangs and drug traffickers, the report states that public officials represent the most frequent aggressors. These attacks occur against a backdrop of almost total impunity, leading to widespread self-censorship.

No journalists were killed in Guatemala in 2014, though attacks against journalists continued. In February, journalist Nery Morales of Canal Óptimo 23 survived a shooting attack as he drove home. In another case, Dadiana Cabrera, a journalist with Guatevisión TV, was undergoing prosecution on charges of attacking police in February, in a case that Reporters without Borders referred to as "absurd." In July 2014, Ana Margarita Castillo Chacón was named director of a president-initiated prevention-oriented Journalist Protection Program established in 2013, but little other progress has been made on the program. Some journalists, while recognizing the importance of such a program, are suspicious of the government's motives.

Economic Environment

The internet was accessed by nearly a quarter percent of the population in 2014, and there were no reports of government restrictions on internet usage. Newspaper ownership is in the hands of business elites who maintain centrist or conservative editorial stances. All four major daily papers are privately owned. Broadcast television is concentrated in the hands of Ángel González, a politically connected Mexican entrepreneur who controls Guatemala's four main private television stations and favors conservative perspectives. Online news sites, such as Plaza Pública and Nómada, attempt to offer independent, investigative information in an effort to challenge the country's oligopoly. On radio, one state-owned station competes with numerous private stations. Some media owners allege that the government allocates advertising unevenly in

favor of supportive outlets and that it pressures private companies to pull their advertising from unfriendly media stations. *ElPeriodico* has not received state advertising since 2013, and its reporters have no access to the presidential palace. Bribery of journalists remains a concern.

Guinea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 28 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 64 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	71,NF	59,PF	62,NF	62,NF	64,NF

Although Guinea avoided a repetition of the previous year's political violence in 2014, the media environment suffered from the effects of an Ebola outbreak that also struck neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone. Authorities struggled to balance a professed commitment to free expression against a desire to prevent panic as the epidemic gained momentum. A journalist and two media workers were among several people killed in a remote part of southeastern Guinea during a visit by a medical team attempting to alert villagers to the dangers of Ebola. Although the attack was attributed to fear and confusion on the part of the local people, the army subsequently prevented a group of journalists and lawyers from investigating the killings.

Legal Environment

Constitutional and legislative reforms enacted in 2010 improved the legal environment for the press, but some measures remained unimplemented, and prospects for achieving genuine press freedom are tenuous. Defamation against the head of state, members of parliament, the military, and other government institutions is a criminal offense subject to high fines, as is reporting falsehoods. A law on access to information was adopted in 2010, but it has never been effectively enforced, reportedly as a result of bureaucratic delays, procedural errors, and resistance on the part of government employees who are reluctant to disclose their offices' information.

The appointment of Alhousseine Makanera as the new minister of communications in January 2014 elicited some hope for progressive change. Shortly after his nomination, Makanera announced that he would cooperate with all journalists regardless of their affiliation and promised an end to state abuses. Speaking at a press conference in November, however, President Alpha Condé made bluntly dismissive remarks about the international press freedom group Reporters Without Borders, the media in general, and human rights concerns.

The media regulatory body, the National Communication Council (CNC), is mandated to support equal treatment and foster a diversity of views in the media sphere. In practice, the CNC has periodically taken punitive measures against media outlets that do not support Condé's government. In 2014, the council stated that responsibility for media affairs would pass to a new body, the High Authority for Communications (HAC), as mandated by the 2010 media law.

However, neither an HAC nor the supervisory body intended to oversee the transition process had been established by year's end.

Political Environment

The government occasionally attempts to censor content that it finds overly critical. In August 2014, authorities threatened to close down two popular outlets, the television station Espace TV and the radio station Espace FM. The government claimed that both were operating without a license, but their representatives stated that they had been repeatedly ignored by regulators when they attempted to complete the licensing procedures. The stations are known for their frequent investigations into official corruption. At year's end Espace FM remained on the air, while Espace TV was unable to broadcast domestically, though it was accessible via satellite.

There were a number of reports of harassment and violence directed against journalists in 2014. In July, the editor of the newspaper *Le Fouineur* was attacked by police while he was investigating the eviction of a family from the Coléah Lanséboundji neighborhood in Conakry. In November, a radio journalist in Labe was threatened and had his equipment damaged by a local businessman who objected to a recent broadcast.

The year's most violent incident occurred in September, when residents of Womey, a village near the initial site of the Ebola outbreak, killed a journalist and two media workers along with at least five other people—including health workers and state officials—who were attempting to visit the community as part of a public awareness campaign. Fear surrounding the Ebola virus apparently exacerbated the villagers' suspicion of outsiders, leading to the murders. A group of lawyers and journalists attempted to travel to the village in October to investigate the killings, but they were prevented from proceeding by the army, which seized their equipment and deleted files.

Economic Environment

Media laws passed in 2010 guarantee the freedom to open a newspaper, but in practice, economic difficulties present large obstacles. Because production costs are high, newspapers struggle to secure printing equipment and distribute a significant number of copies. The typical newspaper has a circulation of only a few thousand and does not publish with any regularity. A number of private publications, mostly weeklies, are published in Conakry and present a diversity of views, though distribution outside the capital is unreliable. The only daily newspaper, *Horoya*, is state owned and avoids criticism of the government; even this paper has struggled to maintain its production schedule due to outdated equipment.

In a country with high illiteracy rates, radio is the dominant medium. The public broadcaster Radio Télévision Guinéenne (RTG) operates radio and television stations with programming in French, English, and a number of local languages. Numerous private radio stations operate throughout Guinea. Many citizens listen regularly to foreign programming on FM and shortwave radio. The government does not restrict access to or distribution of foreign television content via satellite and cable, though few citizens can afford these services. There are no government restrictions on access to the internet, which is gaining some importance as a platform for dissent, including through sites managed by the diaspora community such as GuineeConakry.info. However, inside the country, internet penetration remains very low at only around 1.7 percent in 2014.

Newspapers have difficulty securing enough advertising revenue to cover their costs, but since 1996 the government has provided increasing subsidies for both print and online media outlets of all political allegiances. Some critics have said that these subsidies are insufficient, irregularly allocated, and often poorly managed by the recipients. Some local newspapers and broadcast outlets are thought to be controlled by political or business interests. Low pay for journalists has led to unethical practices, such as accepting bribes to suppress unflattering stories.

Guinea-Bissau

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 59 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	54,PF	57,PF	57,PF	65,NF	67,NF

Status change explanation: Guinea-Bissau's status improved from Not Free to Partly Free due to strengthened legal protections, the reopening of private outlets, and a reduction in censorship and attacks on journalists in the wake of free and fair elections in April 2014.

Guinea-Bissau's shift toward functional democracy after two years of instability and military control led to significant improvements in press freedom in 2014, though fear and self-censorship remain pervasive in the face of government weakness, organized crime, and continued military influence in politics and society.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of expression and the press are guaranteed in the constitution and in a 2005 law. These rights appeared to be enforced under the new democratic government, with no reported violations in 2014. However, criminal laws still ban defamation, abuse of press freedom, and violation of state secrets. No specific legislation guarantees the right to access information, though Article 34 of the constitution states vaguely that "All have a right to information and judicial protection, according to the terms of the law." After a news blackout following the 2012 coup and the continued restriction of independent media in 2013, the return to democracy in 2014 has seen a freer and more diverse press.

Political Environment

The return to democracy has led to the reopening of private news outlets, though government control and influence remain strong. While government censorship has dramatically decreased, unofficial censorship remains a problem. Certain subjects are still off-limits, such as the military and its relationship with drug traffickers.

Although coup-related repression has ended, media workers in recent years have experienced increasingly harsh treatment at the hands of those with close connections to South American drug traffickers, including government officials, members of the military, and private citizens. Since 2009, at least three journalists have fled into exile due to threats related to their reporting on drug trafficking in the country. The resulting climate of fear has led to self-censorship, with many journalists afraid to cover drug- or military-related issues. Impunity is the norm for government and military officials who abuse members of the press, though no additional attacks against journalists were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Private media returned to publication and the airwaves after the shift to democracy, though government media still dominate. The state-run Rádio Televisão de Guiné-Bissau (RTGB) and the Portuguese-run RTP's Africa service operate the country's two main television networks. Guinea-Bissau's first community television station, TV Klélé, has managed to sustain itself since launching in 2013. A number of private radio stations, such as Rádio Bombolom, Rádio Sol Mansi, and Rádio Jovem, compete with the state-run broadcaster. Government weekly *Nô Pintcha* operates alongside several less prominent private print outlets. The press in Guinea-Bissau, one of the world's poorest countries, is plagued by financial instability, lack of resources, and low salaries. With only one high-capacity and state-owned printing press, publications have historically struggled with high costs, slow production, and limited supplies of affordable newsprint. Broadcast outlets face unreliable electricity that hinders steady operations. While many young people continue to pursue careers in journalism, the lack of resources hampers growth.

No governmental restrictions on the internet are apparent, though a lack of equipment and infrastructure drastically limits access to the internet in practice. Only around 3 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. Guinea-Bissau's .gw domain only became operational in 2014. The African Bureau of the International Federation of Journalists has been working to train Bissau-Guinean journalists to maintain online security and to protect digital publications and data from government or private interference as internet traffic grows. Several online news outlets such as *Bissau Digital* contribute to the information environment, and social media and crowdsourcing were used to provide coverage and transparency during the 2014 national elections. The United Nations also offered support and equipment for Angolan journalists to improve coverage of Guinea-Bissau's elections and beyond.

Guyana

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 11 / 30

Total Score: 36 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	30,F	30,F	33,PF	33,PF	34,PF

Legal Environment

Guyana's constitution provides for freedom of expression, and the law protects freedom of the press, but relations between the People's Progressive Party (PPP) government and some media outlets have deteriorated in recent years.

Penalties for defamation are found in both civil and criminal law; under the latter, offenses are punishable by fines and up to two years in prison. Public officials commonly utilize civil defamation suits to stifle criticism in the media, and while such suits are rarely successful, the threat of legal liability can be enough to silence journalists. In April 2014, Attorney General Anil Nandlall launched a G\$20 million (US\$99,000) defamation case against the *Stabroek News* over a column that criticized his performance; the case remained open at year's end. In an older case that was still unresolved, then president Bharrat Jagdeo filed a libel suit in 2010 against journalist and political activist Freddie Kissoon as well as the editor in chief and publisher of *Kaieteur News* over a critical article, and obtained a preliminary injunction barring the newspaper from printing similar content. Hearings in the case began in late 2012 and continued through 2014.

The 2011 Access to Information Act guarantees the public's right to information and requires government bodies to publish documents. It established the office of the information commissioner to regulate data requests and releases. The president is exempt from the law's requirements, and its overall implementation has been criticized as inadequate. In June 2014, the information commissioner denied a request from Transparency International Guyana, a nongovernmental organization (NGO), for information about a business deal between the government and a Canadian firm, claiming that the office did not have enough money to process it. Reportedly the request was, at that point, the only one the office had received since opening in 2013. In September 2014, the director of the NGO Justice Institute Guyana called for the information commissioner's resignation, saying that numerous requests for information had been returned unopened, including at least one that was rejected on the grounds that the correspondence had not addressed the commissioner by all of his official titles.

The 2011 Broadcasting Act gives the president the power to appoint six of the seven members of the Guyana National Broadcasting Authority (GNBA). When the law took effect in 2012, President Donald Ramotar stacked the new regulator with PPP insiders who had little or no broadcasting experience. The law authorizes the GNBA to issue licenses for private television and radio operators, but licenses have been denied to television stations operating in opposition strongholds.

Political Environment

Guyana has a vibrant, though threatened, opposition press. On several occasions in recent years, the government has moved to censor the media, usually in connection with coverage of the political opposition. In April 2014, the National Communications Network (NCN), a state-run broadcaster, temporarily suspended a producer for airing without authorization a parliamentary speech by a member of the opposition Alliance for Change party. The broadcast reportedly violated a government order that parliamentary addresses by opposition members only be aired late at night.

There are occasional cases of harassment against journalists and media outlets. In October 2014, the *Kaieteur News* released a transcript and audio recording of a phone call to one of its senior reporters, in which the caller, widely identified as Attorney General Nandlall, threatened the staff with physical harm in connection with critical reporting. In response, Nandlall filed a G\$30 million (US\$150,000) defamation lawsuit against the paper's editor and publisher, which remained pending at year's end. There were no reports of physical attacks against journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

The government owns and controls the television and radio broadcaster NCN, which favors the ruling party in its coverage. There are multiple private television stations, and at the end of 2012, Radio Guyana Inc., the first private radio station, began broadcasting. The country's print outlets include several private newspapers and the government-owned daily *Chronicle*. Independent and opposition-oriented papers have historically had difficulty competing with progovernment outlets for advertising revenue, threatening their economic viability. The government does not restrict internet access, and approximately 37 percent of the population used the medium in 2014.

Haiti

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 50 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	49,PF	49,PF	50,PF	49,PF	50,PF

Although no journalists were murdered in Haiti in 2014, in contrast with the previous year, the country continued to suffer from widespread social, political, and economic instability in the aftermath of the catastrophic 2010 earthquake. The political climate deteriorated significantly during the year as legislative elections, originally due in 2011, were not called by year's end. Violent protests erupted, leading to the prime minister's resignation in December. In this context, journalists' work was hindered by entrenched poverty, lack of institutional support, difficulty accessing information, and political bias at many outlets.

Legal Environment

In the past decade, Haiti's government has improved its record on upholding constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and of the press, which include a ban on censorship except in the case of war.

However, legal protections have been undercut in practice by impunity for some past murders of journalists. In January 2014, an appellate court in Port-au-Prince announced the

indictment of nine people—most of whom had close political and personal ties to former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide—in connection with the 2000 murder of radio journalist Jean Dominique. The charges came after years of delays, and observers remained concerned about authorities' ability to move the case forward. Former senator Myrlande Lubérisse, named as the alleged organizer of the crime, currently resides in the United States, and during the year the defendants employed stalling tactics such as requests for a change of venue. No verdict was reached by year's end.

Defamation remains a criminal offense, though only a few cases in recent years have advanced beyond the initial charge. In February 2013, Justice and Public Security Minister Jean Renel Sanon issued a press release that pledged a renewed emphasis on enforcing the defamation law, noting the strict punishments in the Haitian criminal code. The minister's remarks triggered an outcry from Haitian media outlets and journalist associations. Sanon was later called to testify before the Senate, where he stated that he was simply applying existing national legislation, and that the Senate should repeal the law if members believed it threatened press freedom.

Article 40 of the constitution stipulates that the government must publicize all laws, international agreements, decrees, and treaties. However, no legislation provides for public access to state information, which remains difficult in practice.

The state-run National Telecommunications Council (CONATEL) issues licenses to radio stations and does not regulate content. However, in April 2014, the council accused numerous stations of broadcasting "false information" and threatened sanctions as a result. It also sent a direct communication to Radio Zenith FM, discouraging it from airing certain critical material. The National Association of Haitian Media (ANMH) criticized these actions and stated that because CONATEL's mandate is a technical one, it should not be involved with radio content. Separately, since 2012, CONATEL has shut down more than 50 community radio stations on the grounds that they were operating illegally with improper licenses. In 2013, 10 of the stations appealed their closure and applied for legitimate licenses, but they were denied, with CONATEL allocating their frequencies to new stations.

In December 2011, media associations and journalists in Haiti signed their first journalistic code of ethics, which included clauses pertaining to respect for individual dignity and privacy, prohibiting discrimination in journalistic work, and encouraging an unbiased and balanced treatment of information.

Political Environment

While the Haitian media landscape is pluralistic, many media outlets are affiliated with political factions and display a partisan bias. Financial insecurity also contributes to self-censorship among journalists, many of whom may be wary of damaging the interests of employers or funders.

Access to official sources is often circumscribed. Since taking office in 2011, President Michel Martelly has been praised for his willingness to hold press conferences and his use of social media to communicate with the public. At the same time, he has been criticized for his open hostility and occasional derogatory comments toward journalists, and his frequent refusal to speak with representatives of media outlets that are critical of the government.

Although the situation has improved markedly in the past decade, journalists in Haiti occasionally face harassment, intimidation, and violence. No journalists were killed in 2014, but some crimes from 2013 were still being resolved or investigated during the year. In March, two

presidential security guards who had been charged with assaulting a journalist in 2013 refused to appear in court, and the authorities refused to compel their appearance. Nevertheless, the judge announced that he would deliver a verdict in the case in January 2015. In August 2014, a judge found Maudelaire Augustin guilty of the May 2013 murder of radio journalist Pierre-Richard Alexandre, who was shot in his home in an incident that was apparently unrelated to his work; the defendant was sentenced to five years in prison. Another 2013 murder, the drive-by shooting of the editor in chief of *Haiti Progrès*, Georges Henri Honorat, remained unsolved in 2014.

Economic Environment

Radio is by far the dominant medium, with more than 300 stations operating across the country, though not all carry news content. Many stations are affiliated with political organizations or parties. In addition to the state-owned Télévision Nationale d'Haïti (TNH), there are about 60 private television stations; audiences remain small due to lack of electricity and resources. Newspaper distribution is also limited due to high rates of illiteracy. Haiti has several weekly and two daily newspapers—*Le Nouvelliste* and *Le Matin*—all of which are privately owned and published in French, a language spoken by only about 20 percent of the population. There are no government restrictions on internet access, and roughly 11 percent of Haitians used the medium in 2014.

The concentration of wealth among a small number of Haitians and the effects of the 2010 earthquake have negatively affected media outlets' ability to obtain advertising revenue and sustain themselves financially. Journalists also struggle with low salaries, and economic hardship has led some outlets and journalists to accept bribes. Many journalists also hold multiple jobs, some of which create significant conflicts of interest.

Honduras

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 68 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	59,PF	61,NF	62,NF	62,NF	64,NF

The environment for media freedom in Honduras has grown worse since the 2009 coup, with increasing violence and threats against journalists. The trend persisted in 2014, as journalists reporting on organized crime and corruption worked under difficult and dangerous conditions. The January inauguration of a new president, Juan Orlando Hernández, brought no change in politicians' general hostility toward the press.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and the press are constitutionally protected in Honduras, but the legal environment remains problematic. While the penal code's *desacato* (disrespect) provision, which aimed to protect the honor of public officials, was abolished in 2005, other restrictive press laws can still be used to punish journalists who report on sensitive issues such as government corruption, drug trafficking, and human rights abuses. In December 2013, journalist Julio Ernesto Alvarado of the often-targeted radio and television network Radio Globo received a 16-month prison sentence after being convicted of criminal defamation for an incident that occurred in 2006. Although he paid a fine to avoid the prison term, in September 2014 an appellate court confirmed that Alvarado would be banned from working as a journalist during the 16-month period. The authorities continued to attempt to impose the ban late in the year despite an order from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to suspend it pending the commission's review of the case.

A separate criminal defamation case was pending against David Romero Ellner, director of Radio Globo, who was accused in August of insulting a lawyer—the wife of the deputy prosecutor general—on the air. If found guilty, Romero faced a possible 15-year prison sentence, and the broadcaster could be forced to close. In June, Albertina Manueles Pérez of Radio Progreso was charged with sedition over her coverage of a disputed mayoral election. The case was provisionally dismissed in July, which reportedly meant that it could later be revived.

Also in June, the National Congress passed the Law on Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators, and Operators of Justice. It was intended to strengthen protections for journalists who are consistently under physical threat, and provides for resources and mechanisms to ensure that investigations are carried out when violence or intimidation occurs. While most analysts welcomed the law, the Inter American Press Association warned that it lacked clarity on budget allocations and failed to facilitate coordination among all relevant branches of the government, such as the Attorney General's Office, raising doubts about its ultimate effectiveness.

Access to information remains a serious concern. Officials have reportedly failed to comply with the requirements of a law on freedom of information in force since 2007, and in January 2014 the National Congress adopted the Law on Secret Information, which threatened to further undermine the purpose of the existing statute. The new law would devolve the classification powers of the Institute for Access to Public Information to individual state agencies, giving them the authority to restrict access to information for between 5 and 25 years based on vague criteria. However, only a week after approving it unanimously, the National Congress agreed to suspend the law for further review.

Community radio stations are not clearly recognized by Honduran law, and they operate under the threat of closure. Their ambiguous legal status also exposes them to regular threats and harassment, particularly for stations that carry opposition views.

Political Environment

Government pressure and threats continue to limit editorial freedom, and in 2014 there were multiple reports of harassment and intimidation of journalists by officials. President Hernández set a negative example in July, when he threatened reporter Ramón Maldonado at a press conference. In response to the journalist's question about an alleged plan to adjust the borders of a nature reserve to accommodate mining activity, the president asked the reporter to identify his source and instructed security personnel to take Maldonado's name and photo.

Separately, Julio Ernesto Alvarado of Radio Globo and independent journalist Dina Meza were reportedly subjected to physical surveillance and online threats in 2014.

In a case of de facto censorship, Radio Estereo Castilla in the city of Trujillo removed the program *Noticiero Independiente* (Independent News) from the air in August due to alleged pressure from the mayor and a representative of the National Telecommunications Commission. The program, which regularly carried criticism of local authorities, had been broadcast for 12 years and was often disrupted by power cuts.

Self-censorship has been exacerbated by an increase in intimidation and death threats against journalists and their families by both criminal groups and state agents. The trend has weakened investigative journalism and led reporters to avoid certain areas of the country.

The general prevalence of criminal violence in Honduras, and the failure of police and prosecutors to conduct thorough investigations, makes it difficult to determine whether the murders of journalists are related to their work. The Committee to Protect Journalists identified at least two killings in 2014 in which a work-related motive was possible.

Economic Environment

Honduras has at least nine daily newspapers, six private television stations, and five radio stations that broadcast nationally, as well as a large number of community radio stations. Most of the major outlets are owned by a small group of business magnates who have political and commercial interests and exercise considerable control over content. About 19 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014; poor infrastructure in rural areas limits penetration.

Corruption among journalists and government manipulation of state advertising purchases remain common. Many journalists tailor their coverage to serve the interests of state and other advertisers.

Hong Kong

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 13 / 30

Political Environment: 18 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 41 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	33,PF	32,PF	33,PF	35,PF	37,PF

Freedom of expression is protected by law, and Hong Kong media remained lively in their criticism of the territory's government and to a lesser extent the Chinese central government in 2014. However, Beijing's enormous economic power and influence over Hong Kong businesses, politicians, and media owners allow it to exert considerable indirect pressure on the territory's media, leading to growing self-censorship in recent years. During 2014, the environment for media freedom declined further as physical attacks against journalists increased, massive cyberattacks crippled widely read news sites at politically significant moments, and businesses withdrew advertising from outlets that were critical of Beijing and supportive of prodemocracy

protesters. The year featured an especially brutal assault on a former chief editor of the daily newspaper *Ming Pao*, as well as a wave of attacks on journalists covering prodemocracy protests and counterdemonstrations.

Legal Environment

Under Article 27 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong residents enjoy freedoms of speech, press, and publication, and these rights are generally upheld by the territory's independent courts. However, they risk being undermined by the power of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's rubber-stamp parliament, to make final interpretations of the Basic Law, as well as by Chinese surveillance in the territory and the mainland economic interests of local media owners. Moreover, the perpetrators and especially the organizers of attacks on journalists in recent years have often gone unpunished, creating a climate of impunity that became more evident in 2014 as the pace of attacks increased. Hong Kong's Defamation Ordinance establishes defamation as a civil offense punishable by a fine. Although the ordinance includes a definition of criminal defamation, that clause has rarely been used in court.

Hong Kong has no freedom of information (FOI) law. An administrative code—the Code of Access to Information—is intended to ensure open access to government records, but official adherence is inconsistent, prompting local journalists and watchdog groups to urge the government to give freedom of information requirements the force of law. In March 2014, after a year-long investigation into the territory's existing access to information regime, the Office of the Ombudsman concluded that Hong Kong needed an FOI law. The government responded by stating that it would defer a decision on FOI legislation until after the release of a Law Reform Commission subcommittee report on the issue. Law Reform Commission secretary Stephen Wong Kai-yi said the subcommittee's report was expected before 2016.

As part of the broader effort to ensure citizens' right to freedom of information, the ombudsman also recommended in March that the government enact an archive law to preserve government documents. In May it was revealed that the Food and Health Bureau and the Labor and Welfare Bureau had not saved any files in government archives in at least three years. However, the executive branch again cited an ongoing Law Reform Commission subcommittee study as its reason for not considering archive legislation in 2014. The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) has expressed its suspicion that the government uses Law Reform Commission studies as a pretext to delay legal reforms. The watchdog group noted in its 2014 annual report that such studies often take several years to complete and produce recommendations that the government is not obligated to follow.

On March 3, 2014, a new Hong Kong Companies Ordinance took effect, but controversial provisions restricting the disclosure of company directors' residential addresses and identification numbers, which would pose serious obstacles to investigative reporting, were not put into operation. At year's end, these provisions were still under consideration by the government. Separately, the Legislative Council's constitutional affairs panel abandoned efforts to advance a blanket antistalking law that was first proposed by the Law Reform Commission in 2000. Journalists had warned that a broadly defined antistalking law could be abused to suppress press freedom.

Press freedom advocates continue to question the selective application of the Broadcasting Ordinance and the constitutionality of existing procedures for granting licenses to

new media outlets, as the decisions to grant or refuse licenses are made by the executive branch rather than an independent body.

Political Environment

Hong Kong's media remain relatively outspoken, featuring a high degree of professionalism and vigorous political debate. However, media self-censorship poses a serious threat to free expression in the territory. According to a survey conducted by the HKJA between December 2013 and February 2014, local journalists believe that self-censorship is common. The respondents gave an average rating of 6.9 on a 0–10 scale, with 0 representing no self-censorship and 10 indicating that it is very common. The problem stems in part from the close relationship between local media owners and the central government in Beijing. Several owners sit on the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), an advisory body that has little real influence over government policy but is used by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to co-opt powerful members of society. A number of Hong Kong media owners are also current or former members of the NPC, and many have significant business interests in mainland China.

Two prominent media figures were removed from their positions by employers in 2014, prompting accusations of censorship. In January, the parent company of Chinese-language daily *Ming Pao* reassigned chief editor Kevin Lau Chun-to to its electronic books and teaching materials division. During Lau's two years as chief editor, the newspaper pursued a number of investigations into local officials and politically connected mainlanders, leading many of Lau's colleagues to suspect that his removal was part of an effort by Hong Kong's political establishment and the CCP to stifle the territory's independent media. *Ming Pao* staff protested managers' decision to replace Lau with Chong Tien-siong, a Malaysian national who had publicly expressed support for a failed 2012 CCP plan to introduce "patriotic education" to Hong Kong schools. At year's end, Chong had yet to officially assume the position of chief editor from editorial director Cheung Kin-bor, the acting chief editor.

In February 2014, Li Wei-ling, an outspoken government critic, was fired from her job as a radio host at Commercial Radio. Li claimed that the government had pressed the station to either fire her or jeopardize the renewal of its broadcasting license, which expires in 2016. Hong Kong chief executive Leung Chun-ying denied ever communicating with Commercial Radio about Li, and the broadcaster asserted that political pressure did not play a role in Li's firing. Local and international watchdog groups expressed concern about the case, and argued that the process by which the government issues broadcasting licenses needs to be more transparent.

In October 2014, the television station TVB broadcast footage of police officers beating an activist during the fall prodemocracy protests known as Occupy Central with Love and Peace, but within hours it replaced the video's voiceover to downplay allegations of excessive force. Three employees who prepared the initial clip were later demoted or otherwise disciplined by the company.

Reporters covering rallies or sensitive breaking news stories sometimes face assaults. The HKJA recorded two dozen attacks on journalists during the first month of the Occupy Central protests, which began in late September 2014 and at times featured violence by police or counterprotesters. Two journalists were arrested for allegedly assaulting police while recording their attempts to disperse protesters. Hong Kong journalists also face restrictions and intimidation when covering events on the mainland, limiting their ability to provide national news to the local population. Chinese authorities require journalists to obtain temporary press

cards from the Liaison Office in Hong Kong prior to each reporting visit to the mainland, and to obtain the prior consent of interviewees. Even with accreditation, journalists from the territory have repeatedly been subjected to surveillance, threats, beatings, and occasional jailing when reporting on the mainland.

Targeted, retaliatory violence against media workers, although relatively rare in Hong Kong, has occurred more frequently in recent years. On February 26, Kevin Lau, the recently reassigned chief editor of *Ming Pao*, was assaulted by two men while on his way to work. One of the assailants hacked Lau's back and legs with a meat cleaver, leaving him with serious long-term injuries. Many local media outlets, politicians, and rights groups condemned the attack as an assault on press freedom. Because many past cases of violence against Hong Kong journalists have gone unsolved, some media outlets expressed concern that the perpetrators and any possible organizers of the Lau attack would not be brought to justice. In March, police arrested 11 people in connection with the case, including two men who were charged with carrying out the assault. As of the end of 2014, none of the suspects had been brought to trial.

Separately in March, two executives of the *Hong Kong Morning News*, a Chinese-language newspaper that was scheduled to be launched in the summer of 2014, were reportedly beaten by a group of four men wielding metal pipes. Police subsequently charged five suspects; at their arraignment in December, one pleaded guilty to carrying out the assault, while the four others denied participating in the crime.

Cyberattacks pose a growing threat to press freedom in Hong Kong. The website of *Apple Daily*, a tabloid newspaper that is critical of the Chinese government, suffered major cyberattacks throughout 2014. In February, the outlet reported that a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack had effectively shut down its Hong Kong and Taiwan websites for several hours. Then, in the midst of an unofficial referendum on election reform organized by Hong Kong prodemocracy activists in June, the media outlet became the target of the largest DDoS attack in history, with junk traffic to its websites reaching 500 gigabits per second and causing a "total collapse" of the sites on June 18, according to owner Jimmy Lai. The computer systems of *Apple Daily* and parent company Next Media sustained further attacks during the Occupy Central protests, as did the e-mail accounts of Next Media executives. Lai himself was harassed and briefly arrested at protest sites late in the year, and he stepped down as his company's chairman in December.

Economic Environment

Dozens of daily newspapers are published in Chinese and English. Hong Kong's residents have access to satellite television and international radio broadcasts from services such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). There are no official restrictions on internet access in Hong Kong, and the territory has one of the highest usage rates in Asia, with about 75 percent of the population accessing the medium as of 2014.

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) operates as an independent department in the government and earns high public-approval ratings for its critical coverage of the authorities. However, since the government issued a new charter in 2011 that vowed to promote China's official "one country, two systems" policy toward Hong Kong, there have been concerns over mounting political pressure on RTHK's editorial independence.

Publications known for their criticism of the Chinese central government have reported difficulties in attracting advertisers in recent years because of fears among private business

owners that the association would damage their economic interests on the mainland. In 2014, as a confrontation over Hong Kong's electoral reform loomed, a number of companies began pulling their advertisements from such outlets. In January, the head of *AM730*, one of Hong Kong's few remaining print newspapers without a pro-Beijing editorial perspective or ties to the CCP, revealed that mainland Chinese companies had recently started to withdraw their advertising from his publication. Separately, Mark Simon, an executive at Next Media, announced in June that the British-based multinational banks HSBC and Standard Chartered had pulled millions of dollars in advertising from *Apple Daily* starting in late 2013. Simon attributed the decisions to pressure from Beijing, though the banks and the Chinese government's Liaison Office in Hong Kong denied the claim. *Apple Daily* also suffered financially from efforts by thuggish Occupy Central counterprotesters to disrupt distribution of the paper and destroy copies en masse. In July, the prodemocracy news website House News shut down, with the owner citing political pressure and a lack of advertisers.

Hungary

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 37 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	30,F	36,PF	36,PF	35,PF

Hungary's media environment, which has suffered from increased state regulation and other interference since 2010, deteriorated slightly in 2014 as the government continued to exert pressure on private owners to influence coverage, and a new advertising tax disproportionately affected a major private television station. However, a proposed tax on internet data traffic was withdrawn in October after opponents mounted large demonstrations.

Legal Environment

Hungary's constitution protects freedom of speech and of the press, but complex and extensive media legislation adopted in 2010 is widely deemed to have undermined these guarantees. A ruling by the Constitutional Court in December 2011 and amendments adopted during 2011 and 2012 to meet objections from the European Commission did little to limit the power of a new media regulation authority created by the 2010 laws. The authority is currently controlled by appointees of the ruling Fidesz party.

Fidesz has used its supermajority in the parliament to amend the constitution at will, at times doing so as a means of enacting legislation that was previously rejected by the Constitutional Court. Changes adopted in this manner in 2013 included a rule that political advertising during campaign periods may only be placed in media outlets free of charge. Critics argued that private outlets would have little incentive to carry such material, further limiting media access for opposition parties in particular.

The Hungarian penal code places a number of restrictions on freedom of speech through provisions that prohibit incitement to hatred, incitement to violence, incitement against a community, and denial of crimes “committed by national socialist or communist systems.” Defamation remains a criminal offense, and both defamation and related charges—for example, breach of good repute and hooliganism—are regularly brought against journalists and other writers. Under a November 2013 amendment to the penal code, anyone who knowingly creates or distributes false or defamatory video or audio recordings can face a prison sentence of one to three years. A civil code provision that took effect in March 2014 imposes penalties on those who take pictures without the permission of everyone in the photograph; previously permission was only required for publication.

Amendments to Hungary’s Freedom of Information Act in 2013 limited the scope of the law by granting state bodies the discretion to reject requests for information on vaguely defined grounds. Despite a presidential veto that prompted lawmakers to pass modifications to the initial set of amendments, the legislation could effectively bar citizen requests that are deemed too large or intrusive.

Hungary’s National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information is responsible for reviewing rejected information requests, among other functions. However, in June 2012 the European Commission referred Hungary to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) over the questionable independence of the authority, which was created by the new constitution enacted in 2011 and began operating in January 2012. The commissioner of the previous data protection body was removed before the end of his term, and the leader of the new authority was appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister. The ECJ ruled in April 2014 that the premature termination of the data commissioner’s term had been a breach of European Union (EU) law.

The government has made a number of changes to the regulatory system for the media in recent years. The restructuring began in 2010, when Fidesz used its new parliamentary supermajority to pass a series of laws that tightened government control of the broadcast sector and extended regulation to print and online media. It consolidated media regulation under the supervision of a single entity, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH), whose leader also chairs a five-person Media Council tasked with content regulation; council members are elected by a two-thirds majority in the parliament. The law gives the head of the Media Council the right to nominate the executive directors of all public media. The structure and broadly defined competencies of the NMHH and Media Council were outlined in subsequent legislation, including the Press and Media Act of November 2010 and the so-called Hungarian Media Law, which was adopted in December 2010 and came into effect in 2011. Though they share a leader and consist entirely of Fidesz nominees, the NMHH and Media Council are theoretically autonomous, both from the government and from each other.

Negotiations between Hungarian officials, EU media monitoring bodies, and Hungarian media experts have yielded a number of relatively minor legislative amendments. In 2010–11, the rules on registration and authorization of media service providers were amended to comply with the EU’s Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive, allowing print, ancillary, and on-demand media to register with the NMHH within 60 days of launching their services, rather than prior to doing so. However, all media outlets, including online services, must still register, and can be fined for failing to do so. An additional amendment protects audiovisual media service providers based in other EU member states from being fined for breaching certain provisions of the Hungarian Media Law.

Following a December 2011 ruling by the Constitutional Court, the parliament approved revisions to media legislation in 2012 that addressed 11 of 66 recommendations made by the Council of Europe. The changes excluded print and online media from the scope of the content-related sanctioning powers of the NMHH, aside from penal code violations; revoked the media authority's right to demand data from media service providers, publishers, and program distributors outside regulatory procedures; deleted a provision limiting the confidentiality of journalists' sources to stories serving the public interest; and eliminated the position of media commissioner, an appointee of the NMHH president with the authority to initiate proceedings that do not involve violations of the law and whose decisions could be enforced by NMHH-issued fines and sanctions. The unamended provisions of the law still allow the Media Council to fine any media outlet for "inciting hatred" against nations, communities, minorities, or even majorities. If found to be in violation of the law, radio and television stations may receive fines proportional to their "market power"—a number that may reach up to 200 million forints (\$860,000). These fines, which are collected as taxes by the Hungarian Tax Authority (NAV), can be demanded even before an appeals process is initiated. Such provisions of the law have been used actively against media outlets since coming into effect. The Media Council can also initiate a regulatory procedure in the case of "unbalanced reporting," and ultimately it can suspend the right to broadcast.

Candidates for the presidency of the NMHH must be appointed by the president following a recommendation from the prime minister and nonbinding consultations with various stakeholders. Lawyer Monika Karas was elected to a nine-year term in August 2013. Left-leaning opposition parties criticized the nomination, calling Karas a Fidesz "puppet" and alleging professional unsuitability.

The laws governing broadcast media content include specific details on what type of programming may be aired and when. Radio broadcasters must devote over one-third of their airtime to Hungarian music, while 50 percent of television programming must be devoted to European productions. As under the previous media regulation authorities, broadcasters with expiring licenses are required to enter a new bid with the NMHH.

Klubrádió, a popular station known for its antigovernment political commentary, finally regained control of its main frequency in March 2013 after a two-year legal battle with the Media Council, which had prevented it from renewing its broadcasting license for five frequencies after the license expired in early 2011. However, in June 2014 the Media Council shut down Lokomotiv Radio, the Klubrádió affiliate in Debrecen, Hungary's second-largest city. The station had been broadcasting without a license since its previous one expired in September 2012. The closure meant that Klubrádió content could only be heard in Budapest and via the internet.

Other recent regulatory actions have affected Hungary's privately owned television stations. In 2012, the television station ATV challenged a fine imposed by the NMHH for its description of the ultranationalist Jobbik party as "far-right," a term the party rejects. Overturning a ruling by a lower court, in June 2014 the Supreme Court ruled against ATV, agreeing with the NMHH that the term was not objective and had been used to create a negative impression. In a separate case on a similar topic, renowned historian László Karsai, who described Jobbik as a neo-Nazi party in an ATV broadcast in late 2011, was initially found to have damaged the party's reputation with "subjective" commentary, but a higher court reversed the decision in January 2014, dismissing Jobbik's complaint.

Online media are subject to blocking if they violate legal content restrictions. An amendment to the criminal code that took effect in July 2013 requires internet service providers (ISPs) to block content deemed illegal by a court order. Websites hosting illegal content are placed on a nonpublic “blacklist” operated by the NMHH. The vaguely worded amendment, which was condemned by domestic and international free expression advocates, allows the government to take action if ISPs fail to heed the blocking orders.

In May 2014, the Constitutional Court ruled that internet content providers can be held liable for unlawful user-generated comments, even if they are promptly removed. The decision was widely criticized for encouraging websites to disable user comments.

Political Environment

Editorial bias and political pressure are growing problems at both public and private media outlets. Employees have spoken to international watchdog organizations about growing self-censorship in the face of possible fines or dismissal.

Under the Media Law, the funding and content production for all public media was centralized under one body, the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA), supervised by the Media Council. Following large layoffs at MTVA in 2011 amid government claims of budgetary concerns, public media began to receive significant budget increases, adding to suspicions that the firings were politically motivated. Also in 2011, Dániel Papp, cofounder of Jobbik, was named editor in chief of television news at MTVA. In October 2014, he was placed in charge of all news content on public media.

In June 2014, journalists and media freedom activists took to the streets to protest the reported firing of Gergő Sáling, the editor in chief of Origo, an online news portal that has carried critical reporting on the government and is owned by the Hungarian subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom. The move followed Origo’s publication of a story on the alleged misuse of public funds by János Lázár, the head of the Office of the Prime Minister. Most of Origo’s staff either resigned in protest or otherwise left the outlet over the following weeks. The company’s management denied being under political pressure and maintained that the editor left by mutual agreement.

Violence against journalists is rare in Hungary, and no physical attacks were recorded in 2014.

Economic Environment

Hungary enjoys a broad array of print, broadcast, and online media, although most outlets appear to identify with one or the other side of the political spectrum. The media landscape is dominated by private companies, with high levels of foreign investment in national and local newspapers. Privately held newspapers include 10 national and 24 local dailies. Hungary has seven national public radio stations and two main private stations. Two terrestrial commercial television stations, TV2 and RTL Klub, remain the principal sources of news for most Hungarians, along with a growing number of cable channels. RTL Klub’s Luxembourg-based parent company is owned by the German media conglomerate Bertelsmann. TV2 was owned by another German media group, ProSiebenSat1, until December 2013, when the station was sold to its own chief executive and financial director amid speculation about their links to politically

conservative Hungarian media groups. The latter have expanded rapidly in recent years, consisting largely of 15 companies controlled by four businessmen with ties to Fidesz.

The state-funded news agency MTI publishes nearly all of its news and photographs online for free, and offers media service providers the ability to download and republish them. Paid-subscription news agencies and smaller media outlets with limited resources cannot compete with MTI, and the incentive to practice “copy-and-paste journalism” is high. The accuracy and objectivity of MTI reporting has come under criticism since the Fidesz government came to power in 2010.

There has been an increase in domestically owned internet-based news outlets in recent years. The internet penetration was nearly 76 percent as of 2014, just below the European average. Data published by the NMHH in 2013 indicated the persistence of a significant gap between usage rates in Budapest (73 percent) and the rest of the country (58 percent).

The government’s tax policies toward the media have generated controversy over the past two years. In May 2013, the government proposed a progressive advertising tax that would draw most of its revenue from the country’s largest broadcasters. After the bill was postponed, some alleged that Fidesz had circulated it to influence the impending sale of TV2 and deter potential foreign buyers. The proposal resurfaced in June 2014 and was promptly adopted by the parliament. Critics noted that TV2’s main competitor, RTL Klub, was the only company that fell into the highest tax bracket. The station filed an official complaint with the European Commission in October, and the government subsequently raised the taxation rate for the top bracket from 40 to 50 percent. RTL Klub estimated that it would supply 90 percent of the revenue generated by the tax, despite its market share of 15 percent.

The government in October withdrew a contentious plan to impose a tax of 150 forints (\$0.60) for every gigabyte of data traffic after it led to large protests. Tens of thousands of people gathered in Budapest and at least 10 other cities to denounce the tax, which would have been the first of its kind in the world. Officials had initially responded by promising to set a monthly cap on the tax, but the demonstrations continued until the government officially withdrew the proposal.

State and state-dependent advertisers usually buy space in progovernment media, and many private companies have followed suit, helping to fuel the expansion of the conservative-leaning media groups. In 2014 the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers—in cooperation with other international media monitors—released a report on “soft censorship” practices in the Hungarian media, alleging that the state’s biased ad spending influences editorial policies.

Iceland

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4

Political Environment: 6

Economic Environment: 6

Total Score: 16

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	10,F	12,F	14,F	14,F	12,F

Legal Environment

Freedom of expression is protected under Article 73 of the constitution, although there are limitations to this freedom, including restrictions on verbal assaults based on race, religion, nationality, and sexual orientation. A media law passed in 2011 contains provisions for the editorial independence of outlets from owners and for the protection of sources. The law generally prohibits journalists from revealing the identity of sources who have requested anonymity, with some exceptions. Legal protections for freedom of the press are generally respected in practice.

Journalists have often criticized the country's libel legislation as an avenue to silence the press. The 2011 law afforded some improvements by establishing that journalists can no longer be held responsible for potentially libelous quotes from their sources. Defamation and insult nevertheless remain criminal offenses subject to fines or a prison sentence of up to one year; journalistic invasion of privacy is also a crime. In August 2014, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the Icelandic Supreme Court had violated a journalist's rights in 2007 by convicting her of defamation based on quotes she had published from a source. In November, an Interior Ministry official pressed charges of defamation and insult against two journalists who, in an article for the newspaper *DV*, had erroneously cited her as responsible for leaking internal ministry information about an ongoing asylum case. The plaintiff requested damages as well as the imprisonment of the journalists. *DV* had issued a correction and an apology within a day of the article's publication.

Iceland's Information Act, passed in 2013 to strengthen existing legislation on transparency and freedom of information, has been criticized for unsatisfactory provisions for public access to information. The year 2014 saw little progress by the International Modern Media Institute (IMMI), which spearheads the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative—a parliamentary resolution, inspired by both the financial crisis and the antisecrecy organization WikiLeaks, that aims to improve the media environment in Iceland by strengthening protections for sources, whistleblowers, and freedoms of expression and information at large. Although stronger protections for sources have already been codified, most of IMMI's proposed changes are pending or incomplete.

Political Environment

Private outlets are sometimes subject to editorial pressure from their owners, and politically motivated dismissals of journalists have been reported in the past. The newspaper *DV*, historically one of the country's main outlets for investigative reporting and criticism of the government, was the center of a politicized struggle for control in 2014. In November, local outlets reported that the media company Vefpressan had bought the majority of shares in *DV*. Vefpressan's majority shareholder is a former Reykjavik city councilor with ties to the Progressive Party. In December, the *DV* editor in chief was dismissed along with several journalists—the second major change in editorial leadership during the year. Critics decried the purchase as politically motivated.

The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RÚV), a state-owned company, has been the target of hostile rhetoric from multiple members of the government, who have publicly accused the outlet of lacking impartiality and favoring the opposition. In recent years, media

workers and watchdogs have voiced concerns about undue government pressure on editorial content at RÚV. Journalists, both at RÚV and private outlets, have also complained of an environment that encourages self-censorship. Access to the internet is not restricted by the government.

All media outlets are subject to the oversight of a five-member media board; two of the members are appointed by the Supreme Court, one by representatives of universities, one by the Union of Icelandic Journalists, and one by the government. Media outlets must regularly report their ownership and editorial policy to the board. Critics of the board claim that it has excessive latitude, including the right to levy fines for various violations.

There were no reports of physical attacks on journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

The country's print sector is diverse and includes both independent and party-affiliated newspapers, although the financial crash of 2008 has led to cutbacks in both broadcast and print media. RÚV runs Iceland's largest television station and two major radio stations, funded by license fees and advertising revenue. The state-owned television station accounts for the majority of viewership, while the two state-owned radio stations together enjoy approximately half of the radio sector's audience share. There are also several private radio and television stations. Private media ownership is concentrated among a group of companies and individuals with commercial or political ties to the ruling coalition. The state controls the funding and budget of RÚV, and significant budget cuts in recent years have led to the dismissal of dozens of journalists and strained the ability of the broadcaster to produce programming.

Approximately 98 percent of Iceland's population accessed the internet in 2014. The two daily newspapers and RÚV maintain the country's most popular news websites. Blogs are a major source of information, and the use of social-networking websites is widespread.

India

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 40 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	33,PF	35,PF	37,PF	38,PF	39,PF

While India's vibrant media remained the freest in South Asia in 2014, press freedom in the country was threatened by several factors, including a series of legal actions against journalists and editorial interference by media owners in the run-up to the May national elections. Continued violence against journalists, attempts at surveillance, and blocking of news channels, among other forms of censorship, were also issues of concern during the year.

Legal Environment

Although the constitution guarantees the freedoms of speech and expression, legal protections are not always sufficiently upheld by the courts or respected by government officials. A number of laws that remain on the books can be used to restrict media freedom. The sedition law, formally Section 124A of the 1860 penal code, outlaws expression that can cause “hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection,” toward the government. The 1923 Official Secrets Act empowers authorities to censor security-related articles and prosecute members of the press.

State and national authorities, along with the courts, have also punished sensitive reporting by using other security laws, criminal defamation legislation, bans on blasphemy and hate speech, and contempt-of-court charges. In September 2014, police in Assam arrested journalist Jaikhlong Brahma and accused him of having links with a faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, a separatist group. Amnesty International reported that he was held without formal charges for several weeks under the National Security Act, but was released on bail in December. Journalist Sudhir Dhawale, who had been charged and jailed in 2011 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and the sedition law due to allegations that he was supporting the Maoist insurgency, was acquitted on all charges in May 2014 and released after more than three years in prison.

In late 2013 the Sahara conglomerate brought a criminal defamation complaint against journalist Tamal Bandyopadhyay, then deputy managing editor of the business daily *Mint*, in connection with his book, *Sahara: The Untold Story*. The conglomerate sought \$32 million in damages. The case was withdrawn in April 2014 after the parties reached a settlement, and the court lifted a stay order on the book’s publication. However, as part of the agreement, the book was required to carry a disclaimer stating that it contained defamatory content. Also in April, business magnate Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Industries Limited and his brother Anil Ambani of Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group served defamation notices through their respective corporations to three journalists who wrote the book *Gas Wars: Crony Capitalism and the Ambanis*, which details alleged irregularities in the pricing of natural gas in the country. Despite the threat of legal repercussions, the journalists proceeded to publish and distribute the book themselves. In the period surrounding the May 2014 elections, authorities at the state and local level reportedly brought defamation charges against dozens of students and professors for criticizing or mocking incoming prime minister Narendra Modi in their campus publications.

Legal restrictions on and surveillance of internet content have been increasing in recent years. In April 2013, the government announced the launch of a new program, the Centralized Monitoring System, which for the first time would provide the government with centralized access to all communications data and content that travel through Indian telecommunications networks. The system would enable the government to listen to telephone calls in real time and read text messages, e-mail, and chat conversations. As noted by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the new system, coupled with lengthy jail sentences for failing to comply with a government decryption order, could be used against journalists who routinely rely on encryption and privacy to conduct their work. The system was reportedly not fully operational at the end of 2014.

In January 2014, news outlets reported that the government would be deploying an internet surveillance system known as NETRA, which would be capable of real-time keyword analysis on a range of internet communications, from public tweets to private e-mails, as well as

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) traffic on services like Skype and Google Talk. There was little public information about the project's status at year's end.

These surveillance efforts are the latest in a series of setbacks for media freedom online. Under the 2000 Information Technology Act (ITA), amended in 2008, the government has the authority to block content, even if it is not obscene, whenever it is the "national interest" to do so. Section 66A of the ITA criminalizes online information intended to cause "annoyance or inconvenience," among other loosely worded criteria, and arrests under the provision continued to occur in 2014, particularly in response to criticism of Modi on social media. However, a constitutional challenge of Section 66A was pending before the Supreme Court at the end of the year.

Rules introduced in 2011 under the ITA compel internet companies to remove objectionable content within 36 hours of receiving an official notice, and oblige cybercafés to install surveillance cameras and submit records of their users' online activity to the government. Google and Facebook reports have detailed the number of requests for user data that they receive from national governments, showing that India is among the top countries in terms of number of requests. In 2014 India filed the second-highest number of requests with Facebook, after the United States, and the fourth highest with Google. In addition, Facebook reported that it restricted access to over 10,000 pieces of information for India in 2014—the most for any country—largely under Indian laws prohibiting criticism of a religion or the state.

Implementation of the landmark Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005 has been mixed, with the majority of requests blocked due to the law's broad categorical restrictions on the release of information. The RTI Act's success has also been hindered by an overall lack of awareness of the rights it guarantees, a large backlog of appeals and requests, and widespread inefficiency within state and local governing bodies. As of late 2014, India's six main national political parties still refused to comply with the law despite a June 2013 decision by the Central Information Commission holding that political parties fall under the RTI Act's provisions as "public authorities." In September, the Supreme Court recalled rules issued by the government in 2012 that had restricted membership on information commissions to retired judges and people with legal training.

While some state governments are making an effort to disseminate information about the RTI Act, especially in rural and isolated areas, others are employing various means to make requests more onerous. A number of activists who have attempted to use the act to uncover abuses, particularly official corruption, have been harassed or even killed in recent years. The Whistleblowers Protection Act was signed into law in May 2014, almost four years after it was first introduced, but analysts raised concerns about its limitations and enforceability. In December, media reports suggested that the government planned to amend the law to create exceptions protecting information related to national security.

The Press Council of India (PCI), an independent self-regulatory body for the print media that is composed of journalists, publishers, and politicians, investigates complaints of misconduct or irresponsible reporting, but does not have punitive powers. The regulatory framework for the rapidly expanding broadcast sector does not presently feature an independent agency that is free from political influence. The News Broadcasters' Association, an industry body that primarily represents the television sector, issued a new set of self-regulatory guidelines in 2009, covering topics including crime, violence, and national security in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack. A series of scandals, including the 2012 arrests of two editors on charges of extortion, prompted media critics to call for greater regulatory curbs on unethical journalism in 2013. In

May of that year, the parliamentary committee on information technology proposed establishing a statutory regulator for print and electronic media, but this had not occurred by the end of 2014.

Access to the profession of journalism is open in India. Media industry groups and local press freedom advocacy organizations generally operate without restrictions.

Political Environment

Politicized interference in editorial content and staffing decisions remained a concern in 2014, and it appeared to increase in the months surrounding the May national elections. In late May, Reliance Industries Limited, India's largest company, announced its acquisition of the media group Network 18, which includes a host of news outlets including CNN-IBN and CNBC TV18. Reliance's owner, Mukesh Ambani, has displayed intolerance toward critical journalism, and Network 18 staffers reported editorial interference with political coverage following the takeover. Even before the ownership change, however, Network 18 managers allegedly instructed journalists to provide favorable coverage of Modi during the election campaign. Analysts noted that in general, mainstream media tilted to the right amid widespread expectations that Modi's party would win the elections, and continued to do so after the voting. Meanwhile, critical journalists and commentators also faced pressure in the form of online harassment and threats from supporters of Modi, particularly on social media.

After taking office, the Modi government reportedly told senior officials to avoid media interviews and channel communications with the press through official spokespeople. Journalists complained that the new leadership relied on one-way formats—such as social-media posts and the prime minister's monthly radio program—to communicate with the public instead of granting access to the press.

Despite increasing diversity in the print and online media sectors, some outlets self-censor to avoid losing public-sector advertising purchases, which are a key source of revenue. Foreign journalists continue to have occasional difficulty obtaining visas to report from within the country, particularly if their prior reporting has been critical of the national or state governments.

Journalists faced physical violence and intimidation while gathering news or in reprisal for their reporting in 2014, though there were apparently fewer incidents than in 2013. CPJ found that two journalists were killed in connection with their work during the year. In May, assailants fatally stabbed journalist Tarun Kumar Acharya, apparently in connection with his reporting on child labor practices at a local cashew processing plant in Odisha. In November, Andhra Pradesh-based journalist MVN Shankar died from a severe beating he received after reporting on the operations of black marketeers in the region.

Among other, nonfatal attacks in 2014, a journalist was gang-raped while on assignment in Uttar Pradesh in March. In April, unidentified assailants hurled a Molotov cocktail at the home of investigative journalist Devinder Pal in Punjab following his critical reporting in the lead-up to elections in the state. In May, at least four journalists were assaulted outside the home of a high-ranking political leader in Tamil Nadu while covering news of his possible resignation. Such violence is encouraged by a prevailing climate of impunity, with most past murders remaining unsolved and other acts of violence going unpunished.

Members of the press are particularly vulnerable in rural areas and insurgency-racked states such as Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, and Manipur, where they continue to

face physical violence, harassment, and censorship from the government or militant groups seeking to slant coverage in a certain way.

Economic Environment

India is one of the few countries in the world where print media remain a vibrant and financially sustainable growth industry, and there are rising numbers of print and broadcast outlets that cater to national or various regional or linguistic audiences. Most print outlets, particularly in the national and English-language press, are privately owned, provide diverse coverage, and frequently scrutinize the government. The low cost of newspapers—which are sold at prices far below the cost of production—ensures wider access to print media than in most low-income countries. The broadcast media are predominantly in private hands, and diversity in the television sector has expanded dramatically. India is home to more than 90,000 print publications and more than 700 television channels, with a significant proportion focused on news and current events.

Despite these favorable features, the ownership structure of India's media market continues to compromise objectivity in both print and broadcast journalism. India's state-controlled television station, Doordarshan, has been accused of manipulating the news to favor the government, and some private satellite television channels provide coverage that reflects the political affiliations of their owners. There is evidence that political influence in media ownership is systemic in India. According to a 2012 report by the *Business Standard*, local politicians own an estimated 60 percent of the country's cable distribution systems. CPJ has documented cases in which this has enabled politicians to block television channels for broadcasting news that adversely affected their interests. The state retains a monopoly on AM radio broadcasting, and private FM radio stations are not allowed to air news content. Under a 2006 policy that provided guidelines for the ownership and operation of community radio stations by civil society groups, there has been a modest increase in the number of small nonprofit outlets. As of late 2014, there were over 170 community radio stations in India.

Access to foreign media, with the exception of some outlets based in Pakistan, is generally unrestricted. However, authorities sometimes block distribution of certain foreign print editions due to content such as maps of the disputed Kashmir region. In recent years, intelligence agencies have also objected to broadcasts from neighboring countries that contain "anti-India" content, and the government has attempted to block service providers from carrying them and increase the penalties for doing so. Some impediments to production and distribution of domestic media, such as blockades of newspapers or official instructions not to carry certain cable channels, also occasionally arise. In June 2014, the privately owned Telugu-language news channels TV9 and ABN Andhra Jyothy were blocked by cable providers in the newly created state of Telangana following critical political coverage. TV9 resumed broadcasting in November after securing a favorable order from a telecommunications disputes tribunal, but ABN Andhra Jyothy was still off the air at the end of 2014.

Some 18 percent of India's population had access to the internet in 2014. Mobile telephones are increasingly used to gather and disseminate news and information, particularly in rural communities and areas with high rates of illiteracy. However, the government retains the power to obstruct online and mobile communications. In February, authorities in Jammu and Kashmir ordered a partial block on mobile internet services for a day, after a local group

proposed a strike commemorating the 2013 execution of Mohammad Afzal Guru, who was convicted of involvement in a 2001 terrorist attack on India’s Parliament.

National and state governments have used financial means, such as advertising purchases, to reward or punish news outlets for their coverage. Other concerns include bribery of journalists or editors by government or private interests, as well as the erosion of barriers between the editorial and advertising departments at many outlets, sometimes through the use of “private treaties” with major companies. Despite investigations by India’s election commissioner and the PCI, the practice of “cash for coverage”—in which payments are made to secure favorable reporting on candidates and parties, particularly during election cycles—remains deeply entrenched.

Indonesia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 18 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 49 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	52,PF	53,PF	49,PF	49,PF	49,PF

The 2014 presidential election illustrated both the positive and negative progress that the Indonesian press system has made since the fall of Suharto in 1998. Although print and electronic media are generally independent of government interference and allowed for lively and unfettered reporting leading up to the election of political outsider Joko Widodo, coverage of the campaign itself highlighted the ability of media tycoons to distort election news through their control of major media outlets. Use of the 2008 Electronic Transaction Information (ITE) Act continued to raise concerns about freedom of expression on the internet.

Legal Environment

Constitutional and legal provisions allow for freedom of speech and freedom of the press. However, both the government and private actors sometimes obstruct these rights. A 2011 Constitutional Court decision to uphold a law prohibiting blasphemy had negative implications for freedom of expression, as did the judges’ apparent endorsement of the government’s argument that prohibition of blasphemy is vital to protecting religious harmony. In December, the chief editor of the *Jakarta Post*, Indonesia’s leading English-language daily, was named a suspect in a blasphemy case following the July publication of a cartoon showing a man raising a flag with the Arabic phrase “There is no God but Allah” over a skull and crossbones. The Jakarta Muslim Preachers Corps filed the complaint even though the paper had issued an apology and retracted the cartoon five days after publication, stating that the cartoon was intended to “critique the use of religious symbols” and to be a “reproach” to the Islamic State militant group (IS). The charge carries a punishment of up to five years in prison.

Defamation is an offense covered by more than 40 provisions of the criminal code. Although the independent Indonesian Press Council, created by the 1999 Law on the Press, is supposed to adjudicate all media disputes, authorities still undermine the council's mandate by bringing defamation charges to the courts. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) also continues to express concerns about use of the 2008 ITE Act to muzzle internet users with spurious defamation claims. According to Indonesia Corruption Watch, as of October 2014, 71 people had faced defamation charges under Article 27 (3) of the ITE Law since it was passed, with 40 cases in 2014.

The 2008 Law on Public Information Transparency provides for the right to freedom of information, but implementation remains flawed. The State Intelligence Law (SIL), passed in 2011, can easily conflict with the 2008 law. SIL Article 26 prohibits individuals or legal entities from revealing or communicating state secrets, with penalties of up to 10 years in prison and fines exceeding 100 million rupiah (\$10,000). This article is open to misinterpretation and abuse by state officials, as state secrets are not clearly defined.

Print media are regulated through the press council, while broadcast media must be licensed by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI). Both the press council and the KPI appear to operate for the most part independently. Although there are hundreds of community radio stations in Indonesia, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) has called for legal reform and equitable distribution of frequencies to promote the growth of community radio in the country, pointing to the slow process of licensing, the lack of proper enabling legislation, and a lack of transparency and fairness in licensing decisions as the major obstacles to the sector's development.

Political Environment

Media coverage of the 2014 election campaign was biased due to the control of major news outlets by Aburizal Bakrie and Surya Paloh. Bakrie—a powerful business magnate, chairman of the Golkar party, and owner of tvOne and ANTV—openly supported candidate Prabowo Subianto. Conversely, Paloh, founder and patron of the National Democratic Party, whose rival media group includes Metro TV and the newspaper *Media Indonesia*, supported Widodo. There were widespread complaints of top-down pressure to report favorably on one candidate and not the other, even going as far as the broadcast of misleading election returns based on dubious “quick counts.”

iLab, an Indonesian nongovernmental organization that promotes open data and transparency, reported in 2014 that more than 10 million websites have been blocked over the past three years by Indonesia's filtering system because of content that is deemed either to be “negative” or “culturally inappropriate.” If a post is labeled blasphemous, authorities can block the entire site. Similar wholesale bans have occurred on video-sharing site Vimeo.

Media coverage of the sensitive issue of Papuan separatism continued to draw special scrutiny and restrictions from the government in 2014. Before taking office, President Widodo pledged that he would allow international journalists and organizations access to Papua and West Papua; however, this did not happen by year's end. The Indonesian authorities effectively block foreign media from reporting in the two provinces by restricting access to those with official government approval, which is rarely granted. The few journalists who do gain permission are closely monitored by government agents, who control their movements and access to local

residents. In August, Indonesian police detained journalists Thomas Dandois and Valentine Bourrat, who were filming undercover a documentary for the French-German television network Arte. The two were charged with misusing their visas, as they had entered Indonesia as tourists but conducted journalism work in Papua. They were detained for 11 weeks and sentenced to two and a half months in prison on October 24. They were released four days later due to their time in pretrial detention, though the prosecutor had requested a four-month sentence. At the end of the year one of their sources, Areki Wanimbo, was still in prison, and may be tried on a charge of “rebellion.”

Although domestic media face fewer restrictions in Papua, the documented presence of government informers within the press corps of Papua and West Papua has led to serious concerns about the reliability of news coming from the provinces. According to Human Rights Watch, the military has also financed and trained journalists and bloggers, citing alleged foreign interference in the region, including by the U.S. government.

Under the 2002 Broadcast Act, local stations are prohibited from disseminating foreign broadcasts. The act has drawn criticism for its limits on content and severe penalties for violations, and the government has occasionally used it to restrict broadcasting.

Journalists remain subject to attacks and physical harassment from both the authorities and nonstate actors, although violent attacks against journalists have decreased in recent years. The AJI reported that the number of incidents of violence against the press held more or less steady at 41 in 2014, down from 56 in 2012. Many of the 2014 cases involved harassment and assaults against reporters as they attempted to cover sensitive news stories or protests. In November, police were accused of assaulting as many as 10 journalists in Makassar who were covering students demonstrating against a hike in subsidized fuel prices.

Economic Environment

In general, the Indonesian public has access to a variety of news sources and perspectives provided by a large number of private print and broadcast outlets. Television is the most popular medium, and the sector is competitive, with 10 national commercial networks in addition to the state-owned Televisi Republik Indonesia. In 2013, the internet was accessed by 17 percent of the population.

A 2011 study conducted by the nonprofit groups Hivos Southeast Asia and the Center for Innovation, Policy, and Governance found that nearly all of the 12 most prominent media companies had ties to political parties in some respect. These 12 companies also own the country’s 10 major national television stations and five of the six major newspapers. Although a wide range of privately owned local publications operate across Indonesia’s provinces, the print sector is dominated by two media conglomerates, Jawa Pos Group and the Kompas Gramedia Group. Media coverage of the 2014 presidential election campaign confirmed fears about the ability of political parties, large corporations, and powerful individuals to control media content, with major media outlets openly reflecting the political affiliations of their owners. Tabloid newspaper *Obor Rakyat* reportedly ran libelous anti-Widodo material that is suspected to have been produced by associates of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

There are no government restrictions on internet access, but the lack of high-speed infrastructure outside major cities limits the medium’s use as a news source in rural areas. Social-media sites such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have become extremely popular among users in Indonesia.

Under the 2002 Broadcast Act, foreign ownership of broadcast media is banned.

Advertising remains a robust source of income for newspapers and television companies, and the shift to online news sources has been slow, though this appears to be changing. Working conditions for Indonesian journalists are poor. According to AJI, media companies do not pay competitive salaries, leading many journalists to take second jobs with corporate sponsors or accept bribes for coverage. In 2013, Bambang Harymurti, a former press council member and publisher of *Tempo* magazine, described bribery as “a rampant problem in Indonesia, especially among the small and regional media.”

Iran

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 36 / 40

Economic Environment: 24 / 30

Total Score: 90 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	89,NF	91,NF	92,NF	92,NF	90,NF

Iran’s media environment remained one of the world’s most repressive in 2014. Certain topics—including criticism of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—were subject to long-standing red lines, enforced in part through harsh online and offline censorship. Several dailies and magazines were closed or suspended during the year, and a number of reporters were arrested and prosecuted. Journalists practiced self-censorship, though some said the atmosphere had improved slightly since the 2013 election of President Hassan Rouhani, who presented himself as a moderate. Among other limited improvements that carried over from 2013, reporters and editors were able to cover a marginally broader array of sensitive topics than in the recent past, and a few new publications were allowed to open.

Legal Environment

Constitutional provisions and laws restrict what can be covered in the press and fail to provide protections for journalists. The authorities regularly invoke vaguely worded laws to criminalize dissenting opinions.

Article 24 of the constitution guarantees freedom of the press, but with a broad exception for content that is deemed “detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public.” The Press Law, first drafted in 1986 and amended in 2000, states that “publications and news media shall enjoy freedom of expression provided what they publish does not violate Islamic principles of the civil code.” Article 3 of the law states, “The press have the right to publish the opinions, constructive criticisms, suggestions and explanations of individuals and government officials for public information while duly observing the Islamic teachings and the best interest of the community.”

Article 500 of the penal code states that anyone who undertakes any form of propaganda against the state will be sentenced to between three months and a year in prison, but the code

leaves “propaganda” undefined. Under Article 513, certain offenses deemed to be an “insult to religion” are punishable by death, or prison terms of one to five years for lesser offenses, with “insult” similarly undefined. In 2010, the government broadened the definition of the crime of *moharebeh*, or “enmity against God,” in order to convict activists and journalists. Iranian law also provides for sentences of up to two years in prison, up to 74 lashes, or fines for those convicted of intentionally creating “anxiety and unease in the public’s mind,” spreading “false rumors,” writing about “acts that are not true,” and criticizing state officials; however, many prison sentences have been arbitrarily harsh, ranging from 6 to 10 years or more. Courts also frequently set exorbitant bail for detained journalists. The high bail amounts and suspended jail sentences often discourage journalists from engaging in media activities and criticism of the establishment even when they are not behind bars.

Multiple journalists faced arrest, indictment, or imprisonment during 2014. Most were charged with propaganda against the state, among other offenses, and some had recently returned to Iran from abroad in the hope that conditions would improve under Rouhani. Journalist Hossein Nouraninejad was arrested in April, about a month after returning to the country from Australia. He was reportedly sentenced in June to six years in prison for crimes including propaganda against the state, but was then released on bail of some \$100,000.

Journalist Serajeddin Mirdamadi, who had recently returned from Europe, was arrested in May and sentenced in July to six years in prison on charges that included “acting against the Islamic republic” and “spreading antigovernment propaganda.” Later in May, reformist journalist Saba Azarpeik was similarly arrested on vague security charges. She was released in August on bail of about \$70,000.

In June, journalist Reyhaneh Tabatabaei was summoned to Tehran’s Evin prison to serve a six-month sentence that was apparently imposed for her reporting on the opposition movement. Tabatabaei, who was initially arrested in 2011, was released in November after completing her sentence. Also in June, prominent journalist Mashallah Shamsolvaezin was summoned to court and banned from leaving the country. He later wrote on his Facebook page that he had been charged with “propaganda against the state” over a speech and interviews he had given, and was subsequently released on bail. Shamsolvaezin was one of many intellectuals, activists, and politicians who had been arrested in a 2009 crackdown that followed the disputed reelection of former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Journalist Marzieh Rasouli, who worked for several reformist publications, was summoned to Evin prison in July to serve a two-year prison sentence and receive 50 lashes on security charges that included “disturbing public order.” Rasouli had initially been arrested in 2012 and released on bail. In October, photojournalist Arya Jafari was arrested after covering protests in Isfahan over a series of acid attacks that targeted young women. His photos were published by the semiofficial Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) as well as international media outlets. Jafari was released on bail after nine days in detention. Other ISNA staff members were also briefly detained, reportedly in retaliation for the agency’s coverage of the acid attacks. The authorities strongly rejected the widespread belief that the women were attacked by religious zealots who disapproved of their attire.

Bloggers and online activists face many of the same legal repercussions for their work those applied to professional journalists. In July 2014, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported that a Revolutionary Court had sentenced eight Facebook activists to a total of 127 years in prison. The unnamed individuals, who reportedly administered several pages on Facebook, were found guilty of spreading “propaganda against the establishment,”

“acting against national security,” and “insulting” Iran’s leaders. Political cartoonists have also drawn the ire of the authorities; in August, artist and activist Atena Farghadani was arrested and jailed for a cartoon criticizing members of parliament who were considering legislation limiting access to birth control. After reportedly being subject to ill treatment in Evin Prison—including solitary confinement, daily interrogations, and beatings and body searches by female prison guards—she was released on bail in November; however, her case remains open.

The judiciary frequently denies accused journalists and bloggers due process by referring their cases to the Revolutionary Courts, a venue intended for those suspected of seeking to overthrow the regime. Cases against journalists before these courts generally feature closed-door hearings and denial of access to an attorney.

In November 2014, the government issued regulations for the implementation of a moribund 2009 law on access to official information. The law had called for the regulations to be produced within three months, but the government apparently failed to act for over five years. The legislation includes no penalties for failure to release information; exemptions apply to state secrets, personal information, and information that conflicts with public morality.

Press licenses are issued by the Press Supervisory Board and have been rescinded in retaliation for criticism of the ruling establishment. The authorities also target journalists’ associations and civil society organizations that support freedom of expression. The Association of Iranian Journalists, a professional syndicate dedicated to protecting journalists’ rights, was shut down in 2009. Despite numerous attempts by members of the association, officials refuse to permit it to resume its activities. State media and other loyalist outlets are used to propagate false claims about freedom of expression activists. Hard-line media, including the daily *Kayhan* and Fars News Agency, are notorious for attacking reformists and others.

Political Environment

The Iranian media landscape is dominated by official, semiofficial, and conservative news outlets that support the authorities or particular factions of the ruling establishment, and strongly oppose reformists and opposition figures. *Kayhan* in particular is often seen as the mouthpiece of the supreme leader, although in some cases—namely on the nuclear issue—the daily has not necessarily reflected Khamenei’s official stance. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), a state agency with a monopoly on domestic television and radio broadcasts, airs programs aimed at smearing and discrediting dissidents and critical journalists. IRIB also has a record of working with security forces and airing forced confessions by dissidents and others. Its news and analysis are censored and biased in favor of the establishment.

Media outlets that carry independent or critical content regularly face closure. In 2014, several newspapers and magazines were shut down or forced to stop publishing. In February, for example, the daily *Aseman* was shut down after publishing only six issues. The official reason was that an article had criticized *Qisas*, the principle of in-kind retribution in Islamic jurisprudence, as “inhumane.” A court said the daily had violated religious sanctities. *Aseman*’s managing editor, Abbas Bozorgmehr, was arrested and later released on bail of \$100,000. In March, the hard-line weekly *9-Day*, which had vocally criticized the policies of the Rouhani administration, was suspended by the Press Supervisory Board for alleged “publication of false information.” In December, authorities suspended the newspaper *Roozan*, apparently over a front-page article marking the fifth anniversary of the death of dissident Ayatollah Hossein Ali

Montazeri. One of the newspaper's journalists, Yaghma Fashkhami, was arrested a day after the daily was ordered closed by the prosecutor's office.

In addition to the print media, blogs and news websites—particularly those in the Persian language—are subjected to state censorship and periodic filtering. In October, the news website Entekhab.ir was blocked temporarily. The website's editors were quoted as saying that criticism of government policies was the reason for the filtering. There were also reports during the year that authorities had blocked the website of conservative lawmaker Ali Motahari, who has criticized the house arrest of opposition figures Mir Hossein Mousavi, his wife Zahra Rahnavard, and Mehdi Karroubi.

The authorities' systematic internet controls and pervasive censorship have continued despite Rouhani's promises to ease restrictions on media and information. The government has relaxed curbs on media coverage of topics that were previously deemed sensitive, including the state of U.S.-Iran relations and some very limited discussion of the house arrest of opposition leaders. However, the wholesale blockage of social-media websites including YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, and surveillance of the activities of Iranians who manage to reach such platforms, remained in effect in 2014. Throughout the year, the Intelligence Unit of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) targeted and detained internet activists and social-network users. A few detainees are said to have been tortured to extract televised confessions.

Foreign media are unable to operate freely in Iran. The government requires all foreign correspondents to provide detailed itineraries and proposed stories before visas are granted, and visas are regularly denied to foreign reporters who have previously been critical of the regime. Authorities have in recent years arrested a number of Iranian journalists and documentary makers for suspected ties with Persian-language media outlets based abroad, particularly the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Persian service.

In July 2014, *Washington Post* reporter Jason Rezaian, a dual Iranian-American citizen, was arrested in Tehran along with his wife, Yeganeh Salehi, a reporter with the Abu Dhabi English-language newspaper *National*. Salehi was released on bail in October, but Rezaian remained in jail at year's end on unknown charges. His family said he faced difficult conditions and had lost a significant amount of weight. He was also reportedly denied access to a lawyer.

As of December 2014, Iran had the second-largest number of incarcerated journalists in the world, after China, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). While the number of imprisoned journalists declined from 35 in 2013 to 30 in 2014, CPJ's December census did not account for the dozens of journalists who were arbitrarily arrested and released throughout the year. Authorities have sometimes extended the intimidation and harassment to journalists' family members. Prison conditions remain harsh, and detained journalists are often held in solitary confinement. A group of imprisoned contributors to a Sufi news website, *Majzooban Noor*, reportedly engaged in a hunger strike during 2014 to protest the conditions of their detention. According to Paris-based Reporters Without Borders, Iran is the leading jailer of women journalists and netizens.

In the past, there were reports of harassment and threats against the Iranian relatives of staff members at BBC Persian and Radio Farda, the Persian service of U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Security forces reportedly pressured the families to tell their loved ones to cease their journalistic and media activities. There have been also efforts to spread spurious allegations about such employees. Attempts to hack into the e-mail accounts of Iranian journalists working outside the country have been reported.

Economic Environment

Given the limited distribution of print media outside large cities, radio and television serve as the principal sources of news for many citizens. It is estimated that more than 80 percent of residents receive their news from television. Article 175 of the constitution forbids private broadcasting. The state maintains a monopoly on all domestic broadcast media and presents only the official political and religious viewpoints. In the print sector, the newspapers with the widest circulation and influence adhere to a conservative editorial position or are directly operated by the government. A state-run English-language satellite station, Press TV, was launched in 2007. The IRGC largely controls the Fars News Agency. Several other hard-line news outlets are also closely associated with the IRGC and state security forces.

Many Iranians use banned satellite receivers to watch international channels. Their number, according to Iranian officials, is on the rise despite a state campaign of dish confiscations and fines that began after the divisive 2009 presidential election. The authorities also engage in systematic jamming of foreign satellite signals for viewers in Tehran and other cities, stepping up the effort during sensitive political times. In recent years, some officials and media reports have raised concerns over the jamming's interference with meteorological forecasts and its potential health hazards for citizens. The government said in February 2014 that it would investigate the health issue thoroughly. Iran has repeatedly jammed the Persian television service of the BBC, whose popular programming challenges the government's portrayals of both the domestic political scene and Iran's foreign relations. The uncensored news broadcasts of Radio Farda are also jammed.

Although access to the websites of international Persian-language media outlets and other organizations is similarly blocked by Iranian authorities, many Iranians use circumvention tools to reach censored information on the internet and discuss taboo subjects on banned social-media sites. The regime's increased monitoring of such activity in recent years is a tacit acknowledgment of its inability to completely silence online dissent through blocking. The internet in general is subject to extremely slow speeds and other practical obstacles in Iran, but it continues to expand as an important source of diverse news coverage and analysis. The penetration rate reached about 39 percent in 2014.

In 2009, as part of an ostensible privatization process, a corporation linked to the IRGC bought a majority stake in the Telecommunications Company of Iran (TCI) with little outside competition. The government retains ownership of most of the remaining portion. The transaction effectively gave the IRGC indirect control over the country's dominant provider of fixed-line, mobile, and internet communications services. The country's other major mobile carriers are also linked to the IRGC or the state.

Iraq

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 72 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	65,NF	68,NF	69,NF	67,NF	69,NF

Press freedom conditions deteriorated in 2014, with rising violence and repression making Iraq one of the world’s most deadly countries for journalists. As the Islamic State (IS) militant group seized control in northwestern Iraq, including the city of Mosul, the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil instituted media blackouts in the areas under attack. Throughout the year, particularly in territory under de facto IS rule, reporters were executed, detained, beaten, and had their equipment confiscated with impunity.

Legal Environment

Iraq’s constitution protects freedom of speech and expression, but vague and redundant laws govern the media. The 1968 Publications Law prescribes up to seven years in prison for insulting the government, and the 1969 penal code criminalizes libel and defamation. In 2010, the Supreme Judicial Council created a special court to prosecute journalists—despite a ban on the creation of special courts in Article 95 of the constitution.

Among other cases during the year, in March the Housing Ministry won a criminal libel case against journalist Zahir al-Fatlawi over an article on the *Kitabat* website in which he accused the ministry of corruption. Al-Fatlawi was fined 1 million dinars (\$860) or six months in prison, and the judge reportedly disregarded evidence supporting the article’s allegations. However, in December, recently elected prime minister Haider al-Abadi issued an order that withdrew all government legal cases against journalists and media outlets.

In areas under KRG control, the Kurdistan Press Law protects journalists’ right to obtain information “of importance to citizens” and “relevant to the public interest.” The law also requires officials to investigate incidents in which journalists are injured or killed as a result of their work. However, few journalists’ deaths have been investigated. Public officials have often used the region’s penal code to sue journalists for libel, usually for stories about corruption.

Iraq lacks national legislation guaranteeing access to government information, and journalists struggle to obtain official documents in practice.

The government-controlled Communications and Media Commission (CMC) is the primary body responsible for regulating broadcast media. After the government declared a state of emergency amid the IS offensive in early June 2014, the CMC issued “mandatory” guidelines for media “during the war on terror”—a series of vague stipulations that placed arbitrary restrictions on coverage. One provision required the media to “hold on to the patriotic sense” and to “be careful when broadcasting material that ... may express insulting sentiments” or does “not accord with the moral and patriotic order required for the war on terror.” Another forbade media outlets from broadcasting or publishing material that “may be interpreted as being against the security forces,” and instead obliged journalists to “focus on the security achievements of the armed forces.” These guidelines led to inaccurate reports on the course of the fighting, including false claims that the military had defeated IS forces in Tikrit, which in fact remained under the group’s control. Media in Iraqi Kurdistan received similar guidelines.

Repeatedly during 2014, the CMC and other government entities threatened to close or revoke the licenses of critical media outlets, particularly those with foreign ties that gave a platform to Sunni politicians, carried denunciations of the government of then prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, or provided live coverage of the fight against IS. In January, the Iraqi

government banned the printing and distribution of the Saudi-owned pan-Arab daily *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*. In June, the government threatened to close the Iraq bureaus of the Saudi-funded television networks Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath, both based in the United Arab Emirates.

Political Environment

The Iraqi news media are diverse and collectively present a range of views, but most outlets are owned by or affiliated with political parties and ethnic factions, often leading to sharply partisan coverage.

Outlets also face various forms of pressure from the authorities, and reporters are regularly denied access to sensitive events and officials. Fear of reprisals—from fatal violence to criminal libel suits—makes self-censorship among journalists common.

The conflict with IS in 2014 prompted restrictions on journalists' access to the affected areas as well as large-scale shutdowns of media and internet services. In January 2014, when IS advanced into the city of Fallujah in Anbar Province, the Iraqi government imposed a media blackout, denying access to independent journalists to cover the fighting. Shortly after IS gained control of Mosul in June, the prime minister's office ordered the Ministry of Communications to shut down internet service in IS-occupied provinces, ostensibly to prevent the group from using social media to plan attacks and release propaganda. Access to websites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter was reportedly blocked across the country. Meanwhile, IS itself closed and confiscated media facilities in areas it controlled.

Journalists face regular threats and physical harassment from both state and nonstate actors, and Iraq had one of the world's highest murder rates for journalists in 2014. Mosul was especially dangerous for media workers, even before the IS takeover. Throughout the IS-occupied region, journalists were attacked or murdered for supposedly serving as spies or otherwise undermining the group's mission. In October, Mohanad al-Aqidi, a correspondent for the Sada news agency in Mosul, was reportedly shot dead in IS custody. That month in Samarra, IS beheaded Raad Mohamed al-Azzawi, a cameraman for Sama Salah Aldeen TV. In November, IS executed five journalists in Mosul who had worked with the local station Shema TV. By the end of 2014, the risk of kidnapping and execution was a constant threat for any journalists remaining in IS territory, and the group was reportedly holding about 20 journalists in Mosul.

A number of journalists were also killed or injured during the year by security personnel, bombings and gunfire associated with the broader conflict, or in reprisal attacks by factions other than IS. In January, a Fallujah TV correspondent was killed in a roadside bombing in Khalidiya. In February, *Al-Sabah al-Jadid's* Baghdad offices were bombed after the newspaper published a cartoon deemed offensive to Iran's supreme leader. In March, two journalists working with the state-owned Al-Iraqiya television channel were killed in a suicide bombing south of Baghdad, a journalist for Radio Free Iraq was killed by a government security officer in the capital, and a Radio Babel journalist was injured when gunmen attacked him outside his home in Babil Province. In April, unidentified assailants attacked the Baghdad offices of the Iraqi dailies *Al-Nas* and *Al-Mustaqbal*, assaulting their journalists for allegedly criticizing an Iraqi Shiite cleric. During Iraq's parliamentary elections that month, police routinely denied journalists access to polling stations and protests. Al-Baghdadiya TV faced harassment including arrest warrants against its journalists in March and a May assault on the office of photographer and correspondent Hussam al-Aqooly, who was stabbed and had his equipment confiscated. In June, an Al-Ahad TV cameraman was killed amid fighting with IS in Diyala Province. In July,

assailants wearing Iraqi military uniforms threatened journalists in the Baghdad office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) daily *Al-Taakhi*, and confiscated equipment and cash. A Kurdish journalist from Turkey, Leyla Yildizhan, also known as Deniz Firat, was killed in August while embedded with Kurdish forces fighting IS in northern Iraq.

Journalists in Iraqi Kurdistan, particularly those working for independent or opposition outlets, sometimes face a hostile environment away from the conflict zone. Kawa Garmyane, editor in chief of the news website *Rayel* and a correspondent for the newspaper *Awene*, was shot to death in December 2013, apparently in connection with his reporting on alleged corruption in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party. The prime suspect, PUK official Mahmud Sangawi, was arrested in January 2014 but released shortly thereafter, and continued to defend his innocence. Separately, in July, Payam TV presenter Ayhan Saeed was badly beaten by unidentified assailants in the city of Dohuk. The lack of successful prosecutions in most cases has created a climate of impunity.

Economic Environment

Hundreds of privately owned television, radio, and print media outlets have opened since Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown in 2003, with publications in languages including Arabic, Kurdish, Syriac, and Turkmen. However, political parties and ethnic factions fund most media outlets. The government controls the Iraqi Media Network, a holding company that owns Al-Iraqiya television, Republic of Iraq Radio, and the newspaper *Al-Sabah*. Satellite dishes are legal, and most homes in Iraq have a dish. More than 30 satellite networks transmit into Iraq, including Al-Sharqiya, an Iraqi-owned station that broadcasts from Dubai; Qatar's Al-Jazeera; and the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya. IS seized media outlets in Mosul and Tikrit in 2014, and it has attempted to establish its own communications infrastructure in Iraqi territory under its control, including both broadcast and print media outlets.

Commercial advertising revenues alone are too small to sustain Iraq's private media, and the government shapes the editorial content of some outlets by manipulating public advertising or pressuring private advertisers. Journalists have also reportedly slanted the news in return for bribes from officials, who offer money, land, and other rewards. In KRG areas, independent media suffer from lack of advertising and are unable to compete with outlets that are subsidized by the major Kurdish parties.

Until the crisis created by the IS offensive in the summer of 2014, the internet had largely operated without government restriction, and usage had steadily increased since 2003. A growing number of Iraqis turn to digital and social media to spread information and consume news. However, poor infrastructure and sporadic access to electricity continue to make Iraq's penetration rate for terrestrial internet access one of the lowest in the region. Instead, the majority of Iraqi users get online with wireless technology. The overall internet penetration rate stood at about 11 percent in 2014.

Ireland

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 6 / 40

Economic Environment: 5 / 30**Total Score: 16 / 100**

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	15,F	16,F	16,F	16,F	16,F

Legal Environment

Press freedom is guaranteed in Ireland's 1937 constitution and generally respected in practice. However, archaic defamation laws continue to place the burden of proof on defendants. The 2009 Defamation Act reduced the timeframe for bringing civil suits after a defamatory statement is made from six years to one; it also included the option for media outlets to issue an apology without admitting to libel.

In July 2014, the 1991 Criminal Damage Act was used in a landmark case involving a defendant who posted defamatory statements about his ex-wife from her Facebook account in 2011. The defendant was fined €2,000 (\$3,600), though the act allows up to 10 years in prison for intentional damage to another person's property. The ruling was controversial because it suggested that damage to a person's reputation could lead to criminal sanction, despite the abolition of criminal liability for defamation in the 2009 Defamation Act.

Blasphemy is considered a criminal act under the 1937 constitution, but there were no legal means for prosecution until 2009, when the Defamation Act established blasphemy as an offense punishable with fines of up to €25,000 (\$33,000). Article 36 of the law states that "a person publishes or utters blasphemous matter if he or she publishes or utters matter that is grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matter held sacred by any religion, thereby causing outrage among a substantial amount of the adherents of that religion, and he or she intends, by the publication or utterance of the matter concerned, to cause such outrage." In October 2014, cabinet minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin confirmed that a referendum would be held on removing the blasphemy clause from the constitution. This decision followed recommendations made by a constitutional convention in 2013 to replace the provision with a general clause on incitement of religious hatred. The referendum had yet to be scheduled at year's end.

The Freedom of Information Act of 2014 came into effect in October, replacing the 1997 Freedom of Information Act and its 2003 amendment. The new act reduces exemptions of government records to five years, establishes a maximum fee of €500 (\$650) for requests, and expands the number of state agencies that must release information. While the reduction in fees was viewed as a positive step, there are still limits on the public's access to files held by the police, who are only obliged to release administrative records, with exemptions for security reasons.

The Broadcasting Act of 2009 established the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, which oversees the public-service broadcasters, allocates public funding, and promotes accountability. The act expanded the role of the former Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, which had no responsibility for public-service broadcasting.

In 2008, the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman were set up to safeguard and promote the professional and ethical standards of newspapers and other periodicals, including through the establishment of a mandatory Code of Practice for member organizations. The public can bring complaints against member publications to the Office of the Press Ombudsman, and appeals of the ombudsman's decisions are adjudicated by the Press

Council, which may also hear significant or complicated cases directly. The Press Council is recognized by law under the Defamation Act of 2009, meaning those newspapers and magazines that choose to be regulated by it have certain legal advantages. This statutory underpinning was established following a consultative process involving the National Union of Journalists, representatives of newspapers owners, and others within the media industry. Media organizations that opt out could face difficulties in dealing with legal complaints, as they must convince the courts that they operate by the same standards.

Political Environment

Journalists can generally report freely, without political pressure, harassment, or the need for self-censorship. However, reporters have encountered obstacles in attempting to access officials as sources, particularly in the police service. Under Ireland's 2005 Garda Síochána Act, police can face fines of up to €75,000 (\$98,000), lose their jobs, or receive up to seven years in prison for speaking with the media without prior authorization. Investigative journalists say they are routinely questioned by police after breaking stories that indicate the use of a police source. In past years, journalists have reported that their investigative work was compromised due to police queries about sources and police contacts, as well as threats of arrest for failing to reveal sources. In March 2014, it was revealed that the police had been secretly recording phone calls to and from police stations, from the late 1980s through November 2013. The government set up a commission to review the implications of these recordings, which could have included communications between journalists and sources.

Physical attacks directed at journalists are rare. In November 2014, Sinn Féin political party leader Gerry Adams publicly joked about holding an editor of the *Irish Independent* at gunpoint. Local and international press freedom watchdogs condemned his remarks, which he did not withdraw.

Economic Environment

Ireland has strong and competitive print media, led by the privately owned *Irish Independent* and *Irish Times*. The public-service broadcaster RTÉ (Raidió Teilifís Éireann) dominates the radio and television sectors but provides a comprehensive and balanced news service. RTÉ receives competition from both private and British television channels. Ireland also has more than 50 licensed radio stations. Nearly 80 percent of the Irish population used the internet in 2014, and there are no government restrictions on access.

Debate over the concentration of media ownership and a lack of content diversity continued in 2014. The O'Reilly family had directly controlled Ireland's largest media company—Independent News and Media (INM)—for 39 years, until Gavin O'Reilly resigned as chief executive in 2012. Denis O'Brien, INM's largest single shareholder with a 29.9 percent stake, now controls the company. Because O'Brien has business interests in many other industries, there are ongoing concerns that he will exert undue influence over content.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Act, which took effect in October 2014, aims to assess the anticipated effect of proposed media mergers on the plurality of both ownership and content. In December, the government published draft merger guidelines under the law that would allow a stake of as little as 10 percent to be defined as a "significant interest" in a given media enterprise, meaning any merger involving the same owner would face increased scrutiny.

The communications minister will have final say on whether a merger can proceed, after an assessment is made by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. The law applies across print, broadcast, and online media outlets. However, because it is not retroactive, existing media structures will not be reassessed under the new rules.

Israel

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 30 / 100

Note: The scores and narrative for Israel do not reflect conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which are assessed in a separate report.

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	29,F	29,F	30,F	31,PF	30,F

Israel enjoys a lively, pluralistic media environment in which press freedom is generally respected. However, due to ongoing conflicts with Palestinian groups and neighboring countries, media outlets are subject to military censorship and gag orders, and journalists often face travel restrictions. The financial viability of private print and broadcast outlets also remains a concern.

Legal Environment

Legal protections for freedom of the press are robust. While the country's Basic Law does not specifically address the issue, the Supreme Court has affirmed that freedom of expression is an essential component of human dignity. The legal standing of press freedom has also been reinforced by court rulings citing principles laid out in Israel's Declaration of Independence.

The country's legal framework is predominantly protective of media freedom, but it does include a number of restrictive elements that are sometimes used against journalists. Hate speech and publishing praise of violence are prohibited, and the 1948 Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance bans expressions of support for terrorist organizations or groups that call for the destruction of Israel.

Operation Protective Edge, an Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip during the summer of 2014, inflamed public discourse in Israel, particularly on social media, leading to a variety of proposals for new legal or regulatory restrictions. In July, Communications Minister Gilad Erdan called on regulators to remove Qatar's Al-Jazeera television network from the lineup of channels available in Israel, accusing it of broadcasting unlawful incitement. The regulatory agency rejected this demand, citing concerns about press freedom and freedom of expression. In November, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni initiated a change in the definition of incitement to violence or terrorism in order to make it easier to file criminal charges. Due to a policy of restraint by the State Attorney's Office, few indictments for incitement have been

issued in Israel in recent years. Livni's initiative was aborted when the ruling coalition collapsed in early December, clearing the way for elections in early 2015.

While the media continue to face the threat of legal action, particularly on accusations of libel, the courts tend to rule in favor of the rights of journalists. In September 2014, a nine-judge panel of the Supreme Court largely upheld a 2012 ruling by a smaller panel, again finding that journalist Ilana Dayan was protected from libel claims by a former military officer who objected to his portrayal in an investigative television program on the 2004 killing of a Palestinian girl near the Gaza border.

The confidentiality of journalistic sources is not explicitly protected under Israeli law, although it is recognized by the courts. In November 2012, the Supreme Court ruled that journalistic privilege extends not only to the confidential source itself, but also to information that may reveal the identity of the source; the court directed the Knesset to codify the journalist-source relationship by means of legislation. Nevertheless, authorities continued to conduct investigations and surveillance with the aim of uncovering journalists' sources.

Twice in 2014, police or other investigative authorities entered the offices of the investigative television program *Uvda* (Fact) with a court order instructing staff to hand over materials that had been collected during investigations of economic and criminal matters. The program's staff refused in both cases. In the first incident, a court ruling in January 2014 confirmed that the program had to hand over documents related to interviews of witnesses in a serial murder case. In March, *Uvda* was ordered by a court to provide authorities with "full copies of all of the raw materials used" to prepare an investigation of private medicine in Israel, and the journalists refused. In this case, the authorities reached an agreement with the program and did not demand any item that might violate journalistic privilege.

In October, the Supreme Court ruled on a case involving a senior prosecutor, Liora Glatt-Berkowitz, who was fired after police identified her as a journalist's source for leaked documents. Glatt-Berkowitz sued the journalist, Baruch Kra of *Haaretz*, for compensation, arguing that he had failed to protect her confidentiality. The Supreme Court upheld a lower court's conclusion that Kra had not been negligent in his handling of the matter, finding that although a journalist has a duty of care vis-à-vis his source, if he acts responsibly and in accordance with the rules of journalistic ethics, he will not be held liable for compensation.

Freedom of information has been protected by law since 1998, and the courts have gradually widened their interpretation of the public's right to know. The legal tools provided by the law are used by journalists and activist groups. In September 2014, the Supreme Court upheld a 2009 freedom of information request by *Haaretz* in which the newspaper sought data on the number of open cases before each judge in the Israeli justice system.

According to the Press Ordinance of 1933, publishers are required to obtain a license from the Interior Ministry to operate a newspaper; broadcasters are covered by separate regulatory authorities. The Government Press Office (GPO) requires journalists operating in Israel to have proper accreditation in order to attend official press conferences, gain permission to access government buildings, and pass through Israeli military checkpoints. Hundreds of foreign journalists are generally accredited. However, the GPO has occasionally refused to provide press cards—especially to Palestinians—on national security grounds, thus preventing the affected reporters from entering Israel.

During the last several years, journalists have been drawn into a series of legal battles to protect their labor rights, supported by a new union founded in 2012 to defend journalists' interests. In March 2014, the National Labor Court issued an important ruling recognizing the

union as the representative organization of journalists at *Yedioth Ahronoth*, its affiliated website Ynet, and its sister newspaper *Calcalist*.

Separately, a final ruling was still pending in the case of journalist Haggai Matar, who had been fired by the new owners of the newspaper *Maariv* after it changed hands in 2012. Matar had served as chairman of the union committee at the paper, and the union filed a petition on his behalf, asserting that he had been fired illegally. Management then claimed that he had been dismissed because his political views diverged from the paper's editorial line, prompting further legal arguments.

Political Environment

The Israeli media collectively offer a diverse range of views, and they are generally free from overt political interference. However, some private outlets are highly partisan in their news coverage, and broadcast stations have faced instances of political pressure in recent years.

Under the 1948 Defense Act, softened by the 1996 Censorship Agreement between the media and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the military censor has the power to penalize, shut down, or halt the printing of a newspaper for national security reasons. In practice, however, the censor's role is quite limited and under strict judicial oversight. Journalists often evade restrictions by leaking a story to a foreign outlet and then republishing it. Digital media have added to the challenge of enforcing the 1996 agreement, but in May 2012 the military censor announced a new surveillance tool aimed at tracking textual and visual information online, especially on social networks.

During Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in the summer of 2014, the military censor grew more active, particularly when an IDF officer, Lieutenant Hadar Goldin, was declared missing. That day, the censor asked reporters, including foreign media, to submit all related content for review prior to publication. The IDF was apparently attempting to prevent publication of the fact that the missing officer was related to the Israeli defense minister. The *New York Times*, which communicated with the censor but declined to submit articles for prepublication review, said the demand was the first censorship notification it had received in over six years. The restriction related to Goldin was lifted within two days, after the officer was declared killed in action.

A huge oil spill in December drew public attention to the fact that the state-owned company responsible for the breached pipeline had for years been protected from media scrutiny by the military censor. The judiciary at times has imposed bans on coverage of certain stories—including quotation of foreign sources—as an alternative to military censorship. The most controversial instances of such gag orders in recent years have involved secret detainees.

Self-censorship was also concern in 2014, particularly in the context of Operation Protective Edge. A journalist was reportedly fired by a local newspaper in southern Israel after publishing an article about the lack of protection from militant rockets in Israeli Bedouin communities.

A long-standing law forbidding Israeli citizens from traveling to “enemy states” such as Lebanon and Syria without permission from the Interior Ministry has, on occasion, been applied to journalists. Press freedom organizations have condemned the selective application of the law, as well as the potential effects of such travel restrictions on the diversity of news available to the Israeli public. Although Israeli journalists are generally barred from entering the Palestinian

territories without explicit military approval, in practice the military frequently ignores the presence of Israeli journalists in the territories.

During Operation Protective Edge, Israeli journalists were forbidden to enter the Gaza Strip for their own safety, except in a few cases in which IDF escorts were provided. As a result, Israeli media had to rely on military sources and the foreign press in their coverage of the fighting.

Deliberate violence against or harassment of journalists is relatively rare in Israel. The principal targets have traditionally been Arab journalists—both foreign and local, often in and around Jerusalem—though many incidents have also stemmed from private or commercial conflicts (such as within the ultra-Orthodox and Israeli-Arab media sectors) and police harassment of journalists who are reporting from demonstrations on social and economic matters. In August 2014, it was reported that a legal correspondent for one of Israel's major news sites was arrested while recording police officers who, according to her account, used excessive force during a demonstration. The story was widely covered in the media, and the police came under harsh criticism.

Economic Environment

Israelis are active news consumers. Mainstream Hebrew newspapers garner an estimated one million daily readers out of a population of less than eight million. The pluralistic makeup of Israeli society is reflected in the press landscape, which includes 12 daily newspapers and a wide range of weeklies and news websites serving readers from various religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups. The major newspapers are privately owned, and some freely criticize government policies and aggressively pursue cases of official corruption.

However, the popularity of the free daily newspaper *Israel Hayom*, which has captured about 40 percent of the market, has placed financial pressure on other mainstream papers, as its business model has forced them to slash advertising rates, thus threatening their sustainability. *Israel Hayom* is owned and subsidized by Sheldon Adelson, a wealthy American businessman who is openly aligned with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his conservative Likud Party.

As a result of financial difficulties, the mainstream daily newspaper *Maariv* faced the threat of closure and was eventually sold in 2012 to Shlomo Ben-Zvi, the owner of a small right-wing paper, *Makor Rishon*. The merger of the two outlets increased ownership concentration, but their financial problems continued. The corporation controlled by Ben-Zvi collapsed in early 2014, leaving the two newspapers and the affiliated news website NRG in danger of immediate closure. *Maariv* was sold to businessman Eli Azur, who has holdings in a number of media outlets, including the *Jerusalem Post*. Sheldon Adelson acquired NRG and *Makor Rishon*. The antitrust commissioner approved the sales in April.

In November, the Knesset gave initial approval to a bill that would prohibit the free distribution of newspapers. If it won final passage, the legislation would force *Israel Hayom* to charge readers at least half the price of its lowest-priced rival. The proposed law, which was directly supported by the free paper's main competitor, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, stirred a heated debate. Supporters said Adelson's role in the newspaper market constituted a threat to freedom of expression and freedom of the press, while opponents criticized the use of legislation to essentially target a specific media outlet. The bill was stymied by the dissolution of the Knesset in December.

A diverse selection of broadcast media is available, although ownership concentration among private stations is a growing concern. Most Israelis subscribe to cable, satellite, or digital terrestrial television services that provide access to international stations. The dominance of the state-run Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in the television market has declined significantly in recent years due to competition from private television and radio outlets, continuing political interference in the content of IBA programming, and poor management. In July 2014, the Knesset voted to close the IBA in 2015 and replace it with a new entity. The law offered sound guarantees to protect the new authority from political pressures and to ensure that it will operate more efficiently. Only a fraction of the IBA's staff would be employed by the new authority, drawing objections from labor unions. A professional manager was brought in to replace political appointees, and by year's end the IBA was in the process of transitioning to its new structure.

The IBA's radio station, Kol Israel, and the military-operated Galei Tshahal remain popular throughout the country, and a broad range of local radio stations also operate, serving the country's regional communities as well as ultra-Orthodox, Russian-speaking, and Arabic-speaking populations.

At the end of 2014, after years of financial problems and debts to a regulatory agency that jeopardized its license, the private television station Channel 10 had yet to find new investors and was again on the brink of shutting down. Extensive media pressure led to another temporary fix that would carry the channel, whose coverage is often critical of the government, through the elections scheduled for March 2015. Separately, a new current events outlet, Channel 20, began operating during the year, targeting audiences on the political and religious right.

Israel has one of the region's highest rates of internet usage, at 71 percent as of 2014. More than half of all internet users take active part in social-media sites, and a number of online news and information websites have sprung up in recent years. The government generally does not restrict internet access, although blocking of certain data on applications like Google Maps, as well as surveillance of internet service providers and telecommunications services, is carried out, ostensibly for security purposes.

Branded content, product placement, and paid news items have become common in the Israeli media. Such practices gained greater exposure in 2014, generating public calls to clearly identify content that has been paid for by advertisers and other parties. For example, the Seventh Eye, a Hebrew media monitoring site, reported in May that the Economy and Trade Ministry had paid nearly \$100,000 to *Yedioth Ahronoth* in exchange for positive coverage in 2012–13. The Mako news and entertainment portal announced at the end of the year that it would be the first site to clearly identify reports and video clips that contain branded content.

Italy

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 31 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	33,PF	34,PF	33,PF	33,PF	31,PF

Italy's media environment remained relatively open and vibrant in 2014. Parliament moved forward with the approval process for legislation that would abolish imprisonment as a penalty for defamation, and several open-data initiatives were implemented by both state institutions and civil society to enhance public access to information. However, the country's media still faced a number of challenges, including the continued status of defamation as a criminal offense, political influence at the public broadcaster, and highly concentrated ownership among private outlets.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of expression and the press are constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected. Italy has signed and ratified relevant international treaties establishing the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Defamation is a criminal offense, punishable under Article 595 of the penal code by a fine of between €16 (\$690) and €20,000 (\$27,000) or six months to three years in prison. In addition to criminal charges, an alleged victim of defamation can pursue civil litigation, though preliminary mediation is mandatory and the disputes are submitted to court only when the parties do not come to an agreement. Civil cases can last as long as five to seven years, and the defendant in a pending suit must report the amount of damages sought by the plaintiff as a liability. Even if journalists are acquitted of the crime of defamation, they cannot seek compensation for their legal costs. Since 2013, the Italian journalists' association, Ordine dei Giornalisti (ODG), has offered members the opportunity to purchase liability insurance at favorable rates.

Unlike in the previous year, no journalists received prison sentences for defamation in 2014, and court decisions made it clear that imprisonment should be limited to exceptional circumstances. Nevertheless, defamation suits continued to hamper media freedom. According to figures released by Ossigeno per l'Informazione, a local press freedom watchdog, 159 journalists were targeted with spurious legal actions in 2014. These cases can be effective in suppressing information. In January, the former chairman of Telecom Italia threatened to sue the author and publisher of a book, *Goodbye Telecom*, that criticized his management of the company. He sought €10 million (\$13 million) in damages. In May, the author and publisher withdrew the book from the market to avoid a costly legal battle.

In October, the Senate passed a new defamation bill that had received initial approval from the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament's lower house, in 2013. The bill was submitted for a second—likely final—review by the Chamber of Deputies at the end of 2014. The legislation would abolish prison sentences for defamation and allow journalists to secure compensation for failed or frivolous lawsuits. Despite these substantial improvements, the proposed bill also extended defamation penalties to online newspapers and blogs, failed to decriminalize the offense, and imposed significant fines, among other problematic provisions. According to the draft legislation, defamation committed through the media can draw fines of up to €50,000 (\$67,000) if the statements are not proven to be truthful.

The right to access information is not included in the constitution, and Italy does not have a freedom of information law, relying instead on a patchwork of provisions scattered across different statutes. In February 2014, new prime minister Matteo Renzi stated his intention to adopt a freedom of information act. Under an existing measure, Legislative Decree 33/2013 on

public access to information, both national and local agencies created sections on their websites providing data on personnel, contracts, budgets, and performance reviews. In April 2014, the government approved the declassification of secret documents relating to terrorist attacks from the 1960s to the 1980s. This decision significantly sped up a release process that otherwise could have taken up to 40 years. Moreover, in December the government launched a new portal, Soldipubblici.gov, containing detailed information on public spending.

A variety of civil society organizations also make significant contributions to open-data initiatives. Such organizations are regularly consulted by public authorities and sometimes cooperate in the implementation of specific projects. Beginning in July 2014, over 30 civil society groups conducted a public campaign, FOIA4Italy, to call for the adoption of a freedom of information act. By the end of 2014, the initiative had completed the drafting of framework legislation to be presented to public institutions in early 2015.

AGCOM is the main regulatory body for broadcasting and telecommunications in Italy, tasked with ensuring fair and equitable conditions of competition for private media outlets. According to the law, AGCOM is an independent agency that is accountable to Parliament. However, the selection procedure for the board seriously undermines its autonomy from the influence of the executive and legislative branches. The board president is appointed by the president of the republic upon the advice of the prime minister, in agreement with the minister for economic development; two of the four members are elected by the Senate, and the remaining two by the Chamber of Deputies. The current board was elected in 2012 for a nonrenewable seven-year mandate. On several occasions, both the international community and domestic civil society groups have called for a transparent, merit-based process for selecting AGCOM members, as opposed to the existing system of political appointments based on party affiliation.

Journalists do not need a license to practice in general, but they do need a license to work as full-time professionals with one of the major media outlets. Obtaining a license from ODG is a lengthy procedure in which applicants must pass a professional qualification test, which generally costs about €400 (\$530), after serving as an intern for at least 18 months.

Political Environment

The degree of political influence on the media system is a serious challenge in Italy. Major concerns include the lack of a proper law regulating conflicts of interest and questionable procedures for the appointment of board members of RAI, the public broadcaster.

In November 2013, former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi was expelled from Parliament as a result of his conviction on tax fraud charges related to his media conglomerate, Mediaset Group. The expulsion effectively brought an end to his conflict of interest as both a high-ranking public official and the owner of Italy's largest media company. However, there are no explicit rules in place to prevent a similar situation in the future.

Political interference in the management of RAI has also undermined media freedom in Italy. Since Berlusconi resigned as prime minister in November 2011, political pressure on the broadcaster has diminished, but it is far from absent. According to the Gasparri Law, the minister of economy and finance appoints two board members and also selects which of the two will be the president of the board. The remaining seven members are nominated by a special Parliamentary Commission for General Guidance and Supervision of the Broadcasting Services, whose membership reflects the balance of power among political parties in Parliament. In

practice, the nominations themselves have matched this political balance. Meaningful reforms of the appointment procedure had yet to be adopted at the end of 2014.

Censorship of media content is generally not a concern. Although the internet is largely unrestricted, websites are increasingly blocked for selling counterfeit goods, illegal video streaming, unlicensed gambling, or child pornography. According to Osservatorio Censura, an internet censorship watchdog, the number of websites blocked rose from 345 at the end of 2013 to 716 at the end of 2014. In March 2014, new AGCOM regulations on the protection of copyright against digital piracy entered into force. As of the end of 2014, AGCOM had processed 101 out of 152 copyright infringement claims submitted; in 56 cases the alleged violating parties complied with removal requests, while in 30 cases AGCOM ordered internet service providers (ISPs) to restrict access to the infringing materials or the entire website depending on the extent of the copyright violation. Critics of the regulations, including both consumers and ISPs, objected to AGCOM's extension of its own powers without parliamentary approval, and questioned its authority to order ISPs to remove online content or block websites without prior judicial consent. In response, AGCOM stated that the procedure was an alternative to, not a substitute for, judicial processes and would be suspended in the event of an appeal to a court by either party. The main advantage of the notice-and-takedown procedure handled by AGCOM is its ability to address large-scale piracy quickly through time-restricted enforcement mechanisms.

Journalists occasionally face intimidation and attacks from organized crime networks and other political or social groups. According to Ossigeno per l'Informazione, 139 journalists received verbal or written threats, 47 were physically attacked, and 22 had their equipment damaged in 2014. None of these incidents resulted in fatalities or critical injuries. Police have consistently provided effective protection to a number of threatened journalists and also act to prevent imminent attacks through investigations and wiretaps. Several reporters live under police protection due to their work on organized crime, including Lirio Abbate, who has been a target of numerous attacks by the Sicilian Mafia; Roberto Saviano and Rosaria Capacchione, who wrote about the Neapolitan Camorra; and Giovanni Tizian, whose life is threatened by Calabria's crime network, the 'Ndrangheta. Michele Albanese, a reporter for *Quotidiano del Sud*, was placed under police protection in July 2014, when authorities discovered that individuals linked to the 'Ndrangheta were planning to kill him. In recent years he had already received several threats and suffered a break-in at his home.

Economic Environment

The Italian media landscape is rich and complex. Television is the most popular source of information, followed by newspapers and then the internet. Radio is mainly considered a source of entertainment rather than news and information.

As a result of the transition from terrestrial to digital television, content pluralism has been enhanced through the creation of new thematic channels. Currently, there are 88 national free-to-air channels and 37 pay channels. The print sector features about 140 daily newspapers, both national and local. Italian news agencies, which provide the majority of information content to the media, have always been free from the government's influence. Ansa, the oldest news agency, is a cooperative company exclusively composed of newspaper publishers, while the others are private corporations. In recent years, both large and small publishers have developed new business policies and commercial services in order to offer content online. Recent data show

a significant growth in the use of smartphones, tablets, and computers for news consumption. Italy's internet penetration rate was nearly 62 percent of the population in 2014.

Italy suffers from an unusually high concentration of media ownership. In 2004, the Gasparri Law reformed antitrust rules, establishing that no broadcaster should control more than 20 percent of television and radio stations or more than 20 percent of the total revenues from the entire media industry. The second threshold actually reduced previous antitrust restrictions. As a result, the Gasparri Law exacerbated the dominance of the leading companies—the opposite of its declared intention. At the end of 2012, a provision of the law that banned the joint ownership of broadcast and print media was removed. Several international bodies have repeatedly pressed their concerns about the Gasparri Law and the negative effects of ownership concentration.

Berlusconi's departure as prime minister in late 2011, and his expulsion from Parliament in 2013, helped to reduce concentration in de facto terms by ending his political influence over RAI. However, he remains the main shareholder of Mediaset, which owns several television channels; the country's largest magazine publisher, Mondadori; and Publitalia, Italy's largest advertising company. In addition, one of the country's major daily newspapers, *Il Giornale*, is owned by Berlusconi's brother.

According to AGCOM's 2014 report on 2013 data, over 90 percent of total revenues in the television sector are held by only three operators: Sky Italia (32.5 percent), RAI (28.9 percent), and Mediaset (28.4 percent). Sky Italia is a digital satellite television platform owned by the American corporation 21st Century Fox. The publishing sector is more fragmented, featuring a few large publishing groups and numerous smaller owners, especially in the sphere of local daily newspapers and specialist magazines. However, two of the main publishing groups have a significant share of the market: Gruppo L'Espresso (21.5 percent) and RCS Mediagroup (17.7 percent). The press continued to show a decline in total revenues, with falling advertising and sales. Public subsidies for print media outlets, including approximately €78 million (\$104 million) for dailies, remained stable.

Working conditions for journalists have become difficult in recent years; those with a full-time contract constitute less than 20 percent of the workforce, and there is a significant pay gap between salaried and freelance journalists. In June 2014, the journalists' trade union, Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana, renewed a collective agreement with publishers. For the first time, online and freelance journalists were covered in the agreement, but the minimum standards on their pay conditions remained low compared with cost-of-living indicators.

Jamaica

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 3 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 17 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	16,F	18,F	18,F	18,F	17,F

Legal Environment

The constitution provides for freedoms of expression and the press, and the government generally respects these rights. Defamation was decriminalized by the 2013 Defamation Act, which also reduced the time limit for filing a civil defamation suit from six years to two; eliminated the distinction between libel and slander and established a single cause of legal action known as defamation; and introduced a provision that removed liability from media houses that innocently disseminate content from a reputable source.

Civil defamation convictions can result in high fines. In October 2014, a court ordered the Nationwide News Network (NNN) and its chief executive, Cliff Hughes, to pay former prime minister P.J. Patterson J\$12.5 million (US\$112,000) in defamation damages over a 2009 report on the arrival in Jamaica, from Cuba, of a charter flight carrying Patterson and executives of the Kingston-based telecommunications company Digicel. The court dismissed NNN's argument that the report was publicized as a duty to inform the public and without malicious intent, but lowered Patterson's award from the J\$180 million (US\$1.6 million) he sought originally.

The Official Secrets Act serves as an obstacle to the effective implementation of the 2002 Access to Information Act and the 2011 Protected Disclosures Act, which protects whistleblowers. In practice, journalists' attempts to access official information are often met with bureaucratic delays.

Political Environment

Journalists sometimes face interference while performing their jobs. In November 2014, a government official obstructed coverage of a press conference, seizing a microphone from one journalist, and signaling for a technician to disable audio equipment while a second journalist was attempting to question him. The episode drew a rebuke from the Press Association of Jamaica (PAJ). Journalists and media outlets face occasional threats from both state and nonstate actors. Two journalists received death threats in 2014 in connection with coverage of a high-profile case in which Jamaican musician Vybz Kartel was sentenced to life in prison for murder. The PAJ and the Media Association of Jamaica (MAJ) both condemned the threats. While the Police High Command assured journalists it was investigating the incidents, there were no reported developments in the police investigation at the year's end. There were no reports of physical attacks against journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

Jamaica has two national daily newspapers and a daily afternoon tabloid, all of which are privately owned. There are several other national and regional periodicals serving a variety of sectors and interests, as well as more than 20 radio stations, 3 terrestrial television stations, and numerous cable networks with multiple channels. Most broadcast media are owned by the state, but they disseminate diverse viewpoints. The authorities impose no restrictions on the internet, which was accessed by 41 percent of the population in 2014.

Japan

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30
Political Environment: 14 / 40
Economic Environment: 6 / 30
Total Score: 25 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	21,F	21,F	22,F	24,F	25,F

Legal Environment

Press freedom in Japan is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected in practice. However, in December 2014, the restrictive Protection of Specially Designated Secrets Act went into effect amid opposition from international and local press freedom advocates as well as the Japanese public. Under the law, which had been passed in 2013, whistleblowers who leak vaguely defined “state secrets” can face up to 10 years in prison, while journalists who publish leaked information can face up to five years in prison. The law also grants ministers the power to designate certain information as state secrets for up to 60 years. In response to public criticism of the law after its passage, the Japanese government indicated that it would appoint an independent inspector to monitor implementation and handle disputes regarding classification. However, critics have questioned the independence of the inspector, who will be based in the administrative arm of the cabinet. Furthermore, the inspector will not have the authority to reject requests to restrict information, leaving final decisions to individual ministries. The position had yet to be filled at the year’s end.

Defamation can be prosecuted as either a civil or criminal offense and is punishable with fines reaching 500,000 yen (\$4,700) or imprisonment of up to three years. In early 2014, a Japanese nongovernmental organization filed a criminal contempt complaint against journalist and blogger Mari Takenouchi after she wrote about the group on Twitter, criticizing its efforts to encourage habitation of areas contaminated with radioactivity from the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. Criminal proceedings were suspended later in the year, but advocacy groups continued to call for the case to be dropped.

Japan’s freedom of information law requires government agencies to respond to requests for information within 30 days. The law also mandates an independent review board, which in practice tends to support the appellant seeking information. However, media freedom advocates have expressed concern over the potential of the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets Act to interfere with information requests.

Political Environment

While Japan’s media are generally free to disseminate diverse views, journalists and media freedom advocates have criticized media outlets’ coverage of the 2011 meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear power plant as inadequate, and have voiced claims that reporters frequently parroted information about the disaster that had been issued by government bureaucracies or by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), which ran the Fukushima plant. The *kisha kurabu* (press clubs) system remains strong. The press clubs have long been at the center of concerns regarding the lack of diversity and independence in Japanese news media, as they foster cozy relationships with bureaucrats and politicians in which journalists are granted access in exchange

for refraining from writing critical stories. Meanwhile, freelance and foreign journalists face routine discrimination, especially when reporting on issues related to Fukushima.

Journalists occasionally face direct government pressure. In November 2014, ahead of general elections, the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) reportedly issued written instructions to mainstream television stations about how to best select news topics and interview subjects, and requested that the stations avoid “one-sided” coverage. One television station reportedly received a separate letter from the LDP containing a complaint that the outlet had misrepresented government policies by suggesting that they tended to disproportionately benefit the wealthy.

Although the Japanese government denies accusations of censorship, incidents were reported in which freelance journalists and bloggers were stopped from or faced repercussions for disseminating critical information regarding Fukushima. Violence against members of the press is rare, and no major incidents were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Japan has one of the highest print readerships in the world. More than half of the national newspaper market is controlled by three major papers: the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the *Asahi Shimbun*, and the *Mainichi Shimbun*. There is considerable homogeneity in coverage due to the conservative nature of these newspapers. Television news content, once dominated by the public broadcaster NHK, has diversified considerably with the rising popularity of TV Asahi, Fuji TV, the Tokyo Broadcasting System, and satellite television. Japan also has a vibrant community radio sector. The government does not restrict the internet, which is a major source of news and information in Japan. Approximately 91 percent of the population had internet access in 2014.

The 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster highlighted the influence of TEPCO on Japan’s advertising industry, and the company’s ties to both the government and major businesses remain strong. The company reportedly spends around \$192 million on advertising, a factor that some have linked to the media’s conservative coverage of TEPCO’s handling of the nuclear crisis. Moreover, many journalists have economic links to the nuclear industry. Reporters with the *Nikkei* and *Mainichi Shimbun* newspapers have reportedly gone on to work for pro-nuclear organizations and publications.

Jordan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 66 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	63,NF	63,NF	63,NF	63,NF	68,NF

The Jordanian press faced decreased levels of overt harassment and violence in 2014 after withstanding an escalation of violence and threats in the previous year. Nevertheless, the

government took action against several journalists, principally using a newly revised antiterrorism law, and expanded efforts to silence critics on social-media platforms.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and expression, but press laws contain vague clauses that restrict media activity in practice. Journalists can be prosecuted under the penal code or tried by the quasi-military State Security Court (SSC) for offenses involving speech and association. A 2011 amendment to the country's main anticorruption law criminalized reporting on corruption without sufficient proof of wrongdoing, including news that defames someone or "impacts his dignity." The 1998 Press and Publications Law prescribes fines of almost \$40,000 for speech that denigrates the government or religion. A 2010 amendment to the law established specialized courts to prosecute press violations.

Further changes to the Press and Publications Law were passed in 2012, imposing restrictions on online news content and requiring news websites to obtain licenses to operate. The amendments apply the law's existing provisions to websites, making it unlawful for online outlets to insult the royal family, harm "Arab-Islamic values," or incite sectarian strife, among other prohibitions. Site owners are also responsible for patrolling reader comments to ensure that they do not violate the law. The government's Media Commission—a new body created from the merger of several media regulators in 2014—can issue orders, without a court ruling, to block foreign and domestic websites that fail to comply with the law. Press freedom advocates have said the changes have had a chilling effect on free expression online, as the government has used the revised law in numerous prosecutions.

In part due to a lack of diversity of viewpoints in traditional media, the online sphere has quickly grown into a space for independent reporting and news. However, in 2013 the government blocked approximately 300 local news websites for failing to adhere to new registration and licensing provisions; access to most websites was restored after they came into compliance with the requirements. A number of outlets—most notably 7iber, an opposition outlet that provides critical coverage of sensitive topics—chose to contest the law. Refusing to register, 7iber changed its web address to circumvent the block and operated for approximately a year before being blocked again in July 2014. After coming back online under a new domain, 7iber finally relented in late 2014, registering its website and hiring an employee belonging to the government-backed press union in order to meet the necessary legal requirements.

In April 2014, Jordan passed amendments to its antiterrorism legislation broadening restrictions on speech related to national security issues, which activists censured as an attempt to limit criticism of the government. In June, authorities used the amended law to arrest 12 journalists who were working at an Iraqi television station in Amman. The station, Al-Abasiya, was also shuttered. Throughout the year, authorities also prosecuted several individuals based on content posted on social-media websites, particularly information concerning political or foreign policy issues. Additionally, in December, the military issued a directive that all reports on the activities of the armed forces must first be submitted for approval. Critics widely questioned the overt prior restraint on the press and worried that the move could open the door for more censorship.

In 2007, Jordan became the first country in the region to pass an access to information law. Amendments to the law in 2012 permitted foreigners to request information from the government, something previously disallowed. However, journalists complain that their efforts

to obtain information on government policies and officials are often obstructed in practice. According to the Amman-based Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists, the implementation of the law is characterized by inconsistency across state institutions as well as arbitrary classification decisions. In 2014, advocates continued to pressure the government to make improvements to the legislation, including eliminating vague language, expanding the number of institutions subject to the legislation, and increasing public awareness of the law and procedures for requesting information. However, no changes were made by year's end.

Both print media and online outlets must register with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and obtain licenses from the Media Commission. Journalists must belong to the Jordan Press Association (JPA) to work legally. Those who are critical of the government have sometimes been excluded from JPA membership. Furthermore, the chief editors of news websites must have at least four years of prior membership in the JPA in order to obtain a license, and licensing fees for news sites cost \$1,400, which critics deem to be burdensome.

Licensing responsibilities for television and radio are shared by the Council of Ministers, the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), and the Media Commission. The Council of Ministers is responsible for granting, revoking, and renewing licenses, but it does so based on the recommendations of the Media Commission. In the past, the council has been accused of arbitrary and politicized delays in granting licenses. The Media Commission handles disputes between broadcasters, issues directions on programming, and takes punitive action against broadcasters that violate their licensing conditions. The TRC is responsible for allocating frequencies to broadcasters, issuing telecommunications licenses, and managing information-technology services.

Political Environment

The government tolerates modest criticism of officials and policies, and allows room for opposition movements to express their ideas. However, government attempts to influence editorial content occur regularly, with top officials and security operatives contacting editors and warning them not to publish stories on politically sensitive issues. Journalists routinely practice self-censorship and are aware of "red lines" in media content, including negative coverage of the royal family. In August 2014, the news website *Al-Madina* removed a story alleging a violation of Jordanian airspace by a Syrian aircraft after the Jordanian military threatened to refer the matter to the State Security Court. Also in August, the daily *Al-Ghad* refused to publish an article by a prominent journalist criticizing the increasing concentration of power by the king.

Journalists faced interference from state actors on several occasions while covering the news in 2014. In January, the chairman of the parliamentary finance committee barred journalists from attending a session about Jordan's annual budget. While there were fewer attacks against the media in 2014 than in 2013, journalists continued to encounter retaliatory threats and violence due to their reporting. In June 2014, two legislators brutally assaulted an online journalist that had criticized a parliamentary session in which they had participated. As Jordanian legislators enjoy immunity from prosecution while in office, no charges were brought against them.

Economic Environment

While some Jordanian news outlets are independent, much of the country's media sector is state-run. The government-owned Social Security Investment Fund has a majority stake in Jordan Press and Publishing, which runs the major daily *Ad-Dustour*, as well as in the Jordan Press Foundation, which publishes *Al-Rai*, the most popular daily, and the English-language *Jordan Times*. *Al-Arab al-Yawm*, considered to be Jordan's main independent paper, suspended operations for two months in 2013, citing financial difficulties. Fourteen employees were fired during this period in a move that human rights organizations say contravened labor laws. Unregistered independent news sites also struggled to remain financially viable, as companies are reluctant to buy advertising space on blocked websites. Bribery threatens independent reporting, and in the past, dozens of media professionals have been accused of accepting payments from the former director of the General Intelligence Department.

The 2003 audiovisual law ended the government monopoly on terrestrial broadcasting, and there has been an increase in the number of private radio stations in recent years—mainly regional outlets that cater to a specific demographic, such as women or students. However, terrestrial television stations remain under state control; the country's first privately owned television channel, launched as a pilot project in 2007, has since stalled. Satellite dishes are allowed, and pan-Arab news channels remain popular. Approximately 44 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014.

Kazakhstan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 23 / 30

Total Score: 85 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	78,NF	80,NF	81,NF	84,NF	85,NF

The Kazakh government sustained its multiyear media crackdown in 2014, prosecuting journalists for defamation and other offenses, issuing new laws to enable outlet closures and suspensions, and imposing harsh penalties for content violations and minor technical infractions. Analysts argued that the authorities were especially defensive during the year due to tensions surrounding the conflict in Ukraine, Kazakhstan's agreement to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), and economic weaknesses marked by the drastic devaluation of the tenge in February.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and the press, but the government severely restricts these rights in practice. Defamation remains a criminal offense, with specific provisions for defaming the president, members of Parliament, and other state officials. In July 2014, President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed amendments to the criminal code that increased the penalties for defamation, with fines of up to 5.556 million tenge (\$31,000) and prison terms

of up to three years. Among other new restrictions, the amendments criminalized dissemination of false information, which can be punished with fines and up to 10 years in prison.

Such laws are regularly used against independent and critical journalists. The press advocacy group Adil Soz documented 38 criminal cases against journalists and media outlets in 2014, including 15 defamation cases. There were also 106 civil suits, of which 97 were for defamation. While the courts frequently rule in favor of media outlets, the threat of substantial penalties and protracted court cases may contribute to self-censorship. Truth is not a defense in libel cases, there is no statute of limitations, and the law automatically targets both the writer and the publication in which the article is published.

A court charged journalist Natalya Sadykova with criminal defamation in March 2014 for allegedly writing an article under a pseudonym that falsely accused a former lawmaker of corruption. Sadykova fled the country and denied writing the article, which had appeared in December 2013 on a website of the independent newspaper *Respublika*. The paper and its affiliated outlets had been banned in 2012, but survived online. In November, shortly after the independent weekly *ADAM bol* was shuttered in another case, the outlet's parent company was ordered to pay five million tenge in defamation damages to an Almaty imam over a February article about the conflict in Syria.

In addition to the criminal code amendments, the government advanced legislation in 2014 that strengthened its ability to control media content and shut down outlets at will. A decree approved in January and effective in April imposed new regulations under an existing law on "emergency situations," which can include forms of social unrest like mass protests. The decree requires all media outlets in areas under a state of emergency to submit their content to the authorities for approval prior to publication. Outlets that fail to comply can be suspended. Separately in April, Nazarbayev signed amendments to a communications law that allow the prosecutor general to temporarily shut down—without a court order—websites and entire communication networks based on vaguely worded criteria, such as potential harm to the interests of individuals, society, or the state, or incitement of extremist or other activities "carried out in violation of the established order."

Kazakhstan lacks a freedom of information law, despite years of discussions on developing such legislation. A 2012 law requires foreign broadcast media to register with the government, and rules for the accreditation of foreign journalists include vaguely worded restrictions barring hate speech and speech that undermines national security and the constitutional order. A law that took effect in 2012 requires owners of internet cafés to obtain users' names and monitor and record their activity, and to share their information with the security services if requested.

Political Environment

The government and its allies dominate the media landscape, and the few independent print outlets and news websites have been under severe pressure from the state since a deadly police crackdown on striking oil workers in 2011. In 2012, the courts banned dozens of leading opposition outlets for "extremism," including those affiliated with *Respublika*, and further closures were reported through 2014. In February, a court in Almaty ordered the closure of the independent *Pravdivaya Gazeta*, which had been accused of a series of minor breaches of publishing regulations since it launched in 2013. Another independent paper, *Assandi Times*, was shuttered in April for its alleged links to *Respublika*. In November, the weekly *ADAM bol* was

closed on the grounds that it had published illegal “war propaganda” in its coverage of the Ukraine conflict.

Separately, the chief editor of the popular magazine *Anyz Adam* was ordered to pay multiple fines for an April edition that was devoted to Adolf Hitler. Although he was accused of technical violations and insulting World War II veterans, observers noted the Russian government’s public complaints about the issue, arguing that Moscow may have been angered by its comparison of Hitler’s actions with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

State censorship efforts extended to the internet during the year, with 25 cases of unjustified blocking reported by Adil Soz. The website of Radio Azattyk, the Kazakh service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was partially and periodically blocked inside Kazakhstan, particularly in the first half of the year. The newspaper *Uralskaya Nedelya* reported that its website was inaccessible for several days in April, allegedly in connection with its critical coverage of Kazakhstan’s EEU accession plans. In November, Kazakh authorities pressed the Kyrgyzstan news site Kloop.kg to take down a video that claimed to show Kazakh children training to fight with the Islamic State militant group in Syria. Regulators in Kyrgyzstan then tried unsuccessfully to block the site.

Independent journalists and outlets continued to face physical attacks and other obstacles to reporting in 2014. According to Adil Soz, there were 16 attacks on media workers and staff, 13 threats, and 8 arbitrary detentions during the year. In April, police tried to prevent several journalists from covering a peaceful protest outside the prosecutor general’s office, assaulting them and injuring a cameraman for the online television channel 16/12. In May, two journalists with 16/12 and one with Radio Azattyk were briefly arrested near Astana while covering a gathering of anti-EEU activists. In June, police searched the Astana office of 16/12 and confiscated equipment, citing a money-laundering investigation.

Economic Environment

Major broadcast media, especially national television networks, are partly or wholly owned by the state or by members or associates of the president’s family. According to the government, there are 250 television and radio stations in the country. Television remains by far the most popular source of news, and it is also the most tightly controlled. Government oversight extends to the country’s broadcast transmission facilities.

Kazakh law limits rebroadcasts of foreign-produced programming to 20 percent of a station’s total airtime, burdening smaller stations that are unable to develop their own programs. Nevertheless, Russian television and radio broadcasts are popular and influential in Kazakhstan, reaching viewers partly through cable and satellite services.

There are well over 1,000 daily and weekly newspapers in Kazakhstan. As with the broadcast media, many of them are either run by the government or controlled by groups or individuals associated with the president, and do not carry critical content. The government controls all of the country’s printing presses, and with advertising revenue in short supply, private print media are often forced to rely on state subsidies. The Soviet-era practice of compulsory subscriptions to state-run newspapers still exists in parts of Kazakhstan, further extending government influence over public opinion.

Internet use in Kazakhstan continues to grow, reaching almost 55 percent of the population in 2014. The government holds a majority stake in the largest service provider,

Kazakhtelecom, which is especially dominant in the fixed-line market but also offers mobile services.

Kenya

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 57 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	57,PF	54,PF	52,PF	53,PF	57,PF

Despite robust constitutional protections for freedom of expression, Kenyan legislators passed security legislation in late 2014 that threatened to curtail media coverage of terrorist attacks and security operations in the country. Throughout the year, the authorities intimidated the press in order to stifle reporting on the worsening security situation.

Legal Environment

Kenya's 2010 constitution was widely praised for expanding freedoms of expression and of the press, specifically by prohibiting the state from interfering with the editorial independence of individual journalists and both state-owned and private media outlets. The constitution also binds Kenya to a series of international and regional legal instruments governing free expression, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. While the constitution does contain potential curbs on press freedom with regard to privacy, incitement, hate speech, and antigovernment propaganda in times of war, they are not as severe as those in the previous charter.

In reaction to a series of terrorist attacks in late 2014, Parliament passed and the president signed an expansive security law in December. Through a series of amendments to existing laws, the legislation would impose penalties of up to three years in prison and 5 million shillings (\$57,000) in fines for the unauthorized dissemination of information that undermines counterterrorism investigations or operations, or of photographs showing the victims of terrorist attacks. Similar punishments are prescribed for media houses that publish or broadcast material "likely to cause fear or alarm to the public." Other provisions in the law would grant broad surveillance powers to Kenyan security forces. A court challenge of the new legislation's constitutionality was pending at the end of 2014.

Just days before the security bill was published, the Qatar-based broadcaster Al-Jazeera released a documentary implicating the Kenyan security forces in extrajudicial killings. The government denied the claims and instructed the relevant authorities to begin investigations into whether charges could be brought against those involved in the documentary.

Two restrictive laws adopted in late 2013, the Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Act (KICA) and the Media Council Act, created a government-appointed Communication and Multimedia Appeals Tribunal with the power to hear appeals on complaints

initially handled by the statutory Media Council of Kenya. The tribunal is authorized to withdraw media accreditation and seize any property or other assets to cover fiscal penalties. Individual journalists face fines of up to 500,000 shillings, and media companies up to 20 million shillings, if they are found in breach of a government-dictated code of conduct drafted by legislators. Another entity created by the new laws, the Communications Authority of Kenya, replaced the Communications Commission of Kenya as the broadcast and online media regulator, responsible for tasks including licensing and frequency allocation. That provision of the KICA was widely criticized for giving the communications secretary and the president the power to appoint the authority's board and chairperson without stakeholder input. Both laws were still under judicial review at the end of 2014.

Although rarely used, several anachronistic laws remained on the books in 2014. The 1967 Preservation of Public Security Act gives the president sweeping powers to censor, control, or prohibit information that is deemed a security risk. The majority of libel and defamation cases are tried under civil law, but defamation is still a criminal offense under the penal code. Observers argue that the mere possibility of criminal defamation charges is often used to intimidate journalists.

The Information Ministry's 2007 draft freedom of information bill has yet to be presented to Parliament, but access to information improved with the passage of the 2010 constitution. New rights that were constitutionally guaranteed to the media effectively weakened laws such as the Official Secrets Act, which prevented the release of information on national security grounds.

In August 2014, Parliament introduced the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Bill, which would require the press to seek permission from the speaker to cover parliamentary proceedings. It prescribed up to two years in prison and fines of 500,000 shillings for journalists who publish anything deemed defamatory toward Parliament, its committees, or its proceedings. The bill had yet to be enacted at year's end.

Political Environment

Kenya's leading media outlets, especially in the print sector, are often critical of politicians and government actions. They remain pluralistic, rigorous, and bold in their reporting, although they also frequently pander to the interests of major advertisers and influential politicians, especially at the editorial level. Political pressure coupled with threats and intimidation has encouraged self-censorship on sensitive topics such as security operations and major political events. In July 2014, Kenyan broadcasters collectively decided not to cover a nationwide opposition rally held to voice concerns over Kenya's security situation. They cited fears of divisive rhetoric or calls to violence for the decision. In September, the inspector general of police issued a directive banning all county and divisional police commanders from speaking to the press, leaving only the Nairobi-based police spokesperson as a point of contact for journalists.

Journalists were threatened, intimidated, or beaten in at least 19 different incidents across the country in 2014, with police and government officials accounting for nearly all of the perpetrators. This total represented a slight improvement over the previous year. In May, Lynda Ngoolo, a journalist for the private daily *Star*, went into hiding after receiving police threats over a story urging authorities to investigate claims that terrorists were using a home in Mwingi Town as a safe house. In October, police briefly detained Justus Ochieng, another *Star* reporter, in connection with a series of stories alleging criminal activity by police officers in Kisumu.

Several journalists in recent years have reported harassment and threats linked to their coverage of the International Criminal Court (ICC) case against three high-profile suspects—including the president and deputy president—who were accused of crimes against humanity in relation to the postelection violence of 2007–08.

At least one foreign journalist from Somalia was detained in Kenya, where terrorism concerns have increased pressure on the large ethnic Somali and Somalian refugee communities. Ibrahim Said Salah, editor of the Puntland news website Allcarmo.com, was arrested for questioning in September 2014 and reportedly remained in detention at year’s end.

Economic Environment

There are four daily newspapers, one business daily, several regional weekly newspapers, and now one free daily tabloid in Kenya. Six private television broadcasters and one state broadcaster operate alongside a myriad of private and community radio stations. There has been a significant expansion of FM radio outlets in recent years, particularly ethnic stations, and their call-in shows have fostered increasing public participation as well as commentary that is critical of the government. Two private companies, the Standard Media Group and the Nation Media Group, run independent television networks and respected newspapers. International news media, including the British Broadcasting Corporation and Radio France Internationale, are widely available in Kenya, as are newer international media players such as the Chinese government’s China Central Television.

About 43 percent of Kenyans accessed the internet in 2014. Kenya is the leader in usage in East Africa and boasts a thriving online community, including a number of prominent, critical blogs. Due to lack of infrastructure and electricity, internet connectivity is still limited in rural areas, though expanding mobile-phone usage has increased access.

Kiribati

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 29 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	27,F	27,F	27,F	27,F	29,F

Kosovo

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 18 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 49 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	53,PF	51,PF	49,PF	49,PF	49,PF

While Kosovo's constitution and legal framework provide for freedom of expression and of the press, the media environment is affected by political interference, financial pressure, and a high degree of ownership concentration.

Legal Environment

Defamation is a civil offense punishable by fines. A few defamation cases reached the courts in 2014, though all ended in acquittal. Journalists note that defamation suits can be onerous because the burden of proof falls on the defendant. A 2013 law mandates that journalists cannot be obliged to reveal their sources without a court order, and protects journalists and media outlets from property searches.

While Kosovo's media laws are broadly in line with European Union (EU) standards, such laws are not implemented consistently. Both the police and the judiciary lack experience and training in addressing threats against the media. Judges and prosecutors have difficulty interpreting Kosovo's ever-expanding body of laws.

A Law on Access to Official Documents was enacted in 2010. By 2012, each government ministry had appointed an official specifically tasked with handling requests for documents. However, full implementation is lacking, and the courts are slow to respond to complaints due to persistent backlogs in the judicial system.

Officially, media outlets can enter Kosovo's market without encountering legal hurdles. However, the Independent Media Commission (IMC), which issues broadcast licenses and is charged with promoting ethical, technical, and professional standards in the broadcast sector, is widely considered to be politicized. In 2014, an IMC proposal to increase Kosovo's broadcasting license fee was suspended, with a trade group representing private television stations claiming responsibility for the effort to defeat it. Two IMC board members were dismissed in December 2013 because their involvement in politics rendered their membership illegal. The dismissals left the body short of the necessary quorum, and it was thus nonoperational for the first few months of 2014. The IMC began operating again in the spring, following the appointment of new board members. However, as in the past, the appointment process was colored by the political affiliation of the appointees. Print media and news agencies do not require operating licenses. The Press Council of Kosovo (PCK) is a self-regulatory body for the print media. However, it lacks power to implement its own rulings, and has experienced difficulty raising funds under the provisions outlined in its statute.

Political Environment

Political interference, direct and indirect, remains a concern for the public broadcaster, Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK), and private media outlets. RTK, which is financed by taxpayers and governed by a board appointed by parliament, is seen as a mouthpiece of the government. The Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AGK) alleged that government officials, business interests, and media owners have issued verbal threats against journalists and their employers, and have otherwise obstructed reporters' work. In October 2014, an investigative

reporter with the *Koha Ditore* newspaper claimed that officials with the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) threatened to have him prosecuted after he refused to hand over documents informing a series of articles that implicated EULEX officials in corrupt activity. The AGK itself has experienced politically tinged controversy within its own ranks. Its chairwoman resigned in May 2014 amid allegations of improper links with the then ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), and a new AGK head was later elected.

Journalists who criticize public officials are often denounced, sometimes as traitors or Serbian sympathizers. Editors have barred their reporters from publishing or broadcasting stories that are critical of the government or of particular officials due to the outlets' political leanings. In some cases, editors have allegedly threatened to fire reporters if they continued to produce such stories. Newspapers that are not aligned with the government or ruling parties have been subject to intimidation through tax investigations, or blocked from accessing public information.

Most print media outlets neglect coverage of news relevant to Kosovo's minority populations. However, according to a 2013 study by the Institute for Development Policy, a Pristina-based think tank, print media outlets that do cover minority issues generally do so in an unbiased manner. Most such outlets are operated by members of the Serb minority, who focus their coverage on events in northern Kosovo, ongoing normalization talks between Kosovo and Serbia, and interethnic relations. A 2012 law allowed RTK—which mainly carries content in Albanian—to establish a second, Serbian-language channel to serve members of Kosovo's ethnic Serb minority. The channel's establishment was criticized by several Serb journalists who claimed that the legislation placed decisions regarding the channel's leadership and finances in the hands of members of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority. The channel, RTK2, began broadcasting in June 2013; however, it is available only via cable because it lacks permission to broadcast over a terrestrial frequency.

Journalists and media outlets continue to report threats and physical attacks related to their work. The AGK documented more than 25 attacks and threats against media workers in 2014. Among the worst such instances was an October attack in which an assailant entered the offices of the television station Klan Kosova and repeatedly stabbed an editor there; the editor, Milot Hasimja, survived the attack. The attacker was arrested, but had not been charged at year's end. In another incident in June, a reporter with the Serbian public broadcaster said he was arrested in connection with minor traffic violations as he prepared to cover a festival at Gracanica monastery, and sustained injuries after being manhandled while in police custody. A journalist specializing in political Islam received death threats after a radical group accused him of apostasy in August. In December, newly elected AGK head Zekirja Shabani was physically attacked by his employer, *Tribuna* owner Sejdi Demiri, who subsequently fired Shabani from the publication; the episode took place after Shabani announced that he was suing Demiri for failure to pay wages to *Tribuna* staff.

Successful criminal prosecutions of attacks and threats against journalists are rare. In March 2014, a court delivered a verdict in a high-profile case involving *Kosovo 2.0* magazine, in which a crowd of some 30 people had stormed the launch party of an issue that highlighted LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and gender-identity issues. Three men were convicted of violating the equal rights of residents of Kosovo, preventing or hindering a meeting, and property damage; they were given suspended sentences for two years. Journalists have also reported pressure from police to report attacks and incidents of intimidation as personal rather than related to their profession.

Economic Environment

Kosovo has a large number of media outlets representing a variety of political viewpoints. There are 7 daily newspapers, 83 radio stations, and 21 television stations. Three of the television broadcasters have national reach, including RTK. Newspaper readership is low, and television remains the main source of information for most residents. About 84 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014, according to Internet World Stats, and the government does not restrict access.

Private broadcast and print outlets are required to register with the Kosovo Business Registration Agency, a process that involves disclosing the names of their owners. Broadcasters must also obtain a license from the IMC, which is required by law to make its license registry public. Journalists say that while ownership transparency rules for the broadcasting sector are effective, it is difficult to determine who is truly backing many print media operations. Online media outlets remain unregulated, making it difficult to determine ownership. According to the 2014 European Commission progress report and many other sources, media ownership in Kosovo is highly concentrated.

Kosovo lacks a strong private advertising industry that could support the growth of private media. As a result, private broadcasters have been dependent on international donors. In 2013, the government decided to exempt broadcast media from the value-added tax. While some outlets have started to rely more on their own revenues from advertising, most remain financially unstable, and very few are able to operate without support from the government or businesses associated with public officials. The government is the country's largest employer and public entities provide the largest amount of advertising revenue. The prospect of securing advertising contracts from public entities has been known to influence editorial policies.

Journalists have few professional rights, earn low wages, and often work without contracts, leaving them vulnerable to corruption and prone to self-censorship. While a number of journalists' associations exist, there is no official journalists' trade union.

Kuwait

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 20 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 59 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	55,PF	57,PF	57,PF	59,PF	59,PF

In 2014, the government of Kuwait took action against both journalists and social media users in a continued effort to stifle criticism of the government and to dampen tensions between Shiite and Sunni Kuwaitis.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and of the press are protected under Articles 36 and 37 of the constitution, but only “in accordance with the conditions and in the circumstances defined by law.” Although the Press and Publications Law also extends some important protections to the media, it prohibits the publication of material that insults God, the prophets, or Islam. It also forbids criticism of the emir, the disclosure of secret or private information, and statements calling for the overthrow of the regime. Penalties for criticizing Islam were increased in amendments to the law in 2006, and the offense now draws up to one year in prison and fines of up to 20,000 dinars (\$70,500). Both the author of prohibited content and the editor of the publication may be held criminally liable for any violations. Meanwhile, Article 25 of the criminal code penalizes public criticism of the emir, with penalties of up to five years in prison. Violations are reported frequently, as any citizen may initiate charges against an individual who they believe has committed an offense under these laws. Kuwait does not have any legislation guaranteeing the right to access official information.

In May 2014, the government adopted a law creating the Commission for Mass Communications and Information Technology to regulate digital communications in the country. The communications minister oversees the new agency, which has sweeping regulatory powers over companies that provide phone, internet, cable, and satellite services. The commission may grant or revoke licenses without explanation, and can direct providers to censor undesirable content that “harms public order.” The body’s members were appointed in October, although it remained unclear if they had begun operations at year’s end. The law also penalizes the communication of “immoral messages” on digital platforms with prison terms of up to two years. Critics voiced concerns that the commission’s powers are both broad and vaguely defined, and that the law does not provide for judicial review.

All publishers are required to obtain an operating license from the Ministry of Information (MOI) to launch daily newspapers, and the 2006 press law requires capital of at least 250,000 dinars (\$893,000) for the establishment of a paper. However, the MOI’s regulatory power is subject to some limits—the ministry must issue a license or provide an explanation for its refusal within 90 days of application, and refusals can be appealed in court. Media licenses, once given, may not be revoked without a court order. The authorities monitor online communications for defamation and security threats, and the Ministry of Communications (MOC) blocks websites that are suspected of “inciting terrorism and instability.”

In January 2014, activist Abdullah Fairouz Abdullah Abd al-Kareem was convicted of insulting the emir in a case stemming from a series of critical remarks he made on Twitter. He received a five-year prison sentence and was ordered to leave Kuwait after his release, a sentence upheld on appeal. In April, popular blogger Mohammed al-Ajmi was also arrested on charges of insulting Kuwait’s emir, though he was later acquitted. In August, al-Ajmi was arrested again and charged with blasphemy over posts on Twitter in which he criticized a popular religious leader. He was released after eight days, but the charges remained pending at year’s end. In June, activist and blogger Hijab al-Hajri was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of insulting the emir and attempting to overthrow the government.

The Kuwaiti government rescinded the license of the *Alam al-Youm* newspaper and Al-Youm TV in July. The MOI claimed that the outlets failed to respect conditions for obtaining licenses, but some observers suspected the outlets were facing retribution for critical reporting. *Alam al-Youm* and another daily, *Al-Watan*, were suspended earlier in the year for failing to follow an order to not report on an attempted coup in Kuwait. Following the July suspension of *Alam al-Youm* and Al-Youm TV, the government stripped the outlets’ owner of his Kuwaiti

citizenship, rendering him ineligible to own media under the 2006 press law, which restricts ownership to Kuwaiti nationals.

Political Environment

International news is widely available, and a number of foreign media outlets maintain bureaus in Kuwait. News sources originating outside Kuwait must be reviewed by the MOI before circulation. The MOI screens all imported media for morally offensive content, and controls the publication and distribution of all materials classified as informational.

The MOI can censor all books, films, and periodicals that it deems to be morally offensive. However, in practice, the ministry does not regularly interfere with or restrict access to news, and the Kuwaiti media sector is considered more critical and outspoken than many others in the region. More in-depth reporting and a greater diversity of opinions appear in newspapers than in broadcast media. Nevertheless, given the restrictions in media legislation and governmental intolerance of critical reporting, journalists on all platforms continue to practice self-censorship, as failure to do so often results in reprisals. In addition to legal and regulatory penalties, journalists and media outlets occasionally face physical harassment.

Economic Environment

Thirteen Arabic-language and two English-language newspapers circulate in Kuwait and are all privately owned, largely independent, and diverse in their reporting. Private media have relatively transparent ownership and their own presses, and they are free to set their own prices. A small number of private radio and television stations are available for audiences in Kuwait, and satellite dishes are common. Although the advertising market remains limited, it continues to grow, partly due to an increase in the number of advertising agencies in the country. Wage levels for journalists at both state and private outlets are not high enough to discourage occasional bribery to influence coverage. Relatively low salaries have also dissuaded Kuwaiti nationals from pursuing journalism as a profession; many local media workers are noncitizens.

Approximately 78 percent of the population used the internet in 2014, and the government continued to debate how best to regulate this increasingly popular medium. Authorities require all internet service providers to install and operate systems to block certain types of political websites, in addition to websites carrying material that is deemed anti-Islamic, extremist, or pornographic. However, the blocking policies are not always clear or consistent. Internet café owners are required to record the identities of their customers and must disclose this information to the MOC upon request.

Kyrgyzstan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 20 / 30

Political Environment: 27 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 67 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	73,NF	70,NF	69,NF	69,NF	66,NF

After experiencing some openings in 2013, the Kyrgyz media landscape appeared to take a step back in 2014 as the authorities advanced a series of bills that could further restrict speech and attempted to block a popular news website. Access to a diversity of news sources, and particularly to Uzbek-language media, continued to be a challenge.

Legal Environment

The constitution and the country's laws guarantee the freedoms of speech and the press, but observance of these guarantees is inconsistent. Kyrgyzstan became the first state in Central Asia to decriminalize libel in 2011, though insult of public officials remained a criminal offense. In May 2014, President Almazbek Atambayev signed into law an amendment to the criminal code that prescribed up to three years in prison for falsely and publicly accusing a person of committing a crime. International observers and press freedom organizations criticized the law for effectively recriminalizing libel. Civil suits also continued to be used against journalists. In August, the State Committee for National Security (UKMK) sued independent journalist Shohruh Saipov for an online article he wrote in May about security officials' alleged involvement in extortion. The agency sought 1 million soms (\$19,000) in damages for defamation, though the suit was dropped after the news site that published the article, Ferghana.ru, agreed to carry the UKMK's response.

Kyrgyz lawmakers advanced a number of other bills during 2014 that would restrict freedom of expression or the operation of groups dedicated to protecting journalists' rights. One measure under discussion in the parliament at year's end would require domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive foreign funding and engage in "political activities" to register as "foreign agents." In October, a bill banning speech that promotes "nontraditional sexual relations" passed its first of three readings in the parliament. It carried a maximum penalty of one year in jail, and could be applied to journalists who report on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people in a "positive" way.

Existing laws on terrorism, extremism, and incitement of ethnic hatred are sometimes used against journalists and media outlets. In January 2014, Osh TV was accused of extremism for allegedly calling for the division of the country into two states. The comments were reportedly broadcast ahead of that month's mayoral elections, in which Osh's controversial former mayor, Melis Myrzakmatov, was defeated; Myrzakmatov was believed to control Osh TV. The station's director called the extremism investigation an attack on freedom of speech. However, the station was sold to a Russian businessman in April, prompting many employees to quit, then seized by the state in May on the grounds that the sellers had obtained it illegally.

Azimjon Askarov, an ethnic Uzbek independent journalist and human rights defender, remained in prison in 2014, serving a life sentence on charges of inciting ethnic hatred and complicity in the murder of an ethnic Kyrgyz police officer during broader ethnic unrest in June 2010. In June 2014, the Bishkek city court refused to reopen his case. Askarov's investigative reports had overturned convictions and cost several officials their jobs, and he was widely believed to have been prosecuted in retribution for his reporting.

Access to public information is guaranteed by law. Access Info Europe and the Centre for Law and Democracy consider Kyrgyzstan's access to information law to be relatively strong,

despite some weaknesses, in their Global Right to Information Rating; however, the assessment does not examine the quality of implementation. During 2014, lawmakers and civil society groups were considering amendments to the law aimed at reducing the response time for information requests, among other changes. In October, the activist group Movement-33 carried out a campaign in four cities to inform citizens about their rights under existing law.

All media outlets must register with the Ministry of Justice to operate. The approval process entails background checks on outlets' owners and funding sources, including whether they receive funding from international donor organizations.

Regulatory bodies displayed a lack of independence in December 2014, when they passed on an order from the prosecutor general's office that instructed internet service providers to block the news website Kloop.kg without the requisite court decision. The Kyrgyz authorities, allegedly acting under pressure from Kazakhstan, were attempting to suppress the site's coverage of a video in which Syrian-based Islamic State militants were shown training Kazakh children; Kloop.kg had refused requests to remove its report. The blocking order was withdrawn after several days due to the lack of judicial ruling.

NGOs that work to support freedom of expression operated in a generally more hostile environment for civil society in 2014. Analysts cited the "foreign agents" bill, the anti-LGBT bill, and related political rhetoric as signs of growing Russian influence in the country, which was in the process of joining the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. Hostility toward human rights groups has also come in the form of aggressive street protests and criminal investigations.

Political Environment

The media in Kyrgyzstan often suffer from editorial pressure from private owners or the authorities, as well as a lack of diversity with respect to language and viewpoints. A 2010 law converted the state media into a public-service broadcaster, known as the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Corporation (KTRK). Its 15-member supervisory board is made up of media experts, journalists, cultural figures, and civil society representatives; the president, the parliament, and civil society each nominate five members. However, the parliament has the power to approve the five members nominated by civil society, and to dissolve the board if it is not satisfied with its performance. Although the KTRK has been airing more diverse content than before the reform, it is reportedly biased in favor of Atambayev and members of the governing coalition.

There are reports that the government occasionally pressures outlets regarding the coverage of certain stories, though media outlets anxious to avoid the ire of politicians will often issue their own directives to journalists. Some journalists express concerns about investigating sensitive topics such as government corruption, claiming that security services monitor their activities and contacts with foreigners.

Officials have also been accused of distancing themselves from the press, for instance by communicating with journalists only in writing or seeking to deny access to events. In December 2014, a deputy prime minister urged lawmakers to ban journalists from controversial hearings on the Canadian-owned Kumtor gold mine.

The government seeks to restrict access to content related to terrorism or deemed to incite ethnic or religious hatred. Although the law requires a court order to block websites on such grounds, the authorities have occasionally attempted to circumvent this rule, as with Kloop.kg in

December 2014. At the same time, implementation of blocking orders by service providers is inconsistent in practice. Some 19 websites were blocked as of late 2014.

Access to a diversity of news sources, and particularly to minority-language media, remains a challenge in Kyrgyzstan. Many Uzbek-language outlets closed down after the ethnic violence of 2010, though some new multilingual enterprises have recently emerged with the help of international funding, such as the television and radio broadcaster Yntymak (Harmony). In November 2014, a bilingual Kyrgyz-Uzbek newspaper called *Biz* (We) reportedly started publishing in Osh and Bishkek, with a circulation of 1,300 in each language. Still, international human rights bodies have repeatedly called on Kyrgyz officials to foster more privately owned media outlets in minority languages. The government's limited activity on the issue is reportedly linked to concerns about a backlash from ethnic Kyrgyz nationalists and renewed political interest in promoting a unified Kyrgyz identity.

Meanwhile, well-funded Russian television stations and other media are widely accessible in Kyrgyzstan. A 2014 poll sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development found that a Russian state-owned station was second only to KRTK in popularity, and had gained viewers at the latter's expense in recent years. Sputnik, the Kremlin's international multimedia news service, launched a hub in Kyrgyzstan in December 2014, offering content in both Kyrgyz and Russian.

No journalists have been killed in Kyrgyzstan in recent years, and physical attacks are relatively rare. However, reporters continue to face intimidation in the course of their work, and past crimes against journalists remain unsolved—including a brutal 2011 assault on Shohruh Saipov and the 2007 murder of his brother and fellow journalist, Alisher Saipov. In March 2014, blogger and human rights activist Ilya Lukash fled Kyrgyzstan due to threats from a nationalist youth group. In November, the offices of the opposition newspaper *Alibi* were ransacked by unidentified intruders who allegedly searched the paper's computers. A female journalist wrote in August about regular sexual harassment faced by women in her profession and in Kyrgyz society more broadly.

Economic Environment

There are more than 200 traditional media outlets operating in Kyrgyzstan—including 159 newspapers, 25 television channels, and 26 radio stations—and 22 popular online news services, according to an October 2013 study by the Public Association of Journalists. The public broadcaster operates two television and two radio networks with national reach. Russian-language television channels are widely available and garner a significant share of the audience. However, conditions differ by region, and access to media outlets remains limited in rural areas.

An independent printing press run by the Media Support Center, a local NGO, surpassed the state-run printing house, Uchkun, as the country's leading newspaper publisher several years ago. State-owned media outlets benefit from government subsidies. However, the ability of authorities to use advertising to influence media content has receded as more private sources of advertising revenue have become available. International donor funding also plays an important role, particularly for public, regional, and minority-language media.

In September 2012, Kyrgyzstan began a program to switch to digital broadcasting and stopped issuing licenses for analog television stations. The process continued in 2014, with the goal of full digital conversion by June 2015. However, critics have expressed concern that the

government has not allocated adequate funding for the switchover, leaving both public and private stations without the necessary resources.

While the majority of citizens continue to get their news primarily from television, internet penetration has been on the rise, exceeding 28 percent of the population in 2014. According to the Public Association of Journalists' study, new online media outlets are slowly emerging, and traditional outlets are building an online presence, though a lack of funding for training and equipment, as well as low salaries for journalists, continue to hamper progress in this area. Internet news sites such as Barakelde.org, Akipress.org, 24.kg, and Kloop.kg; blogging platforms such as LiveJournal and Twitter; and forums such as Diesel.kg provide lively alternative news sources for those with access. In 2014, a group of young female activists began blogging about challenges faced by women and girls in Kyrgyzstan, a topic that tends to be neglected in mainstream media.

Further expansion of online media is slowed by lack of infrastructure outside towns and cities. Moreover, most users reach the internet through the state-controlled service provider KyrgyzTelekom, creating the potential for government influence over the medium. A growing number of Kyrgyz citizens access the internet through their mobile telephones, but a new law enacted in February 2014 required the registration of SIM cards, which curbs the ability of citizens to use information and communication technologies anonymously.

Laos

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 26 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 25 / 30

Total Score: 84 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	84,NF	85,NF	84,NF	84,NF	84,NF

Press freedom in Laos is highly restricted. In September 2014, the government approved a prohibitive new cybercrime law.

Legal Environment

Article 44 of the 1991 constitution guarantees freedom of the press, but in practice the government controls nearly all print and broadcast news. Under the criminal code, individuals can be jailed for reporting news that "weakens the state," or for importing a publication that is "contrary to national culture." Defamation and misinformation are criminal offenses, carrying lengthy prison terms and even the possibility of execution. However, due to high levels of official censorship and self-censorship, legal cases against journalists are rare.

In September 2014, Laos's government signed a new law introducing criminal penalties for publishing to the internet false information about the government, or information meant to discredit it. Internet service providers can also face penalties for permitting internet users to publish such information. The law additionally requires individuals to register on social media

sites with their full names, making it difficult for people in Laos to share news articles or other information anonymously.

There is no law mandating access to official information, and in practice, the authorities restrict media access to information sources.

Political Environment

The country's media remain under the tight control of the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP). Media personnel are appointed mostly from within the LPRP, and publications must be approved by the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism (MICT). Officials provide content guidelines for newspapers. Postpublication monitoring of content is routine, and outlets can be penalized for covering issues that fall outside the guidelines. As a result, journalists write primarily about anodyne topics, and the vast majority practice self-censorship. Meanwhile, Laos's telecommunications minister warned in July 2014 that Facebook users who post articles or other content that disrupts "social order" or threatens security in the country would see their accounts blocked. However, the government's technical ability to monitor internet usage is limited. Press releases on noncontroversial activities by international organizations and foreign missions are usually published with minimal edits.

Pervasive censorship and self-censorship mean that physical attacks and extralegal intimidation aimed at journalists are rare. Detentions in Laos occur with little public information, so it is impossible to tell how many journalists might be in jail in the country, although the advocacy group Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) does not count any reporters jailed in Laos. Foreign journalists are usually permitted to enter Laos and travel to cover specific stories, but face significant barriers in establishing a permanent presence there.

Economic Environment

There are around 24 regularly printed newspapers, all government affiliated. Privately owned magazines have emerged in recent years to cover general interest, health, and other nonpolitical issues. Newspaper and other print media circulation figures remain small due to low literacy rates and an insufficient distribution infrastructure outside the capital, Vientiane. Most of Laos's roughly 30 television stations and 44 radio stations are government-run, though companies are increasingly permitted to buy airtime and run privately produced content. A number of citizens access Thai television and radio, and wealthier individuals have access to cable and satellite television. A few community radio programs, covering local interest stories along with health and social issues, have sprung up with the help of international development organizations. Foreign television and radio services, such as Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, broadcast in Laos without disruption. Internet penetration rose to just over 14 percent of the population in 2014, and the number of Facebook accounts has reportedly grown from 60,000 in 2011 to over 500,000 in 2014. The government is concerned that the youth population is increasingly using social media to discuss sensitive political and social issues. Nevertheless, the government is eager to boost Laos's information and communication technology capabilities, and in March 2014 Laos's first state-funded nationwide underground fiber optic network was completed.

Latvia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 11 / 30

Total Score: 28 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	26,F	26,F	27,F	28,F	27,F

Legal Environment

Latvia's constitution protects freedoms of speech and the press, although there are a number of legislative restrictions. Incitement to racial and ethnic hatred is prohibited, as is anti-Semitic speech. Libel remains a criminal offense. While journalists rarely face criminal prosecution for the offense, in 2009 European Parliament member Aleksandrs Mirskis accused journalist Gunta Sloga of libel for publishing a report that questioned Mirskis's military experience. After a lengthy legal process, Sloga was acquitted in 2011 by the Jūrmala City Court, but Mirskis appealed the judgment. In 2013, the Supreme Court confirmed Sloga's acquittal.

Journalists have also faced pressure from authorities to reveal sources in cases of potential libel or for publishing state information. In 2013, Edgars Kupčs, the deputy editor of the regional newspaper *Zemgales Ziņas*, was accused of libel for writing an article that referenced the transcript of a public court hearing, and was pressured to reveal his source. During interrogations by the police, Kupčs reported that he was harassed and threatened with house arrest. The court ultimately dismissed the case and did not compel Kupčs to reveal his source. Also in 2013, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) issued a ruling in the case of *Nagla v. Latvia*, which concerned a police search of a journalist's home in 2010. The ECHR rejected a domestic court ruling and declared that the investigative authorities had failed to properly protect journalistic sources during their search.

The case of Leonids Jakobsons, an investigative journalist who had revealed information about misconduct in the Riga mayor's office, was ongoing in 2014; Jakobsons faces the charge of violating the Riga mayor's privacy by publishing his electronic communications. A case against netizen Ilmars Poikans, who was arrested in 2010 after revealing controversial tax records of public servants, also continued. In 2014, media watchdogs decried Latvian authorities' decision to hold the men's trials in closed court, calling for transparent proceedings and access for journalists.

The Law on Electronic Mass Media includes provisions for the regulation of media content. In April 2014, National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEPLP) used the law as grounds for suspending retransmissions of the Russian-language Rossiya RTR—which operates under the name RTR Planeta in Latvia—for three months. The channel, which is produced by a Russian state-owned media company, faced accusations of disseminating “war propaganda” and information that threatened Latvian national security. Authorities also reproached other Russian-language outlets about their content throughout the year.

The Law on Freedom of Information provides detailed rules on access to public information, and government agencies have adopted a number of practices in recent years to improve transparency, including publishing legislation and other official documents online.

The NEPLP serves as the main regulator for broadcast media. Beginning in 2012, members of the NEPLP were to be appointed by Parliament in consultation with various nongovernmental organizations, a move intended to improve the council's independence. Many current NEPLP members, however, still have links to the government.

Political Environment

Political parties and other actors have been known to exert influence over the media. In 2012, an NEPLP member threatened to restrict guests on Latvijas Radio after several former political advisers criticized the ruling party on a talk program.

Latvian media are relatively diverse and competitive, offering a wide range of political viewpoints. The Law on Electronic Mass Media requires at least 65 percent of broadcast programming to be in Latvian, which is the country's only official language despite the presence of a large Russian-speaking minority. Programming for Russian speakers is available on cable television networks, in addition to the terrestrial broadcast stations.

Journalists and media outlets have occasionally been harassed or attacked in previous years, but there were no reports of such incidents in 2014. The 2010 murder of investigative journalist Grigorijs Nēmcovs, widely believed to have been a contract killing, remained unsolved at year's end.

Economic Environment

The print media, which include a large number of both Latvian- and Russian-language newspapers, are independent and privately owned. The main national television stations include two public channels—LTV 1 and LTV 7—and the commercial channels TV3 and LNT. PBK, a third major commercial channel, broadcasts programs in Russian. A number of privately owned radio and television outlets operate on a regional basis. Many people in eastern Latvia cannot access Latvian television channels, partially as a result of the switchover from analog to digital transmission in 2009 and the weakness of cable infrastructure in rural areas. Viewers there primarily receive terrestrial and satellite broadcasts from Russia and Belarus. In 2014, approximately 76 percent of the population had access to the internet.

Ownership in Latvia's small media market has become increasingly concentrated in recent years, prompting concerns about pluralism. Foreign companies, including Scandinavian firms, own or control a considerable portion of Latvia's print and broadcast media. In March 2014, the Finnish company Sanoma sold the popular Latvian news portal Apollo.lv to the Estonian company Eesti Meedia, which already owns the widely visited Tvnet.lv outlet. Following a series of ownership changes, in 2012 the country's three major Russian-language newspapers were merged into a single publication. In June of that year, TV3, which is controlled by Sweden's Modern Times Group (MTG), took over LNT, which had seen a decline in market share in recent years. The media sector has suffered from the effects of the economic downturn that started in 2008, but has shown signs of recovery.

A 2011 amendment to the Law on the Press and Other Mass Media requires full disclosure of the beneficiaries of media enterprises, including websites. Outlets must list their

beneficiaries in the Register of Enterprises. Nevertheless, the ownership structures of private media outlets are often opaque, and the government has received criticism for not facilitating or enforcing transparency.

Although television advertising comprises nearly half of the advertising market, online outlets are playing an increasingly stronger role. Due to advertising losses, MTG announced in 2013 that LNT and TV3 would only be available to cable television subscribers beginning in January 2014, affecting viewers who primarily rely on free broadcasts. In recent years, media outlets have received criticism for the practice of “hidden advertising,” by which they disguise paid material as independent content. This practice frequently involves advertisements paid for by political or commercial interests.

Lebanon

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 20 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 55 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	55,PF	53,PF	51,PF	53,PF	53,PF

Press freedom in Lebanon deteriorated significantly in 2014, though the country’s media environment remained among the freest in the region. Violence and instability from the Syrian conflict bled into Lebanon, compounding domestic issues that restricted the press. Authorities reportedly beat, detained, or confiscated equipment while journalists covered bombings or clashes. One journalist was sentenced to jail over political commentary posted online, and several others were summoned to security offices for questioning in similar instances.

Legal Environment

The constitution provides for press freedom, but vague laws banning news deemed contrary to “national ethics” or “religious feelings” remain on the books. It is a crime to insult the head of state or foreign leaders, and journalists charged with press offenses may be prosecuted either in a military tribunal or a special publications court. Lebanese journalists complain that media laws are chaotic, contradictory, and ambiguously worded. Provisions concerning the media, which justify government prosecution of journalists, can be found in the penal code, the Publications Law, the 1994 Audiovisual Media Law, and the military justice code. The Audiovisual Media Law prohibits broadcasting of unauthorized political or religious gatherings, and bans “commentary seeking to affect directly or indirectly the well-being of the nation’s economy and finances, material that is propagandistic or promotional, or promotes a relationship with Israel.”

In 2014, dozens of civil and criminal legal cases targeted members of print and online media, revealing a politicized judiciary incapable of guaranteeing press freedom. By November, Lebanon’s Court of Publications had ruled against journalists and media outlets in 37 out of 40

cases brought, the majority of which involved defamation claims. Verdicts often resulted in exorbitant fines that appeared to be politically motivated. High-profile Lebanese officials brought multiple claims against the same critical outlets throughout the year, using the system to silence critics, often for personal gain. In February, journalist Mohamed Nazzal and his employer *Al-Akhbar* were each fined 12 million Lebanese pounds (\$7,910)—with interest of 15 million Lebanese pounds (\$9,900)—on defamation charges linked to Nazzal’s 2013 article on judicial corruption. Rasha Abou Zaki, another *Al-Akhbar* journalist, faced libel charges for an article she published investigating corruption and embezzlement linked to the Ministry of Finance. In the most egregious instance, Member of Parliament Michel Aoun of the Free Patriotic Movement won nine judgments in the court—eight against the newspaper *Al-Mustaqbal*—and received more than €100,000 (\$136,450) in compensation, 90 percent of which came from *Al-Mustaqbal*. Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil also sued *Executive Magazine* in March following its investigation of alleged malpractice in the oil and gas sector during his tenure as energy minister. Web developer Jean Assy was sentenced to two months in prison in February over his tweets critical of Lebanese president Michel Suleiman, commentary a judge declared “defamation and libel.” Although Assy is not a journalist, activists expressed concern over the ruling’s inevitable chilling effect on media critical of the authorities. Lebanon has no access to information law.

Created by the 1994 Audiovisual Law, the National Audio-Visual Council (NAVC) is responsible for licensing media outlets. Broadcast licenses are allocated to ensure that each sectarian group is represented in the media landscape. The 1962 Press Law limits the number of political dailies to 110 and requires the minister of information to withdraw unused licenses for use by other prospective applicants. In practice, licenses are rarely withdrawn; instead, owners sell unused licenses for exorbitant prices, making it cost-prohibitive to establish a licensed media outlet without significant resources. The Ministry of Information and the NAVC can refuse to renew licenses for radio and television and require foreign publications to register for a license prior to distribution in the country.

Political Environment

Lebanese law does not restrict access to the internet. In 2012, the Ministry of Information failed to win parliamentary support for a bill that would have allowed the government to restrict online expression. However, the Internal Security Forces’ Cyber Crimes Unit detained and questioned bloggers and journalists working for digital outlets throughout 2014, despite the press and publications law, which stipulates that courts—not members of the security sector—oversee investigations of journalists. The armed forces’ army intelligence unit also detained an activist over a political cartoon published on the *Beirut Observer* website that was critical of Army Chief General Jean Kahwagi.

The Lebanese censorship bureau has sweeping authority to censor all foreign magazines, books, and films prior to distribution on the basis of defending political or religious views and protecting national security. Religious authorities also wield substantial influence in the review process and are frequently consulted in enacting state bans on publications. There are no clear standards for bans: a film might be banned in cinemas but approved for DVD release; a song title may be omitted on an album cover but not removed from the disc itself. Of the hundreds of publications screened each year, the censorship bureau bans or censors only a handful, though it still butts heads with free-speech activists. In November 2014, activists decried as politically motivated the ban on a film about Iran’s 2009 protest movement.

Although Lebanon boasts a diverse media landscape, news content is politicized, and an outlet's coverage tends to reflect the political views of its leadership. Accordingly, journalists can most easily access politicians with a sectarian or political affiliation that aligns with their outlet, as politicians seek out journalists more inclined to agree with their politics. Ambiguous media laws and partisan pressure compel journalists to self-censor, but the spread of online media has helped fill the gap this leaves.

Lebanon fell prey to violence from Syria's civil war in 2014, and journalists are both caught in the crossfire and deliberately targeted. In January, a reporter for the Al-Manar television station was killed in a suicide bombing in a neighborhood of southern Beirut. In February, forces against Syrian president Bashar al-Assad kidnapped a Danish freelancer and a Lebanese-Palestinian journalist in the Lebanese town of Arsal in the Bekaa Valley; both were reportedly beaten while in custody until their release one month later. Lebanese security forces also clashed with journalists on several occasions. In August, guards assigned to Prime Minister Tammam Salam's security detail attacked reporters covering the election of Lebanon's new Sunni grand mufti, which the premier attended. Hezbollah also attacked members of the press accused of investigating the group's activities, including the detention of an MTV news crew in the Bekaa Valley in March, and the severe beating, verbal abuse, and threatening of a website owner who had criticized the group in July.

Economic Environment

Lebanon's media landscape includes more than a dozen privately owned daily newspapers in English, Arabic, and French, and more than 1,500 weekly and monthly periodicals. Outlets are often affiliated with religious, ethnic, or political groups. Shiite Muslim and Orthodox Christian families own the two largest Arabic-language dailies, *As-Safir* and *An-Nahar*, respectively. Similarly, nine television stations, two digital cable companies, and about 40 radio stations have sectarian affiliation. Nearly three-quarters of the Lebanese population had access to the internet in 2014. Use of digital and social media to disseminate and share news and information is widespread and has expanded access to a range of viewpoints.

Lebanese media observers estimate that advertisement-driven revenue is insufficient to finance most outlets. To compensate, companies rely on donations from politicians or sell shares to well-connected individuals, despite a provision in the law on audiovisual media banning funding from sources external to advertising and production. The Choueiri Group, a marketing and advertising company, manages advertising for 25 satellite channels, 15 print publications, and 10 radio stations, as well as for web portals, cinema, and billboards. *Executive Magazine*, a Lebanese business monthly, estimated that the group controls as much as 70 percent of the advertising in Lebanon.

Lesotho

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 13 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 48 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	48,PF	48,PF	49,PF	49,PF	47,PF

Although freedoms of speech and the press are generally respected in Lesotho, recent political turmoil has interfered with the journalists' ability to operate, and led to heightened polarization in the media. An attempted coup in August 2014 resulted in a brief television and radio blackout. Intervention by regional mediators resulted in a calming of the political environment and an agreement to hold early elections in February 2015.

Legal Environment

While the constitution does not directly mention press freedom, freedom of expression and informational exchange are guaranteed. However, multiple laws, including the Sedition Proclamation (No. 44 of 1938) and the Internal Security (General) Act of 1984, prohibit criticism of the government, provide penalties for seditious libel, and endanger reporters' ability to protect the confidentiality of their sources. The 1967 Official Secrets Act and the 2005 Public Service Act prohibit civil servants from disclosing information, limiting the transparency of government institutions and making it difficult for journalists to conduct investigations.

After more than a decade of negotiations with the media, the government still has not passed a range of reforms. The reforms would depoliticize government-owned media outlets, eliminate "national security" statutes that allow government censorship, and move many slander and libel cases from the courts to an arbitration system. Though the Communications Ministry produced at least three drafts, the reforms had not been sent to Parliament by the end of 2014. However, there were no reports that the government used the restrictive laws against the media during the year.

There is no law guaranteeing the media or citizens access to state information in Lesotho. In 2014, media freedom advocates continued to campaign for the passage of the Receipt and Access to Information Bill, which had been drafted by the Lesotho Law Reform Commission in 2000 but had not progressed in Parliament. Research examining the disclosure practices of eight government departments was released by the Media Institute of Southern Africa–Lesotho in October 2014. The study confirmed that access to information remained impeded and that government employees were wary of sharing information with the media. In a boost to transparency, in November 2014 a judge ruled that for the first time ever, television cameras would be allowed to broadcast a portion of a High Court case, during a high-profile corruption trial involving a government minister.

In July 2013, the Broadcasting Disputes Resolution Panel (BDRP) was established, in accordance with the Communications Act of 2012. The panel was established to resolve disputes regarding broadcast content and to develop a broadcasting code, but it is facing difficulty as it lacks basic resources, such as an office, staff, and financial support. Despite its lack of resources, the BDRP held public consultations around the country and subsequently produced an updated draft of the Broadcasting Code in 2014. Largely due to the political turmoil, the code had not received the necessary ministerial approval by the end of the year.

Political Environment

Despite the existence of active independent media, journalists often self-censor because of a history of government officials and private citizens responding to criticism with punitive lawsuits. Some local media, in particular private radio stations, have developed a tendency to affiliate with one political party or another.

Journalists are threatened, harassed, and occasionally assaulted as a result of their work. In January 2014, Harvest Radio's owner and presenter received death threats after accusing a former minister of abuse of funds; separately, the radio station alleged that the Communications Ministry had diminished its broadcast signal after it reported on the political upheaval in August. In September 2014, a reporter and editor from the prominent weekly *Lesotho Times* were arrested, detained for more than six hours, and charged with defamation. Although later released, they were questioned about information that had been given to them concerning the identity of the plotters of the failed August 30 coup. In an earlier incident, four unnamed men destroyed the studios and assaulted the presenter of Tsenolo FM, a private radio station perceived to be loyal to an opposition party. The owner estimated the attack resulted in financial damages worth 100,000 maloti (\$8,700); however, the authorities did not make any arrests. In December, a foreign correspondent based in Lesotho was subjected to harassment and intimidation after he reported comments made by state officials.

Economic Environment

There are no domestically produced daily newspapers in Lesotho. Several independent newspapers operate freely and routinely criticize the government, while state-owned print and broadcast media mostly reflect the views of the ruling party. Many newspapers are printed in South Africa and transported into the country to avoid the high cost of printing domestically. Diversity in the print media received a boost in November 2014 when the Court of Appeal reversed a ban on the establishment of a new print newspaper, the *Post*. The newspaper had been banned because of an alleged breach of employment conditions of three journalists who had worked for a rival media company. The *Post* has been in circulation since November 2014, increasing the number of weekly newspapers operating in the country to seven.

Because of high distribution costs and low literacy rates, especially in rural areas, radio is the most popular news medium. There are two state-run radio stations in addition to about 10 private stations, and many South African and other foreign broadcasts reach Lesotho. Two community radio stations were recently established in Lesotho. Mafeteng Community Radio was established in 2012 and broadcasts to an estimated population of 70,000 people. Motjoli FM was set up in May 2014 and broadcasts within a 50-kilometer radius of the Thaba-Tseka area. The country's only television station is state-run. Media development is constrained by inadequate funding and resources. Because most media houses rely heavily on state-funded advertising, the government is able to tacitly encourage favorable coverage.

The government did not restrict access to the internet in 2014, but due to a lack of infrastructure and high costs, the medium is used by just 11 percent of the population.

Liberia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 22 / 40
Economic Environment: 21 / 30
Total Score: 60 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	61,NF	59,NF	60,PF	56,PF	58,PF

The government of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf declared a state of emergency in response to a severe outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in 2014, leading to the temporary suspension of certain rights afforded to the media. The Ebola crisis also led to an increase in censorship during the year, as the government attempted to control reporting on the crisis.

Legal Environment

Liberia's constitution provides for freedoms of speech and the press, but these rights are often restricted in practice. In July 2012, Sirleaf became the second African head of state to endorse the Declaration of Table Mountain, which calls on African governments to abolish criminal defamation laws. The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) submitted a draft bill to the parliament later that year that would move forward with decriminalization; a similar draft was submitted by the PUL and other media groups in December 2014. However, no action had been taken on the bill as of the end of 2014. In addition, Liberia's libel laws allow for large financial awards in civil suits, which can cause severe economic difficulties for journalists and media outlets, and foster self-censorship. Although no major lawsuits were filed in 2014, suits filed against media houses filed in 2012 and 2013 sought more than \$20 million in total damages, according to the PUL.

In July 2014, Octavian Williams, the publisher of the *Nation Times*, was arrested for a traffic offense, in what many saw as retaliation for a series of articles that criticized one of the president's sons. Corruption and bribery in the judicial sector contribute to a largely unfavorable legal environment for journalists.

In 2010, Liberia enacted West Africa's first freedom of information law. Journalists and the general public have the right to access any public document, with exemptions for those related to national security. In 2013, a court in Monrovia heard the country's first freedom of information case. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff, ordering the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to disclose the asset declaration forms of cabinet ministers and other officials to Liberia's Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP). Local media hailed the decision as a victory for transparency.

In October 2014, the PUL challenged the government's plan to begin a licensing scheme for journalists, which would require media personnel to register annually with the Information Ministry. According to CEMESP, there are very few legal provisions to help guide media policy or offer protections to journalists in Liberia. Existing regulatory bodies are largely ineffective at implementing laws and regulations governing the media, and self-regulatory mechanisms have not yet been developed. A 2008 bill that would have established an independent broadcast regulator with safeguards against government intervention is still waiting to be passed by the Senate. Efforts to convert the state broadcaster into a public-service broadcaster were also pending at the end of 2014.

Political Environment

Although Liberia's media environment is not heavily polarized, outlets often display loyalties to political parties, particularly during election periods. Media outlets express a range of political views, generally without restriction.

In August, the government declared a 90-day state of emergency as part of its efforts to control the spread of Ebola. The emergency order included a nightly nine-hour curfew, limiting the media's ability to accurately report the outbreak; however, journalists were later exempted from the curfew. In October, the government declared that journalists could be arrested for interviewing or filming Ebola patients, or reporting from hospitals, if they did not first obtain written consent from the Health Ministry. The state of emergency was lifted in November.

In August, police raided and later barricaded the offices of the *National Chronicle*, shut down the paper, assaulted staff, and briefly detained two staff members. The Information Ministry said the paper's suspension was based on complaints from national security officials. The suspension, which remained in place through the end of 2014, followed controversial articles alleging the planned creation of an interim government intending to unseat the president.

Violence against the press has declined in recent years, but journalists still face threats and intimidation in the course of their work, especially by state security agents. In February, police attacked Papie S. Kollie, a reporter with Liberia Women Democracy Radio, while he covered a football tournament. A formal complaint was made to police, but no investigation had taken place at year's end. In August, *FrontPage Africa* journalist Henry Karmo was assaulted by police outside the Foreign Affairs Ministry after photographing demonstrators protesting the state of emergency.

Economic Environment

The media sector includes both state-owned and private outlets. Although about a dozen newspapers publish with varying regularity, including the government-owned *New Liberian*, distribution is limited largely to the capital. Low literacy rates and the high price of newspapers and transportation make radio the primary source of information for most Liberians. Monrovia is home to over 15 independent radio stations, at least two of which broadcast nationwide. Community radio has expanded to more than 50 stations across the country, and television has grown to at least six stations.

More than 5 percent of Liberians accessed the internet in 2014. There are no official restrictions on internet use, and there were no reports during the year of the government monitoring online communications.

There were no reported cases in 2014 of the government or other entities attempting to influence editorial content through the withholding of advertising. However, reporters commonly accept payment from individuals covered in their stories, and the placement of a story in a paper or on a radio show can often be bought or influenced by outside interests. Media houses sometimes accept payment from individuals not to run certain stories. Most media outlets are not self-sustaining and rely heavily on government advertising and financial support from politicians or international donors. According to the Liberia Media Center, newspapers are typically owned and operated by journalists, who are rarely trained in business management. Journalism training is also limited, with CEMESP providing one of the only venues for training in journalistic ethics.

Libya

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 73 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	94,NF	94,NF	60,PF	59,PF	62,NF

Libya experienced further declines in its legal, political, and security conditions in 2014, undermining the ability of journalists to pursue their work. Media workers endured threats, kidnappings, and physical attacks throughout the year. Attacks were often carried out by nonstate actors, but also occasionally by the national security forces in areas under their control.

Legal Environment

The Draft Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Stage, adopted during the 2011 conflict, remained in force during the year as the country's governing legal document. While it was originally intended as a stopgap measure until a new constitution could be drafted, political and military turmoil have long prevented that process from moving forward. The current charter provides for freedoms of opinion, communication, and the media. While positive, these provisions do not fully reflect international standards for freedom of expression. The charter does not explicitly abolish censorship or include the right to access information. It does not cover all types of expression and methods of communication, nor does it grant the rights in question to every person.

Moreover, various other legal provisions undermine the charter's guarantees. In January 2014, the General National Congress (GNC), Libya's interim legislative body, passed a law authorizing the suspension of satellite television channel broadcasts that criticize the government or attempt to destabilize the country. In February, the GNC amended the penal code inherited from the Qaddafi regime to apply to the current government, prescribing 15 years in prison for public criticism of the 2011 uprising. Qaddafi-era defamation laws were used to impose harsh sentences on journalists, and libel remained a criminal offense. Amara Abdallah Al-Khitabi, the editor of the privately owned newspaper *Al-Umma*, was sentenced in absentia to five years in prison in November for libeling court officials by publishing a list of allegedly corrupt judges and prosecutors. The ruling bars him from practicing journalism while in prison and for one year following his release.

The ongoing conflict has had a detrimental impact on the Libyan media legal regime, as legal and regulatory bodies have collapsed. The Ministry of Information finances state media, oversees the publication of public newspapers, and accredits foreign journalists. However, no media laws clearly regulate the press, and no mechanisms are in place for the licensing of new outlets. Libyan journalists have formed a number of competing associations and unions, such as the Libyan Center for Press Freedom and the Union of Libyan Media.

Control over media content and resources became a principal strategy of numerous factions in the context of the civil war that broke out in July 2014. After taking control of the capital, Islamist forces took over the state-owned television station Al-Wataniya in August. In response, the competing government based in Tobruk convinced the Egyptian satellite company carrying Al-Wataniya's signal to halt its broadcasts, as well as those of state-owned channel Libya al-Rasmiya, which had taken an antigovernment line. Both channels quickly returned to the airwaves by broadcasting on other frequencies. Several journalists publically resigned from private outlets in Tripoli as the Islamists exerted stringent control over the operations of media there. The staffs of several outlets were replaced with journalists sympathetic to the Islamists.

In Benghazi, Tobruk government forces shut down media organizations considered to be affiliated with the Islamists, such as Al-Ayn, which owns a radio station and website. The Tobruk government also closed radio stations in the east believed to support the rebels.

Political Environment

Media content is now controlled by militias or the army, and censorship is pervasive. Due to the mounting pressure of both the Tripoli and Tobruk governments, in combination with ongoing hostilities, many journalists have resorted to self-censorship out of fear of reprisal. Numerous radio stations have either stopped broadcasting political programs or shut down entirely. Newspapers such as *Al-Mayadeen* in Tripoli and *Al-Ahwal* in Benghazi suspended publication due to credible threats.

Libya's chaotic security situation made it difficult for journalists to access many parts of the country and exposed them to danger while in the course of their reporting. Three journalists with Fezzan TV were kidnapped in January while covering clashes near the southwestern city of Sabha. In August, two journalists with Alassema TV were kidnapped while reporting on a rally in Tripoli's Al-Shohada Square in support of the Libyan army. The latter station is a high-profile critic of Libyan Islamist groups. In September, two Tunisian journalists were kidnapped twice—once after their initial release—while reporting on the security situation in the city of Ajdabiya.

Journalists were also subject to reprisal attacks as a result of their reporting. Dozens of threats, physical assaults, and abductions were reported throughout 2014. In particular, Alassema TV suffered a number of attacks. In February, the station's headquarters was hit with rocket-propelled grenades, and the home of the owner was bombed, badly injuring a journalist who was there. In August, the headquarters was stormed by militants, who destroyed equipment and kidnapped employees. In May, Muftah Bu Zeid, the editor-in-chief of a weekly paper in Benghazi and high-profile critic of the Islamist forces, was shot and killed. Although his murder is the only one confirmed in 2014 by the Committee to Protect Journalists as definitively linked to his work, several other journalists were killed throughout the year for unconfirmed reasons.

Economic Environment

Libya's media landscape remains fluid and vulnerable due to the security upheavals. Two public dailies, the official state paper *February* and the state-sponsored *Libya*, operate alongside nearly a dozen prominent private weeklies and monthlies published in Tripoli, Benghazi, and Misrata. Hundreds of other newspapers are registered, but many publish only sporadically or online. However, reports indicate that the publication of many newspapers in Tripoli ceased in July 2014 as printing press workers went on strike over labor conditions and pay. Libyan Radio

and Television operates the three main public radio stations, including Radio Libya. Local councils fund various other radio stations, and there are over a dozen private stations, including Egypt-based Libya FM. The internet penetration rate remains relatively low, with about 18 percent of the population accessing the medium in 2014.

Both state-owned television stations fell under the control of Islamic militias in 2014. Media controlled by the government reflect the official line, while the state-owned media that fell under militia control are used as a mouthpiece for the rebels. Local councils in Misrata and Benghazi also fund their own channels. The sector is open to private ownership, and there was a proliferation of new outlets after 2011, but many have since closed due to lack of funding or experienced journalists. There is currently no law mandating transparency in media ownership or funding. After the fall of Tripoli to rebel groups, several new television channels began broadcasting, but the opacity of the situation in the capital means that their ownership structure, political affiliations, and operating procedures remain unknown. Many privately owned television stations reflect the positions of particular political factions. For example, Libya al-Hurrah is viewed as an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party. By contrast, Libya al-Ahrar is increasingly seen as a mouthpiece of the government. Alassema and Al-Dawliya are linked to the National Forces Alliance of the liberal leader Mahmood Jibril, and Al-Nabaa is affiliated with Islamist elements. Most of these channels deny any allegations of bias or conflicts of interest.

The telecommunications infrastructure inherited from the previous regime has yet to be refurbished, and internet users struggle to secure a reliable, high-speed connection. Libya had the lowest average internet connection speed in the world in 2014. However, it also has one of the highest mobile telephone penetration rates in Africa. Social media have seen continual growth. Libyans' use of online social networks, microblogs, and video- and photo-sharing sites was instrumental in the dissemination of information about the 2011 protests and ensuing conflict, and these platforms continue to be a key source of news for many residents.

Liechtenstein

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 1 / 30

Political Environment: 5 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 14 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	14,F	14,F	14,F	14,F	14,F

Lithuania

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 25 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	21,F	22,F	23,F	24,F	24,F

Legal Environment

Lithuania's constitution provides for freedom of speech and the press, and those protections are respected by the government. In July 2014, the parliament adopted amendments to the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public that provide greater protections for journalists' sources, limiting the power of the government to pursue disclosure. Lithuanian law prohibits some categories of speech, including incitement to hatred and denial of Soviet or Nazi crimes. Online hate speech aimed at Jews and Roma has reportedly proliferated in recent years. According to the European Journalism Centre, inaction by law enforcement agencies has left local nongovernmental organizations—specifically the Tolerant Youth Association—with the task of referring online hate speech to officials, who have prosecuted a number of cases.

In March 2014, on the basis of the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public, Lithuanian authorities suspended retransmissions of some programming by the Russian-language television channel NTV Mir for three months. The suspension was based on findings by the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) that a historical film aired by NTV Mir about the Soviet army in Lithuania contained untruthful and offensive content. Similarly, in April, the LRTK suspended rebroadcasting of some programs by the Russian-language RTR Planeta for three months. The commission found that the outlet's coverage of the Ukraine crisis contained biased and tendentious information that justified violence and military aggression. In December, the president of Croatia proposed amendments to the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public that would hold broadcasters liable for transmitting "war propaganda" or information deemed to be harmful to national security, penalizing the offense by a fine of up to 3 percent of an outlet's annual income. The bill remained under consideration at year's end.

Defamation is punishable by fines or imprisonment. While it is more common for lawmakers and business leaders to pursue cases against individuals who make allegedly defamatory statements than the news outlets that report them, journalists are sometimes affected. In 2011, journalist Gintaras Visockas was convicted of libel and fined \$12,400 for an article in which he suggested that a former presidential candidate was controlled by the state security service during the Soviet period.

A freedom of information law obliges the government to help citizens access public documents, and authorities generally provide access. The law was amended in 2012 to improve assistance for those requesting information. In the first eight months of 2014, there were 32 reported complaints of information request delays; the parliamentary ombudsman, who handles complaints about freedom of information, investigated 24 of the reports and found 16 to be valid, recommending that disciplinary measures be taken.

The LRTK is authorized to handle licensing and regulation of private broadcasters, while the Council for Lithuanian Radio and Television (LRTT) handles the same issues for the public broadcaster, Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT). Both regulators are perceived to be generally independent from the government or political interests. Self-regulatory bodies oversee print and online media.

Political Environment

The country's media freely criticize the government and express a wide variety of views. In the run-up to presidential election held in Lithuania in May 2014, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) noted a diversity of opinions in the country's media environment and found that adequate regulations were in place for the coverage of presidential candidates and campaigns.

Journalists have faced retaliatory pressure from authorities for publishing state information. In June 2014, Lithuanian authorities revealed that the Special Investigative Service (SIS) had wiretapped the phones of several employees of the Baltic News Service (BNS). The disclosure followed a December 2013 court order to reveal methods used by the SIS to investigate the sources of a controversial BNS story that had cited leaked intelligence information. In August 2014, the Vilnius Regional Court found the surveillance by the SIS to be illegal.

There were no reports of attacks against journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

LRT operates three national television channels, three national radio channels, and an online portal. In addition to the public broadcast outlets, dozens of independent television and radio stations are available, including the main commercial television stations LNK, TV3, and BTV. More than 300 privately owned newspapers publish in Lithuanian, Russian, and a few other languages. Online outlets have gained popularity as sources of news and information. Approximately 72 percent of individuals accessed the internet in 2014.

Media ownership remains concentrated, with a small number of firms—both domestic and foreign—owning the majority of the market. Ownership is not transparent, as disclosure is not strictly mandated or enforced. Banks are barred by law from owning media outlets, but many institutions work around the restriction by maintaining media holdings through intermediaries. Newspapers controlled by financial institutions demonstrate bias in favor of their owners. Amendments designed to keep banks from indirectly purchasing shares of media outlets were introduced in the parliament in 2011, but have not been passed. Several politicians maintain ownership stakes in major news outlets, some of which demonstrate related biases; political parties are prohibited from owning news media.

The country's advertising market experienced a steep decline in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008, but has shown signs of recovery. The government is one of the largest advertisers. A U.S. diplomatic cable released by the antisecrecy organization WikiLeaks in 2011 revealed information on the extent of corruption in media advertising in Lithuania. Major newspapers such as *Respublika* and *Lietuvos Rytas* had allegedly threatened politicians with negative coverage to obtain advertising revenue, according to the document. The cable also indicated the ease with which politicians have traditionally been able to buy positive press coverage.

Luxembourg

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30
Political Environment: 4 / 40
Economic Environment: 6 / 30
Total Score: 12 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	12,F	12,F	12,F	12,F	12,F

Macedonia

Status: Partly Free
Legal Environment: 18 / 30
Political Environment: 21 / 40
Economic Environment: 19 / 30
Total Score: 58 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	46,PF	48,PF	54,PF	56,PF	57,PF

Legal Environment

The Macedonian constitution includes basic protections for freedom of the press and of expression, but the authorities do not uphold them impartially. The use of criminal laws to restrict journalistic activity drew international attention in 2013 when *Nova Makedonija* reporter Tomislav Kezarovski was arrested in May for allegedly revealing the identity of a protected witness in a murder case; he was sentenced to four and a half years in prison that October. The articles in question, which were published in 2008, alleged that police had coerced the witness in a 2005 murder case into giving false testimony. The witness confirmed that account in a court hearing in February 2013 and said he was only given protected status in 2010; the original murder convictions were consequently overturned. Kezarovski was moved to house arrest after his sentencing pending the outcome of an appeal, which he was still awaiting at the end of 2014.

Defamation was removed from the penal code in 2012, but a parallel change to the civil defamation law authorized large fines for reporters, editors, and media owners. At least 580 civil defamation suits had been filed since the change by the end of 2014, including dozens of cases against journalists. Many are dropped or settled out of court, often because defendants yield to the threat of crippling financial penalties. In September 2014, an appellate court upheld a January ruling that a reporter and the editor of the independent weekly *Fokus* had to pay some \$12,000 in damages and court costs for a 2013 article that allegedly defamed Saso Mijalkov, head of the Security and Counterintelligence Administration. The law on open access to public information is unevenly and selectively enforced, with officials delaying responses and shunning independent or critical media outlets.

Enforcement of media regulations is weak, and the licensing process is subject to undue political and economic influence. In December 2013, the parliament adopted two laws—the Law on Media and the Law on Audiovisual Media Services—that created a new government-dominated media regulator to replace the previous Broadcasting Council. The new agency is

empowered to impose heavy fines and revoke broadcast licenses for content that threatens vaguely defined interests such as “public order” and “health or morals.” Amendments adopted in January 2014 exempted online outlets from regulation, minimized the obligations of print media, allowed the Journalists’ Association of Macedonia (ZNM) to nominate one of the regulator’s seven council members, and inserted language to ensure that all future content rules comply with standards set by the European Court of Human Rights. Critics of the laws said the changes, adopted under international pressure, were inadequate.

The government has reportedly promoted the Macedonian Association of Journalists (MAN) as a rival to the ZNM, while members of the Trade Union of Macedonian Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM) have faced dismissal and other forms of pressure from officials and employers. In July 2014, the parliament amended the Law on Audiovisual Media Services to give one of the ZNM’s two seats on the board of the public broadcaster to the MAN. The media laws passed in 2013 do not recognize bloggers and citizen journalists as professional journalists.

Political Environment

Most private media outlets are tied to political or business interests that influence their content, and state-owned media tend to support government positions. According to the 2014 European Commission report on Macedonia, there is lack of independent reporting and objective information available to the public. The government’s dominance of the media landscape through advertising was on display ahead of the April 2014 general elections, with public and most private outlets showing a clear bias in favor of the ruling coalition. In February, the chief editor of the leading private television station, TV Sitel, called on voters to support the government on ethnic nationalist grounds. An SSNM survey in March found that 65 percent of journalists had experienced censorship, and more than half said they practiced self-censorship.

Journalists sometimes face physical violence and harassment. In March 2014, the ruling party used harsh language to personally attack the editor of *Sloboden Pecat* after it ran stories about pressure on state employees and students to attend campaign rallies. In April, the Constitutional Court rejected a complaint by journalists who had been expelled en masse from the legislative chamber during a political standoff in December 2012, finding that the action had been taken for the reporters’ own safety. Reporters from at least three outlets were forced by police to delete images of officers’ confrontations with civilians during violent ethnic protests near the capital in May 2014. Past death threats and other forms of intimidation have not been prosecuted.

Economic Environment

Macedonia has a large number of broadcast and print outlets for its population, but progovernment media—including the public MRTV and several private television stations and newspapers—hold a dominant position in the market. A small number of outlets, such as Telma TV, 24 Vesti, *Sloboden Pecat*, and *Fokus*, carry more balanced or critical coverage. Ownership transparency is undermined by the use of proxies and silent partners; in February 2014, a group of investigative journalists created a website to trace obscured ownership in the media sector. Foreign investment in the media is largely limited to Serbian companies. A Serbian-owned media group has a virtual monopoly on newspaper printing and distribution, and its owner has ties to high-level security officials.

Foreign media content is not restricted. Access to the internet is constrained only by cost and infrastructural obstacles, with around 68 percent of the population accessing the medium in 2014. Use of social media continues to increase, and news sites and blogs have expanded, but most news content originates in traditional media. In February, Macedonia adopted a new Law on Electronic Communications to improve competition and consumer rights in line with European Union (EU) standards.

The government is regularly criticized for its liberal use of promotional advertising, which increases the media's financial dependence and favors progovernment outlets. The government is the country's largest single advertiser, and the ruling party benefits from deep pricing discounts from friendly outlets, particularly during election campaigns. In another sign of apparent collusion, in early 2014 it was revealed that a company linked to Ivona Talevska, an editor at two progovernment news outlets, had received a lucrative contract from the Health Ministry in late 2012. Journalists face low salaries, poor job security and working conditions, and editorial pressure from owners, and most outlets rely on financial support from government entities or owners' other businesses.

Madagascar

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 59 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	61,NF	64,NF	63,NF	66,NF	63,NF

Status change explanation: Madagascar improved from Not Free to Partly Free due to a more favorable environment for the press after the restoration of democratic rule, including a decline in direct pressure and censorship from the highest levels of government, and a general lack of violence toward journalists in 2014.

In January 2014, former finance minister Hery Rajaonarimampianina assumed the presidency following concurrent presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2013. This transfer of power marked a major step toward resolving a protracted political crisis that began with a military coup in 2009. Following the coup, legislation protecting freedom of the press was routinely ignored or selectively applied by the High Authority of the Transition (HAT), the interim government led by Andry Rajoelina. Madagascar's press environment improved with the return to democratic rule in 2014, with the new administration demonstrating greater respect for media freedom. Nevertheless, official censorship and intimidation of journalists continued at reduced levels.

Legal Environment

The 2010 constitution, approved by popular referendum, provides for freedoms of expression and of the press, but stipulates that these may be limited “by the imperative of safeguarding the public order, the national dignity, and the security of the state.” In practice, these freedoms are subject to a number of restrictions. Defamation is a criminal offense. In July 2014, two journalists from the daily *Madagascar Matin*— publication manager Jean Luc Rahaga and editor in chief Didier Ramanoelina—were arrested on charges of “libel and press offenses” for the publication of a letter alleging the involvement of government officials in the trafficking of rosewood. The incident led to street protests, and President Rajaonarimampianina issued a statement condemning the arrests. The journalists were released shortly, and the charges were dropped. In August, Parliament adopted a cybercrime law that prescribes up to five years in prison as punishment for defaming state officials online. The law’s vague definition of defamation has led to fears that certain provisions can be used to limit the freedom of expression online.

In 2013, the Special Commission on Audiovisual Communication (CSCA), a body within the Ministry of Communication, ordered the closure of Kolo Radio and Television due to “licensing irregularities.” The move was widely suspected to be politically motivated, and the closure was shortly suspended pending appeal. In April 2014, a high court reversed the CSCA decision, finding that Kolo meets the legal and technical requirements to continue operations.

Madagascar does not have a freedom of information law. Despite attempts by several members of the media to formally draft a code of ethics, no such code exists. The Ministry of Communication established an ethics commission for the media in 2011, but it quickly collapsed. In some cases, media bodies administer their own ethics criteria in lieu of national standards. A number of leading journalists in 2012 launched an open-membership union for the protection of journalistic interests. It actively engaged with the regional Southern African Development Community and other international entities to address the mass closure broadcast outlets that occurred under the HAT.

Political Environment

The restoration of democratic rule in 2014 and related efforts to facilitate national reconciliation led to an improvement in government relations with the media in 2014, including a decline in censorship of content and political interference with outlets. Rajaonarimampianina, unlike Rajoelina, does not own any media outlets. Rajoelina’s transitional government had maintained a tight grip on nationwide broadcasting, and radio and television licenses were often suspended arbitrarily based on grounds of national security. Approximately 80 radio and television stations were closed under the HAT and have yet to be reopened. Censorship, harassment, and intimidation continued at a reduced degree in 2014 despite general improvements in the media environment. In October 2014, the government issued a warning that media outlets would be held responsible for threats to national security stemming from coverage of the return of former president Marc Ravalomanana from exile.

In general, state and privately owned media continue to display bias toward particular political figures, parties, or business interests. Ahead of the 2013 elections, the Ministry of Communication established a monitoring program for media coverage of the polls. The media environment was highly polarized, with outlets often representing a political faction. Major political figures own several of the country’s private media outlets.

Violence against journalists declined in 2014, with only one reported case—a photojournalist working for the newspaper *Midi* was assaulted by police officers in February after photographing their response to a bomb threat in Antananarivo. In the south of the country, widespread insecurity and violence continue to make reporting extremely difficult.

Economic Environment

More than 300 radio and television stations were operating in 2014. There are numerous private newspapers, including dailies and those published less regularly; the number fluctuates due to frequent suspensions. Widespread poverty and illiteracy severely limit the penetration of television, print media, and the internet, making radio by far the most important medium in the country.

Only about 4 percent of the population used the internet in 2014, and access continued to be limited mainly to urban areas. There were no reports that the government restricted internet usage or monitored electronic communications. Despite the low penetration rate, the internet is seen as an important source of reliable information, as many servers are located outside the country and beyond the reach of the government. Political groups and parties use the internet widely to share opinions, engage in discussion, and criticize opponents.

Malawi

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 49 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	56,PF	55,PF	60,PF	53,PF	51,PF

After May 2014 presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, media watchers were concerned that newly elected president Peter Mutharika would undermine press freedom during his time in office. However, few significant violations of press freedom were reported during the year.

Legal Environment

Malawi has strong constitutional guarantees for freedom of the press, but several laws restrict this freedom in practice. The 1967 Protected Flag, Emblems, and Names Act prescribes fines and up to two years in prison for insulting the president and various national symbols, and the 1947 Printed Publications Act mandates stringent registration requirements for persons seeking to publish printed matter such as newspapers and books.

Malawi has no comprehensive framework for information and communication technologies (ICTs). The previous government of Joyce Banda had introduced two different proposals that were both criticized for potentially limiting free expression online. In October 2014, the Mutharika government said that it was preparing a new electronic transaction

management bill to present to parliament, but its exact details remained unclear, and a final proposal had yet to be presented at year's end.

Libel is both a civil and a criminal offense, punishable with up to two years' imprisonment. However, many libel cases are processed as civil matters or settled out of court. In November 2014, Mutharika indicated he would consider signing the Declaration of Table Mountain, a pan-African initiative that calls for the abolition of criminal defamation laws. However, no action was taken by year's end. In August 2014, former vice president Khumbo Kachali confirmed that he was proceeding with a libel suit against radio journalists Sylvester Namiwa and Gerald Viola—both former employees of Galaxy FM Radio, which is owned by the Mutharika family. The two had alleged during a 2013 broadcast that Kachali was involved in the "Cashgate" corruption scandal in which large sums of money were embezzled from state coffers. Namiwa was arrested for inciting violence after the incident, though he was appointed to Mutharika's press office in June 2014 and was reportedly seeking to have the charges dropped.

In 2013, Justice Mponda, a correspondent for the online publication *Malawi Voice*, was arrested for allegedly trying to extort officials from the former ruling People's Party (PP), offering to take down a critical article in exchange for a large sum of money. In February 2014, a Blantyre court cleared Mponda of the charges, and he too took a post in Mutharika's press office later in the year, illustrating the complicity of some elements of the media in the country's political sparring.

The constitution guarantees access to information, but efforts to pass a bill implementing this right have been stalled for years and accessing government information remains a considerable challenge for reporters. In January 2014, the Banda government adopted an access to information policy outlining its vision for the goals, procedures, and technical mechanisms of future legislation, a development described by observers as a critical first step in passing a final bill. In June, the Mutharika government pledged to table an access to information bill at the first session of the new parliament, but in September it announced that unforeseen delays had made this impossible. No further action was taken by year's end.

The broadcast media are licensed by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), which is funded by the government and led by a presidential appointee. In 2012, MACRA issued 15 new licenses to private and community radio and television stations, winning praise from the Malawi chapter of the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA). However, a proposed consolidated ICT regulatory management system (CIRMS) for the country's mobile phone network that could access the call records of users has led media professionals to warn that their ability to keep sources confidential could be compromised. After years of legal wrangling that had delayed implementation, in September 2014 the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled that authorities could proceed with the CIRMS program, though it was not yet operational by year's end.

In 2014, a grant from the Norwegian embassy allowed the Media Council of Malawi, a self-regulatory body, to resume operations after years of inactivity due to funding issues. In May it held its annual general meeting and elected a new chairperson.

Political Environment

In the past, public outlets were strongly biased in favor of the government and were accused of serving as tools of official propaganda. However, the Banda government pledged to reform these outlets, and in 2013 MISA praised the state-owned Malawi Broadcasting

Corporation (MBC) for featuring more diverse views and opposition members on its radio shows. MISA urged the MBC to continue this opening as the 2014 elections approached, since radio remains the primary source of information for most people in the country. However, media monitoring groups detected a strong progovernment bias in MBC's election coverage, as well as that of other state-owned outlets. The vast majority of airtime went to coverage of the PP and Banda, and was generally more positive than coverage of opposition candidates. Moreover, a disproportionate amount of time was spent covering the presidential race, while the parliamentary and local elections were neglected. Observers lauded the performance of the private media, which they found to have been fairer and more equitable in their coverage of both the incumbent party and the opposition, and to have generally contributed to a vibrant and substantive media landscape during the campaign and the election period. Nevertheless, some issues persisted in the private media as well, including a strong bias toward the presidential race at the expense of the parliamentary and local contests. Additionally, even prominent outlets sometimes displayed a lack of professionalism and polish in their coverage, undermining their credibility.

Violence against and harassment of journalists were common under the administration of President Bingu wa Mutharika, Peter Mutharika's late brother, but declined after Banda took office. However, occasional incidents persist. In January 2014, police seized the camera of Thoko Chikondi, a photojournalist for Nation Publications Limited, as she was photographing the arrest of Malawi's former justice minister; the camera was later given back, but other journalists were highly critical of the police's actions. In October, Archibald Kasakula, a reporter for Blantyre News Limited, was severely beaten by police officers after he photographed them harassing a woman on the street; he was later charged with obstructing police operations, but was released on bail. The beating provoked widespread outrage from across the media sector, and prompted the head of the Malawi Police Service to issue a statement in December affirming that journalists are free to photograph police without obtaining prior permission.

Economic Environment

Malawi's print sector consists mainly of 13 independent newspapers, including two dailies—the *Daily Times* and the *Nation*—several weeklies, and a few magazines. However, print readership is quite low. Most newspapers and magazines remain inaccessible due to their relatively high costs and their publication in English, which is read by only around 1 percent of the population. The biweekly *Fuko Nation* is published in the majority Chichewa language and in Tumbuka; it targets rural readers.

Radio remains the primary source of information for most people. Two state-owned stations broadcast nationally, Radio 1 and Radio 2, both managed by the MBC. Additionally, 10 privately owned stations have national reach, and there are more than a dozen community radio stations. The most popular station is the privately owned Zodiak, which had a presence in nearly the entire country and commanded 76 percent of Malawi's listenership in 2013, compared with 43 percent for MBC's Radio 1 and 40 percent for Radio 2. Around 75 percent of Zodiak's broadcasts are in Chichewa. Most other privately owned stations are located in large urban centers in the south and do not broadcast to more rural sections of the country, while most community radio stations—which broadcast in local languages—lack financial security. Although there are seven television stations, only the state-run TV Malawi broadcasts nationally.

Advertising revenue, including government advertising, is critical to the survival of Malawi’s press, which operates under tenuous economic conditions. Many media houses lack funding and journalists are often underpaid, leaving them vulnerable to political pressure and bribery. In November 2014, during a reception for media workers held by Mutharika, journalists were given notebooks with large sums of money hidden inside, believed to be bribes to win favorable coverage. Several journalists denounced the move and donated the bribes to charity, but many were also reported to have accepted the money.

There are no government restrictions on the internet, although just 6 percent of the population used the medium in 2014 due to lack of access to computers and high subscription costs. The majority of Malawians who access the internet do so through their mobile phones; about 32 percent of the population had a mobile-phone subscription as of 2013.

Malaysia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 65 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	64,NF	64,NF	63,NF	64,NF	64,NF

In 2014, a string of arrests, charges, and investigations under the Sedition Act raised alarm about use of the law to stifle opposition to the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition.

Legal Environment

Article 10 of the constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but it also allows for a host of limitations on this right. The 1948 Sedition Act and harsh criminal defamation laws are regularly used to impose restrictions on the press and other critics of the government. The Sedition Act is a relic of British colonial rule criminalizing any act with “seditious tendency” that might “excite disaffection” or “bring into hatred or contempt” the rule of government. It does not require the prosecution to prove intent and provides for up to three years’ imprisonment for those found guilty. In November 2014, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced that he would reverse his 2012 pledge to abolish the act, prompting sharp outcry from prodemocracy and human rights groups. What appeared to be a crackdown on political opposition involved multiple arrests, including of members of Parliament, opposition politicians, student activists, a university professor, and online news portal *Malaysiakini*’s Penang correspondent Susan Loone. Loone was held and questioned for more than eight hours for reporting that Penang executive councilor Phee Boon Poh had been treated “like a criminal” when he was arrested for being part of an unregistered voluntary organization set up by the Penang state government. At the end of December, Amnesty International reported that at least 44 people had been investigated, charged, or convicted under the Sedition Act since 2013.

In May, Prime Minister Najib Razak initiated legal action against the online news portal *Malaysiakini* and two of its editors over critical comments by readers in the portal's "Your Say" column. The prime minister demanded that the news site apologize, retract the columns, and promise not to publish such comments in the future. The decision by a sitting prime minister to sue a media organization for defamation in his personal capacity was highly unusual for Malaysia.

Political cartoonist Zulkiflee Anwar Haque, better known as Zunar, was questioned by the police in November regarding his latest book, *Komplot Penjarakan Anwar* (Plot to Jail Anwar). During the preceding weeks, three of Zunar's assistants and the company that manages online sales of the book were also questioned. These incidents followed a unanimous Appeals Court decision in October rejecting a government charge of sedition against Zunar, stating that the Malaysian government had acted "unreasonably and irrationally" by banning two of his other cartoon collections. Malaysia's Ministry of Home Affairs announced it would appeal this decision, but the trial was ongoing at the end of the year.

In late December, five presenters from the radio station Business FM 89.9 (BFM) were investigated under the Sedition Act, reportedly in relation to on-air discussions regarding Islam. The police report against the BFM presenters alleged that BFM has a strategy to create a "liberal country" that would "destroy the integrity of Islam and create confusion among the people." Such police reports by conservative groups are not unusual in Malaysia. In June, the federal court turned down an appeal by an archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church against a decision of the Home Affairs Ministry to ban the use of the word "Allah" in the church's weekly *The Herald*; *Allah* is a common word for *god* in Malay but has been banned for use by non-Muslims since 2013.

Although the opposition-controlled states of Selangor and Penang passed freedom of information laws in 2011, Malaysia has no federal law with such guarantees, and officials remain reluctant to share even innocuous information with journalists—including the content of proposed legislation—for fear of being charged under the Official Secrets Act.

The Communications and Multimedia Act (CMA) gives the communications and multimedia minister a large measure of discretionary authority over broadcast licenses. The BN reviewed existing media licensing and censorship laws in 2012, and a resulting amendment to the 1984 Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) repealed a provision that had required all publishers and printing firms to obtain an annual operating permit. However, the revision left all other restrictions in place, including the government's authority to grant or deny license applications and to revoke the required licenses at any time without judicial review. The Home Affairs Ministry may also issue "show cause" letters, which require newspapers to explain certain articles or face suspension or revocation of their permits. In February 2014, the Home Ministry notified the Edge publishing group that it was revoking a license to the group to establish a paper called *FZ Daily*. The license had been granted in August 2013 but suspended a week later. Although no reason was given for the revocation or the earlier suspension of the license, Edge Media Group owner Tong Kooi Ong suggested that it may have been the result of collusion among media companies seeking to protect their interests. The Edge group also owns the weekly magazine *The Heat*, which was suspended indefinitely in 2013 over alleged violations of the terms of its publishing license. Critics of the suspension argued that it was politically motivated, as the magazine had recently published a feature article detailing lavish spending by the prime minister and his wife. *The Heat* was permitted to resume publication in February 2014.

In 2013, the Federal Department of Islamic Development issued a call for stronger internet regulation, and Communications and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek noted that the government was studying the possibility of regulating online news portals; the government has taken no further action on these proposals.

Political Environment

The internet remains a bright spot in the media landscape, with the government formally committed to a policy of refraining from direct online censorship through Section 3(3) of the CMA and the Multimedia Bill of Guarantees. However, web content is monitored by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). Foreign print media are occasionally censored or banned.

Self-censorship is common due to the legal and economic environments. Physical harassment and intimidation are usually less of a danger for journalists than arbitrary arrest or threats of legal action, though incidents are occasionally reported. There were numerous reports of cyberattacks on independent news sites leading up to the 2013 general elections.

Economic Environment

Although the media industry is dominated by private ownership, the majority of print and broadcast outlets are controlled either by political parties in the ruling coalition or by businesses with political connections to the government. The largest media conglomerate, Media Prima, owns half of the Malay and English-language newspapers as well as many television channels; it is believed to be closely linked to the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the leading party of the BN. Huaren Management, which is associated with another BN member, the Malaysian Chinese Association, monopolizes Chinese-language newspapers. Despite the BN's insistence that mainstream newspapers are impartial, the owners' political and business interests often lead to self-censorship by journalists.

With around 68 percent of the population accessing the internet in 2014, Malaysia is home to many news websites and blogs that offer competing points of view. Although not all internet news organizations are politically independent—many have suspected affiliations with politicians from either the opposition or the ruling coalition—they offer an array of political opinions that cannot be found in the traditional media. Social-networking sites such as Facebook continued to flourish in 2014, hosting vigorous debates on political issues and government policies. The internet has also been a place to challenge corruption and raise human rights concerns, though existing laws require bloggers to tread carefully.

Maldives

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 22 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 55 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	50,PF	50,PF	51,PF	55,PF	55,PF

Media conditions remained challenging in 2014 as journalists and outlets faced continued harassment and violence, including the August disappearance of Minivan News reporter Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, which was still unsolved at year's end.

Legal Environment

The 2008 constitution protects freedom of expression, but it also places restrictions on speech deemed “contrary to any tenet of Islam,” and the overall legal framework protecting free expression remains weak. While defamation was decriminalized in 2009, civil cases are still occasionally brought against journalists. In 2012, the parliament passed the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Act, which set out a number of limitations on journalists, including a requirement for accreditation by the Maldives Broadcasting Commission (MBC), which regulates broadcast media. Watchdog groups have raised concerns about the Parliamentary Privileges Act, which the parliament passed in 2013 by overriding a presidential veto, on the grounds that parts of the law could undermine journalists’ constitutional right to protect sources.

In September 2014, the government dropped charges against Channel News Maldives (CNM) journalist Abdulla Haseen. He had been accused of obstructing police duties during a 2012 protest, but the charges were not filed until over two years later. The case marked the first criminal prosecution of a journalist since the adoption of the 2008 constitution. In a separate incident in February 2014, a journalist from the newspaper *Haveeru* was arrested for photographing plainclothes police officers, but he was released the same day without charge.

Freedom of information is recognized as a fundamental right in the constitution. In January 2014, the president ratified the Right to Information Act, which drew praise from activists for the strength and scope of its provisions. Implementation was proceeding on schedule by the time the law took effect in July.

In 2013, the MBC threatened to revoke the licenses of any outlet that broadcast information harmful to national security. Other decisions handed down by the body have sparked allegations of biased treatment. The Maldives Media Council (MMC), a statutory body consisting of eight media workers and seven members of the public, enforces a code of conduct for journalists and investigates public complaints against both print and broadcast outlets. Despite concerns regarding government influence over the MMC and lack of transparency in its elections process (the minister of information nominates the public candidates), the MMC has criticized government encroachments on media freedom, voiced support for opposition outlet Raajje TV, and filed a no-confidence motion against the MBC. The Maldives Journalist Association (MJA), formed in 2009, regularly made statements regarding media freedom issues and journalists’ rights during the year, accusing the government and political leaders of interference with private media in a number of cases.

Political Environment

The government is often reluctant to cooperate with the press, and access to official sources can be circumscribed. In 2013, Raajje TV, the only opposition-aligned private television outlet, brought a lawsuit against the president’s office, alleging discriminatory treatment. A court

ruled in the station's favor, ordering the president to provide Raajje with access to official events, which the administration had repeatedly denied. A civil court ruling had similarly censured the national police service for refusing to cooperate with Raajje TV and barring it from press conferences and events, calling such actions unconstitutional. In May 2014, a new policy allowed journalists to use mobile phones and laptops to provide live updates from within the parliament for the first time.

Internet censorship is a growing concern. The Communications Authority of the Maldives (CAM) often blocks websites that are deemed anti-Islamic or pornographic by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. In 2012, in the first case of its kind, a criminal court granted police a warrant to obtain the personal information of a user accused of "violating Islamic principles" on a news website's comment board.

Journalists and media outlets faced attacks and harassment throughout 2014, particularly regarding coverage of gang activities. In August, Minivan News journalist Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla was abducted at knifepoint outside his apartment. Religious extremist gangs were implicated in the abduction, and police made several arrests in the case. However, all suspects were subsequently released without charge. Rilwan remained missing at year's end. The disappearance prompted a landmark solidarity movement by journalists and broadcasters, including a joint statement of condemnation from all Maldivian media outlets.

In September 2014, a security camera was violently removed from the Minivan News building and a rusty machete lodged in the door, in what was seen as a threat. In November, the administrator of an opposition-oriented Facebook page was abducted and beaten after posting photographs of those implicated in the Rilwan disappearance. At least 16 journalists faced death threats after reporting on gang-related street violence during the year. An analysis published by the MBC in 2014 found that 84 percent of journalists faced threats and nearly one-third of journalists self-censored due to threats. The MBC cited political parties and gangs as the main perpetrators of threats and intimidation.

Economic Environment

Private print media present a fairly wide diversity of viewpoints, although news coverage has become more polarized since the 2012 change in government. Some publications are owned by allies of former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom or other key political actors, who exercise considerable control over content. Coverage by the state broadcaster, which assumed control of all government-owned media in 2012, ignores opposition voices and favors the ruling party. The number of private radio stations has increased in recent years, while several private television channels, including Raajje TV, DhiTV, and VTV, compete with the state-run broadcaster. Broadcasters remain subject to high annual licensing fees and must be relicensed every year. Most newspapers are not profitable and rely on financial backing from businessmen with strong political interests. Private media have been under significant financial pressure since 2009, when the government began publishing its advertisements in the weekly official gazette instead of private outlets. The internet was accessed by about 49 percent of the population in 2014; the number of web-based news outlets and social-media use have greatly expanded in the past several years.

Mali

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 37 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	25,F	24,F	24,F	46,PF	37,PF

Mali's ongoing conflict with Tuareg separatists and continued attacks by Islamist militants undermined stability throughout 2014, making reporting in the country a potentially dangerous task for domestic and foreign journalists alike. Self-censorship and economic difficulties also inhibited news coverage in what was otherwise a relatively open media landscape.

Legal Environment

Freedom of speech is guaranteed under Article 4 of the 1992 constitution, but no legislation guarantees the confidentiality of journalists' sources. A press law passed in 2000 imposes fines and prison sentences for defamation. It also criminalizes offenses such as undermining state security, demoralizing the armed forces, offending the head of state, sedition, and consorting with the enemy. However, journalists are rarely prosecuted. While Malian authorities have not signed the Table Mountain Declaration, a formal commitment to decriminalize defamation and insult laws across Africa, the Association of Private Press Editors of Mali (ASSEP) announced in November 2014 that it was reviewing potential reforms of the 2000 press law, including the decriminalization of press offenses.

Mali does not have a dedicated law guaranteeing public access to official information, and journalists have faced obstacles when attempting to obtain information about the military in particular.

The two bodies tasked with regulating the media—the High Communications Council and the Committee for Equal Access to the State Media—lack the funding and capacity to function effectively. The Maison de la Presse, an umbrella organization for press unions, provides journalists with work facilities, training centers, and support for the protection of their legal rights. The National Union of Journalist Reporters (SYJOR) complements the work of the Maison de la Presse with an emphasis on labor rights for media workers.

Political Environment

The media are pluralistic overall, but some private outlets display partisan bias in their reporting, and the state broadcaster—the Malian Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting (ORTM)—tends to carry progovernment programming. The media faced official pressure to self-censor when reporting on security issues during 2014, particularly after the government suffered a military reversal in Kidal in May.

Violence and intimidation directed at journalists was less severe in 2014 than in the previous two years, but many outlets remain wary of reporting critically on the security forces, and northern Mali continued to be a dangerous area for the press. Three ORTM journalists were

among a group of hostages detained by Tuareg rebels following the May clashes with the army in Kidal; they were released after three days of captivity. In September, armed men attacked a crew of ORTM journalists and stole their vehicle as they traveled to Diré to cover an official's visit to the region.

Ongoing insecurity and unrest in 2014 also hindered French and Malian investigations into the November 2013 kidnapping and murder of French journalists Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon, for which Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb claimed responsibility.

In the south, cases of detention and physical intimidation of journalists were rare. However, police officers assaulted and detained reporter Clarisse Njikam of the privately owned daily *L'Indépendant* in October as she covered a children's singing competition at a stadium in Bamako.

Economic Environment

Mali has long hosted a diverse media environment, with more than 300 radio stations operating across the country, as well as roughly 60 newspapers that publish on a semiregular basis. Print circulation, however, is limited; other than the state-owned *L'Essor*, few publications have circulations exceeding 1,000 copies. Foreign news services, including the British Broadcasting Corporation and Radio France Internationale, are broadcast on FM radio in Bamako and some other areas. The state broadcaster ORTM is the only domestic television station with national reach, and it is under the tight control of the executive branch; the president appoints its general manager based on the recommendation of the minister of communication.

Only 7 percent of Malians were able to access the internet in 2014. However, news websites are very popular with the educated elite and Malians living abroad. Users increasingly consume their content via internet-enabled mobile phones. Mobile phone usage in general is virtually ubiquitous, with an estimated 149 subscriptions for every 100 residents.

Insufficient funding and access to equipment and electricity continue to prevent many media outlets in Mali from operating at full capacity, particularly in the north. Regular blackouts in Timbuktu and Gao, for example, force many radio stations to limit broadcasts to evenings, when power is available. Poor working conditions, including low or nonexistent salaries, often lead journalists into unethical practices.

Malta

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 23 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	22,F	22,F	22,F	22,F	23,F

Legal Environment

Malta's constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and of the press, but it limits these rights under a variety of circumstances. Laws against "vilification" of or "giving offense" to the Roman Catholic faith, the country's official religion, have led to restrictions on expression. Maltese law criminalizes obscene speech, acts, and gestures with the aim of defending public morality. In June 2012, the criminal code and the Press Act were amended to include gender identity and sexual orientation, in addition to race and other categories, as prohibited grounds for hate speech. Journalistic protection of sources is safeguarded under Article 46 of the Press Act. In late 2013, Parliamentary Secretary Jose Herrera announced a legislative proposal to remove all censorship in the arts, but no changes had been enacted by the end of 2014.

Defamation is a criminal offense, and perceived victims have a legal right of reply. Civil libel cases are also common, with news outlets occasionally ordered to pay exorbitant damages. Malta continued to be plagued by libel suits in 2014, with three dozen criminal cases filed by lawmakers and other political figures. In July, the Justice Reform Commission made it a priority to change the procedural framework after it was revealed in Parliament that 185 libel cases were pending in the courts, with the oldest dating to 1997.

Many libel cases result in fines or jail terms. In June, a former editor for *It-Torca* was ordered to pay €5,000 (\$6,800) to former Transport Malta chief executive Stanley Portelli for an image and article, published in 2012, about possible corruption at the agency. In November, Felix Agius, editor of the Labour Party weekly *KullHadd*, was fined €250 (\$340) in a case brought by Richard Cachia Caruana, Malta's former permanent representative to the European Union (EU), who accused the paper of defaming him in a 2001 article.

In 2012, Malta's 2008 Freedom of Information Act went into full effect, allowing any long-term resident of the country to submit a request for public information. In March 2013, members of the information appeals tribunal resigned, causing a freeze in the already cumbersome appeals process. A new panel was appointed in January 2014. Media outlets continued to complain of ignored requests for information and an inefficient appeals process during the year.

The Broadcasting Authority regulates and monitors all radio and television broadcasts. Its members are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister, an arrangement that has been criticized for its potential to enable political influence.

Political Environment

Malta's active independent media sector is free to convey a variety of opinions, though the opposition Nationalist Party has repeatedly complained of inadequate coverage by the Public Broadcasting Services, which it says amounts to censorship.

Malta is a physically safe environment for journalists, and there were no reported cases of threats or harassment in 2014.

Economic Environment

There are at least five daily and two weekly newspapers publishing in Maltese and English. The major political parties, labor unions, private businesses, and the Catholic Church all have direct investments in broadcast and print media, and a number of these outlets openly express partisan views. The country also has access to international broadcasts and Italian television, which many Maltese watch. Traditional media outlets are available online, along with

other news websites and popular social media. About 73 percent of the population used the internet in 2014.

Marshall Islands

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30

Political Environment: 6 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 17 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	17,F	17,F	17,F	17,F	17,F

Mauritania

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 50 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	56,PF	53,PF	52,PF	47,PF	48,PF

Mauritania's progress on media freedoms over the past several years became imperilled in 2014 as a restrictive new cybercrime bill moved forward, and a blogger was sentenced to death in December on apostasy charges. President Mohammed Ould Abdel Aziz, who had passed a number of positive media reforms during his first term in office, won reelection in June 2014 in polls boycotted by most opposition parties.

Legal Environment

Article 10 of the 1991 constitution guarantees freedom of opinion, thought, and expression. Legal and regulatory reforms enacted in 2006 eliminated the requirement for prepublication government approval for newspapers, established journalists' legal right to protect sources, and created a media regulatory body, the High Authority for the Press and Audiovisual Sector (HAPA). In 2011, the parliament approved amendments to the 2006 Press Freedom Law that abolished prison sentences for slander and defamation, including for speech about heads of state.

In January 2014, Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mohamed Ould Mkhaitir, an engineer, was arrested over the publication of an allegedly blasphemous blog post in which he criticized the prophet Muhammad and critiqued local interpretations of Islam for allegedly providing religious

justification for Mauritania's rigid caste system. The piece sparked widespread social outrage, including street protests, condemnations by religious authorities, and death threats against Ould Mkhaitir. After a trial, he was convicted of apostasy and sentenced to death in December. Ould Mkhaitir could avoid execution through a pardon or an appeal.

After being dropped in the second half of 2013, government proposals for a cybercrime and digital information regulatory regime reemerged in 2014. In April, the cabinet ratified a draft bill that, among other provisions, would establish jail time and heavy fines for disseminating certain types of politically sensitive content over the internet. Journalists alleged that the legislation would permit authorities to prosecute them for almost anything published online. The legislation would also bring encryption technology under heavy state regulation, and nullify previous laws extending protections to journalists using digital technologies. At the end of November, the government invited civil society groups to comment on the bill; however, the bill had not been passed at year's end. Mauritania has no legislation guaranteeing access to information.

In addition to its regulatory role, the HAPA is responsible for nominating the heads of public media outlets and the Mauritanian News Agency. The HAPA's board members are appointed in consultation with media associations and journalist groups, a departure from the previous practice of presidential appointments. HAPA played an important role in the 2014 presidential election, establishing guidelines for and limits on campaign coverage and political advertising for state-run media outlets, and ensuring compliance with those regulations. Beginning in 2013, the Ministry of Communications liberalized certain broadcasting regulations and licensed a number of private media outlets, although some opposition members maintained that the allocation of permits favored progovernment political and tribal interests.

The Mauritanian Journalists' Union engages in regular, vocal advocacy for the rights of journalists, including for fair wages and protection from violence. In 2014, it established two new affiliate groups: one for photojournalists and another for young people. The National Union of Electronic Sites in Mauritania, a syndicate of websites and digital publishers, focuses on the rights of journalists operating through digital media. Although it has at times toed the government line on discouraging content that undermines values such as Islam or national unity, it also came out against the proposed cybercrime bill in April 2014.

Political Environment

Though the media express a variety of views, most journalists practice a degree of self-censorship in their coverage of sensitive issues such as the military, corruption, Islam, and slavery—which is still practiced in Mauritania. Media outlets generally do not stray far from official reports, including in their coverage of the 2013 parliamentary and municipal elections, which opposition parties boycotted on grounds of fraud. However, local media did report on the large street protests staged by the opposition in the run-up to the 2014 presidential poll, which rocked the capital in early June, and regularly reported on the opposition's disputes with the government.

Mauritanian journalists are subject to some harassment while covering sensitive issues or reporting on the country's political elite. In March 2014, six journalists were detained by security forces while covering a press conference by the extremist group Friends of the Prophet. Alleging the reporters were not authorized to cover the event, officers confiscated their equipment and deleted their recordings before releasing them a few hours later. In December, Abeh Ould

Mohammad Lafdal, the manager of the newspaper *Al-Layl*, was arrested following a verbal confrontation with President Abdel Aziz at the Tadamon news agency headquarters. He was held without charge for several days before being released, but was arrested again for unclear reasons hours later; an unidentified source said to be close to Lafdal, in remarks to the British news website *Al-Araby al-Jadeed*, alleged that the second arrest came on orders from a high-ranking official in the presidential palace. Lafdal’s legal status was unknown at year’s end. Foreign reporters are prevented from openly covering certain subjects, such as slavery, and therefore must operate clandestinely in such cases. Extralegal violence and intimidation toward journalists has decreased over the past several years, but news reports and advocacy groups indicate that journalists regularly face aggression from civil authorities and security forces in the course of their reporting.

Economic Environment

Mauritania has experienced an unprecedented opening of the media sector since 2011, although financial constraints and capacity issues mean that independent media remain underdeveloped in practice. The government owns two daily newspapers, the French-language *Horizons* and the Arabic-language *Chaab*, which circulate alongside numerous independent print outlets. The government’s 51-year monopoly on broadcast media formally ended in 2011 when the HAPA announced the creation of new independent television and radio operations. Domestic media has continued to diversify, with two independent television outlets now in operation. Mauritians have access to international satellite television; two internet-based television stations, Shinquti and Murabitun, also operate. There are a handful of public and private radio stations, while a number of international radio stations are rebroadcast locally. Radio Sawa, a U.S. government-funded, Arabic-language radio station, began operating in Mauritania in 2014.

The wages of public media workers remain a particular concern. While most state employees saw salary hikes of between 30 and 50 percent in 2014, the Mauritanian Journalists’ Union said media workers were excluded from the increase, and that their wages have stagnated for more than 10 years.

The government does not restrict internet access, but penetration was just 11 percent in 2014. However, mobile-telephone subscriptions are within the reach of the majority of Mauritania’s people. The impact of online media has grown in recent years, but existing legislation does not address emergent internet-based journalism.

Mauritius

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 30 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	27,F	28,F	29,F	30,F	30,F

Mexico

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 31 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 63 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	60,PF	62,NF	62,NF	61,NF	61,NF

Mexico remained one of the world's most dangerous places for media workers in 2014, and freedom of expression faced new threats with the adoption of the Federal Telecommunications and Broadcasting Act in July. Multiple attacks on journalists and media outlets were carried out during the year, reporters faced police aggression while covering protests, and self-censorship remained widespread. While the telecommunications and broadcasting law allowed greater competition in both sectors, it also granted the government powers to monitor and shut down internet activity during protests.

Legal Environment

Freedom of expression is established in Articles 6 and 7 of the constitution. Mexico decriminalized defamation at the federal level in 2007, and a number of states have eliminated their own criminal defamation statutes, including the state of Mexico—the country's most populous—in 2012. Nevertheless, criminal defamation laws remain on the books in 12 of the 32 states, and both criminal and civil codes continue to be used to intimidate journalists.

In July 2014, President Enrique Peña Nieto signed the Federal Telecommunications and Broadcasting Act, known as the "Ley Telecom." Although it facilitated greater competition among television stations and telecommunications providers, some of its provisions drew criticism for threatening freedom of expression. The law gives the government the authority to shut down telecommunications in order to prevent crime, and contains vague wording allowing for the "precautionary suspension of transmission of content." The law also authorizes the government to geo-locate and track mobile-phone use in real time, and requires internet companies to save information on users without judicial oversight. Such records could theoretically enable authorities to identify or monitor whistle-blowers, journalists' sources, and individuals engaging in political expression. Activists staged street protests and voiced opposition to the law online.

The competition components of the Ley Telecom, building on related constitutional amendments adopted in 2013, empowers a regulatory agency, the Federal Telecommunications Institute (IFT), to force concessions from telecommunications firms and television networks that are designated as dominant in their respective markets. For example, the dominant players would be obliged to grant smaller competitors access to their infrastructure and distribution systems. At year's end the IFT was considering bids for two new television broadcast licenses, whose recipients would compete with the existing duopoly of Televisa and TV Azteca.

However, opponents of the law raised concerns that competition in the telecom and broadcast sectors would still be limited to a handful of large commercial groups, while noncommercial radio stations in particular would be left in an even more precarious legal and financial position. The Mexico chapter of the World Association of Community Radio Operators (AMARC) criticized the law as a step backward on the grounds that it failed to set clear guidelines for the approval of license applications, threatened unauthorized radio stations with possible criminal sanctions and exorbitant fines, limited independent and commercial funding for community stations, and restricted noncommercial and indigenous stations to a small portion of the radio spectrum. The AMARC Mexico branch filed a legal challenge to the constitutionality of the law. Community radio stations tend to serve politically and economically marginalized communities and are regularly targeted for closure over illegal broadcasting, often due to pressure from larger outlets or to serve political and business interests that are threatened by their content.

A law passed at the same time as the Ley Telecom focused on the public broadcasting system. It would reorganize existing public media under a new federal entity with a citizen oversight council and a mission to promote objective and pluralistic content. Media watchdogs raised concerns that the entity's political independence was not adequately safeguarded by the law, and that public media would remain largely dependent on state funding after proposals to allow more advertising were rejected.

Mexico passed a Freedom of Information Law in 2002, and a 2007 amendment to Article 6 of the constitution stated that all levels of government would be required to make their information public. However, information can be temporarily withheld if it is in the public interest to do so, and accessing information is often a time-consuming and difficult process in practice.

A number of press freedom organizations and journalists' associations operate in Mexico, but they have faced increased intimidation in recent years. In March, the home of press freedom watchdog Article 19's Mexico director, Darío Ramírez, was ransacked and his work documents and computer were stolen. The incident occurred a few days before Article 19 released its annual report on media freedom in Mexico. Also that month, Reporters Without Borders correspondent Balbina Flores Martínez received threatening phone calls at her office.

Political Environment

Media outlets and their employees face pressure from a variety of actors looking to manipulate or obstruct news content, including owners with political or business agendas, major advertisers seeking positive or neutral coverage, and government officials. However, the most acute threat to independent reporting in Mexico is criminal violence. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 31 journalists and 4 media workers have been killed in connection with their work since 1992, and another 13 have gone missing since 2005, though other organizations have cited much larger figures. The quasi-governmental National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) registered the deaths of 88 journalists and media workers from 2000 through April 2014. The broader lawlessness in many parts of the country makes it difficult to determine whether slain journalists were targeted for their reporting.

CPJ confirmed two work-related murders of journalists in Mexico during 2014. In February, Gregorio Jiménez de la Cruz, a crime reporter for the newspapers *Notisur* and *Liberal del Sur*, was found dead several days after being abducted in the state of Veracruz; an organized

crime group was suspected of ordering the murder. Octavio Rojas Hernández, a crime reporter for the daily *El Buen Tono* who was based in San José Cosolapa, Oaxaca, was shot and killed in front of his home in August. The murder came shortly after the paper published a story linking the Cosalapa police chief to organized crime and gas theft.

Hundreds of nonfatal attacks on journalists and press outlets occur in Mexico every year, with many allegedly perpetrated by corrupt or abusive government officials. Journalists and media workers frequently faced assaults and brief detentions while covering the many large protests of 2014, which focused on grave human rights abuses and the Ley Telecom.

The offices of a number of media outlets across Mexico were attacked during the year. In August, gunmen opened fire on community radio journalist Indalecio Benítez and his family outside the radio station located within his home. His son was killed in the attack. In September, journalist Karla Janeth Guerrero Silva, who was critical of local public services, was brutally beaten by armed men who forced their way into a newspaper office in the state of Guanajuato. In October, gunmen burst into Radio Fiesta Mexicana in Sinaloa and murdered program host Atilano Román Tirado while he was on the air. He frequently criticized local officials and had received threats related to his activism on behalf of farmers whose lands were flooded by the construction of the Picachos dam.

The prevalence of threats, and impunity for perpetrators, have caused self-censorship to deepen and spread, including to areas that were not considered hotspots for drug-related violence, such as Zacatecas and municipalities surrounding Mexico City. Since 2010, at least three newspapers have published editorials indicating that they would avoid coverage likely to provoke further attacks or threats from organized crime. The Observatory of Public Communication Processes about Violence, a group of outlets jointly monitoring coverage of violence and drug trafficking, reported in 2013 that national coverage of those topics declined following Peña Nieto's inauguration in late 2012, as the federal government implemented strategies to reduce the prominence of violence in the news.

In the state of Tamaulipas, where a dozen journalists have reportedly been killed since 2000 and crime reporting in mainstream media is limited, citizens anonymously use social media to share information on local violence, criminal activity, and missing persons. In October 2014, one such citizen journalist, María del Rosario Fuentes Rubio, was allegedly murdered after being tracked down by a criminal gang. Photographs of what appeared to be her body were posted on her Twitter account as a warning.

Officials sometimes dismiss potential journalism-related motives for attacks and threats with questionable haste. For example, after the February abduction and murder of Gregorio Jiménez de la Cruz, state authorities in Veracruz arrested five people, one of whom was the journalist's neighbor, and initially claimed that the killing was related to a personal dispute. However, an investigative reporting team discovered work-related motives for the murder and identified important errors in state investigators' procedures and conclusions. Veracruz is a particularly dangerous place to practice journalism, and state authorities there have repeatedly invoked journalists' personal lives as motives for their deaths, despite evidence to the contrary. Article 19 recorded the murders of 15 journalists in Veracruz between 2000 and early 2014 with potential work-related motives, 10 of which had occurred since the current governor took office in late 2010.

State and local officials themselves have faced intimidation when investigating crimes against journalists. In May 2014, armed men kidnapped journalist and state government press spokesman Jorge Torres Palacios from his home in Acapulco, Guerrero. His decapitated body

was found four days later. Torres had written columns denouncing government corruption and organized crime in the state. The federal special prosecutor's office for organized crime took over the case in June after local investigators were threatened by crime figures.

While federal government investigators are better trained and more removed from local criminal pressures and government corruption, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes Against Freedom of Expression (FEADLE) has been hesitant to assert its jurisdiction over such crimes—as authorized under a 2012 constitutional reform—without state officials' approval. The office has closed several high-profile cases without resolution and neglected pending arrest warrants. The CNDH reported in April 2014 that 89 percent of crimes against journalists go unpunished in Mexico.

Human Rights Watch warned in late 2013 that another federal program, the Protection Mechanism for Journalists and Human Rights Defenders, was “seriously undermined by a lack of funds and political support at all levels of government.” Journalists and human rights defenders who sought risk assessment and protection measures reportedly faced long delays and inadequate safeguards, although some did benefit from the program. There is no confirmed count of Mexican journalists in exile, but tenuous security conditions have prompted several to leave the country.

In addition to violence, journalists occasionally face arbitrary detention by local authorities. In late February 2014, Alma Delia Olivares, a reporter for the community radio station La Cabina in Veracruz, was reportedly detained for five days on unclear charges before being released. The station was closed following her arrest.

Economic Environment

Numerous privately owned newspapers operate in Mexico, and diversity is fairly broad in the urban print media. However, the broadcasting sector is highly concentrated, especially in television, with two networks—Televisa and TV Azteca—controlling most of the market. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) maintained a close relationship with both networks during its decades in power prior to 2000, and accusations that Televisa was colluding with then PRI candidate Peña Nieto during the 2012 election campaign increased pressure for media-sector reform after the elections. The 2013 constitutional changes that created the IFT and the 2014 Ley Telecom were both products of this pressure.

In March 2014, the IFT designated Televisa, which controls about 70 percent of the free-to-air television market and is also the largest cable and satellite television operator, as the dominant player in its industry, meaning it would have to share infrastructure with competitors. The pending issuance of two new broadcast television licenses would help diversify the market beginning in 2015, though critics complained that true pluralism and diversity of opinion could still be limited if other large and well-established commercial media companies were the only enterprises to benefit from the reforms.

The IFT in March also designated billionaire Carlos Slim's América Móvil group as the dominant player in telecommunications, prompting similar steps to increase competition. América Móvil at the time controlled about the 80 percent of the fixed-line telecommunications market and 70 percent of the mobile market. High costs and lack of investment have limited access to telecommunications services to date. According to the International Telecommunication Union, only 44 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014, but 75 percent of households had a mobile telephone as of 2012.

State and local authorities or their allies sometimes interfere with the production and distribution of critical news publications. In September 2014, a federal judge in Quintana Roo ordered the administration of the state's governor, Roberto Borge Ángulo, to stop creating false cover images of the critical magazine *Luces del Siglo* and distributing them via social media. Other outlets in the state were also allegedly targeted with the tactic, and *Luces del Siglo* had previously encountered obstacles to print distribution, including the theft of editions and denial of sales space. False print editions had also been created.

In March, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers reported that government officials use discretionary authority over some 12 billion pesos (\$905 million) in federal and state advertising expenditures to shape editorial policies and advance partisan and personal agendas. The association's study found that many media outlets slanted their coverage to gain more favorable government ad contracts.

Micronesia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 11 / 30

Total Score: 21 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	21,F	21,F	21,F	21,F	21,F

Moldova

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 55 / 100

Note: The scores and narrative for Moldova do not reflect conditions in Transnistria.

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	65,NF	55,PF	54,PF	53,PF	53,PF

In 2014, press freedom in Moldova was influenced by the country's sharp political divisions. Moldova formally signed an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) in June and held national elections in November, and media outlets generally aligned themselves with specific political parties or interests in their coverage of both events. The Audiovisual Coordinating Council (CCA) took an increasingly active role in regulating the content of television broadcasts during the year, and the concentration and lack of transparency in media ownership remained key problems.

Legal Environment

The constitution and laws provide for freedoms of expression and the press, but these rights are often limited by other laws or violated in practice. A number of planned legislative improvements, including a long-awaited new broadcasting code, stalled in 2014.

Moldova decriminalized defamation in 2009, and the quantity and adjudication of civil defamation cases has reportedly improved somewhat. Nevertheless, various groups continue to file cases against media outlets in the courts, which have a reputation for being extremely corrupt. Implementation of defamation-related reforms under the 2010 Law on Freedom of Expression remained problematic in 2014, particularly in the filing of complaints, despite a Supreme Court document issued in 2012 to clarify how the changes should be applied. Local press freedom groups could not assess how many defamation cases were filed against the media in 2014, as many courts either refuse to provide the information or lack qualified personnel to respond to the requests. In July, a Chişinău court ruled in favor of Ruslan Popa—leader of the Reformist Communist Party of Moldova, a small rival of the opposition Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM)—who brought a case against Accent TV for airing allegedly defamatory information. Accent TV was ordered to pay 130,000 lei (\$9,000) in damages. Representatives of the channel as well as media experts noted a number of irregularities in the case, including the fact that Popa had not lodged the complaint within 30 days after the last broadcast of the information in question, as required by the 2010 law.

Compliance with the 2000 Access to Information Law also remains weak, as no state body has the authority to enforce or monitor implementation. Access to information remains most difficult outside the capital, especially in the autonomous region of Gagauzia. In October 2014, authorities nullified fees for accessing information on companies registered in Moldova, a move that watchdogs hailed as an important but small step toward broader accessibility.

The perceived lack of independence and politicized, opaque decision making of the CCA remained key problems in 2014 amid concerns that the government was attempting to use the council to punish critical stations. The CCA's 2012 closure of the pro-PCRM television station NIT for a lack of pluralism in opinion was upheld on appeal in 2013. The council offered a similar justification for its decision in July 2014 to suspend the Russian state-owned channel Rossiya 24 for six months, following content monitoring requested by Liberal Reformist Party lawmaker Ana Guţu. The CCA also issued fines and warnings to a number of Moldovan outlets that retransmit Russian channels during 2014.

In September, the Supreme Court upheld the CCA's 2013 enactment of a widely contested quota obliging broadcasters to fill at least 30 percent of their airtime with locally produced programming, and half of their primetime hours with locally produced programming in the Romanian language.

Political Environment

Media outlets are regularly used to advance the business or political interests of their owners rather than objectively reporting the news. In the months preceding the November 2014 parliamentary elections, the political leanings of major television stations was apparent in their coverage of candidates and issues. Monitoring conducted by the CCA and a group of domestic

media organizations showed that most private channels aligned with particular parties or interests, giving the corresponding candidates more airtime and more positive portrayals.

Four national channels—Canal 2, Canal 3, Prime TV, and Publika—showed a marked bias in favor of the pro-EU, center-left Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) throughout the campaign period, giving the party the lion's share of airtime and consistently portraying it positively. The channels are owned by the General Media Group, which is believed to be controlled by businessman and PDM power broker Vlad Plahotniuc. The channels Euro TV, N4, and TV7 were aligned with the pro-EU, center-right Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, while Accent TV seemed to favor the pro-Russian Patria Party. Coverage by the public station Moldova 1 was relatively balanced, though at times more positive toward the pro-EU governing parties. Although regulations require broadcasters to submit a plan for electoral coverage, including a declaration of the identity of their owners, to the CCA in advance of elections, a number of broadcasters failed to include ownership information; Canal 2, Canal 3, Prime TV, and Publika were among them.

In early 2014, when the parliament returned to a building that had been renovated after suffering damage in 2009 riots, authorities prohibited the presence of journalists in the plenary hall, restricting them instead to a separate press room. Journalists accredited to the parliament and domestic media organizations, particularly the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), pressed the government throughout the year to revoke this policy, criticizing it as a violation of access and pointing out the insufficient size and facilities of the press room.

Media pluralism and the volume of locally produced programming have expanded in recent years. Television remains the most popular source of information for Moldovans, followed by the internet and radio. There are approximately 64 television channels—including five with national coverage, four of which are privately owned—57 radio stations, and 400 print publications in operation. In January 2014, in what was seen as a politically motivated move, a number of cable operators excluded three broadcasters—the opposition-affiliated Accent TV, the critical Jurnal TV, and RTR Moldova, which retransmits Russian state media—from their basic packages, raising concerns among domestic and international media monitoring organizations about the impact on media pluralism and diversity. The operators reintroduced the channels after widespread objections from the public and international observers, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Although intimidation of and physical attacks against journalists are relatively rare in Moldova, a few incidents were reported in 2014. In June, journalist and human rights activist Oleg Brega was assaulted by two masked men in Chişinău; Brega said he believed the attack was tied to his professional and civic activity. In September, the staff of the investigative newspaper *Ziarul de Gardă* received threats after publishing information about the assets and personal life of the leader of the Moldovan Orthodox Church.

Economic Environment

There is a mix of private and public ownership across all types of media in Moldova. Five of the six most popular television stations, as well as two of the top three radio stations, are privately owned. Seven of Moldova's eight major press agencies are likewise in private hands. Ownership transparency is lacking, and the government does not effectively regulate concentration of ownership. A bill drafted by the IJC that would amend the Broadcasting Code to

require stations to publish information about their owners was passed in its first reading in July 2014, but it made no further progress in the parliament during the year.

Private media remain highly dependent on financial subsidies and advertising revenue from affiliated businesses and political groups, rather than market-driven advertising and circulation revenue. Economic pressures continued to force media outlets to cut costs and shift from print to online operations in 2014.

An underdeveloped telecommunications infrastructure, coupled with high fees for internet connections, has hampered internet usage, though access is generally not restricted by the authorities. Approximately 47 percent of the population had access to the internet as of 2014. News portals and social media are popular, including social-networking platforms like Facebook and the Russian site Odnoklassniki.

Monaco

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 3 / 30

Political Environment: 6 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 15 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	16,F	16,F	16,F	16,F	15,F

Mongolia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 13 / 30

Political Environment: 12 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 37 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	39,PF	39,PF	37,PF	37,PF	37,PF

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and of the press are protected under Mongolian law, but the government has an uneven record on respecting these rights in practice.

Defamation is a criminal offense punishable by fines of between 51 and 150 times the monthly national minimum wage (roughly \$6,000 to \$17,000), or by jail terms of between three and six months. The burden of proof in defamation cases rests with the defendant. Public figures and private organizations frequently file defamation cases against journalists.

In 2014, Minister for Roads and Transport A. Gansukh brought criminal libel complaints against two of his detractors. In August, Ts. Bat, an engineer and blogger whose sister is the minister of culture, was found guilty of defaming Gansukh in a series of Twitter posts, marking Mongolia's first defamation conviction involving a social-media user. Bat was sentenced to 100 days in prison but was released on appeal in September, with the court ruling that further investigation into his allegations against Gansukh was necessary. Gansukh filed a criminal libel case against a second Twitter user, railroad researcher L. Davaapil, over an October post in which Davaapil accused Gansukh of corruption. In December, a first instance court found Davaapil guilty and ordered him to pay a fine of 9.7 million tögrög (\$5,200).

In another case involving social media, journalist S. Ankhbayar was charged with defamation in December in connection with Facebook posts in which he accused a local official of allowing the illegal allocation of land permits, and of misusing public funds. The case remained open at year's end.

The 2011 Law on Information Transparency and Right to Information contains restrictions on what information is considered public. Authorities often invoke these exceptions, as well as the State Secrets Law, in order to limit disclosures. Information released under the 2011 law is frequently presented in a confusing format.

Mongolia's media sector is overseen by the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC). The government appoints the commission's members without input from the public, and its tender processes are nontransparent. The authorities routinely monitor broadcast and print media for compliance with restrictions on violent, pornographic, and alcohol-related content.

Political Environment

The media landscape is diverse but politicized. Most print and broadcast outlets are affiliated with political parties and display political bias. Both public and private media frequently experience political pressure.

While the law bans censorship, the CRC in 2013 introduced regulations requiring internet service providers to install software that can filter and delete user comments containing slander or threats, which are to be identified using a list of "prohibited words" published by the CRC. In June 2014, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe criticized the CRC for blocking the news website Amjilt.com. Hours before the block was imposed, the regulator had informally asked the outlet, via a phone call, to remove a story that was critical of Mongolia's prime minister.

Self-censorship is encouraged by the risk of legal liability, and journalists often retract critical stories before defamation cases go to trial.

Media workers risk intimidation, harassment, and physical attacks for critical reporting. In June 2014, members of a news team with the television station TV8, who were working on a story about unauthorized nightclubs, were attacked by one club's security guards; the guards also destroyed a video camera. The same news crew was temporarily detained by the owner of another nightclub, who destroyed a second video camera. In August, the News.mn website experienced a cyberattack after it published a story on Mongolia's Independent Authority against Corruption. The outlet reported the incident to the General Intelligence Agency, which after two days said it was unable to determine the attack's origin.

Economic Environment

Mongolia's media sector features hundreds of newspapers and approximately two dozen television stations, most of which are local. Residents of the country's vast rural areas generally rely on national public radio for information. Most media outlets are reportedly owned directly or indirectly by political actors, who exert influence on editorial decisions. Exact ownership structures are not publicly known, however, making it difficult to assess the reliability of some media content.

In addition to local broadcasters, Mongolians have access to English-language programming from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America on private FM stations, and, in Ulaanbaatar, foreign television programming via cable and satellite. About 27 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014.

Low wages for journalists have created a secondary market for purchasing coverage, and the media sector has yet to produce strong business models to facilitate sustainable growth or independence. Although the growing advertising market in Ulaanbaatar provides an increasingly viable avenue for financial sustainability, the meager market in the provinces often leaves local media outlets dependent on government subsidies and the direct support of political or business figures.

Montenegro

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 10 / 30

Political Environment: 18 / 40

Economic Environment: 11 / 30

Total Score: 39 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	37,PF	37,PF	35,PF	36,PF	39,PF

Negative official rhetoric and serious physical attacks against reporters continued in 2014. The government took some steps to investigate cases of violence against journalists, but convictions in such cases remain rare.

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution, and Montenegro decriminalized defamation in 2011. However, a backlog of civil defamation cases has been reported. In recent years, the independent dailies *Vijesti* and *Dan* and the weekly *Monitor* have been fined hundreds of thousands of euros in damages for insulting Prime Minister Milo Đukanović and his family. In November 2014, a parliamentary committee passed a measure that would ban media outlets that violate hate speech laws. Observers have noted that court proceedings are slow, investigations inadequate, and judges unprepared for media-related cases.

The right to access information is guaranteed in the constitution, and journalists can request public information via a 2005 freedom of information law. However, the government does not always adhere to this law, particularly when journalists request information that could

reveal corruption. The country's media regulators are not financially independent and have inadequate monitoring capacity. A code of ethics for journalists was adopted in 2003, but Montenegrin journalists have struggled to establish a common self-regulatory body since then.

Political Environment

Government officials often show blatant favoritism toward particular media outlets, and independent journalists face pressure from business leaders and the government. Reporting by both private and state-owned media outlets frequently lacks objectivity. Journalists who investigate government corruption often face allegations from officials that they seek to harm the state of Montenegro.

Journalists face threats, attacks, and vandalism of their property, with new incidents reported each year, leading to increased self-censorship. Among the most severe such incidents in 2014 was a January attack on *Dan* reporter Lidija Nikčević, who was beaten with a baseball bat. In December, five men convicted in connection with the attack received jail sentences ranging from 11 to 15 months. However, many other cases of attacks against journalists remain open, and convictions remain the exception. The government in February 2014 reopened the 2004 murder case of *Dan* publisher and editor Dusko Jovanović, and in July two suspects were brought to justice for a December 2013 explosion in front of *Vijesti's* offices. The government has also established a commission to oversee investigations of violent acts against media representatives. It remains to be seen whether more convictions will follow.

The European Union in its October 2014 progress report on Montenegro expressed concern that some older, unsolved cases of violence against journalists may soon exceed the statute of limitations. The report urged the government to refrain from voicing statements about the media that "may be understood as intimidation." For example, in March Đukanović said he would "deal with all kinds of mafia, including the media mafia."

Economic Environment

The media environment is diverse for a small country, with about 24 television stations, 54 radio stations, 5 daily print outlets, 3 weeklies, and 30 monthlies. Access to the internet is not restricted, and approximately 60 percent of the population had access in 2014. The public broadcaster faces financial difficulties and generally relies on the government as its primary source of information. In December, the government took over the broadcaster's debt, worth €2.4 million (\$3.2 million).

Many media outlets lack professionalism and produce tabloid-style journalism. Media content is significantly influenced by the business and political interests of owners, and the media landscape is heavily polarized along political lines. While technically transparent, media ownership structures are widely believed to mask the true power forces involved. The government and government-run organizations and businesses do not advertise in outlets that criticize Đukanović's administration.

The global financial crisis exacerbated the financial problems of Montenegro's media environment, which has yet to recover. Some 500 journalists have been laid off since 2011, according to the country's media union. Journalists are not highly paid, and combined with poor training and political and business influence, this often leads to biased coverage. In November 2014, the chronically indebted progovernment daily *Pobjeda* was taken over by Media Nea,

which is owned by Greek businessman Petros Stathis. The development brings the government in line with a 2002 law that required it to sell its shares in the paper. Media Nea indicated that it would merge *Pobjeda* with another Montenegrin newspaper it owns, *Dnevne Novine*; lay off roughly half of *Pobjeda*'s staff; and establish a fresh editorial board for the new outlet. Despite robust government advertising contracts, the paper had been declared bankrupt in July.

Morocco

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 66 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	66,NF	68,NF	68,NF	66,NF	66,NF

The Moroccan government's promised campaign to expand press freedom languished in 2014, as draft legislation fell short of recommendations from media freedom groups and failed to progress through the legislature. Unofficial but clear restrictions remained in place, discouraging coverage of politically and socially sensitive subjects, while restrictive laws continued to be used to clamp down on journalists and news sources.

Legal Environment

Morocco's 2011 constitution guarantees freedom of the press, but its vague language enables great latitude for interpretation and hinders enforcement of media protections. The press law prohibits criticism of the monarchy and Islam and effectively bars independent coverage of certain taboo subjects, including the royal family and the status of Western Sahara. Defamation is a criminal offense punishable by up to one year in prison and/or fines of up to approximately \$12,000. In the most recent high-profile defamation case, Youseff Jajili, editor in chief of the weekly *Alaan*, was arrested in January 2013 and charged with criminal defamation for an article in which he reported that a government minister had used public money to order alcohol while on a taxpayer-funded trip, a charge embarrassing to the official given the Islamic prohibition on consumption of alcohol. Jajili was fined 50,000 dirhams (\$6,000) and given a two-month suspended sentence in June 2013.

Journalists are often imprisoned on trumped-up criminal charges, as opposed to explicitly press-related offenses. In June 2014, Moroccan authorities arrested journalist Mahmoud Lhaisan following his televised report on police abuse during protests after a World Cup game. Lhaisan is a reporter for Rasd TV, which is connected with the Sahrawi separatist group Polisario Front. He was charged with illegal protest, obstructing traffic, and attacking police officers. Critics suggested that his arrest was politically motivated.

Ali Anouzla, editor of the Arabic edition of the news website *Lakome*, was arrested in September 2013 for posting an article that included a link to a YouTube video in which an extremist group criticized Morocco's King Mohamed VI and called for Moroccan youth to wage

jihad; he was freed on bail in October. After a number of delays in the case, in May 2014 Anouzla received a one-month suspended sentence and a fine of 5,000 dirhams (\$600). Anouzla's supporters argued that the charges were a pretext to target the editor, whose coverage has been critical of the king in the past and who had earlier in the year broken a politically damaging story about the king accidentally pardoning a child molester.

Blogger and journalist Mustafa al-Hasnawi, a known advocate for the rights of incarcerated members of the Islamic movement, was arrested in May 2013; in July, he was sentenced to a four-year jail term on terrorism charges, although the sentence was reduced on appeal to three years in October. The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) condemned his incarceration, asserting that he had been punished for defending human rights and criticizing the government. He remained in prison throughout 2014.

In October, the Ministry of Communication announced three bills—on press and publishing, the status of professional journalists, and the National Press Council—belatedly launching a reform process promised after the 2011 constitutional referendum. Although the bills mark progress toward strengthening press freedom and access to information in Morocco, many of their provisions fall short of international standards. Press freedom organizations urged the government to consult with media and civil society in order to introduce provisions explicitly guaranteeing access to online information, to eliminate severe penalties for defaming public figures and institutions, and to omit penalties for publishing articles that question Morocco's territorial integrity, among other reforms. These bills had not been adopted by the parliament by the end of 2014.

On July 31, the cabinet adopted a draft law on access to information. The draft was criticized by watchdog groups such as Transparency International and Article 19 for containing language that would restrict, rather than expand, the public's access to information. In addition, a clause that would have mandated the creation of a national commission responsible for information access, included in an earlier version, was deleted. The bill had not passed at year's end.

The government appoints the president and four of eight board members of the High Authority for Audio-Visual Communication, which issues broadcast licenses and monitors content to ensure compliance with licensing requirements. The prime minister appoints two additional board members, and the presidents of the two chambers of Parliament each appoint one of the remaining members. Publications must also obtain accreditation in order to operate, and can be suspended or censored if their content is deemed a threat to public order.

Political Environment

King Mohamed VI and his government continued to wield considerable control over the editorial content of domestic broadcast media in 2014. The government holds the authority to appoint the heads of all public radio and television stations.

Authorities have sporadically blocked certain websites and online tools, including news sites, Google Earth, and blogging platforms. The state also occasionally cracks down on those who produce critical online content on issues such as the monarchy, religion, or official corruption. Sites that have been blocked at times in recent years included Instagram, Pinterest, and the news site *Lakome*, as well as the voice over IP applications Skype and Viber.

Self-censorship is widespread, and journalists tend to stay within unofficial red lines to avoid heavy fines, prison sentences, or extralegal intimidation and physical violence in

retribution for their stories. Some journalists continue to push the boundaries of permissible coverage and report on sensitive subjects such as the military, national security, religion, and sexuality, but most have moved outside Morocco to escape government harassment and surveillance.

Foreign publications are widely available in Morocco, but the foreign media are not immune from government repression. Authorities rescinded accreditation for all journalists working in Morocco for Qatar's Al-Jazeera satellite television network in 2010, effectively suspending the network's reporting from the country. The bureau remained closed until April 2013, when it reopened following negotiations with the government. Foreign publications are also occasionally banned or censored. The Spanish daily *El País* was banned twice in 2012, first for publishing a cartoon of the king and later for coverage of a book that was critical of the monarch. No additional foreign publications were banned in 2014.

Physical attacks on journalists are less common than legal actions, though harassment and intimidation do occur. In August 2012, Ali Lmrabet, who runs the online news portal *Demainonline*, was beaten and robbed by unidentified men who he claimed were plainclothes policemen who had previously harassed him. In 2005, Lmrabet was banned from practicing print journalism in Morocco for 10 years for his reporting on the Sahrawi people, and has been subjected to repeated harassment by the government. In 2013, Agence France-Presse journalist Omar Brouksy was targeted by the police for publishing an article that implied that the king was not politically neutral. Although cases of physical aggression were not widespread in 2014, a national guardsman reportedly attacked two TV journalists in June.

According to the constitution, the press in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara is free, but this is not the case in practice. There is little in the way of independent Sahrawi media. Moroccan authorities are sensitive to any reporting that is not in line with the state's official position on the territory's status, and they continue to expel, detain, or harass Sahrawi, Moroccan, and foreign reporters who write critically on the issue. Alternative viewpoints and resources such as online media or independent broadcasts from abroad are not easily accessible to the population.

Economic Environment

There are nearly 20 daily and more than 80 weekly publications in circulation in Morocco, and it is estimated that more than 70 percent of these are privately owned. Broadcast media are still dominated by the state, and FM radio stations are largely prohibited from airing programs of a political nature. However, residents can access critical reports through pan-Arab and other satellite television channels. The regime uses advertising and subsidies, as well as aggressive financial harassment, to repress critical media coverage and intimidate the independent press.

Although the internet is used as a platform for journalism and the dissemination of news, the government exerts control over online media through the press law as well as censoring content. The high rate of illiteracy in parts of the country limits its reach as a news source; however, internet use, particularly social media use, continues to grow at a fast rate. Approximately 57 percent of the population regularly accessed the internet in 2015.

Mozambique

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 44 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	42,PF	44,PF	43,PF	42,PF	45,PF

Press freedom improved in 2014 due to the passage of a freedom of information law in late November.

Legal Environment

Mozambique's constitution guarantees freedom of the press, explicitly protecting journalists and granting them the right to not reveal their sources. However, the 1991 Press Law contains some limitations on these rights, particularly on national security grounds. Defamation of the president or other high-ranking officials is illegal, and general criminal libel and defamation laws deter journalists from writing freely. Libel and defamation cases, which are common, can lead to fines, prison terms of up to two years, and suspension of the media outlet in question. In May 2014, the Maputo attorney general's office summoned academic and researcher Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco for questioning under the law on Crimes Against State Security, in connection with a December 2013 Facebook post in which he had criticized then President Armando Guebuza. No criminal charges had been filed against him at the year's end. However, in May, the state buildings agency evicted the Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos (IESE), which is headed by Castel-Branco, from its offices, with the IESE given only 15 days' notice to vacate the premises. The move was interpreted by many as political retaliation for Castel-Branco's criticism.

Journalists face difficulties accessing public information and official documents, though after years of discussion and advocacy, the parliament in late November 2014 passed a freedom of information law that had been outlined by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2005, and was later championed by UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. The bill applies to "public bodies and private bodies invested with public powers, by law or by contract," and provides for free access to information by any party, with a few restrictions for individual privacy and for bank and trade secrets. Separately, the National Elections Commission took efforts to ensure that journalists could observe vote-counting for October's national elections.

The current regulatory framework for media, administered by the Government Information Bureau, is in need of updating and remains vulnerable to political influence. In particular, there is an urgent need for a legal framework regulating broadcast media. Mozambique's press law almost exclusively addresses print outlets, creating a troubling legal vacuum. According to MISA, radio stations are subject to overly bureaucratic procedures to obtain operating licenses. Bloggers and community radio or newspaper journalists, who often work on a voluntary or part-time basis, may not be equally protected under Mozambican press laws, though this has yet to be tested in a court case. The High Media Council, a government-

affiliated regulatory and disciplinary body, primarily concerns itself with guaranteeing prominent figures access to the right of reply.

Political Environment

The government's information office holds regular meetings at which administration officials direct and coordinate coverage at state-controlled media outlets. Censorship by government authorities has been reported at community radio stations. In March 2014, civil society members accused the government of launching a disinformation campaign aimed at undermining a planned demonstration in favor of penal code reform; they claimed that the government had issued statements on social media, through e-mail, and over the radio claiming falsely that the demonstration had been cancelled. Self-censorship by journalists is pervasive, especially in rural areas outside the capital. Independent media often release potentially sensitive stories at the same time, in an effort to counter self-censorship and deter reprisals from the government.

Some reporters undertake significant investigative projects, but journalists say that such endeavors are rare due to high workloads, a lack of resources, and inadequate training. In November 2014, the U.S.-based nongovernmental organization (NGO) IREX and the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism (ABRAJI) began a partnership to offer training and support to Mozambican journalists, to strengthen investigative reporting in the country.

Political interference into media content occurs occasionally, though this decreased in 2014 compared to previous years. In one notable case, the editor of the local newspaper *Malacha* in January 2014 was threatened by a district administrator for publishing reports on the local presence of guerillas associated with the opposition Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO)—information that called into question the government's strength and capacity. In April, the district governor in Manica closed down the community radio station CMC Catandica; the station's manager, John Chekwa, in 2013 had faced and was ultimately cleared of charges related to critical coverage of a powerful agricultural company. Chekwa was told that the station's building was closed so authorities could conduct renovations. However, the building had already undergone renovations recently; moreover, broadcasting was not interrupted during past construction, suggesting political motives for the closure. The station appeared to resume operations later in 2014, in spite of the eviction.

Despite national elections and an escalation in the armed conflict between RENAMO and the government, there was a decrease in attacks, harassment, and intimidation of journalists in 2014. No journalists were killed in Mozambique in 2014, though the year was marked by the early release from prison of Momad Assife Abdul 'Nini' Satar in September, one of the men convicted of the 2001 assassination of investigative journalist Carlos Cardoso, who was known for his exposés of high-level public corruption. Satar was released from prison after serving 13 years of a 24-year sentence, despite the objections of the public prosecutor's office. Separately, in October, the news outlet *@Verdade* suffered a distributed denial of service (DDoS) cyberattack on the day of the national elections, which brought down its website as polls closed.

Economic Environment

Although progress has been made in the development of a strong and free press in Mozambique, the media landscape is still dominated by state-controlled outlets. Independent

media are often underfunded and are generally found only in major cities, with the government employing pressure to restrict advertising in independent outlets. The state-run television station, Televisão de Moçambique (TVM), is still the only domestic television channel with nationwide reach, and has the largest audience. The state provides the bulk of the TVM's operating budget, and its programming is often biased in favor of the government, offering little opportunity for the political opposition to weigh in. The private channel Soico TV, Portuguese state television's African service (RTP Africa), and Brazilian-owned TV Miramar also have large audiences.

Radio continues to be a key source of information for the majority of Mozambicans. Compared with television, there is far more opportunity for private radio stations to open and operate. Numerous private FM stations are based in rural areas and broadcast to small audiences. Many of the numerous community stations currently operating were started by and receive their funding from the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) or other international aid organizations, but they face serious problems of management and sustainability, as they rely on volunteers, and have faced pressure and threats from local governments and private actors. The European Union (EU) offered additional financial support for community radio coverage of the elections. Despite the prevalence of privately owned radio stations, state-run Rádio Moçambique has the largest audience and is by far the most influential media outlet in the country, offering programming in at least 18 languages. Rádio Moçambique receives about half of its operating budget from the government. While the station is known for presenting critical political debates and policy issues on its broadcasts, it most frequently invites guests who are sympathetic to the government.

Newspapers and print media have a far smaller audience than radio and television, mainly because the print media are published only in Portuguese, which is spoken by about 11 percent of the population. The high cost of newspapers relative to average incomes, as well as poor distribution networks and a 41 percent illiteracy rate, also contribute to low readership. The government has a majority stake in *Notícias*, the most-read daily newspaper in the country, which rarely prints stories critical of the ruling party. *O País* is the leader of the four private newspapers. *@Verdade*, which offers a mixed platform of print, online, and mobile publishing, continues to grow rapidly. Import taxes on newsprint remains steep, leading to high production costs for newspapers.

The largest source of advertising revenue for local media comes from government ministries and businesses under state control, and some journalists have accused the government and ruling party of allocating advertising according to political concerns, and of favoring friendly outlets.

Internet access is unrestricted, but penetration is low, and there have been reports of government intelligence agents monitoring the e-mail of members of opposition political parties. About 6 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014, and most usage is confined to major cities. New media and mobile phones are proving useful in increasing access to information and accountability, as media organizations both collect and disseminate information through SMS and social media platforms. Blogging is also increasingly popular.

Myanmar

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23 / 30

Political Environment: 27 / 40
Economic Environment: 23 / 30
Total Score: 73 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	95,NF	94,NF	85,NF	72,NF	70,NF

After several years of reforms and improvements, conditions for the media in Myanmar grew worse overall during 2014. Two controversial media laws were passed, and others made their way through the parliament, even as a number of harsh laws dating to the era of military rule remained on the books. While the media sector continued to be vibrant, independent outlets struggled for financial sustainability, and journalists faced increased pressure in the form of criminal prosecutions, travel restrictions, and physical violence.

Legal Environment

The 2008 constitution provides for freedoms of expression and of the press, while at the same time setting out broad and ambiguous conditions under which these rights may be curtailed. Moreover, media freedoms are not respected by the courts, which lack the independence to try cases impartially.

A number of existing laws include provisions that can be used to restrict journalistic activity. For example, the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act bans content that would “affect the morality or conduct of the public or a group of people in a way that would undermine the security of the Union or the restoration of law and order.” A new Telecommunications Law enacted in 2013 allows the government to intercept any information that threatens national security or the rule of law. It also left in place the 2004 Electronics Transactions Law, which prohibits the electronic transfer of information liable to undermine national security, including communications about cultural or economic affairs, and has been used to criminalize internet activism. The criminal code, the 1923 Official Secrets Act, and other laws have also been applied in ways that restrict media freedoms.

Journalists faced an increase in arrests and criminal prosecutions during 2014. In February, authorities arrested four journalists and the chief executive of the journal *Unity Weekly* under the Official Secrets Act for a report alleging that chemical weapons were being manufactured at a facility in the Magway region. Officials seized copies of the journal across the country. All five defendants were sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment with hard labor in July, but the sentence was reduced to seven years on appeal in October.

In April, Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) journalist Zaw Pe was sentenced to one year in prison by a court in Magwe after being found guilty of trespassing and disturbing a civil servant on duty while he was reporting on a Japanese scholarship fund in August 2012. He was released in July after his sentence was reduced to three months. Also in April, Yae Khe, a *Mizzima News* correspondent in the town of Prome, was arrested under Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Law for organizing an unauthorized rally to call for greater press freedom and the release of detained journalists.

In July, the *Bi Mon Te Nay* news journal was suspended in response to a report claiming that opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and a group of ethnic minority leaders had been appointed by the people to form an interim government. The journal’s offices were searched and

computers and documents seized. In October, three journalists and two owners of *Bi Mon Te Nay* were sentenced to two years in prison under the Emergency Provisions Act for undermining state security and causing public alarm.

Two new media-related laws were ratified by the parliament and signed into law by the president in March 2014. One, known as the Media Law, was drafted by the interim Myanmar Press Council (MPC) and contains strong protections for press freedom, including the increased use of mediation to settle disputes. However, in November the Ministry of Information used the new legislation to file suit against 11 staff members of the *Myanmar Thandawsint (Myanmar Herald)* for publishing critical commentary about President Thein Sein, which it said violated the law's code of conduct. Such a breach would carry a fine of 300,000 to 1 million kyat (\$300 to \$1,000). The second law enacted in 2014, the Printers and Publishers Registration Law, was drafted by the Ministry of Information. Although it removed the legal threat of imprisonment for journalists posed by its 1962 predecessor, it gave the government the right to withhold media licenses and ban reporting that is harmful to "national security, rule of law or community peace and tranquility," or that "insults religion" or violates the constitution.

Separately in March, the Public Service Media Bill was submitted to the lower house of parliament. If passed, it would ostensibly transform the state media, including state-run daily newspapers, into public-service outlets. Critics raised concerns that it would create a publicly funded media conglomerate that acts as a progovernment voice, especially in the run-up to the 2015 elections. The bill had not yet passed at year's end.

In October, a government-introduced broadcasting bill passed with little debate in the upper house of parliament. The measure would authorize the formation of a council to regulate and oversee television and radio broadcasting, with the power to fine outlets and revoke licenses from those seen to have violated the law. Opponents argued that the proposed council's composition would leave it open to political manipulation. The bill had yet to be considered in the lower house at the end of the year.

There is no freedom of information law in Burma, and access to government officials and the military is inconsistent. However, journalist organizations are active in pressing for more openness by the authorities, and their efforts are supported by foreign embassies and international media development organizations.

Political Environment

Media outlets are able to cover political news with relative freedom, addressing topics that were once considered off-limits and scrutinizing the activities of the government and legislature. However, Burmese-language state media continue to avoid topics that could lead to criticism of the government or military, and interethnic tension remains a sensitive subject, especially with respect to Buddhists and Muslims. In July 2014, President Thein Sein accused members of the local and international media of instigating communal violence in the city of Mandalay. Journalists rejected these claims and suggested that government officials needed to better distinguish between journalists and those posting on social media, where hate speech has been a serious problem.

Independent media organizations that formerly operated in exile continued to assimilate into the country's media landscape during 2014. Outlets affiliated with ethnic minority groups appeared to face fewer obstacles in their attempts to register or obtain licenses than in previous

years, while minority journalists asserted themselves at press conferences and demanded official representation in the MPC.

Some measures were taken in 2014 to improve communication between the media and state officials, particularly the military. In March, army chief Min Aung Hlaing held his first-ever press conference, though representatives of independent outlets were not permitted to attend and the commander only took questions from state media. The MPC met with President Thein Sein in July and again in August to discuss growing threats to media freedoms in the country. In July the MPC met with then information minister Aung Kyi, and in early October the group held a closed-door meeting with representatives from the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches, resulting in an agreement for all government ministries to hold monthly press conferences. The MPC also asked ministries to release press statements regularly and the courts to allow journalists to cover trials. In December, Information Minister Ye Htut said journalists from independent media outlets would soon be able join a press corps with access to the presidential palace, public events involving the president and other cabinet members, and facilities previously reserved only for state-owned media. The same month, however, independent media were not granted access to cover the visit of Norway's King Harald V to Mandalay.

Although prepublication censorship was eliminated in 2012, media outlets can be suspended and journalists punished for the content of their reporting, and many editors exercise self-censorship to avoid such repercussions. A number of incidents that amounted to censorship or attempted censorship were reported during 2014. In January, the Ministry of Information's Copyrights and Registration Department pressured the independent magazine and website *Irrawaddy* to change its name to *Ayeyarwaddy*, the official spelling of the eponymous river; official spellings imposed by the former military regime carry political connotations for many Burmese. The outlet refused to change its name, though in December it agreed to use the requested spelling in its license renewal application.

In February, the *Right Time*, a weekly newspaper, published a fabricated image of the president in a dancer's outfit, leading to months of harassment by the authorities, including police interrogations and criticism from government officials on social media. The weekly's editor and several other journalists resigned, reportedly fearing for their safety, causing the owner to close the publication in July. In a case involving pressure from nonstate actors, the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival in Yangon canceled the screening of a documentary on anti-Muslim violence in June, after critics used social media to denounce the film as overly sympathetic to the plight of Muslims.

Journalists with foreign and Burmese exile media outlets faced greater obstacles to reporting in the country during 2014. Early in the year, the Ministry of Information began reducing the length of visas for visiting reporters from three months to one month, though those assigned to bureaus in the country would still have access to renewable six-month visas. In May, an Australian reporter for the DVB, Angus Watson, was deported for covering a protest rally in response to the cases against Zaw Pe and the staff of *Unity Weekly*. Authorities accused Watson of participating in the rally and thereby violating the terms of his visa.

Cases of physical violence or harassment directed against members of the press also appeared to be on the rise. In early October, journalist Aung Kyaw Naing, known as Par Gyi, was killed in army custody after he reported on clashes between ethnic Karen rebels and the Myanmar military in Mon State. The army claimed he was shot while trying to escape, but evidence including descriptions of his exhumed body indicated that he had been badly tortured.

Attacks on journalists were reported during communal unrest that broke out in Mandalay in July, with angry protesters threatening several journalists and attempting to forcibly remove memory cards from their cameras. The *Irrawaddy* was targeted with a series of threats and cyberattacks in September and October over its coverage of Buddhist extremists.

Some instances of harassment involved arbitrary investigations by security forces. Beginning in June, the Ministry of Home Affairs' Special Branch police division visited several private newspapers, ostensibly to look into their financial records. In July, Special Branch officers went to the office of the *Myanmar Thandawsint* and temporarily detained three of the news journal's editors without explanation. Media representatives argued that the probes were a form of intimidation.

Economic Environment

Although private ownership in the media sector has expanded in recent years, it remains highly concentrated, and state-affiliated outlets continue to hold a dominant position. Moreover, a number of the private dailies that opened in 2013 closed for financial reasons during 2014, including the English-language *Myanma Freedom Daily* and the Burmese-language dailies *Naing Ganthis* and *Yangon Times*. The largest print outlets are state run. High levels of poverty and illiteracy, along with poor infrastructure and distribution networks, mean that print media are accessible mainly in urban areas. Most Burmese look to broadcast outlets as their main source for news, but the sector remains under government control. Six public television stations are available, with five controlled by the Ministry of Information and one by the armed forces. The eight domestic FM radio channels are controlled by the government or its allies.

However, radio programs transmitted from abroad by Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, and DVB are accessible and remain very popular. Because of high monthly subscription fees to access satellite television, most Burmese viewers install the receivers illegally. Authorities no longer restrict the importation of foreign news periodicals.

Internet connections are slow and expensive, and in 2014 only about 2 percent of the population accessed the medium, one of the lowest rates in the world. For those with internet access, a range of e-mail, blog, and social-media platforms—including Gmail, Facebook, and YouTube—have grown in popularity.

Long dominated by the state-owned monopoly of Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), the telecommunications sector has in recent years been undergoing major reforms to liberalize the market. International companies were allowed to enter the market for the first time in June 2013, when operating licenses were granted to Norway's Telenor and Qatar's Ooredoo. The two firms began offering mobile services in 2014, and Telenor activated the country's first independent link to the international internet. The new investment and competition was expected to drive down costs and improve service, increasing residents' access to independent news and information. Currently, the cost of mobile data remains high and Wi-Fi signals are notoriously unreliable, limiting smartphone use even for those who can afford the devices.

Namibia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30
Political Environment: 14 / 40
Economic Environment: 10 / 30
Total Score: 33 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	34,PF	34,PF	32,PF	31,PF	31,PF

Legal Environment

Namibia's constitution guarantees freedom of the press, and the media enjoy a relatively open environment. However, constitutional protections for national security, public order, and public morality provide legal grounds for restricting media freedom.

Defamation can be prosecuted as a criminal or civil offense. In January 2014, Minister of Works and Transport Erkki Nghimtina won a defamation case against the *Informanté* newspaper, and was awarded N\$60,000 (US\$5,500) in damages. The judge criticized the newspaper for not having made reasonable efforts to verify claims from an anonymous source that Nghimtina had used his position to illegally redirect electricity to his mother-in-law's home. However, the judge awarded significantly less than the N\$500,000 (US\$46,000) Nghimtina had claimed. A separate defamation case was settled in February when the weekly *Confidenté* agreed to print a front-page apology to former president Sam Nujoma, who had sued *Confidenté* editor Max Hamata as well as the paper's owner and one of its reporters, over a story claiming that Nujoma abused his authority to graze his cattle on state-owned land. It had soon emerged that the claim was incorrect, prompting an initial apology in the paper, but Nujoma still moved forward with a defamation case. As part of the settlement, *Confidenté* also agreed to donate an undisclosed sum of money to charitable projects selected by Nujoma.

There is no law to ensure access to information, and the 1982 Protection of Information Act limits what can be disclosed by government officials. The government in 2014 was reportedly developing a public information policy that could eventually lead to a draft access bill.

Self-regulation of the media sector has developed slowly. The Editors' Forum of Namibia was created in 2007 and abides by an internal code of ethics. A media ombudsman, established by the forum in 2009 to hear complaints against media practitioners, acts independently of the government as an element of the Namibian media's self-regulatory framework.

Political Environment

Some journalists and editors, especially at state-run media, practice a degree of self-censorship. Because there are no restrictions on internet content, many publications and organizations voice criticism of the government online. However, the 2009 Communication Act includes a section that allows for the interception of e-mail, text messages, internet banking transactions, and telephone calls, and provides few oversight mechanisms to prevent abuse.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), a local research group, found that the state-run Namibian Broadcasting Corporation's pre-election coverage of the ruling South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and opposition parties was more equitable in 2014 than it had been in 2009. However, as in 2009, it still dedicated most of its coverage to SWAPO.

Namibian journalists risk harassment and physical attacks. In the days before the 2014 election, opposition party officials unhappy with the balance of coverage at NBC threatened and verbally attacked NBC journalists. Earlier, in August, a senior SWAPO party official entered an NBC radio studio and assaulted a journalist he accused of promoting an opposition party; according to the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the journalist declined to press charges because she feared for her safety. Several other physical attacks against journalists were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Namibia is home to five daily national newspapers, including the state-owned *New Era*, as well as five independent weeklies, one biweekly, and about a dozen monthly magazines. There are more than 20 private and community radio stations and three television stations. Private broadcasters and independent newspapers usually operate without official interference. The majority of print publications are either controlled by the state or owned by businesspeople closely connected to SWAPO. The state-owned NBC is the dominant player in the broadcast sector and has come under increasing political pressure in recent years. The director general of NBC, Albertus Aochamub, is a close ally of newly elected president Hage Geingob and is reportedly in line to be one of Geingob's eight appointees to parliament. The appointees are expected to be announced in early 2015.

Community radio remains underdeveloped, while the high cost of television licenses limit the expansion of that medium. NBC's dominance and reach hinders the further expansion of community broadcasting. Printing and distribution costs for print publications also remain relatively high. The newspaper *Confidante* has increased its circulation by reaching a deal with a courier service that distributes the newspaper in exchange for advertising. Approximately 15 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014.

Nauru

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 13 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 32 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	28,F	28,F	28,F	28,F	31,F

Nepal

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 55 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	59,PF	59,PF	55,PF	58,PF	55,PF

Legal Environment

The 2007 interim constitution includes language protecting freedom of the press, opinion, and expression. However, it has long been criticized for failing to meet international standards, and the government has struggled to uphold media freedom in practice. According to the constitution, freedom of expression can be restricted in cases of defamation and incitement, as well as in the interest of promoting sovereignty, public decency, morality, and harmonious relations between different communities. A constituent assembly elected in 2013 pledged to present a new draft constitution by November 2014, but failed to produce one by the year's end. A previous draft constitution, which was scrapped because an earlier constituent assembly had failed to approve it by a May 2012 deadline, had contained restrictions on free speech.

Criminal defamation charges are rarely employed against journalists, but other legal obstacles can stand in their way. On at least two instances in 2014, police made arrests in connection with comments that had been posted on Facebook, prompting concern among media groups about a possible government crackdown on free expression on the internet. In June, Mohamad Abdul Rahman, a businessman, was arrested for allegedly violating the 2008 Electronic Transaction Act after he had posted to Facebook a comment about improving security in Saptari. The incident came weeks after government employee Raju Prasad Sah was arrested over a comment he posted to the Facebook page of the national daily *Naya Patrika*, in which he stated that a minister who had apparently committed a traffic violation should be shot. Both men were later released.

National media outlets and international advocacy groups expressed concern over a Contempt of Court bill introduced to the parliament in June 2014, which prohibits influencing a subjudicial matter, insulting a court's judgment, recording court activities without permission from a judge, or insulting a staff member or judge of the court. Convictions would carry a fine of as much as Rs 10,000 (\$125) and up to a year in jail. The bill had yet to be approved at the year's end.

The 2007 Right to Information Act, though generally welcomed by press freedom groups, has been criticized for its requirement that applicants furnish reasons for their requests. The government often fails to respect the information law.

There is no independent regulatory body to oversee the broadcasting sector. Under the current arrangement, the government is the only licensing and regulatory agency for the media—a point of contention for independent and community broadcasters.

Political Environment

Journalists sometimes encounter interference while performing their jobs. In January 2014, officials at Nepal's constituent assembly chamber prevented journalists from entering the premises while a swearing-in ceremony was taking place. The media are not generally subjected to direct censorship from the government. However, in another January 2014 incident, Nepal's state-owned media monitoring body, Press Council Nepal, ordered Himalaya Television to

discontinue a news broadcast about a medical college. Additionally, the Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTA) has ordered internet service providers to block pornographic content and any material that “incites racial and religious hatred and is against the national interest.”

Journalists risk threats and harassment in connection with their work. In January 2014, the office of *Tikapur*, a daily newspaper in Dhangadhi, was set on fire; its editor claimed that the arsonists were angry about an article the paper had published about a road accident. Later in January, Santosh Pokhrel, the editor of *Bardibas* daily, and Gita Chimoriya, a reporter from Radio Darpan, received death threats in connection with their reporting about a road accident. K.P. Dhungana of the *Nagarik* daily received numerous death threats in connection with a February story about the mistreatment of elderly women and lack of transparency at a protection center in Kathmandu. In April, Suren Shakya, a technician from Khandbari FM, a radio station in a remote area of eastern Nepal, was threatened over a story about people being lured abroad for employment. In July, Ramesh Rawal of the local daily *Hamro Karnali Khabar* and of the *Karobar* daily, fled the remote area he had been working in due to continued pressure from various officials following his reporting on government corruption.

Attacks against journalists continue to occur. In October 2014, journalist Kali Bahadur Malla was seriously injured in an attack by hotel owners, in connection with his reporting on the sale and distribution of liquor. Also in October, Rejina Rodan of the local weekly *Janaandolan* was seriously injured by three assailants who attacked her while her press card was displayed, though it was unclear if the attack was directly related to her work as a journalist.

There were no journalists murdered in Nepal in 2014 according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and Nepali authorities took some action to combat the culture of impunity. In December, all five of the suspects in the 2004 murder of Dekendra Thapa, a journalist, received prison sentences. However, the longest sentence was just two years. Four other suspects remain at large.

Economic Environment

Nepal’s media sector has developed considerably in the past two decades, with 340 newspapers, 515 radio stations, and 58 television channels in operation in 2013, according to UN figures. The media generally offer a broad spectrum of political views and appear to have diverse owners, though there is no reliable information on media ownership in the country. The government owns several of the major dailies as well as the influential Radio Nepal and the Nepal Television Corporation. Political parties have also come to own an increasing share of newspapers in recent years. It is not unusual for the selection of editors at national newspapers to be governed by political deals and bargaining.

Radio remains among the most popular news sources because there are few barriers to market entry. Nepal has about 250 community radio stations, which operate in 74 of the country’s 75 districts. These stations serve as a means of protecting local cultures and languages from the dominance of Nepali-language media. However, while license fees have been adjusted in recent years to support diversity, community radio stations still have difficulty competing with commercial stations for resources. Despite the large number of outlets, mainstream Nepali media often either ignore or are heavily biased against the interests of Dalits, Madhesis, indigenous peoples, and Muslims, who collectively form about 70 percent of the population. About 15 percent of the population had internet access in 2014.

Many media workers do not receive professional training, are informally employed, and are paid well below prescribed minimum wages. Since the government is a major source of advertising, journalists are often forced to self-censor in order to avoid conflict with the ruling party.

Netherlands

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30

Political Environment: 5 / 40

Economic Environment: 4 / 30

Total Score: 11 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	14,F	14,F	12,F	11,F	10,F

Legal Environment

The media in the Netherlands remained open, accessible, and diverse in 2014, operating in one of the freest environments in the world. Freedom of expression is safeguarded under Article 7 of the constitution, although there are some provisions banning hate speech and discrimination. Nevertheless, freedom of speech usually carries more weight in court decisions. In one of the most prominent cases in 2014, prosecutors started an investigation after Dutch blog *GeenStijl* photoshopped the head of the mayor of The Hague onto a beheading victim of the extremist group Islamic State (IS). However, prosecutors later decided not to pursue the case.

The Netherlands' blasphemy law was repealed in 2013; however, libel and insulting the monarchy or police remain criminal offenses, subject to fines or jail terms. Satire that involves members of the royal family is usually permitted. However, between 2000 and 2012 there were reportedly at least 19 registered court cases and 9 convictions for insulting the monarchy.

In September 2014, two bills were introduced in parliament that sought to amend current laws and bolster the ability of journalists to protect their sources. The proposed amendments came in the wake of several rulings by the European Court of Human Rights in recent years finding the Netherlands in violation of European Convention on Human Rights regarding source protection. Under the proposed amendments, judges may still ask journalists to reveal their sources in serious criminal cases. The amendments had not passed as of the end of 2014.

Article 110 of the constitution stipulates that the government must observe the principle of transparency and requires government agencies to publish information. Under the 1991 Government Information (Public Access) Act, any person is allowed to demand information pertaining to an administrative matter. If the information is located in documents belonging to a public body or a private company conducting work for a public entity, the authorities must respond within a period of two weeks.

An independent body established by the government, the Commissariat for the Media, assesses developments in the Dutch media landscape on a yearly basis, focusing on independence, pluralism, and accessibility. The body has the authority to impose fines, revoke media licenses, and limit broadcast time.

Political Environment

Government interference in media content is rare, and the government does not restrict internet access or censor online content; however, it does monitor the medium for illegal materials, such as child pornography. In 2012, Stichting BREIN, a Dutch antipiracy organization, won a court case against the file-sharing website Pirate Bay. Subsequently, a district court in The Hague ordered internet service providers (ISPs) to block the site, and it remained blocked for most of 2013. Several ISPs appealed the decision and in January 2014, the court ruled that these providers no longer had to block the site. In April, the European Court of Justice ruled that the downloading of copyrighted materials from illegal sources for personal use is prohibited, and that the Dutch government was obligated to follow this decision.

In August 2014, the government presented to parliament “An Integrated Approach to Jihadism,” which included monitoring for the online distribution of jihadist material that “encourages violence, radicalization or hatred,” and taking criminal action against an alleged offender if the material is not voluntarily removed. Authorities would also make agreements with ISPs about the blocking of such content, and would take legal action against sites that continue to spread jihadist content even after being notified. A team from the National Police would be assigned to monitor the distribution of such material online and work with the Public Prosecution Service if they find any content that might be illegal.

The intelligence agencies have been accused of “untargeted” data gathering from users of suspected extremist web forums, and thus overstepping legal boundaries; however, the government claimed that existing law allows this practice.

Journalists in the Netherlands practice a degree of self-censorship, particularly on sensitive issues such as immigration and religion. There are indications that this has increased since the 2004 murder of the controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim extremist. Physical attacks and intimidation directed against journalists are rare. During an anti-IS demonstration in The Hague in August, counter-protesters attacked several journalists and damaged a camera.

Economic Environment

Newspaper ownership is highly concentrated in the Netherlands, with three companies owning more than 80 percent of paid newspapers. In 2010, the government abolished a law that prohibited ownership of more than 35 percent of the print sector; one company can now own up to 50 percent. In April 2013, the government announced plans to cut the budget for the public broadcaster, Nederlandse Publieke Omroep (NPO), and merge the 21 public broadcasting channels into 8 by 2016 under a modernization bill. Other consequences include cutting funding for cultural programs in 2017 and religious broadcasters in 2016. A wide variety of private domestic and foreign channels are available to viewers in the Netherlands and a number of diverse opinions are expressed in the media.

The internet was used by 93 percent of the population in 2014. In 2011, the parliament adopted the first “net neutrality” law in Europe and the second in the world after Chile, barring telecommunications companies from obstructing or charging users extra for certain data-intensive online services, such as Skype.

New Zealand

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 19 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	14,F	15,F	17,F	16,F	18,F

New Zealand's media are generally regarded as free and independent. However, state pressure on the confidentiality of sources took center stage in 2014.

Legal Environment

Press freedom in New Zealand is guaranteed by convention and statute rather than constitutional right, and it is supplemented by freedom of information legislation passed in 1982. Seditious legislation was abolished in 2007. Defamation cases are civil matters, and can result in both punitive damages and heavy fines.

During the campaign period for New Zealand's general election in September 2014, investigative journalist Nicky Hager released a controversial book entitled *Dirty Politics*. Based on confidential sources, the book revealed how Prime Minister John Key's government was leaking select information to right-wing blogger Cameron Slater. The book led to the resignation of Justice Minister Judith Collins. In October, police raided Hager's home and confiscated computers, flash drives, and other devices in an attempt to identify one of his sources. Hager declared that he would rather go to jail than reveal his sources, and the journalists' union accused the government of harassment. Hager had also been collaborating with Glenn Greenwald of Britain's *Guardian* newspaper to prepare articles on classified documents leaked by former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden. However, police said that the officers who raided the house did not know about Hager's work on the leaked U.S. documents, and that the raid was solely in relation to *Dirty Politics*.

Political Environment

New Zealand's news media are generally free of political pressure and include a variety of independent outlets. However, in 2014 there were reports of alleged government interference at state-funded Māori Television, and the publicly owned Television New Zealand (TVNZ) announced plans to outsource production of long-standing Māori and Pacific programs, raising concerns that the outlet's growing commercialization could harm content diversity and the availability of programming for indigenous audiences.

Journalists are generally able to cover the news freely, and physical attacks or threats against the media are rare. There were no reports of physical harassment or assaults against journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

New Zealand has three state-owned broadcasting corporations: TVNZ, Radio New Zealand, and Māori Television. However, the vast majority of print and broadcast media outlets are privately owned.

Australian-owned companies control a substantial portion of the print sector; Fairfax Media Limited, for example, boasts almost 48 percent of daily newspaper circulation. The country's largest and most influential daily newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*, and a string of smaller provincial and suburban newspapers are owned by another Australian firm, New Zealand Media and Entertainment (NZME), a rebranded version of the former APN News & Media. TVNZ has promoted increasing collaboration with the subscription network Sky TV and its free-to-air channel, Prime TV. Another rival, the MediaWorks group, owns the television channels TV3 and Four, as well as 18 radio brands.

There are no government restrictions on the internet, which was accessed by nearly 86 percent of the population in 2014.

Nicaragua

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 52 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	47,PF	47,PF	49,PF	51,PF	52,PF

In 2014, President Daniel Ortega and his Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) maintained restrictive media policies that have been in place since the party took power in 2007, including preferential treatment for the progovernment press and denial of official advertising to independent and opposition outlets.

Legal Environment

While the constitution provides for freedom of the press, in practice the government places constraints on the media's ability to inform the public. Defamation and libel remain criminalized, with violations punishable by substantial fines. While the number of legal cases against the press has decreased, the drop has largely stemmed from self-censorship among journalists who fear economic and physical reprisals for critical reporting. Judges are often aligned with political parties; although there were no reported cases of judicial intimidation in 2014, the pattern of judicial partisanship showed no signs of change.

A 2007 law established the right to access public information and modernized government websites, but information on government activities remains difficult to obtain with the exception of a few public entities, like the Central Bank, that abide by the law. The Ortega administration is highly secretive. The politically powerful first lady, Rosario Murillo, presides

over an unofficial council that acts as a clearinghouse for government information and routinely denies journalists' requests. Journalists who are loyal to the ruling party receive favorable treatment, including exclusive access to government events and press briefings, at which officials typically take no questions. In addition, the administration exploits a law—intended to facilitate the delivery of emergency messages—that allows the government to interrupt regular programming and broadcast official statements. The continued consolidation of power by the Ortega administration has enhanced the ability of the government to withhold information. In early 2014, for example, the government remained silent during a 10-day disappearance of Ortega that led to speculation that he had died.

Political Environment

In 2014, journalists and media organizations continued to report threats, harassment, intimidation, and physical violence, carried out by both government and private actors. In February, Leonel Laguna, a journalist at the progovernment Radio La Primerísima and president of the Association of Nicaraguan Journalists (CPN), was fired from the radio station after making remarks critical of the Ortega government in his capacity as CPN president. In July, a Canal 12 cameraman, Xavier Castro, was assaulted with a bat while covering protests outside the Supreme Electoral Council building. A similar incident was reported a week earlier by Edgardo Trejos, a reporter for Canal 2 television. Trejos was trying to interview a government official when the official's driver drove his car into him. Both Castro and Trejos said authorities made no significant efforts to investigate the incidents. A culture of impunity for such attacks prompted dozens of journalists to stage a demonstration before Nicaragua's police headquarters in July 2014, at which they demanded better police protection for reporters. A spokesman for the national police, following the demonstration, said he was not aware of any events that might have prompted the journalists' concerns.

Economic Environment

There are more than 100 radio stations, which serve as the population's main source of news, and which are mostly privately owned. Print media offer diverse political opinions, with several daily papers presenting both progovernment and critical perspectives. Newspaper ownership was traditionally concentrated in the hands of various factions of the politically influential Chamorro family, though the family's influence has declined somewhat in recent years. Television is dominated by two ownership groups that are generally aligned with the ruling FSLN. One group is controlled by the Mexican media mogul Ángel González, and the other by the president's family; together they hold more than 75 percent of the television market. The Communications Research Center of Nicaragua reported in 2013 that channels controlled by Ortega's family were increasingly used to disseminate government propaganda. The ruling party owns Radio Ya, Radio Sandino, Radio La Primerísima, and Radio Nicaragua, while the president of the FSLN controls news websites such as *El 19 Digital* and *Nicaragua Triunfa*.

Newspaper owners and press freedom organizations continue to decry enforcement of the so-called Arce Law, which imposes high tariffs on imported printing materials such as ink and paper. The administration influences media content by steering its substantial official publicity budget toward the Ortega family's holdings or other compliant outlets.

There are no government restrictions on the internet, although civil society groups have complained of unlawful government monitoring of e-mail. The internet was accessed by nearly 18 percent of the population in 2014. Although the penetration rate remains relatively low, the internet has had a significant impact on the media landscape. The number of users of social-networking sites has increased in recent years, and some Nicaraguans are now using the internet as their primary source of news. In a positive development, the *Nicaragua Dispatch*, a crowdsourced news website, came back online in March 2014, serving as a source of news outside the controlled information provided by the Ortega administration.

Niger

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 51 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	68,NF	59,PF	49,PF	50,PF	52,PF

Although Article 23 of the Nigerien constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of thought, opinion, and expression, these were inconsistently implemented in 2014. Despite a spate of arrests early in the year, journalists faced fewer attacks while covering the news.

Legal Environment

In 2010, the postcoup transitional government decriminalized media offenses and replaced prison sentences with fines as punishments for defamation and publication of false information. In 2011, President Mahamadou Issoufou became the first head of state to sign the Declaration of Table Mountain, an initiative calling for the repeal of criminal defamation and insult laws and for a press environment in Africa that is free from government, political, and economic control. However, journalists are occasionally subject to legal action. Nine journalists were detained on various charges in January and February 2014. Soumana Idrissa Maiga, editor of *l'Enquêteur*, was arrested in January for “threatening national security” via his column, which alleged that “the ruling party’s days in power were numbered.” Later that month, *Radio Television Bonferey* host Abdoulaye Mamane, television host Zakari Adamou, and *L’Union* editor Ousmane Dan Badji were arrested separately after each allegedly accused Issoufou of corruption. All four were released by the end of the month, though Dan Badji was tried in April and fined for defamation of the president. Justice Minister Marou Amadou justified the detentions under Niger’s penal code and stated the government would not tolerate “calls to insurrection, hatred, or a coup.” Other charges against journalists included conspiracy and failing to report a possible coup to authorities; some received fines or suspended sentences.

In 2011, the transitional government approved the Charter on Access to Public Information and Administrative Documents, which aimed to improve transparency and public

access to information. Implementation of the law remains inadequate, and in practice access is somewhat difficult.

While the state-run media regulatory body, the High Council on Communication, issues warnings to media with antigovernment content, it does the same to progovernment media that fail to provide coverage of regime critics.

Political Environment

On November 30, 2014, the government announced the first official National Day of Press Freedom. Issoufou declared the Nigerien government would robustly support a free press and cited the establishment of the press day as proof of this commitment.

Official censorship generally does not take place in either the traditional or online media, though the High Commission for New Technology and Communication ordered the blocking of terrorist group websites in 2014. Self-censorship stems from the authorities' use of intimidation or advertising incentives to shape content. Government critics receive little coverage in public media.

Despite the detentions early in the year, private media coverage throughout 2014 criticized the government and discussed official scandals. For example, *Le Monde D'Aujourd'hui* ran stories accusing the Issoufou government of lies and corruption. Media also covered revelations that Niger's minister of agriculture and speaker of the parliament were among a group of individuals suspected of involvement in an international infant trafficking ring. The minister and speaker claimed the charges were politically motivated, while the prosecutor argued they were substantiated. Media outlets presented both sides of the case, which was ongoing at year's end. No physical attacks or threats against members of the media were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Several dozen private newspapers compete with a state-run daily. Radio remains the most popular and widely accessible news source. The state continues to dominate the broadcasting landscape, though a number of private radio stations and dozens of community radio stations broadcast in French and local languages. Some stations air programming from foreign services, including Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, BBC, and Radio France Internationale. On television, three private stations operate alongside two state-run stations.

A heavy tax on private media hinders development of the private media sector, and public media receive the bulk of advertising from state-owned companies. In 2013, all eligible private media received support funds from the Fund for the Aid of the Press, with the stated aim of encouraging the public service and democracy promotion functions of the press. At the end of 2014, President Issoufou announced a 25 percent increase for the fund. Considerable economic uncertainty has contributed to corruption within the media sector, leading to unethical behavior by journalists that can affect the quality and accuracy of reporting.

Online speech is generally free, but internet access remained very sparse, reaching less than 2 percent of the population in 2014.

Nigeria

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 53 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	54,PF	52,PF	50,PF	51,PF	51,PF

The government stepped up its interference with Nigeria's vibrant and active media sector in 2014 as reporters examined the military's performance against the Boko Haram militant group and political corruption scandals ahead of the 2015 national elections. Security forces seized and destroyed the pressruns of several newspapers in a coordinated operation in June, and local cases of harassment, obstruction, and intimidation of the media were reported in a number of states.

Legal Environment

The 1999 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press, and in recent years, federal courts have attempted to expand legal protections for journalists and provide fair rulings on cases involving the media. For example, a high court ruled in 2012 that police had violated the fundamental human rights of Desmond Utomwen, a correspondent for *The News* magazine and the daily *PM News*, when they assaulted and detained him as he attempted to cover a peaceful protest outside a private bank in Abuja in 2009. The court awarded Utomwen 100 million naira (\$636,000), the largest legal settlement in any Nigerian case involving a journalist.

Sharia (Islamic law) courts, which operate in 12 northern states, demonstrate antagonism toward free expression, and Sharia statutes impose severe penalties for alleged press offenses. Other criminal and civil laws applicable to the entire country also punish various press and speech offenses, including sedition, criminal defamation, and publication of false news. Several journalists have been charged with criminal defamation in recent years, though in most cases the charges were eventually withdrawn.

One of the more serious cases involved *Leadership* newspaper editor Tony Amokeodo and political correspondent Chibuzor Ukuibe, who were charged in 2013 over the publication of a memo allegedly written by President Goodluck Jonathan on plans to increase fuel prices and disrupt the merger of opposition political parties. The two journalists and the paper's parent company faced 11 criminal counts, including forgery, conspiracy to commit a felony, and incitement of public disaffection against the president. If convicted, the journalists could be sentenced to life in prison. The case was pending at the end of 2014. Another 2013 case that was still unresolved in 2014 centered on Tukur Mamu, publisher of the Kaduna-based *Desert Herald*, who was charged with disseminating defamatory stories about the administration of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and its minister, Bala Mohammed. Mamu had long been a target of harassment and was preparing to publish a book about corruption within the FCT administration at the time of his arrest.

In April 2014, security officials arrested Onimisi Isiaka Yusuf for posting photos of a jailbreak in Abuja to his Twitter account. He was held for at least 12 days before being released.

In May, police in Nasarawa State arrested Hir Joseph of the *Daily Trust* and charged him with “injurious falsehood” under the penal code for an article on the “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign, which urged the authorities to recover a group of girls abducted by Boko Haram. The charges were withdrawn in June.

A 2011 antiterrorism law was amended in 2013 to increase penalties for terrorism-related offenses, but critics said certain provisions were so broadly worded that they could be interpreted to include some legitimate journalistic practices. Section 5(2)(c), for example, prohibits “receipt or provision of information or moral assistance, including invitation to adhere to a terrorist or terrorist group.”

The 2011 Freedom of Information Act guarantees citizens’ right to public information and has put pressure on government agencies to release records in response to petitions by media and activist groups. Some state governors have balked at complying with the law, arguing that the federal legislation is not applicable to the states.

Public agencies responsible for media licensing and regulation are run by government appointees whose decisions are not independent, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the agency responsible for processing applications for broadcast licenses and upholding the broadcast code, has come under particular scrutiny for processes and decisions that critics view as opaque and politically biased. In 2014, the government backed away from long-standing plans to merge the NBC with the Nigerian Communications Commission, which is responsible for telecommunications regulation.

The Nigerian Press Council (NPC) was created by a military government in 1992 to regulate a wide range of media policies, including registration and journalistic practice. A 1999 amendment to the decree introduced provisions that prescribed fines and possible jail sentences for noncompliant journalists. With the return to civilian rule in 1999, local media advocacy groups and newspaper owners challenged the constitutionality of the repressive decree, and in 2010 a federal high court duly nullified key sections of the Nigerian Press Council Act as unconstitutional, stripping the NPC of most of its powers.

Political Environment

Nigeria has one of the most vibrant and varied media landscapes in Africa, and the print sector in particular is generally outspoken in its criticism of unpopular government policies. However, the media sometimes face politicized interference from public officials and regulators over their criticism of the government or coverage of sensitive issues, such as high-level corruption and national security. In May 2014, the NBC issued a directive requiring all broadcasters to submit written notice 48 hours before live transmissions of any political program. The commission claimed that the directive was meant to preserve national unity ahead of the 2015 elections by stemming “inciting, provocative, and highly divisive comments.” In June, the NBC suspended the broadcast of a popular radio show on Splash FM after a promotional clip referred to a federal lawmaker as a criminal.

Critical news websites also face occasional interference and restrictions on access. In January 2014, the website of the *Premium Times*, an online newspaper based in Abuja, suffered a denial-of-service attack. Users attempting to access the site received a “website blocked” message, and two days later the site crashed for nine hours. In 2013, the *Premium Times* presence on Facebook had been disrupted after users allegedly reported it for “abusive” links.

The news outlet's editors suspected that government authorities had instigated the complaints in retaliation for its critical reporting on corruption and security issues.

No journalists were killed in connection with their work in 2014, according to CPJ. However, Nigeria remains a dangerous place to practice journalism. In January, Callistus Ewelike, a journalist with the News Agency of Nigeria and President Jonathan's personal media photographer, was injured in a shooting in front of his home in Abuja. In May, armed men attacked a broadcast crew in Ekiti State, destroying equipment and vehicles. The crew was reporting on political developments ahead of a June state election. Nigeria ranked 12th on CPJ's annual Global Impunity Index, which assesses countries based on the number of unsolved journalist murders per capita over the preceding decade.

Nigerian authorities regularly harass, intimidate, and attack journalists in the field. In January, security officials attacked a journalist covering a high-profile church appointment for *Leadership*. For several days in June, soldiers impounded newspaper delivery vehicles, searched employees, blocked printing and distribution centers, and seized copies of at least 10 newspapers. A military spokesman described the measures as a "routine security action" to search for alleged contraband, but they were widely interpreted as reprisals for coverage of the military's faltering efforts against Boko Haram. In August, soldiers stormed the headquarters of the *Daily Trust* and detained two of the newspaper's managers in response to a story on troops demanding better weapons. The military ordered that the story be retracted and the army be contacted regarding any article involving national security.

As a result of these threats, as well as a reluctance to displease media owners and sponsors, some journalists practice self-censorship and refrain from covering sensitive political, social, ethnic, or religious issues.

Economic Environment

There are more than 100 national and local news publications, the most influential of which are privately owned. However, a number of state and local governments own print and broadcast media, as do individuals directly involved in politics. There are 15 major privately owned daily newspapers, one government-owned daily with national reach, and a number of other state-owned dailies that tend to be poorly produced and require large advertising subsidies. Private newspaper distribution was seriously disrupted by the military's June 2014 crackdown on delivery vehicles and printing sites, which was coordinated across multiple states and regions.

While radio remains the main source of information for Nigerians, television penetration has grown substantially in recent years with the proliferation of satellite dishes—even in rural areas. Private television stations must ensure that 60 percent of their programming is produced locally, while private radio outlets must ensure that 80 percent of content is produced locally. Licensing fees and taxes for broadcast media remain high, and many outlets experience financial difficulties, limiting their viability. The only two nationwide broadcast networks are state-owned: the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). However, in 2010 the NBC awarded the first private radio and television network license to Silverbird Communications, which had outbid two other private competitors for the licenses. A 2004 NBC ban on the live rebroadcast of foreign programs, including news, on domestic stations remains in force. However, international broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America remain key sources of news in the country.

The internet has become an important news medium for Nigerians in recent years, as traditional outlets are increasingly burdened by high operating costs or subject to editorial interference. Nigeria has a high internet penetration rate and the greatest number of internet users in Africa. About 43 percent of the population accessed the medium in 2014. Social-media platforms in particular have proven influential as an alternative source of information and opinion.

Bribery and corruption remain problems in the media industry, particularly in the form of “brown envelopes,” or small cash gifts that sources give journalists. A 2009 survey of 184 media professionals in Lagos found that 61 percent of them habitually received brown envelopes while on reporting assignments. However, 74 percent of the respondents disagreed that the gifts led to biased coverage, perhaps because the practice is so common.

North Korea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 38 / 40

Economic Environment: 29 / 30

Total Score: 97 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	99,NF	97,NF	97,NF	96,NF	97,NF

North Korea remained one of the most repressive media environments in the world in 2014, as its leader, Kim Jong-un, sustained his efforts to solidify his grip on power. The North Korean media have continued their propaganda efforts to consolidate national unity around Kim Jong-un, who assumed the country’s leadership after the death of his father and predecessor, Kim Jong-il, in December 2011. Freedom of expression in the country gained renewed attention worldwide in 2014 as the regime threatened war on the United States over a satirical Hollywood movie, *Interview*, about a fictional U.S. Central Intelligence Agency attempt to assassinate Kim. The U.S. government blamed North Korea for a subsequent cyberattack on Sony Pictures Entertainment, which released the film; the cyberattack resulted in numerous leaked e-mails.

Legal Environment

Although the constitution theoretically guarantees freedom of speech, provisions calling for adherence to a “collective spirit” restrict in practice all reporting that is not sanctioned by the government. Under the penal code, listening to unauthorized foreign broadcasts and possessing dissident publications are considered “crimes against the state” that carry serious punishments, including hard labor, prison sentences, and the death penalty. North Koreans are often interrogated or arrested for speaking critically about the government; they also face arrest for possessing or watching television programs acquired on the black market.

Political Environment

The one-party regime controls all domestic news outlets, attempts to regulate all communication, and rigorously limits the ability of North Korean people to access outside information. All domestic journalists are members of the ruling Korean Worker's Party (KWP), and all domestic media outlets serve as mouthpieces for the regime. In 2007, a Japanese journalist and several North Korean refugees launched *Rimjingang*, the first newsmagazine to be based on independent reporting from inside the country. The reporting is conducted by specially trained North Koreans—most of them refugees living along the border with China—who agreed to go back into the country and operate as undercover journalists using hidden cameras. A number of other news outlets based outside the country, including *Daily NK*, also provide reporting about North Korea and rely to some extent on sources based inside the country. Although reports from these outlets are easily accessible to people outside North Korea, within the country most citizens still rely primarily on state-owned broadcasting agencies for news.

In recent years there has been an increase in the flow of news and information into the country via foreign radio stations and organizations that send multimedia content across the border. For example, several Seoul-based radio stations run mainly by North Korean refugees, such as Free North Korea Radio and Radio Free Chosun, have broadcast to North Korea since the mid-2000s. According to surveys of North Korean defectors by the North Korean Human Rights Database Center, an increasing number of North Koreans have listened to foreign radio in recent years. With the growing popularity of DVD players in the country, smuggled foreign DVDs have become an important source for information about life outside North Korea. Although televisions are required to be tuned to official channels, nearly one-third of the population—mainly those living along the Chinese and South Korean borders—reported having accessed foreign television broadcasts, according to a 2012 research report by InterMedia. The use of USB flash drives smuggled from China has also improved the flow of outside information into North Korea, although authorities actively track and punish citizens found with foreign unauthorized content.

Official North Korean media generally portray dissidents and foreign journalists as liars attempting to destabilize the government. Authorities allow very few foreign journalists to report in the country and curtail their ability to gather information by preventing them from freely talking to people on the street and constantly monitoring their movements. The regime does on occasion invite the foreign press, both individually and as a group, to cover festivals, parades, or other events that shed a favorable light on the state.

Economic Environment

The government controls the media landscape, and independent media does not exist. The state-owned Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) supplies content to the country's 12 main newspapers, 20 periodicals, and broadcasters such as the party's Korean Central TV and Korean Central Broadcasting Station radio. *Rodong Sinmun* is the newspaper of the KWP. In a recent opening for Western media, North Korea agreed to allow the Associated Press (AP) to establish its first full-time and all-format news bureau in the country. The AP bureau, located inside the headquarters of the KCNA in Pyongyang, officially opened in January 2012 after weeks of delay following the death of Kim Jong-il. Although the AP had maintained a video bureau in North Korea since 2006, the new full-time news bureau allowed its photographers and journalists to work in the country on a regular basis, albeit under heavy restrictions. The bureau is managed from outside the country, and staffed by two North Koreans inside the country—a reporter and a

photographer. This has allowed more images to emerge from North Korea, especially as some AP journalists, although not resident in the country, regularly post photographs on popular social media sites such as Instagram and Twitter. Other foreign news organizations have also opened offices in recent years, including Russia's RIA Novosti, Japan's Kyodo News, and China's Xinhua News Agency. In June 2014, Agence France-Presse (AFP) announced plans to open a bureau office in Pyongyang by the end of the year, and Reuters was also in negotiations to follow suit.

While the AP's Pyongyang bureau gives Westerners unprecedented access to the closed-off country, the organization does not have any customers in North Korea, given the absence of independent media and total control by state-run outlets. In December 2014, NKNews.org published an article, written by a former AP stringer, alleging that the AP had agreed to distribute North Korea propaganda and surrender to government censorship. The AP issued a statement the same day strongly denying the claim, and describing the article's author, Nate Thayer, as a disgruntled former employee.

There are no accurate statistics measuring the rate of internet penetration in the country, although there were reports that North Korea's already-limited access to the internet had been cut off in December 2014, days after the U.S. government accused North Korea of hacking into Sony Pictures Entertainment. The situation was unusual for the country, which has four official networks running through China to connect itself to the internet, sparking concerns of a cyberattack or retaliation by the U.S. government. The online presence of North Korean official media has increased in recent years. *Rodong Sinmun* launched a new website in February 2011, with its English-language site following within a year. The KCNA website has improved since debuting in 2010, and North Korea maintains YouTube and Twitter accounts under the name Uriminzokkiri (Our Nation). The website of the Korean Friendship Association, a major channel for promoting propaganda abroad, offers multimedia content and includes links to major social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Beginning in February 2013, North Korea allowed foreigners visiting or living in the country access to the internet from their mobile devices via a 3G network run by Koryolink. Reporters for the AP and Xinhua in North Korea were some of the first foreigners to use the service. The decision regarding the mobile internet service came shortly after North Korea began allowing foreigners to bring their own cellphones into the country to use with Koryolink SIM cards.

These new connections, however, have little significance for most North Korean citizens. Global internet access is still restricted to a handful of high-level officials who have received state approval, though increasing numbers of academic scientists and students are also permitted controlled internet access. Ordinary citizens are granted access only to a national intranet that does not link to foreign sites. The Korea Computer Center, a government information-technology research center, controls the information that can be downloaded from the intranet. As personal computers are uncommon in homes, most access occurs via terminals in libraries or offices.

Norway

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 3 / 30

Political Environment: 3 / 40

Economic Environment: 4 / 30

Total Score: 10 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	10,F	11,F	10,F	10,F	10,F

Legal Environment

Freedoms of expression, media freedom, and the right to access government information are guaranteed under Article 100 of Norway's constitution. Defamation can be punished with prison terms, though the relevant penal code provisions are rarely enforced. The penal code also prohibits hateful expression, which is punishable by up to three years in prison. In March 2013, the offense of threats made online was incorporated into the penal code and made equivalent to offline threats. Also that year, anti-Semitic hate crimes were assigned an independent category in police reports to facilitate the collection of data on the phenomenon. This came after a 2012 poll showed a rise in anti-Semitic attitudes, which prompted the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to criticize Norwegian officials for failing to address the issue adequately.

Leaks related to the 2011 terrorist attack carried out by far-right, anti-immigrant militant Anders Behring Breivik have led to a series of rulings on protection of journalists' sources. In October 2013, the Supreme Court determined that an editorial director from NRK, the public broadcaster, did not have to reveal the name of the source who had provided confidential police material about the Breivik case. Also that month, the Supreme Court found that confidential phone numbers and mobile data could be used as evidence in a criminal case, even when they may reveal communications between journalists and sources. The decision concerned a case in which lawyer Sigurd Klomsæt was charged with leaking confidential police material about the Breivik investigation to the media. He was acquitted in Oslo District Court in March 2013, then convicted by the Court of Appeal in February 2014 thanks to the admission of data from three mobile phones at his office, which showed that unnamed journalists were contacting the office at the same time prosecutors said the leak took place. Klomsæt was fined about \$4,000. In April 2014, the Supreme Court rejected his appeal.

The 2006 Freedom of Information Act provides for access to government documents, and the public can request data through an online access portal, the Offentlig Elektronisk Postjournal (OEP). The law includes exemptions to the right of access that protect information concerning the bases for internal decisions made by state authorities, as well as state security and certain foreign policy interests. Investigative journalists have complained that senior government officials use various tactics to avoid or delay press inquiries that would expose negligence or wrongdoing. Journalist Kristoffer Egeberg noted such behavior in his 2014 investigation into the sale of former Norwegian naval vessels to a Nigerian warlord.

However, the information law itself is considered relatively strong, and the courts have upheld the public's right to know. In March 2013, the Supreme Court determined that the press and public should gain access to newly surfaced documents and recordings related to a famous 1985 espionage case against diplomat Arne Treholt. In 2011, several media outlets had brought a joint suit against the government to gain access to the information, after the Norwegian Police Security Service cited national security concerns in refusing their requests. The materials were released in March 2014, reportedly revealing flaws in the Treholt verdict.

In a September 2014 ruling on surveillance issues, the Norwegian Data Protection Authority (DPA) found that an army intelligence unit had violated the privacy rights of nine

journalists by collecting information on them following an investigative story published in a daily newspaper in 2011.

Political Environment

The Norwegian media are generally free of censorship or undue political pressure on editorial policy, and journalists are able to perform their work without physical obstructions. Violence against journalists and media outlets is rare, but there have been some threats from Islamist extremists in recent years. In February 2014, Ubaydullah Hussein, founder of the extremist group Prophet's Ummah, was sentenced to 120 days in jail for hate speech and threatening two journalists; he was released due to time served. In 2012, an Oslo court convicted two men of plotting to attack the Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten*, which in 2005 had published cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that sparked controversy across Europe and the Muslim world. The men had also planned to attack one of the cartoonists.

Economic Environment

Norway has one of the highest rates of newspaper readership in the world, and features more than 200 newspapers that express a diversity of opinions, many of which are openly partisan. Media concentration is a concern, with three main companies dominating the print sector. Many of the major papers, including *VG*, *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, and *Fædrelandsvennen*, are owned by Schibsted Norge, a successor to the consortium Media Norge that was formed in 2009 after a protracted struggle with the Norwegian Media Authority due to concerns over its size. Competition is still strong, even though the economic downturn that began in 2008 hurt the advertising market. The public broadcaster NRK, financed by a license fee, is dominant in both radio and television, but there is considerable competition from private broadcasters such as TV2.

There are no significant restrictions on the means of news production and distribution. Norway fully adopted digital television broadcasting in 2009, and radio will be transitioning to digital transmission by 2017, when most FM signals will be switched off. The new technology is expected to result in more radio channels, lower transmission costs, more stable reception, and more even coverage for urban and rural populations. With digital radio there will also be no obligation to broadcast certain content; FM licenses included requirements to provide cultural programming and content for children and minority groups. After 2017, small local stations may continue to broadcast on FM to account for possible unintended consequences of digitalization that would put them at a disadvantage. About half of Norwegian radio listeners were already accessing digital radio by late 2014.

The government does not restrict use of the internet, and it was accessed by 96 percent of the population as of 2014.

Oman

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 27 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 71 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	71,NF	71,NF	71,NF	71,NF	71,NF

Legal Environment

Oman's restrictive media environment remained unchanged in 2014. Articles 29, 30, and 31 of the 1996 Basic Law guarantee freedom of expression and freedom of the press, but the document also forbids material that leads to "public discord, violates the security of the state, or abuses a person's dignity or rights." Oman's 1984 Press and Publications Law is one of the most restrictive statutes of its kind in the Arab world, and ensures that the media remain censored and subdued. Under the law, libel is a criminal offense, and journalists can be fined or imprisoned for criticism of the sultan, the ruling family, the political system, or the religion of Islam.

The Telecommunications Act allows the authorities to prosecute individuals for any message sent through any means of communication that violates public order and morals. In June 2012, in response to growing criticism of the government's lack of progress in fulfilling promised economic and political reforms, the Department of Public Prosecution issued a statement saying that it would take all appropriate legal action against those who publish any content in the media or online that was found to be "offensive" or "inciting others to actions."

Journalists are required to obtain licenses to practice, and since 2005 they have been obliged to reapply each year as employees of a specific outlet, which precludes the practice of freelance journalism. Journalists and media outlets alike can have their licenses revoked at any time for violating press laws. The government also retains the right to close down any media outlet at any time.

Political Environment

The Ministry of Information is legally empowered to censor politically, culturally, or sexually offensive material in domestic or foreign media and has blacklisted several authors and specific books that it deemed controversial. While information and news are widely available, there is a basic lack of coverage of local topics, such as the economy, unemployment, or the situation of migrants and other minorities in Oman. The only permanent foreign media presence in Oman is a Reuters correspondent in Muscat.

The government exerts considerable control over the internet. The Internet Service Manual establishes an extensive list of prohibitions on defamation of the ruling family, the spread of false data or rumors, and many other types of content. The government routinely blocks websites deemed sexually offensive or politically controversial. Some bloggers and readers use virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass the censorship of local internet service providers, but VPN access is itself widely blocked. Private communications including mobile-telephone calls, e-mail, and exchanges in internet chat rooms are monitored, and web forums where dissent is voiced, such as Farrq, Al-Harah, and Al-Sabla, have experienced temporary shutdowns.

Journalists widely practice self-censorship to avoid dismissal or arrest; reporters have been jailed in the past even for coverage of colleagues' arrests. As a result, journalists are rarely subject to physical threats or assault in reprisal for their work.

However, the authorities continue to carry out arbitrary arrests and detentions without charge in order to intimidate outspoken bloggers and activists. In July 2014, Muawiyah al-Rawahi was arrested over a blog post that criticized Omani authorities for arresting demonstrators protesting the conviction of a teacher for participating in a strike in October 2013. In early August, a photo surfaced of al-Rawahi detained at the psychiatric ward of Sultan Qaboos University Hospital with his legs shackled; he was released days later. Also in July, another blogger and activist, Noah al-Saadi, was arrested without any official explanation and denied access to a lawyer and his family while in detention. He was also released in early August.

Later that month, prominent blogger and government critic Mohammed al-Fazari was arrested and detained for six days; he was subject to harsh conditions and extensive interrogation while in custody. Al-Fazari was eventually released without charge in September, but he was threatened with prosecution if he did not produce a signed pledge to stop criticizing the government. Police had previously warned him against pursuing his activities in March. Al-Fazari has been arrested and faced criminal charges on several occasions in recent years in connection with his calls for reform.

Writer and online activist Saed al-Darodi was summoned for questioning in October, apparently over his recent posts on social media, and reportedly held incommunicado for 25 days before being released. In December, another writer, Ali al-Rawahi, was arrested in connection with two tweets in which he criticized the government for corruption and urged people to demand their rights. Activist and blogger Said al-Jaddad was arrested the same month after repeatedly calling for reform online. Both men remained in detention at year's end.

Economic Environment

In addition to the two major state-owned newspapers, the government owns four radio stations and two television stations. There are eight privately run newspapers currently operating in Oman, alongside a dozen other print publications. Private newspapers are able to sustain themselves largely on local and international advertising revenues rather than sales, and many no longer need state subsidies. The country's single privately owned satellite network provides access to foreign broadcasts but refrains from airing politically controversial content. There are several private radio stations. About 70 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. The state-run Oman Telecommunications Company had a monopoly on internet and telecommunications services until 2008, when the government allowed a privately owned competitor, Nawras, to begin providing service.

Pakistan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 30 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 65 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	61,NF	61,NF	63,NF	64,NF	64,NF

Pakistani media came under increased political pressure in 2014 as part of a broader confrontation—peaking in September and finally ending in December—between the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and opposition protesters who reportedly enjoyed some support from the military. Two prominent journalists, Raza Rumi and Hamid Mir, survived assassination attempts in March and April, respectively, and Mir’s Geo television network later suffered various forms of harassment from security forces, protesters, and media regulators. Also during the year, journalists continued to face a high level of violence and threats from separatist and Islamist militant groups. Impunity remained the norm for such crimes, despite a landmark conviction for a 2011 murder and Sharif’s public commitment to improve security conditions for the media.

Legal Environment

The constitution and other legislation, such as the Official Secrets Act, authorize the government to curb freedom of speech on subjects including the constitution itself, the armed forces, the judiciary, and religion. Since 2010, broadly defined contempt laws have been employed by the judiciary to curb reporting on particular cases or judges, and a number of print and television outlets as well as other critical voices have been threatened or charged with contempt. This makes reporting on judicial matters perilous for most journalists.

The Protection of Pakistan Act, an antiterrorism law adopted in July 2014, gives security forces expansive powers to search, detain, and use force against suspects, but also includes vague references to “internet offenses and other offenses related to information technology.” The provisions raised concerns that the law could be used against journalists and other news providers.

Mir Shakeel-ur-Rehman, owner of Geo TV’s parent company, was convicted of blasphemy in November 2014 over a controversial entertainment broadcast in May. He was sentenced to 26 years in prison plus fines, as were a morning-show host and two celebrity guests, though the court was located in the remote, semiautonomous Gilgit-Baltistan region, and its ruling was reportedly not applicable in Pakistan proper. An appeal was pending at year’s end.

In addition to direct legal repercussions, journalists who are charged under blasphemy laws are subject to extralegal threats and violence. Shoaib Adil, editor of the magazine *Nia Zamana*, was accused of blasphemy in June 2014, ostensibly over his role in publishing a 2007 book by a member of the persecuted Ahmadi religious minority. A group of Muslim activists had threatened Adil and demanded that the charges be filed shortly after *Nia Zamana* reported on the May murder of a human rights lawyer who had defended a blasphemy defendant.

Journalists who uncover official corruption sometimes face legal reprisals. In December, a team of investigative reporters with the private television channel ARY News were charged with smuggling arms themselves after they exposed state railway officials taking bribes to transport weapons illegally.

Accessing official information remains difficult, and existing provisions for obtaining public records are ineffective. Since 2012, the government and lawmakers have been engaged in drafting new freedom of information legislation to replace a 2002 ordinance on the topic. A

Senate committee approved the latest version of the draft in July 2014, but it retained problematic exemptions for information on matters including national security, economic affairs, and international relations. No further progress was reported by year's end.

At the provincial level, the governments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa passed freedom of information legislation in 2013, but the ordinances faced criticism for vague language and a large number of exemptions, and the Punjab version lacked explicit protections for whistleblowers. In 2014 the two provinces established information commissions to oversee implementation of their laws.

The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) was officially established through a 2002 ordinance, comprising a mix of industry representatives and nominated members from various societal groups. After almost a decade, it finally began functioning in late 2011, with the mission of hearing complaints against the media and promoting journalistic ethics. However, as of late 2014 it still lacked provincial offices, and many staff positions reportedly remained vacant.

Members of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), which regulates broadcast media, are appointed or approved by the government, and the agency has a record of using heavy-handed tactics. Divisions within PEMRA emerged in May 2014, apparently reflecting the broader struggle between the government and its opponents, allegedly including some in the military, during the year. Nevertheless, PEMRA continued to issue temporary suspensions of certain broadcasts or programs. In June, PEMRA suspended the license of Geo TV for 15 days and imposed a fine of 10 million rupees (\$100,000) after it aired allegations that the military's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate was involved in the attempted assassination of Geo anchor Hamid Mir in April. Later in June, the affiliated Geo Entertainment channel received a 30-day suspension and a fine of 10 million rupees on the grounds that it had violated the code of conduct by airing blasphemous content on one of its shows. In October, PEMRA imposed a similar fine and suspension on ARY News for allegedly carrying slanderous statements against the judiciary. ARY News anchor Mubashir Lucman and his program were suspended in compliance with a court order as part of the same case. ARY News had been sharply critical of the Sharif government in recent months.

The authorities are believed to engage in online surveillance, and the communications of some journalists are reportedly monitored. Such practices encourage self-censorship and deter contacts with vulnerable sources.

Political Environment

Political actors, government officials, and military and intelligence officers regularly complain about critical reporting, and some have attempted to exert control over media content through unofficial "guidance" to newspaper editors on placement of front-page stories and permissible topics of coverage. Armed groups, political parties, and state institutions have also coerced news outlets into publishing denunciations of their opponents. Fear of reprisals has caused some journalists to self-censor, particularly concerning military or intelligence operations, sensitive social or religious issues, and certain militant groups and political parties.

Websites and blogs addressing sensitive subjects are routinely blocked, and the government has increased censorship of allegedly blasphemous material in recent years. YouTube remained inaccessible as of 2014 after the government blocked it in September 2012 in response to unrest surrounding a controversial anti-Islam film. In May 2014, the National Assembly adopted a resolution calling on the government to remove the YouTube ban.

Media access to certain parts of the country is restricted, either by special government regulations or an increased threat of violence, effectively reducing the news and information available to residents. Conditions for reporters covering the ongoing civil conflict in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and some districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province remain difficult, with journalists subject to detention, threats, expulsion, abduction, attacks, and other interference, whether by Taliban militants and local tribal groups, criminal organizations, or the army and intelligence services. Journalists' ability to cover military operations in the FATA is limited, as they can gain access only if they agree to become embedded with military units, which means that any reporting is subject to potential censorship. Media in general remain much more tightly restricted in the FATA than elsewhere in Pakistan. Independent radio is allowed only with permission from the FATA secretariat, and no newspapers are published there.

Separately, in Pakistani-administered Kashmir, publications need special permission from the regional government to operate, and publications that support independence for Kashmir are generally prohibited. In March 2014, at least 20 attackers ransacked the offices of the Kashmir daily *Chingari* and beat its editor after it reported on an allegedly illegal construction project.

In the southern city of Karachi, increasing civil conflict in the last several years has made reporting more hazardous. In January 2014, three staff members of Express TV were killed when gunmen on motorcycles attacked one of the channel's vehicles in the city. In February, a bomb was found outside the offices of ARY News, and grenades were thrown at the gates of the newspapers *Business Recorder* and *Nawa-i-Waqt*.

Reporters in restive Balochistan Province face pressure and harassment from Balochi nationalists, Islamist groups, and the government. Several local journalists have been killed or forced into exile in recent years after receiving repeated threats. In February 2014, Mohammad Afzal Khawaja, a reporter for the *Balochistan Times* and the affiliated daily *Zamana*, was shot and killed along with his driver. Also that month, Ijaz Ahmed Mengal of the *Daily Intekhab* and *Daily Khabardar* newspapers was shot dead by gunmen on a motorcycle. In August, three media workers were killed when unidentified assailants opened fire in the offices of Online International News Network in Quetta, and the Khuzdar Press Club was forced to close for 10 days following threats to local journalists. Foreign journalists can also face repercussions for reporting on Balochistan. In February, British journalist Willem Marx was denied an entry visa shortly after releasing a book on the situation in the province.

Geo TV and its affiliated outlets suffered violence and intimidation in several forms during 2014, particularly in connection with the political standoff between the Sharif government and its opponents. The most prominent incident was the attempted assassination of Hamid Mir in Karachi in April, which he attributed to the ISI. In the months of controversy that followed, employees, vehicles, and offices of Geo TV and the Jang newspaper group—owned by Geo's parent company—were attacked or harassed across the country. In May, for example, editor Zafar Aheer of the daily *Jang* was badly beaten by masked men in the Punjabi city of *Multan*. During the opposition protests in the capital that began in August, Geo TV and its staff were attacked with clubs or stones, threatened, and denounced as unpatriotic. In September, opposition party supporters also occupied the state television building and assaulted its employees.

Other high-profile attacks on journalists in 2014 were committed by Islamist militants, criminal groups, or unknown assailants. In January, Shan Dahar of Abb Takk TV was shot and killed by unidentified attackers in Larkana, Sindh Province; he had recently reported on illegal

pharmaceutical sales. In March, journalist Abrar Tanoli was fatally shot by unidentified gunmen in Mansehra, north of Islamabad, having previously received threats. He was a reporter for the local newspapers *Daily Mahsib* and *Daily Shamal*, and a photographer for Reuters. Later that month, gunmen in Lahore attempted to assassinate Raza Rumi, a columnist, editor at the *Friday Times*, and talk-show host for the Express Media Group. Rumi's driver was killed. According to police, the sectarian militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi organized the attack due to the journalist's outspoken criticism of Islamist extremism and the blasphemy law. A number of other reporters with the Express group were targeted with death threats and bomb attacks on their homes during 2014. In October, Yaqoob Shehzad of *Daily Express* was killed in Hafizabad, Punjab Province. In a separate attack in that city two days earlier, gunmen killed Nadeem Haider of *Daily Dunya*.

In total, the Committee to Protect Journalists was able to confirm that at least three journalists and three media workers were killed in connection with their work in 2014, making Pakistan one of the world's deadliest countries for members of the press.

Impunity is the norm for such crimes, with nearly all murder cases from previous years remaining unsolved. Investigations into security forces' past crimes against journalists remain inadequate. No arrests have been made in the case of investigative reporter Syed Saleem Shahzad, who was abducted and murdered in 2011, allegedly by the military intelligence agency. However, in a rare victory, a Karachi court convicted six people in March 2014 for their role in the 2011 murder of Geo TV journalist Wali Khan Babar.

Economic Environment

Pakistan is home to hundreds of daily, weekly, and monthly news publications that publish in English, Urdu, and a number of regional languages. Several dozen all-news cable and satellite television channels—some of which broadcast from outside the country—provide live domestic news coverage, commentary, and call-in talk shows, informing viewers and shaping public opinion on current events. However, the government continues to control Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan, the only free-to-air terrestrial broadcast outlets with a national reach; their staff receive directives from the Information Ministry, and their coverage supports official viewpoints.

Private radio stations operate in some major cities but are prohibited from carrying news programming, and PEMRA imposes a maximum broadcast radius of 50 kilometers on private FM transmitters. In rural regions such as the FATA, illegal extremist radio is prominent, with radical Islamists broadcasting unchallenged propaganda. International television and radio broadcasts are usually available in Pakistan, with the exception of news channels based in India. The internet is not widely used, with about 14 percent of the population accessing the medium in 2014. However, blogs and social media are growing in popularity, and many traditional news outlets provide content over the internet.

Cable television operators occasionally pressure media outlets to censor views that could conflict with their business interests, or suspend transmission of certain channels in response to threats. In May 2014, many cable providers—apparently under pressure from the military—dropped Geo TV from their services or gave it a less prominent position. In July, four unidentified men set fire to the offices of WorldCall, a cable television operator in Karachi, possibly because it was transmitting Geo channels. In October and December, cable providers suspended broadcasts of multiple news channels in Karachi and Balochistan after receiving threats.

Provincial and national authorities have used advertising boycotts and bribes to put economic pressure on media outlets or provide incentives to keep journalists in check. Both state and private interests, including the powerful intelligence agencies, reportedly pay for favorable press coverage, a practice that is exacerbated by the low salary levels of many journalists.

Palau

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 1 / 30

Political Environment: 6 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 15 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	14,F	14,F	16,F	16,F	15,F

Panama

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 49 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	44,PF	44,PF	46,PF	48,PF	50,PF

Vice President Juan Carlos Varela was elected president of Panama in May 2014, defeating a candidate selected by the party of outgoing president Ricardo Martinelli. Despite this change in leadership, there was little evidence of an immediate change in the conditions faced by the country's news media.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and of the press are protected by the constitution, but the laws allow for the prosecution of journalists for vaguely defined offenses related to the exposure of private information, and prescribe severe penalties for leaking government information to the press.

Since 2008, imprisonment has been excluded as a punishment for libel and slander against high-ranking public officials, but they remain criminal offenses. Cases occur regularly and often take years to move through the legal system. In June 2014, five journalists and managers of the dailies *La Estrella* and *El Siglo* were found guilty of defamation and ordered to pay Lourdes Castillo, a board member of the Panama Canal Authority, thousands of dollars in compensation. Castillo claimed material damages and moral harm stemming from a series of 2011 reports in the two papers that alleged misconduct in the approval of a \$1.2 million

government contract with her private company. Those found guilty in the civil proceedings were set to face criminal charges as well, though an appeal was pending at year's end.

Despite the existence of transparency legislation, access to public information remains limited. Government officials sometimes refuse to release information, especially in cases involving corruption, and updates to official websites are often late, if undertaken at all. However, in 2014, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the newspaper *La Prensa* regarding several requests for information from government agencies.

Political Environment

The outgoing administration of President Martinelli was known for its hostility toward the press, and Varela campaigned on a platform of increased openness. As of late 2014, it remained to be seen whether the new president would grant journalists' greater access to official sources, interviews, and press conferences, though there were no reports of media intimidation by the government in the second half of the year. Martinelli retained his combative approach during his last weeks in office, blaming media bias for the electoral defeat of his chosen successor, José Domingo Arias.

Journalists in Panama remain fairly safe compared with colleagues in some neighboring countries. Despite the charged atmosphere of the election campaign in 2014, there were no documented instances of violence against journalists. However, some threats of violence were reported. In May, television journalist Castalia Pascual of TVN-2 reported receiving threatening phone calls, and public access to her station's website was disrupted by a series of cyberattacks that began in April. Another television journalist, Álvaro Alvarado, received a death threat via Twitter in November. He had reported on official corruption under the Martinelli administration and believed the threat to have come from the former president's associates, though this could not be confirmed.

Economic Environment

Panamanian media outlets are privately owned, with the exception of one state-owned television network and one radio station. There are at least five daily papers, around 100 radio stations, and several national television networks. Cross-ownership between print and broadcast media is prohibited. However, former president Martinelli is known to own several newspapers in Panama City, along with at least one television station. In June 2013, while still in office, Martinelli announced that he had bought six radio stations in the interior of the country, a clear indicator of consolidated ownership and potential partisan bias. The government has also been accused of distributing official advertising according to political criteria.

There are no government restrictions on access to the internet, which was used by 45 percent of the population in 2014.

Papua New Guinea

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 29 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	24,F	25,F	27,F	28,F	29,F

News media in Papua New Guinea (PNG) have traditionally been among the strongest and most independent in the South Pacific, but press freedom has eroded somewhat in recent years.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech, the press, and information are guaranteed under Section 46 of the constitution. Journalists can be sued for defamation in civil cases, but it is not a criminal offense. In April 2014, the prime minister filed multiple defamation cases against two critical bloggers; the suits remained unresolved at year's end. PNG does not have an access to information law.

The Media Council of Papua New Guinea (MCPNG) has served as a buffer against government pressure by lobbying for media freedom, managing a complaints process, and undertaking media research. The council also has a well-developed code of ethics, which member journalists follow. However, the MCPNG's executive director, Nimo Kama, was suspended in June 2011 after an independent audit of Australian government funding to the organization found evidence of fraud. Donors subsequently withdrew support, and the future of the council remained in limbo in 2014.

Political Environment

The closure of the Australian Associated Press (AAP) bureau in late 2013, which ended the news agency's 60-year presence in PNG, has reportedly had a serious impact on the media landscape. Correspondents working for AAP often broke major stories and carried out investigations that have not been matched by local outlets. Other foreign news services have relied on stringers to cover PNG, with occasional visits by reporters.

Throughout 2014, there were concerns over secrecy and obstruction of journalists attempting to report on Manus Island, an Australian detention center for migrants and asylum seekers that is frequently condemned by human rights groups for its harsh conditions.

Threats and harassment against journalists and attempts to interfere with their work continue to occur, particularly in reprisal for investigative reporting on wrongdoing by officials. In June 2014, police assaulted EMTV reporter Quinton Alomp and cameraman Gesoko Adrian as they attempted to report on alleged police abuses in the capital. Both were temporarily detained without charge, and their video footage was destroyed. In October, media freedom groups condemned the abduction and sexual assault of three women journalists working for the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in Port Moresby. According to local media reports, a minibus delivering staff to their homes was seized by a group of armed men near a suburban settlement. Two of the women were reportedly hospitalized after their release.

Economic Environment

Both of the country's daily newspapers are foreign owned. The *Post-Courier* is owned by an Australian subsidiary of the U.S.-based News Corporation, while the *National*, which now has a larger circulation than its older rival, is owned by the Malaysian logging company Rimbunan Hijau.

Broadcast media consist of the main public broadcaster, the NBC; several major commercial radio networks, such as Nau FM and FM 100; and the main private television station, EMTV. A number of private outlets, including EMTV, are owned by Fiji-based companies. Radio is an important source of news due to the country's isolated settlements and low literacy rates.

The government does not restrict access to the internet, and usage has been growing, but lack of infrastructure limited penetration to roughly 9 percent of the population in 2014.

Paraguay

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 25 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 59 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	59,PF	60,PF	60,PF	61,NF	59,PF

President Horacio Cartes signed Paraguay's first freedom of information law in 2014, though it was not set to take effect until 2015. Three journalists were murdered in 2014. Impunity for attacks against journalists is common.

Legal Environment

The constitution and other laws guarantee freedom of the press, and the government generally respects this right. Defamation is a criminal offense punishable by fines or imprisonment. Defamation cases brought against journalists by public officials are not uncommon, though such cases have declined in recent years.

In September 2014, President Cartes signed into law Paraguay's first access to information law, set to take effect in 2015. The Paraguayan constitution guarantees that "public sources of information are free for all," but previously no legal clarification or statutory law defined this right. The new Access to Public Information and Transparency Law guarantees "free citizen access to public information and governmental transparency" and obliges state institutions and functionaries to disclose information requested by citizens in regards to salaries, official travel, contracts, and any information not designated as secret. The government also announced in June 2014 the launch of an online database that will enable open access to public information. The final version of the bill did not include a controversial provision, drafted by the Senate, limiting the types of information that could be disclosed under the law.

Congress ratified the Telecommunications Law in 2011, overriding then president Fernando Lugo's 2010 veto. The law limits community radio stations' broadcasting power to 50

watts and prohibits them from carrying advertising. It also recognizes the National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) as an independent entity empowered to grant or deny licenses but fails to guarantee the agency's autonomy. Freedom of expression advocacy entities, such as the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters and the Organization of American States' Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, have argued that the law violates international standards for freedom of expression.

Political Environment

The "tri-border" area where Paraguay meets Brazil and Argentina has been a particularly perilous region for reporters. Violence, threats of violence and intimidation from organized crime groups or politicians have become the norm, particularly for journalists who investigate drug trafficking and government corruption in the area. Impunity for such offenses is common. Since 1991, 14 journalists have been murdered in the country. Fausto Gabriel Alcaraz Garay, a journalist at Radio Amambay who frequently reported on drug trafficking, was killed in May in Pedro Juan Caballero. A Brazilian citizen was arrested in June in possible connection to the murder. Edgar Pantaleón Fernández Fleitas, a lawyer and journalist who hosted a local radio program, was shot and killed at his home in the central city of Concepción in June. Fernández was a vocal critic of Concepción's judiciary, having accused numerous members of involvement with drug trafficking, and had faced threats in the past in connection with his radio show. Local prosecutors announced one arrest in June, but no further developments in that case appear to have been reported. The most high-profile murder occurred in October, when Pablo Medina Velázquez, a correspondent for the prominent daily *ABC Color*, was shot and killed in Canindeyú department, near the tri-border region, while on assignment. Medina frequently covered drug trafficking and had received multiple threats in relation to his work, though he was reportedly on an unrelated assignment at the time of his murder. One of Medina's assistants, Antonia Almada, was also killed in the attack. Outcry within Paraguay and by rights groups abroad over the murder of Medina and Almada placed enormous pressure on the government to find and prosecute the assailants. Four suspects were detained soon after the attack, but no further developments have emerged regarding those detentions. Authorities were also working to extradite three more suspects in connection with the murders: Vilmar Acosta, the mayor of Ypehu, a town in Canindeyú, and two accomplices, who are all believed to have fled to Brazil. The Committee to Protect Journalists has placed Paraguay among the 20 most deadly countries for journalists.

There were other instances of limitations and intimidation of the press reported in 2014. In September, journalists with *ABC Color* reported receiving threats after criticizing aspects of a political rally in the southern city of Ayolas, and in January, journalist Paulo Lopez of the *E'a* newspaper was arrested while reporting on a protest in Asunción against an increase in transportation fees. He claimed he was detained illegally and tortured by police, and filed a complaint with Paraguay's human rights office. Several months later he was charged with resisting arrest and assaulting an officer. The Journalist's Union of Paraguay claimed that the charges against Lopez were designed to intimidate him into dropping his complaint.

Economic Environment

The government owns and operates Radio Nacional and Paraguay TV HD; both launched in 2011 following a campaign pledge by former president Fernando Lugo to create public-service media. Paraguay TV HD, formerly known as TV Pública, is the first public-service television station of its kind in Paraguay. As TV Pública, it had developed a generally independent and pluralistic editorial line in its first year of operation. Although its director resigned and many of its journalists were dismissed following Lugo's ouster in 2012, politically motivated dismissals had abated by 2014. In 2013, TV Pública became Paraguay TV HD as part of a rebranding campaign.

Radio remains an essential news medium in Paraguay. Most of the radio spectrum is controlled by either commercial or state-owned stations, despite attempts by community stations to increase their presence. Although some progress has been made, especially through the creation of indigenous community radio stations in the western Chaco region, much remains to be done to diversify the airwaves. In 2013, a fifth indigenous radio station, Voces Nativas 90.9 FM, was inaugurated in the community of Cayin ô Clim. However, later that year rural community radio stations claimed that large outlets were attempting to shut them down by accusing them of sympathizing with a rural insurgent group. Approximately 43 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014, and there were no reports of government restrictions on access.

Paraguay does not place legal limits on media concentration. Three privately owned media groups have significant market share: Editorial Azeta S.A., which publishes *ABC Color*; Grupo Vierci, whose holdings include the newspaper *Última Hora*, television's Telefuturo (Canal 4), and TV and Radio Monumental; and the Holding de Radio company, which owns the popular Radio Ñandutí, among others. According to a 2012 report by Transparency International, these outlets tend to set the national media agenda. Remigio Ángel González, a Mexican media mogul whose holdings across Latin America have sparked concerns among press freedom advocates about media concentration, controls the Paraguayan television station SNT.

Peru

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 47 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	44,PF	43,PF	44,PF	43,PF	44,PF

A number of Peru's long-standing press freedom problems persisted or grew worse in 2014. The use of criminal defamation charges against critical journalists continued, and attacks on reporters by both state and nonstate actors were especially serious during the year. Two journalists, and the wife of a third, were murdered in separate incidents, possibly in connection with their coverage of local corruption and gang violence.

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the 1993 constitution but not always respected in practice. The 2014 appointment of Daniel Urresti as interior minister cast doubt on the government's commitment to legal safeguards for journalists. In July it was revealed that Urresti was under investigation for the 1988 murder of journalist Hugo Bustíos, who was gathering information on military abuses against civilians in Ayacucho at the time of his death. Although two other officers were convicted of the murder in 2008, one of them had recently named Urresti—a military intelligence official in the late 1980s—as the leader of the group responsible for Bustíos's death. The Peruvian National Association of Journalists and the Institute for Press and Society (IPYS) called for Urresti's resignation.

Politicians frequently react to criticism, such as allegations of corruption, by suing journalists, press outlets, and activists. Defamation remains a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment, though sentences are frequently suspended. In March 2014, César Quino Escudero, editor of the biweekly magazine *El Observador*, received a six-month suspended prison sentence for defaming Ancash governor César Álvarez Aguilar. He was also fined \$8,400 and sentenced to 120 days of community service. Álvarez has a record of filing defamation cases against critical reporters, and his 2013 complaints against two journalists at the television station Canal 55 were still pending in late 2014.

Despite the existence of access to information laws, transparency regarding official documents is inconsistent in practice, particularly at the regional and local levels. In December 2012, the government published a legislative decree denying the public access to any information related to national security and defense. Any person who reveals such information could be charged with a criminal offense and punished with up to 15 years in prison. The national ombudsman's office, the Defensoría del Pueblo, submitted a challenge to the decree to Peru's Constitutional Court. The case was still pending at the end of 2014.

In October 2013, President Ollanta Humala signed new cybercrime legislation into law. Press groups expressed concern that the legislation, which was approved by Congress in a closed-door session, would undermine transparency and access to information. It restricts the use of government data by prescribing three- to six-year prison sentences for those found guilty of intercepting computer information from public institutions. It also establishes three- to five-year prison sentences for building databases to track personal, professional, or financial information about individuals or companies, a practice frequently used by transparency groups to monitor the work of government contractors.

There is no independent media regulator in Peru; under the 2004 Radio and Television Law, broadcast licensing is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Foreigners and foreign companies are prohibited from obtaining broadcast licenses and holding more than a 40 percent stake in a licensee, and poorly worded regulations grant excessive power to the ministry to deny applications.

Political Environment

Outright censorship of content is not practiced, but journalists are often subject to pressure from government officials, business figures, and media owners to limit or refrain from coverage of sensitive topics. Local government supporters were thought to be behind the August 2014 cancelation of the television program *Claridad* after threats were made against Corporación Daxi, the company that operates the station on which *Claridad* aired. The show was critical of

local officials and reportedly the only independent local news program in the region, which has long been hostile to journalists.

Physical attacks and threats against media workers continue to create a difficult working environment for the press. Coverage of topics like corruption, misuse of state resources, and mining-related social conflict is considered particularly dangerous. The murders of at least two journalists—along with the wife of a third—in 2014 were flagged for possible connections to their work. In July, Donny Buchelli Cueva, the owner of the Solimar radio station and host of the program *Más Radio*, was tortured and murdered at his home. He had recently begun reporting on the questionable ethics of certain local electoral candidates. In October, Gloria Limas Calle, the wife of journalist Gerson Fabián Cuba, was killed while defending her husband from gunmen at the Junín offices of Radio Rumba, where Fabián hosts a program. Fabián had recently covered controversial topics on his show, including corruption charges against a mayoral candidate and criticism of protests against energy company Pluspetrol. In November, Fernando Raymondi, a 22-year-old journalism student and writer with the popular magazine *Caretas*, was shot and killed at his father's grocery store outside Lima. Although police denied that the murder was connected to his reporting, at the time of his death Raymondi was writing a story on a string of killings carried out by local gangs.

A number of other attacks on journalists and media outlets occurred across the country during 2014. In March, online journalists Pedro Escudero Cárdenas and Germán Escudero Saldarriaga began receiving death threats in conjunction with their work, which focused on corruption in the northeastern city of Pomabamba. In April, a homemade bomb exploded at the home of newspaper editor and radio host Yofré López Sifuentes. López was unharmed, but his parents suffered minor injuries. López believed that the attack was retribution for his work, which centered on local corruption and corporate malfeasance. Also that month, Henry Pinedo, director of the northeastern-based Radio Ayahuasca, reported that some of his journalists had received death threats by text message, and that one was assaulted by a municipal employee, after they began covering irregularities among local garbage-collection services.

Separately in April, journalist Manuel Calloquispe Flores, director of the América TV program *La Cara del Pueblo*, requested government protection after receiving threats in connection with his coverage of regional strikes and environmental damage caused by illegal mining in southeastern Peru. In September, journalist Santos Porras, editor of the weekly newspaper *Quién*, was kidnapped after making accusations against Vladimir Cerrón Rojas, a local official in the Junín region of central Peru. He managed to escape, but days later three people approached him as he was running errands and threatened to kill him. In October, journalists Paola Collazos and José Atauje reported being followed and threatened after investigating ties between local officials and criminal organizations in the Ayacucho region of southeastern Peru.

Impunity for perpetrators of attacks on journalists continues to be a problem. According to the Peruvian Press Council, the murders of 58 journalists between 1982 and 2011 remain unsolved.

Economic Environment

Despite government ownership of one television network, two radio stations, and the print news agency Andina, private outlets dominate the media industry, and the audience for state-run outlets is relatively small. Radio is an important news medium, especially in the

countryside. The internet penetration rate in Peru reached about 40 percent in 2014. There are no reported government restrictions on access, and the use of social media and other digital tools has been increasing steadily in recent years, particularly in urban areas.

In August 2013, Peru’s largest media conglomerate, Grupo El Comercio, which owns the influential flagship newspaper *El Comercio*, purchased a 54 percent stake in Empresa Periodística Nacional S.A. (Erensa), which owns the dailies *Ojo*, *Correo*, *El Bocón*, and *Ajá*. The purchase gave Grupo El Comercio a 78 percent share in Peru’s newspaper market. The company had been criticized for its politicized news coverage in the past, and critics expressed concern that the purchase would negatively affect the diversity of opinion in the country’s media. In November 2013, eight journalists, including the editor of *La República*, *El Comercio*’s main rival, filed suit in the Constitutional Court to block the merger. President Humala also criticized the purchase, calling it “dangerous” and suggesting that a national debate be held on media consolidation. The legal challenge remained unresolved at the end of 2014.

The media corruption that was endemic during Alberto Fujimori’s presidency in the 1990s continues to some extent, with journalists occasionally accepting bribes in exchange for biased coverage.

Philippines

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 20 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 44 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	48,PF	46,PF	42,PF	43,PF	44,PF

The number of killings of journalists in 2014 decreased, although violent attacks, harassment, threats, and legal action against members of the press remained serious problems. Impunity for such abuses was compounded by significant setbacks in the trials related to the 2009 Ampatuan massacre, an election-related crime in which 32 journalists and other media staff were among the 58 people killed. Also during the year, the legal and regulatory environment for media in the Philippines was clouded by the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the constitutionality of key sections of the Cybercrime Prevention Act, the advancement of an expansive privacy bill in the House of Representatives, and continued delays in efforts to pass a freedom of information bill and decriminalize defamation.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees freedom of speech and of expression, and legal limitations such as privacy or obscenity laws are few. However, national security legislation introduced in 2007 can be used to curb journalists’ traditional rights and access to sources, as can the National Security Clearance System, which was designed to “protect and ensure the integrity and sanctity” of classified information against “enemies of the state.”

Existing legal protections have failed to prevent or punish violence against journalists, leading to an entrenched climate of impunity. In a prominent indicator of ongoing impunity, the Ampatuan massacre trials remained encumbered in 2014 by legal technicalities and procedural delays, and potential witnesses continued to be threatened or killed. In February, state prosecutors indicated to the court that they were ready to rest their case against 28 of the accused, including primary suspects, and by year's end the Department of Justice was investigating allegations that some prosecutors may have received bribes to subvert the legal process. A journalist reporting on these claims received anonymous death threats.

In February, the Supreme Court upheld sections of the controversial 2012 Cybercrime Prevention Act that criminalize online libel, although only for the original authors of content—criminalization for individuals who simply react to or receive such content was rejected. The court also struck down other provisions, including sections that empowered the authorities to engage in real-time collection of internet traffic data and allowed the Department of Justice to restrict access to content based on initial evidence of a legal violation. The law had originally been enacted without input from journalists or journalist organizations, prompting public protests; it was then quickly suspended by the Supreme Court, pending a review. The legislation raises the penalties for libel from a minimum of six months' imprisonment per count for libel in print, to a minimum of six years per count for online libel. The Supreme Court's decision was met with protests by activists and media organizations working to decriminalize libel. Opponents of the law said they would push Congress to replace it with less restrictive legislation.

In August, the draft Protection against Personal Intrusion Act passed a second reading in the House of Representatives, renewing concerns that it could be used to target journalists, citizen journalists, or even citizens taking pictures or videos for personal use. The bill would allow civil suits for recording images or audio of people without their permission and for trespassing on private property for that purpose.

Defamation is a criminal offense that can be punished with prison terms and large fines. A campaign to decriminalize defamation has met with resistance, and cases continued to be filed in 2014 against journalists whose reporting angered authorities. In August, for example, a member of Cagayan de Oro City's mining regulatory board filed a libel complaint against the entire editorial staff and a correspondent of *Gold Star Daily* over a report on allegedly illegal mining operations in an outlying area of the municipality. A city councilor had filed a complaint against the editor in chief and two correspondents for the same paper in July, after it published another councilor's allegedly libelous accusations against him.

Efforts to enact a freedom of information bill continued in 2014. The Senate approved the bill in March, but the House of Representatives had not given approval at year's end. National security justifications are regularly employed to obstruct the public's access to government information.

There are no restrictive licensing requirements for newspapers or journalists.

Political Environment

While the media collectively offer a range of views, reporting by private outlets tends to reflect the political or business interests of their owners and financial supporters. Both the private media and the many publicly owned television and radio stations address numerous controversial topics, including alleged election fraud, ongoing counterinsurgency campaigns, and high-level

corruption cases. A censorship board has the power to edit or ban content for both television and film, but government censorship does not typically affect political material.

Beginning in August 2014, journalists were denied access to the proceedings in the Ampatuan massacre trial; authorities did not provide an explanation or even information on which agency had ordered the ban. Journalists are at times prevented from accessing certain areas of the country, and have also faced harassment in the field by local officials. In November, it emerged that the government had barred entry to nine Hong Kong journalists for “heckling” President Benigno Aquino III during a 2013 summit in Indonesia; the ban was lifted shortly afterward, following criticism by journalists’ organizations.

Journalists are frequently subject to harassment, threats, stalking, illegal arrests, and raids on their outlets. In February 2014, a television crew was injured in a bomb attack on a convoy of vehicles in Maguidanao, and a photojournalist was beaten by police while covering protests in Davao City.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the number of killings of journalists declined from six in 2013 to four in 2014. Nevertheless, the Philippines remained one of the deadliest countries in the world for journalists, with more work-related killings between 1992 and mid-2014 than any country except Iraq. In April, tabloid newspaper reporter and radio host Rubylita Garcia, who had exposed abuses by local police, was killed by gunmen who entered her home in Bacoor City; her murder was confirmed as linked to her work. In May, radio broadcaster Richard Nadjid was shot dead in Bongao, and another radio host, Samuel Oliverio, was shot and killed near his home in Digos City. In June, radio anchor Nilo Baculo was shot dead in Calapan City after receiving multiple death threats.

Eyewitnesses to the killings of journalists also face grave danger. In July in Davao City, unidentified men shot and killed a witness to the murder of a journalist in Digos City in 2010, despite measures provided by a witness protection program. In November, a prosecution witness in the Ampatuan massacre case was ambushed and shot to death while traveling in a remote area of Maguindanao Province.

Although President Aquino pledged to end killings and impunity upon his election in 2010, little has been accomplished under his administration, and government officials have publicly played down the issue. During a September 2014 visit to Belgium, Aquino reportedly expressed doubts about the motives for some killings, and was quoted as saying, “Did they die because they were investigative journalists? Were they exercising their profession in a responsible manner, living up to journalistic ethics? Or did they perish because of other reasons?”

Those advocating for an end to impunity have called for a strengthening of the country’s witness protection program, enhancement of the police’s ability to investigate cases, and reforms of antiquated court rules that have delayed trials. A new law that took full effect in January 2014 allows journalists to carry licensed firearms outside their homes due to the risks associated with their profession. Previously, like other citizens, individual journalists had to prove that they were “under real threat” in order to carry a weapon.

Economic Environment

Most media outlets are privately owned. Among those television and radio stations owned by the government, a wide variety of views is presented. There are hundreds of newspaper titles, but private television ownership is more concentrated, with the two largest

broadcast networks (ABS-CBN and GMA-7) controlled by wealthy families with interests in other sectors of the economy. These networks dominate audience share and the advertising market. Radio is a popular medium, and there are more than 600 stations in the country. Nearly 40 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014.

Internet use is not restricted, and Filipinos are among the region’s most active users of social-media websites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, which often carry news content. Fixed-line broadband penetration remains low, particularly in rural areas, and many users access the internet through their mobile phones.

The practice of using bribes or strategic “favors” to elicit positive coverage is widespread; it is a subject openly debated among journalists, and various organizations offer ethics training in an effort to combat bribery. In another common practice known as block-timing, individuals or groups lease airtime from broadcast stations using their own sponsors. Block-time programs are often designed to promote or attack political interests, especially during election campaigns, though they are also used by local environmental, human rights, or anticorruption activists. These programs are seen as prone to sensationalism and unethical practices, and their hosts are frequently victims of violence.

Poland

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 26 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	24,F	25,F	25,F	26,F	27,F

Legal Environment

While the constitution protects freedom of speech and of the press, libel and some forms of insult—including defamation of public officials or the state and statements that offend religious beliefs—are criminal offenses punishable by fines and imprisonment. There have been relatively few investigations or charges in recent years under the so-called blasphemy law restricting speech that causes religious offense, but the provision remains a highly criticized constraint on freedom of expression in Poland.

The number of defamation suits brought annually by government officials and public figures against news media and one another has increased over the last decade. The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights notes that local media in Poland are much more vulnerable than nationwide outlets to legal reprisals by local authorities.

A few long-running defamation cases reached court judgments in 2014. In October, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that Polish courts had violated the right to freedom of expression of two journalists with the daily *Rzeczpospolita* who had been found guilty of defaming a senior Health Ministry official in a 2003 article. The ECHR ruled that the *Rzeczpospolita* article had concerned issues of public interest because its subject was a public

official; it awarded each journalist €5,000 (\$6,300) in nonpecuniary damages, as well as €2,650 (\$3,350) in pecuniary damages and €6,000 (\$7,600) in costs and expenses to the newspaper's publisher. In January 2014, the Circuit Court in Poznań conditionally discontinued proceedings against blogger Łukasz Kasprowicz, who has been embroiled in a legal battle with the mayor of Mosiny, Zofia Springer, since 2010. In a decision that human rights and media freedom organizations had widely condemned, a first-instance court in Poznań sentenced Kasprowicz to 10 months of restricted liberty and 30 hours of community service per month in connection with a series of blog posts in which he called the mayor "a liar" and accused her of "coerc[ing] public officials into lawlessness with threats." The original sentence had been reversed in 2011 on the grounds that Kasprowicz had aired his criticism as a blogger and private citizen, not as a journalist. In September, Kasprowicz's case was brought before the ECHR.

The right to information is protected by Article 61 of the constitution and the Act on Access to Public Information, passed in 2001 and amended in 2011 to bring Poland into line with EU regulations. A December 2013 report by the Polish Open Government Coalition found a number of problems with the implementation of the act, citing inconsistent enforcement across different government bodies, unjustified processing delays, and loosely regulated interpretations of what constitutes public information.

The National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT), whose members are selected by the president, the Sejm, and the Senate, has the power to regulate programming, allocate subscription revenues to public media, distribute broadcasting frequencies and licenses, and impose financial penalties on broadcasters. In October 2014, KRRiT issued a 50,000 złoty (\$15,000) fine against Lux Veritas, the owner of Poland's leading Catholic media outlets, for broadcasting commentary that seemed to sympathize with the persons responsible for a 2013 arson attack on an LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) installation in Warsaw. Although KRRiT members are required to suspend their membership in political parties, the council has always been highly politicized.

Political Environment

Public television and radio broadcasters tend to favor the government, carrying less criticism than the private media. Because the majority of private outlets display ideological or political bias in one direction or another, citizens must consult multiple sources in order to inform themselves effectively. *Gazeta Wyborcza*—Poland's most prominent news daily—the Polish edition of *Newsweek*, the weekly newsmagazine *Polityka*, and the 24-hour news station TVN24 are considered supportive of the incumbent government. Other titles, including *Rzeczpospolita*, *Gość Niedzielny*, *Nasz Dziennik*, and *Gazeta Polska* show more sympathy for PiS and the conservative opposition. Polish media also include a range of largely apolitical, business-focused titles and tabloids.

The government does not censor media in Poland, but the risk of defamation suits can encourage self-censorship, particularly among smaller outlets that could be forced out of business by large fines.

Polish officials occasionally interfere with journalists' work. In November, two journalists were arrested while covering a demonstration at the State Electoral Commission headquarters and charged with refusing to comply with police orders to vacate the premises. They were acquitted in early December on the grounds that they had been present as journalists. In late 2013, a first-instance court convicted TVP television reporter Endy Gęšina-Torres of

perjury and falsifying documents in connection with an investigation for which he had posed as a Cuban refugee. He was ordered to pay a fine of 2,000 złoty (\$630). Gęsina-Torres appealed the verdict before a regional court in 2014, but the judgment and fine were upheld. His case is expected to go before the ECHR in 2015. In late 2014, Poland's Internal Security Agency declared Leonid Svidirov, a journalist working for the Russian state news agency Rossiya Segodnya, a security threat and requested that he be removed from the country. The Foreign Ministry stripped him of his journalist's accreditation, and an investigation against him was ongoing at year's end; Svidirov claimed that authorities refused to disclose any specific allegations against him. According to the Associated Press, Sviridov was denied the right to work in the Czech Republic in 2006 based on allegations of espionage.

In June 2014, police raided the offices of the weekly newsmagazine *Wprost* without first securing a police order. The raid came after the magazine had published transcripts of secretly recorded and compromising conversations held between leading politicians. The authorities ultimately failed to seize the recordings or force the magazine to reveal its sources. Physical attacks against journalists are rare, and no such incidents were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Polish print media and radio outlets are predominantly private and highly diversified in terms of ownership. While coverage can be partisan, a range of opinions are expressed, and outlets do criticize all groups along the political spectrum, even the ones with which they are aligned. According to the European Journalism Centre, German and other foreign owners control approximately 80 percent of the Polish media market. The only major domestic competitor is Agora SA. The public television broadcaster TVP, which runs a number of terrestrial and satellite channels, remains an important source of information for most citizens. It has been reported that only one in three households actually pays the mandatory subscription fee collected from radio and television owners to support public broadcasting.

Local media outlets are vulnerable to being edged out of the market when local governments establish their own newspapers and compete with them for advertising. Following the emergence of the European sovereign-debt crisis in 2009, many media companies were forced to cut spending and lay off employees due to financial constraints. Poland's television advertising market remained weak in 2014, but digital advertising continued to grow and bring income to media companies. Even before the general economic downturn, Polish print media were suffering from the shrinking of the advertising market and the need to compete with electronic and online channels. Readership of periodicals is declining, particularly in the conservative press. The conservative weekly *Do Rzeczy* lost 32 percent of its readership in 2014, and *wSieci* lost 19 percent.

Roughly 67 percent of the population had regular internet access in 2014, and the government does not restrict the medium.

Portugal

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5 / 30

Political Environment: 7 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 18 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	16,F	17,F	17,F	17,F	18,F

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution. Laws that limit free speech, for example by prohibiting denigration of religious and ethnic minorities, are rarely used against journalists.

A 2007 revision of the Journalist Statute allows courts investigating criminal cases to order journalists to divulge their confidential sources. Lawmakers argued that the identity of sources would, in many instances, be too difficult to procure through other means, but journalists asserted that the revision would effectively allow judges to make them carry out police work. In February 2014, a court rejected an appeal by the Sindicato dos Jornalistas—Portugal’s journalist union—after police searched the home of freelance journalist Manso Preto and seized computers in March 2013. A judge ruled that the action was not prohibited under the Journalist Statute, and the computers were not protected as journalistic materials, because the raid was carried out at the reporter’s home in connection with an alleged crime unrelated to his profession. The Sindicato do Jornalistas said it would consider filing an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights.

Defamation and libel are criminal offenses under Articles 180 and 181 of the penal code, and penalties are increased by one half if the offended party is a public official. In April 2014, the soccer team FC Porto sued the sports daily *A Bola* over comments made by journalist Miguel Sousa Tavares in a column; the team sought €1 million (\$1.3 million) in compensation. The same journalist had been placed under investigation in May 2013 for calling President Aníbal Cavaco Silva a “clown” in a newspaper interview, though the matter was later dropped.

Also in April 2014, the European Court of Human Rights faulted a 2009 decision to fine an editor and a reporter from *Jornal do Centro* €2,000 (\$2,700) each for allegedly defamatory comments printed in 2002, finding that it had violated the journalists’ rights. In November, the European Parliament declined to lift the immunity of Socialist Party member Ana Gomes when Portuguese defense minister José Pedro Aguiar Branco sought to have her tried for defamation; in a televised interview, she had raised the possibility of corruption involving his law firm.

The current access to information law was enacted in 2007, replacing the 1993 Law of Access to Administrative Documents, and public records are largely available in practice to both domestic and foreign journalists.

Political Environment

The media are generally free from political interference. However, current and former politicians often act as political commentators, and political parties rely increasingly on pundits to promote their agendas. In April 2013, former Socialist Party prime minister José Sócrates joined state broadcaster Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP) as a political commentator, along with former cabinet minister Nuno Morais Sarmiento of the Social Democratic Party. The growing economic and political influence of Angola in Portugal has also affected the media

sector. In October 2014, Angola's ambassador to Portugal verbally attacked the Portuguese media for attempting to tarnish the country's image.

Cases of physical harassment or intimidation of journalists are rare. In May 2013 the Sindicato dos Jornalistas expressed concern over a trend in which reporters were harassed and attacked at sporting events, though no such incidents were reported in 2014. In March, a press officer with the Social Democratic Party reportedly assaulted a photojournalist with the Global Imagens agency outside a meeting of the party's national leadership.

Economic Environment

Portugal has several daily newspapers and two main weeklies. State-run and state-financed media outlets are considered to be editorially independent. There is a wide variety of privately owned local and regional radio stations; Rádio Renascença, which is run by the Roman Catholic Church, commands a large audience. Commercial television has been making gains in recent years, providing serious competition for the underfunded public broadcasting channels. The internet penetration rate in Portugal reached about 65 percent in 2014. Many prominent journalists and politicians contribute to social media and blogs.

The media in Portugal have felt the impact of the economic crisis that began in 2008–09, suffering from advertising losses and shrinking print circulation. This has led some media outlets to enter into financial arrangements that may compromise their independence. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported in March 2013 on a significant influx of Angolan money into Portugal's media sector. Angolan shareholders in the Newshold media group control large stakes in outlets such as *Sol*, one of Portugal's largest weeklies, as well as two major magazines, a leading tabloid, and an important business paper. According to CPJ, Portuguese outlets are under pressure to self-censor and avoid antagonizing their Angolan patrons, whose investments are critical to their continued operation.

The lack of job security for many younger journalists makes them more vulnerable to self-censorship and pressure regarding content. Several outlets carried out large-scale layoffs in 2012 and 2013. Though layoffs slowed in 2014, job opportunities for journalists remained scarce.

Qatar

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 21 / 30

Political Environment: 24 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 67 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	66,NF	66,NF	67,NF	67,NF	67,NF

While Qatar's flagship satellite television channel, Al-Jazeera, is permitted to air critical reports on foreign countries and leaders, journalists are subject to prosecution for criticizing the Qatari government, the ruling family, or Islam.

Legal Environment

Article 47 of the constitution “assures” freedom of expression “according to circumstances and conditions” prescribed by law. The 1979 Press and Publications Law is administered by the criminal courts and assigns imprisonment for libel. The penal code also provides penalties for defamation. In addition, broadly framed antiterrorism legislation can also be used to restrict freedom of expression.

The Advisory Council, Qatar’s appointed legislative body, drafted a new press law in 2011 that would eliminate the imprisonment of journalists for defamation, prohibit officials from questioning journalists without a court order, and permit journalists to keep their sources confidential unless instructed otherwise by a court. The draft also includes multiple provisions for the regulation of online media. A revised version of the draft was approved by the Advisory Council in 2012, with added provisions that would abolish criminal charges for press offenses and criticism of the Qatari rulers. However, stiff financial penalties would be imposed for the broadcasting or publication of any information that criticizes the Qatari government or its allies, harms national interests, or offends the ruling family. The draft law had not yet been approved by the emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, at the end of 2014.

In September 2014, the government approved a new cybercrime law that restricts freedom of speech online, with maximum punishments reaching imprisonment for up to three years and a fine of up to 500,000 Qatari riyals (\$137,000) for a wide range of offenses. The law criminalizes distributing “false news,” violating “social values or principles,” and any online behavior that can jeopardize state security. The law also penalizes online defamation with a fine of up to 100,000 Qatari riyals (\$27,000) and imprisonment for up to one year. Critics of the law, including international watchdogs, complained that its vague language allows room for abuse.

All publications are subject to government licensing.

Political Environment

In November 2014, the government of Qatar approved the Open Data Policy, an initiative that obliges government entities to release certain official information to the public, with significant exemptions. The policy is part of the country’s development strategy for 2011-2016, and has been framed by the government as an effort to increase transparency. The policy ostensibly addresses longstanding concerns about the secretive and opaque nature of Qatar’s government, although its scope and implementation remained unclear at year’s end.

The government, the Qatar Radio and Television Corporation, and customs officers are authorized to censor both domestic and foreign print and broadcast media for religious, political, and sexual content prior to distribution. Online content is censored through the country’s sole internet service provider, which is state-owned. Internet users are directed to a proxy server that maintains a list of banned websites and blocks material deemed inconsistent with the religious, cultural, political, and moral values of Qatar. The Doha Centre for Media Freedom, a government-backed organization ostensibly dedicated to press freedom, dismissed director Jan Keulen in late 2013. The center had published a report on the weak media laws of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in 2012, and noted the need for more media freedom and transparency in Qatar. Prior to his dismissal, Keulen had also publicly expressed disappointment

with the case of a Qatari poet who received a 15-year prison sentence for reciting a poem about the Arab Spring on YouTube.

Self-censorship is reportedly widespread, although Doha News, an online news site, has been able to publish content critical of the government without interference or reprisal. The Qatari media largely ignored a 2012 fire in the popular Villagio shopping center in Doha that killed 19 people, including 13 children. Local outlets were reportedly ordered by a court to refrain from covering the trial of those held responsible for the blaze; the accused included a member of the ruling family, Sheikh Ali bin Jassim al-Thani, who owned the childcare center where many victims became trapped, and his wife, who managed the center. The Doha News published an article examining the government's failures in responding to the disaster. The judge presiding over the case did not allow Doha News staff to attend the trial, stating that only "official" media outlets could access the proceedings. Local media did not cover later parts of the trial, although no official reason was given.

In December 2014, following requests from the Egyptian government, Qatar suspended Al-Jazeera's Live Egypt channel. Egyptian authorities had banned Egypt Live and shuttered its Cairo office in 2013, but the channel had continued broadcasting from Doha, regularly producing critical coverage of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government.

Foreigners comprise a majority of the media workers in the country, and there is a disparity in the authorities' treatment of Qatari and non-Qatari journalists. While local reporters often receive warnings and threats when pushing the limits of permissible coverage, noncitizens employed by Qatari media outlets risk harsher repercussions, including termination, deportation, and imprisonment. All foreign journalists working in the country must be accredited by the Qatar Foreign Information Agency and sponsored by a local institution or the Information Ministry. However, journalists in compliance with these rules can still be barred from entering the country, and occasionally have been subject to harassment and arrest after engaging in journalistic activities within Qatar. A German journalist was arrested in 2013 for filming at the construction sites of the 2022 World Cup. The German journalist was released the next day after admitting that he did not have official permission to film in the country.

Cases of physical harassment of journalists and bloggers are rare, and although some have been subject to detention without charge as a consequence of their work, no such cases occurred in 2014.

Economic Environment

Qatar has seven newspapers that publish in either Arabic or English, all of which are owned by members of the ruling family or their business associates. The state owns and operates all broadcast media, and there are only two television networks in the country, Qatar TV and Al-Jazeera. While Qatar TV broadcasts mostly official news and progovernment perspectives, Al-Jazeera focuses its coverage on regional and global news, providing only sparse and uncritical reports on local issues. Programming on local radio stations is more accommodating to criticism of government services and operations. The concentration of media ownership within the ruling family and the high financial costs and citizenship requirements for obtaining media licenses continue to hinder the expansion and freedom of the press. The internet has become a major source of news and information in Qatar, and approximately 91 percent of the population accessed the medium in 2014.

Romania

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12 / 30

Political Environment: 15 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 42 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	43,PF	42,PF	41,PF	42,PF	41,PF

Press freedom is protected by the constitution but weakened in practice by financial insecurity and overriding political and business interests.

Legal Environment

Speech that is deemed to insult state symbols or religion, or that promotes fascist or racist ideologies, is forbidden by law, and relatively small fines are sometimes imposed in practice. Cases in 2014 included a fine against then president Traian Basescu for a racist remark about Roma at a 2010 news conference. In another instance, a Facebook user who had posted a Nazi slogan on his page was fined in December after the comment was quoted by a local newspaper. Following a lengthy period of legal ambiguity, defamation was effectively decriminalized by a 2010 Supreme Court ruling, but a 2013 Constitutional Court decision overturned that judgment. Civil defamation suits remain relatively common among public figures and journalists.

Journalists use Romania's freedom of information law with decreasing frequency as cash-strapped outlets' commitment to investigative journalism dwindles. Officials sometimes obstruct access to information on corruption or other sensitive topics.

Appointments to the National Audiovisual Council (CNA) are politicized, and its capacity is inadequate, resulting in biased decision making and ineffective regulation.

Political Environment

A presidential election was held in November 2014, leading to biased coverage based on the political agendas of media owners and sponsors. The parliamentary majority generally changes the leadership of the public broadcaster after each election, ensuring a progovernment bias to its reporting. The private media sector is dominated by Romanian businessmen with political ties or holdings in other industries, and these interests typically determine an outlet's editorial line. In July 2014, the news station Digi TV, owned by Romanian cable and satellite giant RCS-RDS, fired reporter Cristi Citre after he harshly criticized Prime Minister Victor Ponta on his personal Facebook page. Also during the year, news outlets controlled by jailed politician and media mogul Dan Voiculescu repeatedly attacked the country's chief anticorruption prosecutor, who was pursuing graft charges against him. In September, television and radio host Robert Turcescu admitted that he was an undercover agent for the military intelligence service, raising concerns about possible media interference by the country's spy agencies.

Reporters in Romania face verbal abuse, intimidation, and occasional physical aggression in the course of their work. In November 2014, reporter Stefan Mako of the online news site Casa Jurnalistului was detained and beaten by police in Bucharest after he recorded them arresting another man. In August, protesters attacked three journalists during their coverage of a rally.

Economic Environment

A large number of private broadcast and print outlets operate in Romania. However, the print sector has suffered severely since the economic downturn of late 2008, and the television industry is also facing contraction. More than 50 percent of the population used the internet in 2014. Although access is widely available, with no reports of government interference, online news outlets often lack the revenue needed to conduct original reporting. Very few media firms are profitable, increasing reliance on public advertising. With presidential elections taking place in 2014, public advertising became increasingly politicized, and distribution of advertising funds from the European Union—the main buyer of advertising in Romania—was nontransparent. Romania’s leading television stations include Pro TV, owned by the Bermuda-based Central European Media Enterprises (CME), and Antena 1, owned by the daughter of media mogul Voiculescu. Actual ownership is often obscured through intermediaries. Foreign media conglomerates maintain a presence in the country, though some have withdrawn due to the difficult economic environment. At the end of 2014, CME was preparing to sell its local radio holdings to RCS-RDS.

Individual journalists suffer from low pay and job insecurity, and are susceptible to various forms of financial and editorial pressure from owners and advertisers. Delays in salary payments are not unusual, and in early 2014, collective labor contracts for mass media expired.

Russia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 24 / 30

Total Score: 83 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	81,NF	81,NF	80,NF	81,NF	81,NF

Russia’s occupation of the Crimean Peninsula and involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine helped to drive an increase in propagandistic content in the Russian news media and tighter restrictions on dissenting views in 2014. Media outlets became more firmly incorporated into the Kremlin’s policy efforts, moving from supporting the government with biased news to actively participating in an “information war” with its perceived adversaries. Ongoing insurgencies, corrupt officials, and crime within Russia continued to pose a danger to journalists who reported on them, and the remaining independent media outlets in the country came under growing pressure from the authorities.

Legal Environment

Although the Russian constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, politicians and government officials frequently use the country's politicized and corrupt court system to harass the few journalists who dare to expose abuses by the authorities. Russian law contains a broad definition of extremism that officials invoke to silence government critics, including journalists; enforcement of this and other restrictive legal provisions has encouraged self-censorship.

Two new laws that took effect in 2014 significantly extended state control over the online sphere. Federal Law No. 398, signed by President Vladimir Putin in December 2013, came into force in February 2014, allowing the prosecutor general's office to bypass the court system and order—via the state telecommunications regulator, Roskomnadzor—the blocking of websites that disseminate calls for mass riots, “extremist” activities, and participation in illegal assemblies. The law was regularly invoked against independent and opposition websites in 2014, as were older laws that allowed blocking on a variety of other grounds. In the first half of the year alone, Roskomnadzor blocked more than 85 websites for containing “extremist content” based on orders from the prosecutor general's office. In March, access to opposition leader Aleksey Navalny's blog, hosted on the website of the liberal radio station Ekho Moskvyy, was blocked after Roskomnadzor notified internet service providers that the blog contained banned information. Ekho Moskvyy removed the blog, and access to its website was reestablished the following day. Also that month, the prosecutor general issued an order to block access to three websites known for carrying opposition views: the news site Grani.ru, the online magazine *Yezhednevny Zhurnal*, and Kasparov.ru, the site of opposition activist Garry Kasparov. In July, officials used the online extremism law to block mention of a planned march supporting Siberian autonomy.

In May, Putin signed Federal Law No. 97, nicknamed “the bloggers law,” which requires any blog or website with more than 3,000 daily viewers to register with Roskomnadzor as a media outlet. The legislation effectively subjects personal blogs and other sites to the same restrictions imposed on formal news outlets, including bans on anonymous authorship and the use of obscenities, and legal responsibility for comments posted by users. Separately, under Law No. 97 and a follow-up law passed in July, social-media platforms and other internet companies processing Russian users' data would have to store the information on servers located in Russia, where it could be accessed by authorities. The final deadline for compliance remained unclear at year's end, but foreign companies warned that they could be forced to close their operations in Russia in light of these and other restrictions.

Prosecutors in 2014 continued their practice of charging individuals—including journalists, bloggers, and whistle-blowing civil servants—with defamation, extremism, and other trumped-up criminal offenses in an effort to limit their activities. In January, Aksana Panova, former editor in chief of the news website Ura.ru in Yekaterinburg, was given a two-year suspended sentence that included a ban on all journalistic activity after a court found her guilty of extortion. Panova denied the charges, claiming they were filed in retribution for her critical coverage of local officials. In September, Siberian journalist and blogger Dmitriy Shipilov was arrested near Moscow after a newspaper published his interview with the organizer of a planned march for Siberian autonomy. Shipilov, known for his criticism of local authorities in articles for the *Novy Kuzbass* newspaper, was arrested for failing to serve a three-month jail sentence for

“insulting a government servant” in 2012, according to police officials, though his colleagues maintained that the detention was politically motivated.

Investigative journalist and blogger Sergey Reznik remained in prison in 2014. Reznik, who regularly reported on corruption and abuses by local and regional officials in Rostov-on-Don, was sentenced to 18 months in prison in November 2013 on various charges, including insulting a government official. The verdict was upheld on appeal in April 2014, despite rights groups’ insistence that the case was political. In July, a new defamation case was brought against him by three local officials. If found guilty, Reznik faced up to three additional years in prison. Another Rostov-on-Don journalist, Aleksandr Tolmachev, was convicted in October on extortion charges and sentenced to nine years of hard labor. He had already spent nearly three years in preventive detention before his trial.

Judicial harassment of Navalny intensified in 2014. In April, he was found guilty of defaming a Moscow city councilor on Twitter and fined \$8,400. Navalny denied posting the tweet. In December, a Moscow court sentenced Navalny to a three-and-a-half-year suspended sentence and his brother, Oleg Navalny, to a prison term of the same length after the two men were found guilty of fraud charges in what was widely seen as a politically motivated case. Roskomnadzor issued a warning to four media outlets that reported on the sentencing and carried links to a video of Navalny calling for demonstrations; the agency accused the websites of inciting extremism.

While the constitution and a 2009 law provide for freedom of information, accessing information related to government bodies or via government websites is extremely difficult in practice.

Civil society organizations, including those advocating for journalists and media freedom, faced ongoing pressure from the authorities in 2014 under the so-called “foreign agents law.” The 2012 law, which requires nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive foreign funding and engage in broadly defined “political activity” to register with the Justice Ministry as “foreign agents,” was amended in 2014 to allow the ministry to register organizations without their consent. Previously, officials were obliged to engage in lengthy court battles to compel NGOs to register. Targets during the year included two media support organizations that were added to the registry in November.

Political Environment

The main national news agenda is firmly controlled by the Kremlin. The government sets editorial policy at state-owned television stations, which dominate the media landscape. The country’s more than 400 daily newspapers offer content on a wide range of topics but rarely challenge the official line on important issues such as corruption or foreign policy. Meaningful political debate is mostly limited to weekly magazines, news websites, some radio programs, and a handful of newspapers such as *Novaya Gazeta* or the business daily *Vedomosti*, which generally reach a limited audience among urban, educated Russians. These outlets operate with the understanding that the government has the means to close them at any time.

Propaganda from state-owned media outlets intensified after Russia began its military intervention in Ukraine in early 2014. The most egregious disinformation was often reinforced by altered or falsely identified images. In April, for example, Russian media reported that Ukrainian authorities were building a concentration camp in eastern Ukraine, citing pictures that actually showed the abandoned construction site of a European Union-funded facility meant to

house illegal migrants. Separately, Russian authorities continued to use paid commentators to influence online content. Media investigations have uncovered paid commenting campaigns organized by pro-Kremlin youth movements, and foreign media outlets in 2014 reported a surge in propagandistic user comments on articles related to Russia or Ukraine.

The authorities also put pressure on social-media platforms through their owners and managers. Pavel Durov, the founder and chief executive of the popular social-networking site VKontakte, announced in April that he was resigning and leaving the country due to ongoing intimidation from the Federal Security Service (FSB). He had refused FSB demands to hand over the account data of several Ukrainian activists beginning in December 2013. The e-mail provider Mail.ru, owned by Kremlin-friendly businessman Alisher Usmanov, subsequently increased its stake in VKontakte, taking full control by September 2014.

Dozhd (Rain), often described as Russia's only independent television news outlet, faced increased interference in response to its content during 2014. In January, the station came under fire from authorities after it conducted a website poll asking readers whether the Soviet army should have surrendered the city of Leningrad to German invaders during World War II rather than resisting a lengthy siege that cost nearly a million civilian lives. Roskomnadzor began an investigation into the incident, and within days the major satellite providers in Russia began to drop Dozhd from their subscription packages, reportedly under pressure from the Kremlin. In March, Dozhd general director Natalya Sindeyeva announced that the station was insolvent, although it managed to continue operating through the end of the year. A number of observers alleged that the government's campaign against the broadcaster was actually motivated by its critical reports on other topics, including corruption and human rights abuses surrounding the Sochi Olympics.

Independent or objective coverage of the Ukraine conflict resulted in official pressure on a number of other outlets. In March, when the popular news website Lenta.ru published a link to an interview with a leader of the Ukrainian nationalist group Right Sector, Roskomnadzor issued a warning. The next day, the website's owner fired its editor, Galina Timchenko, and replaced her with media executive Aleksey Goreslavskiy, who had previously edited a progovernment outlet. Almost 40 Lenta.ru employees resigned in protest. In October, Ekho Moskvyy received a warning from Roskomnadzor after it aired first-hand accounts of the fighting between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. The regulator alleged that the program contained "information justifying war crimes."

Foreign journalists faced difficulties while working in Russia during the year. In July, Yevgeniy Agarkov, a reporter with the Ukrainian television station 1+1, was arrested in the city of Voronezh, where he had gone to cover the trial of a Ukrainian military pilot who had been captured in Ukraine and accused in the killing of two journalists with the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK). Russian immigration officials charged Agarkov for not having proper accreditation to work as a journalist in the country. He was convicted, deported, and banned from returning to Russia for five years. In September, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news team was attacked in the southern city of Astrakhan, where they had gone to investigate the deaths of Russian soldiers in eastern Ukraine—an especially sensitive subject given the Kremlin's denials that it had deployed troops across the border. The BBC crew's camera was smashed and their recordings were deleted.

At least two journalists died in Russia under unclear circumstances during the year. Timur Kuashev, a correspondent for the independent magazine *Dosh*, was found dead on August 1 after disappearing the previous day in the republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, part of the restive

North Caucasus area. He had also blogged and contributed to news websites covering the region, and received numerous threats in response to his critical reporting on law enforcement and local officials. In October, freelance journalist Valeriy Donskoy died of pneumonia in Moscow after being held in harsh conditions near the Russian-Ukrainian border, though the details of his detention and the identity of his captors were not reported. The Committee to Protect Journalists has documented 56 work-related murders of journalists in Russia since 1992, finding that the perpetrators nearly always enjoyed impunity. In May 2014, after numerous delays, five suspects were convicted for the October 2006 murder of prominent investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya. They received sentences ranging from 12 years to life in prison in June. Press freedom advocates noted that those who ordered the defendants to carry out the contract-style killing remained unidentified and at large.

Physical assaults on journalists were reported in a range of Russian regions in 2014. Several reporters investigating the deaths of Russian soldiers in Ukraine were threatened and attacked. In August, Lev Shlosberg, a Pskov-based newspaper publisher and member of the opposition Yabloko party, suffered a serious assault that left him unconscious. Shlosberg said the attack was related to his paper's investigation into the secret deployment of Russian troops from the Pskov region to eastern Ukraine. Also in August, investigative reporter Aleksandr Krutov was beaten by unknown assailants in the city of Saratov. It was the fourth attack suffered by Krutov, who covers crime for a local publication, in his 20-year career. In September, a television crew in Novosibirsk was attacked by a group of men who smashed the videographer's camera and struck him in the face. The team had been reporting on an employment company suspected of fraud for the *Precedent* television show. In a separate attack in Novosibirsk in December, two men disguised as couriers entered the offices of the Taiga.info news website, searched for editor in chief Yevgeniy Mezdrikov, and began beating him before being chased off by employees.

Economic Environment

The authorities exert significant influence over the information landscape through a vast state-owned media empire. The state owns, either directly or through proxies, all five of the major national television networks, as well as national radio networks, important national newspapers, and national news agencies. Key proxy owners include Gazprom Media, an arm of the state-owned energy giant Gazprom, and National Media Group, owned by Yuriy Kovalchuk, a close ally of Putin and board chairman of the powerful Rossiya Bank. The state also controls more than 60 percent of the country's estimated 45,000 regional and local newspapers and periodicals. State-run television is the main news source for most Russians and generally serves as a propaganda tool of the government, while the newspapers and radio stations with the largest audiences largely focus on entertainment content. The Kremlin bolstered its international media presence in 2014 with the creation of a new multimedia news service, dubbed Sputnik, which merged and replaced existing services. The government also owns RT, an international, multilingual satellite news network, which generally seeks to promote the Kremlin's take on global events.

A law signed in October 2014 will restrict foreign ownership stakes in Russian media assets to 20 percent by early 2017. The law was expected to have the greatest impact on respected, independent publications like *Vedomosti* and *Forbes Russia*, which are owned by U.S. and European media groups.

Government advertising allocations are an important means of influencing content, and most media businesses remain dependent on state subsidies and government printing, distribution, and transmission facilities. Private businesses are reported to be reluctant to place advertisements with outlets that are not favorable to the government. In July, Putin signed a series of amendments to the federal law on advertising that, beginning in January 2015, would ban satellite and cable channels from carrying commercial advertising if they also charge viewers a subscription fee. Stations with terrestrial broadcasting licenses would be exempt from the ban, meaning it would seriously damage the financial viability of Dozhd, foreign content providers, and many other services, but not the dominant progovernment channels.

About 71 percent of Russians accessed the internet in 2014, though the rate was higher in the cities. Russians have joined social-networking sites in large numbers and are among the heaviest social-media users worldwide.

Rwanda

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 23 / 30

Total Score: 79 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	83,NF	84,NF	82,NF	80,NF	79,NF

Press freedom in Rwanda deteriorated in 2014 as independent journalists were frequently harassed, threatened, and arrested. Exiled and foreign journalists were increasingly subject to extralegal intimidation, violence, and forced disappearances for criticizing officials in their reporting. A culture of fear among journalists has led to widespread self-censorship. In October 2014, the government suspended indefinitely the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Kinyarwanda-language radio service following the airing of a controversial BBC television documentary about Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

Legal Environment

Article 34 of Rwanda's constitution stipulates that "freedom of the press and freedom of information are recognized and guaranteed by the state," but other broadly worded clauses allow for restrictions, interference, and censorship. Statutes in the penal code forbid defamation of the head of state or other public officials, which can carry up to five years in prison and fines of up to 10,000 Rwandan francs (\$14). Meanwhile, public incitement to "divisionism" remains punishable by up to five years in prison and fines of up to 5 million Rwandan francs (\$7,000). "Divisionism," broadly defined as "a crime committed by any oral or written expression or any act of division that could generate conflicts among the population or cause disputes," offers extensive leeway for the government to crack down on dissent. Human Rights Watch researchers were routinely unable to obtain a stable definition of the term while interviewing judges who had tried defendants on divisionism charges.

A 2009 media law was amended in 2013 to grant journalists the “right to seek, receive, give and broadcast information and ideas through media” and to guarantee freedom for online communications; however, no further reforms were made in 2014, leaving problematic clauses intact. The law authorizes the state, rather than an independent body, to determine operational rules for media outlets and to define journalists’ professional standards. The law also grants the minister of information and communication technologies (ICTs) unlimited powers to set conditions for establishing media outlets and authorizing foreign audiovisual media companies to operate in Rwanda. In October 2013, President Paul Kagame approved amendments to the restrictive 2008 genocide ideology law, which had prohibited the propagation of ideas based on “ethnic, regional, racial, religious, language, or other divisive characteristics.” More definitive and easier to interpret, the amended law reduced prison sentences from 25 years to a maximum of 9, and requires proof of criminal intent behind an offending act.

A number of journalists were arrested and prosecuted under Rwanda’s restrictive media laws in 2014. In April, the director of a Christian radio station, Cassien Ntamuhanga, was arrested alongside singer Kizito Mihigo for allegedly associating with an opposition political party and a Hutu rebel group. Ntamuhanga went missing for a week prior to his court appearance; and both individuals were charged in December for inciting violence and conspiring to overthrow the government. Stanley Gatera, editor of the independent news website *Umusingi*, was also arrested in April on charges of attempted extortion, which he believed were linked to a critical interview he conducted on Al Jazeera’s *People and Power* program in March. Gatera was held for six hours and received death threats following his release; he fled the country later in April. Previously, he had been arrested and found criminally liable for a controversial opinion piece published in June 2012, for which he was fined and sentenced to one year in prison for gender discrimination and inciting divisionism. In May 2014, two women from the University of Rwanda radio station, Radio Salus, were arrested for broadcasting material deemed offensive to Kagame, but were released the following day with the assistance of the Rwanda Media Commission (RMC), the media’s self-regulatory body.

Umurabyo newspaper’s Agnès Uwimana Nkusi was released in June 2014. Nkusi, jailed in 2010, initially had faced a 17-year sentence for genocide denial, inciting civil disobedience, and defaming public officials based on a 2009 article that criticized Kagame. Her sentence was reduced on appeal.

A revised Access to Information Bill, enacted in March 2013, set new standards for public access to information and protects whistleblowers. Welcomed by international rights organizations, the law applies to public and some private bodies that work in the public interest, though there are some broad exemptions that restrict access to information on topics related to national security and trade.

The 2013 media law provided for self-regulation under the RMC and removed a previous provision that required journalists to hold certain academic qualifications. The bill also eased the process for acquiring press cards, and reduced the grounds on which authorities can refuse to provide information. For broadcast regulation, the RMC makes recommendations to the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA), which issues or withdraws licenses. The Vienna-based International Press Institute initially expressed concern about the genuine independence of the RMC, given that it was enacted by a government statute. However, under the commission’s president, Fred Muvunyi, the body has been known to push back against government infringements on press freedom.

In July 2013, Kagame signed into law a bill establishing the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA), a public broadcaster that would purportedly be more autonomous from the state than its predecessor, the Rwanda Bureau of Information and Broadcasting (ORINFOR). The law established the RBA as a purveyor of impartial news with no government oversight, though some question its impartiality in practice; its current leader, Arthur Assimwe, is known to have close ties to the government.

Political Environment

Although pre-publication censorship is not an official policy, journalists struggle to cover sensitive topics such as ethnicity and the 1994 genocide. On October 25, 2014, the RURA suspended indefinitely radio broadcasts of the BBC's Kinyarwanda-language service following the airing of a controversial television documentary about the 1994 genocide entitled "Rwanda, The Untold Story." Days earlier, Rwanda's Parliament had approved a resolution calling on the government to ban the BBC and open an investigation into charges of "genocide denial" against the broadcaster. Kagame also leveled similar accusations against the BBC. RMC president Muvunyi criticized the RURA's decision, arguing that the body was required to first consult with the RMC on suspensions related to content and that it had overstepped its authority. He faced a wave of online attacks as a result, including a campaign of harassment on Twitter. In early November, the RURA set up a special commission of inquiry to investigate the BBC, which remained suspended as of the end of 2014.

Government censorship of internet content has increased in recent years, and all provisions of the 2012 new media laws apply to online publications. In 2014, a growing number of opposition blogs and independent online news outlets were intermittently inaccessible, including the websites of independent newspapers *Umuwugizi*, *Umusingi* and *Inyenyeri News*, which had been blocked in the past.

Rwanda's restrictive laws encourage self-censorship, as journalists hesitate to cover controversial subjects due to fears of reprisal and government surveillance. Journalists became increasingly concerned about government surveillance after 2012 amendments to the Law Relating to the Interception of Communications empowered the police, army, and intelligence services to monitor online and offline private communications in order to protect "public security." The law also requires all communications service providers to have the technical capability to enable interception upon request.

Rwanda's repressive media environment has led many journalists to flee, including Stanley Gatera, who left the country with his family after his April 2014 arrest. Similarly, Eric Udahemuka of *Isimbi* newspaper left Rwanda in April following months of harassment and threats for publishing articles critical of the Rwandan government. But even once in exile, journalists are increasingly subject to extralegal intimidation, violence, and forced disappearances, resulting in a chilling effect on both exiled journalists and those hoping to flee harassment at home. In February, Andrew Muhanguzi, the brother of John-Bosco Gasasira, the exiled editor of the independent *Umuwugizi* news website, was reported missing from his home in Uganda, where he and his family had been living. Muhanguzi's family claims that he was kidnapped by men in Ugandan police uniforms outside their home in February, and he remained missing as of the end of 2014. He had previously been kidnapped by alleged Rwandan operatives in Kampala and released after two weeks in captivity in September 2013. Charles Ingabire, editor of the Uganda-based online publication *Inyenyeri News* and an outspoken critic of the Kagame

regime, fled Rwanda in 2007 due to threats and was shot dead in Uganda in November 2011. His murder remained unsolved at the end of 2014.

Foreign journalists critical of Rwandan leaders also suffered harassment in 2014, often at the hands of government officials. A journalist for Radio France Internationale was repeatedly harassed on Twitter by a user known as @RichardGoldston, an account later revealed to be operated by the president's office. Rwandan security agents harassed journalists in neighboring Uganda for covering sensitive events in Rwanda. Four journalists with the Ugandan newspaper *Daily Monitor* received death threats after Rwandan state-owned media accused them of associating with the Rwanda National Congress (RNC) opposition group in exile.

Economic Environment

Progovernment newspapers and radio stations dominate the Rwandan media, which disseminate information in English, French, and Kinyarwanda. Although more than 50 print publications were registered with the government in 2014, fewer than 10 published regularly. Eight of the country's more than 30 radio stations are government-owned. The main government-run television station was joined by two private stations in 2012—the first private television channels to operate since 1994—and four privately owned television channels were on the air during 2014. State-owned media maintain the largest audience, and most private outlets do not cover controversial topics, although privately owned radio stations occasionally criticize government policies, as do Kinyarwanda-language newspapers.

Market entry for media outlets remains expensive, but the government eliminated taxes on imported media equipment and removed sales tax on domestic media materials to decrease costs and spur future investment. Most newspapers are printed in Uganda, where printing costs are much cheaper than services provided by Rwanda's government-owned printing facility, the Rwanda Printing and Publishing Company (RPPC), which frequently denies service to critical newspapers. In February 2014, the government privatized the RPPC, handing over 70 percent of shares to a Kenyan printing firm and Rwandan public relations firm.

Low salaries, especially in private media, encourage corruption; journalists often alter coverage for bribes, and extortion is common. Media outlets face pressure to provide favorable coverage to large investors, and the government withholds state advertising from outlets considered critical of the regime. A survey conducted between January and March 2014 found that nearly half of Rwandan journalists earn less than \$293 a month—barely enough to rent a house without basic amenities in Kigali, the capital.

Approximately 10 percent of the population used the internet in 2014, and the vast majority of users accessed it via mobile devices. The government has made ICTs a priority and invested heavily in their development, including the expansion of broadband access. There are 10 internet service providers (ISPs) and three telephone operators, and Rwanda had a mobile penetration rate of 64 percent in 2014.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 20 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	20,F	20,F	20,F	20,F	20,F

St. Lucia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 3 / 30

Political Environment: 8 / 40

Economic Environment: 4 / 30

Total Score: 15 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	15,F	15,F	15,F	15,F	15,F

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 7 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 17 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	17,F	17,F	17,F	17,F	17,F

Samoa

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 13 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 30 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	29,F	30,F	29,F	29,F	29,F

San Marino

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 5 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 16 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	17,F	17,F	17,F	16,F	16,F

São Tomé and Príncipe

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 28 / 100

Survey Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	28,F	29,F	29,F	28,F	28,F

Saudi Arabia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29 / 30

Political Environment: 29 / 40

Economic Environment: 25 / 30

Total Score: 83 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	83,NF	83,NF	84,NF	84,NF	83,NF

Saudi Arabia has one of the most repressive media environments in the world. The authorities bolstered their efforts to control news and information in 2014 with the passage of expansive antiterrorism legislation and further arrests of regime critics.

Legal Environment

Article 39 of the 1992 Basic Law, which covers mass media, does not guarantee freedom of the press, and the authorities are given broad powers to prevent any act that may lead to disunity or sedition. The Basic Law also prohibits publishing materials that harm national security or that “detract from a man’s dignity.” Defamation is a criminal offense, and truth is not a recognized defense in such cases. Any form of expression that insults Islam is potentially punishable by death, as is the crime of apostasy. The 2003 Press and Publications Act governs

the establishment of media outlets and stipulates penalties for press violations, such as fines and imprisonment. A 2005 royal decree transferred jurisdiction over the media from the court system to the Ministry of Culture and Information, which is authorized to shut down any outlet that it finds to have violated the press law. In addition, since 2011, all online newspapers and bloggers have been required to obtain a special license from the ministry. In practice, a variety of courts hear cases against traditional and online media outlets.

In 2011, as uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa gained momentum, the monarchy issued a decree banning the reporting of news that contradicts Sharia (Islamic law), undermines national security, promotes foreign interests, or slanders religious leaders. The decree amended several articles of the 2003 press law, allowing authorities to impose lifetime professional bans on journalists and levy fines of up to 500,000 riyals (\$133,000) for violations of the law. Other amendments barred publication of anything harmful to the state and the coverage of trials without prior authorization from judicial officials.

A new law that took effect in February 2014, the Penal Law for Crimes of Terrorism and Its Financing, defines terrorism as any action intended to “insult the reputation of the state,” “harm public order,” or “shake the security of society,” among other vague descriptions. The scope of the law raised concerns that it could be used to criminalize ordinary journalistic activity. In March, the Interior Ministry issued further regulations that allow police to make arrests for virtually any criticism of the government. Article 8 of the regulations bans “promoting” protests, meetings, or group statements, as well as anything that “harms the unity or stability of the kingdom by any means.” Article 9 targets “sowing discord in society.”

The country’s restrictive legislation is regularly enforced. Throughout 2014, the authorities arrested and prosecuted both professional journalists and prominent users of social media, which have become an important source of news and information given the tight controls on traditional outlets.

In February, a court sentenced Wajdi al-Ghazzawi, owner of the satellite broadcast Al-Fajr Media Group, to 12 years in prison for airing content deemed to have incited sedition and harmed the kingdom’s reputation; he also received a lifetime ban on media appearances and a 20-year travel ban. In March, judicial authorities increased the prison sentences of journalists Habib Ali al-Maatiq and Hussein Malik al-Salam to two and five years, respectively, from one and three years in late 2013. They had been arrested in 2012 for covering protests in Eastern Province for the critical news website Al-Fajr Cultural Network. Al-Salam’s term was increased again to six years in June, while al-Maatiq completed his sentence in August.

In April, *Al-Watan On Line* journalist Mansour al-Mazhem was sentenced to seven days in jail for writing about power outages in a Saudi prison. He was charged under the defamation provision of a 2007 cybercrime law. In May, the courts sentenced the manager of the news site *Al-Awamia*, Jalal Mohamed al-Jamal, to five years in prison on charges of opposing the state through coverage of the demonstrations in Eastern Province. In June, photojournalist Jassim al-Safar was sentenced to seven years in prison and a seven-year travel ban for offenses including posting photos and videos on YouTube that could “discredit the kingdom.”

In July, a court upheld the five-year prison term of writer and human rights activist Mikhlif bin Daham al-Shammari, who was convicted in 2013 of “sowing discord” and other violations linked to his social and political commentary. The court also ordered him to not write for the media, and imposed a 10-year travel ban. In September, an appeals court upheld a May decision sentencing Raef Badawi, founder of a liberal internet forum, to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes, and a fine of 1 million riyals (\$267,000) for insulting Islam. He was also barred from

communicating with international media and faced a 10-year travel ban after serving his sentence. Badawi had originally received seven years in prison and 600 lashes in 2013, but the penalty was increased after he appealed.

Later in the year, several activists were punished for their commentary on Twitter. They included three prominent lawyers who received prison sentences of five to eight years for criticizing the Justice Ministry, and a women's rights activist who was arrested after allegedly insulting religious authorities and calling for women to be allowed to drive.

Saudi Arabia has no freedom of information law that provides for public access to state-held information, and officials do not disclose details related to sensitive topics such as government spending and allocations to the royal family. The media have been allowed to observe and report on the functions of some state entities, such as the Shura Council, but access may be arbitrarily withdrawn and is not guaranteed by law.

Political Environment

According to official media policy, the press should be a tool to educate the masses, propagate government views, and promote national unity. The government has been known to directly censor both local and international media, and journalists routinely practice self-censorship and avoid criticism of the royal family, Islam, or religious authorities.

Many Saudis have turned to the internet to express political opinions and expose government corruption. Twitter has become extremely popular in Saudi Arabia, which has as many as 5 million users, about half of whom are considered "active." Widespread discussion of a topic on Twitter often forces traditional news outlets to cover stories that would otherwise be considered too sensitive.

While it would be both difficult and unpopular to obstruct large, internationally hosted social-media platforms like Twitter, the authorities are able to monitor and block various websites with relative ease. The government aggressively blocks websites it considers immoral, blasphemous, or critical of the regime. Other politically sensitive websites are routinely blocked, including those associated with the country's disadvantaged Shiite Muslim minority. Protests in Shiite areas are not covered by the local press unless the Ministry of Information releases an official statement.

Physical harassment of journalists is relatively rare. However, both local and foreign reporters frequently face difficulty covering the news in person, especially when trying to access Eastern Province.

Economic Environment

More than a dozen daily newspapers publish in Saudi Arabia. All are privately owned but controlled by individuals affiliated with the royal family. Members of the royal family also control two popular London-based dailies, *Asharq al-Aswat* and *Al-Hayat*, that serve a wider Arab audience. The government owns and operates all terrestrial television and radio stations. Although satellite dishes are illegal, satellite television has become widespread and is an important source of foreign news. Key regional satellite channels, including the popular Al-Arabiya news channel, are controlled by Saudi investors and adhere to local media norms.

Internet penetration in Saudi Arabia reached nearly 64 percent of the population in 2014. The country also has one of the world's highest rates of mobile telephone penetration, with about

180 subscriptions for every 100 residents, and many users access the internet via mobile devices. Saudi Arabia also ranks first in the total number of daily YouTube views, according to Google.

Senegal

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 16 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 48 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	57,PF	54,PF	55,PF	52,PF	48,PF

Senegal's press freedom climate remained tolerant in 2014 under President Macky Sall, who took office in early 2012. Many media outlets continued to produce content critical of the government, and journalists generally faced fewer instances of physical and legal harassment than in the past. However, despite promises from government officials in recent years, there was no progress in decriminalizing defamation or adopting freedom of information legislation.

Legal Environment

Article 8 of the 2001 constitution protects freedoms of opinion, expression, and the press, and Article 10 guarantees the right to express opinions freely, in words, in writing, in images, and by peaceful assembly. These freedoms are occasionally limited in practice. Under Sall's predecessor, Abdoulaye Wade, the government used provisions of the 1977 penal code—including Article 80, which criminalizes vaguely defined threats to national security—to harass, prosecute, fine, and incarcerate critical journalists; the use of these provisions has declined under Sall.

Although President Sall has pledged support for stronger protections for press freedom, there has been little legislative progress. In August 2014, the National Assembly rejected a proposed media code that would have decriminalized a number of press offenses. Watchdogs noted the persistence of several other laws—including Article 362 of the penal code, which prescribes fines and prison terms for libel—that can be used to limit freedom of the press. No legislation guarantees the right to access information.

The National Council of Audiovisual Regulation (CNRA), established in 2006 to replace the High Audiovisual Council (HCA), is composed of nine members appointed by the president. In its annual report for 2014, the CNRA criticized the state television station for not covering the convention of the opposition coalition of former president Wade, while simultaneously censoring the Walfadjri media group for broadcasting the very same convention.

Political Environment

Journalists occasionally face harassment, detention, and assault, mainly by the authorities, although such problems have declined during the Sall presidency. In August 2014,

local news outlets reported that Felix N’Zale, editor of the Senegalese newspaper *La Tribune*, was detained by police and charged with “spreading false news” over an article he published claiming that five cases of Ebola had been identified in Senegal. N’Zale was fined and given a one-year suspended sentence.

In a separate case, Walfadjri owner Sidy Lamine Niass was detained in January 2014 for allegedly insulting Sall by accusing him of corruption. He was released the next day, and there were no reports of formal charges. In August, a former member of the Wade administration was arrested on similar charges. He was released on bail in October, and his case remained ongoing at year’s end.

Economic Environment

Many private, independent print publications and three government-affiliated newspapers publish regularly, although they have limited reach in rural areas. Radio is the most important source of news due to high illiteracy rates, and a wide range of public, private, and community radio stations operate on more than 80 frequencies. Some community radio operators have complained that frequencies are not allocated in a transparent manner. There are at least nine private television channels, although they mainly carry entertainment programming. The state-owned Radiodiffusion Télévision Sénégalaise (RTS) generally favors the government in its news coverage, and the president oversees the selection of its 12-member board. Under Wade, the government was accused of selectively granting or withholding state subsidies to influence media outlets, a practice that appears to have continued under Sall. Foreign satellite television and radio stations, including Radio France Internationale and the British Broadcasting Corporation, are available and unrestricted. Internet access is unrestricted and reached 17 percent of the population in 2014. The rapid growth of mobile telephone use in recent years has led to wider access to news and social-networking websites for many Senegalese.

Serbia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40

Economic Environment: 12 / 30

Total Score: 40 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	35,PF	33,PF	35,PF	36,PF	37,PF

Journalists and media outlets faced numerous instances of pressure in 2014 after criticizing the government of Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić. Media workers in Serbia also risk physical attacks and are constrained by a difficult economic environment. The legal framework for the protection of media freedom in Serbia was brought further into line with European Union (EU) standards with the August 2014 approval of three new media laws, but the laws have yet to be implemented.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of speech and the press are protected under Serbia's constitution and legal system. However, these protections are not consistently upheld in practice. Vučić and his supporters stepped up hostile rhetoric and verbal harassment against critical journalists and outlets in 2014. The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), a regional media organization funded in large part by foreign grants, faced pressure after its August 2014 publication of reports suggesting that the Serbian government had overpaid for its share in the Air Serbia airline. Vučić publicly dismissed BIRN's investigation—which was published in the weekly *Vreme*—as based on inaccurate documents, and as backed by a wealthy businessman facing corruption charges. Shortly after the report's publication, the progovernment newspaper *Informer* referred to reporters from BIRN and from Serbia's Center for Investigative Journalism (CINS), a similar media organization, as "spies"; it also alleged that BIRN and CINS held millions of dollars' worth of secret contracts with the EU, and that those contracts defined which topics the organizations were permitted to cover. The director of BIRN's Serbian operations denied the allegations of editorial control, and said the outlets obtained EU funding through a public-call process.

Defamation was decriminalized in 2012, and is now a civil offense. Articles criminalizing insult remain on the books; such offenses are technically not punishable by prison sentences, but journalists can be imprisoned if they are unable to pay associated fines. Investigative reporters and media outlets risk lawsuits or threats of legal action for insulting powerful people. In July, a Belgrade appeals court upheld an October 2013 defamation ruling requiring the B92 broadcaster to pay 200,000 Serbian dinars (\$2,280) in connection with an article that implicated a former assistant minister of health in the mismanagement of public funds.

In 2014, there was a notable decrease in court rulings in which heavy fines were levied in response to politicians' claims of being slandered in the media. Journalists attributed the shift to an improved understanding among judges of Serbia's media laws. Nevertheless, some confusion within the judiciary over Serbia's media laws continues; in particular, journalists say judges often ignore a law holding that journalists cannot be penalized for publishing or rewording official government statements.

Other laws relating to the media are often unclear or contradictory, and some pose a threat to media freedom. Journalists are subject to prosecution under the Data Secrecy Law passed in 2009, which protects information related to national security, public safety, and foreign affairs, among other categories. While internet access is not restricted, the 2010 Law on Electronic Communications requires telecommunications providers to keep records on the source, destination, and timing of all electronic communications for one year for potential government use. When the law was approved, data could be collected without court approval; however, the Constitutional Court ruled in 2013 that the provision was unconstitutional and that court approval is necessary.

In August 2014, the government approved a package of three media reform laws that fulfill significant parts of an EU-backed Media Strategy that Serbia adopted in 2011. Under the new laws, the state will privatize nearly all publicly owned outlets, and will cease direct funding of most media through its budget by July 2015. Instead, media outlets will compete for state grants to support coverage that serves the public interest. The public broadcasters, Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) and Radio Television of Vojvodina (RTV), are exempt from the prohibition against state funding and will remain in the budget until 2016, after which time they will be funded by a separate tax. A similar public service for Serbs in Kosovo, as well as certain

other minority media outlets, will also be exempt from the prohibition against direct state funding. The legislation additionally defines services that a public service broadcaster should provide in order to serve the public interest, but leaves unclear the party that will assess whether those tasks have been fulfilled, or how such an assessment should be conducted. The laws establish a media register in which the ownership of each media company will be listed, although it was not operational as of the end of 2014. The new media laws also aim to harmonize regulatory policies for Serbia's electronic media with EU standards, and prepare for digitalization of the television sector by mid-2015. Some Serbian journalists criticized the government for allowing only seven days for public comment on drafts of the new laws.

The EU praised the laws' adoption in its 2014 progress report on Serbia, but noted that the legislation has yet to be implemented and that the legal environment surrounding Serbian media for the time being remained murky. Media reform advocates warn that the state resisted previous laws that set deadlines for privatization of media outlets, and have expressed concern that the newly codified procedures by which outlets compete for public funding are vulnerable to politicization.

Despite the existence of the 2004 Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, authorities frequently obstruct the media's efforts to obtain public information.

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media issues licenses to broadcasters, though its processes are nontransparent. According to Serbian journalists, the regulator charges arbitrary and frequently expensive fees for licenses. Print media outlets are considered private firms and do not pay license taxes. Online media also do not require licenses.

Political Environment

Media outlets and journalists continued to face pressure from politicians and owners over content and editorial policies in 2014. Self-censorship is reportedly widespread. Journalists attribute the phenomenon not only to harassment that can follow critical or investigative reporting, but also to economic pressures, such as the risk of losing advertising contracts, in connection with such reports.

Amid severe flooding in May 2014, the government declared a state of emergency that allowed it to detain individuals for "inciting panic." According to reports, police detained 3 journalists for questioning during this period, and 20 more were invited for questioning. In several instances, online content critical of the government's handling of the crisis—including entire websites—was deleted or temporarily blocked. The developments prompted a statement of concern about online censorship from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Dunja Mijatović, the organization's media freedom representative, stopped short of directly accusing Serbian authorities of blocking online content, but nevertheless demanded that Serbian authorities "stop interfering with the work of online media outlets." Vučić denied claims of censorship and intimidation, called OSCE officials liars, and demanded that the organization apologize, but later said the government would investigate the incidents. However, little became of Vučić's pledge, and days after his announcement, Serbian authorities detained another journalist for criticizing the government response to the floods on Facebook. In another instance of apparent online censorship, the news website Peščanik.net was temporarily knocked offline in June after publishing a story suggesting that Serbia's minister of internal affairs might have plagiarized a portion of his doctoral thesis.

Separately, four popular political talk programs—three television shows and one radio show—were canceled in 2014. Among them was the long-running B92 television program *Utisak Nedelje*; its host, Olja Beckovic, claimed that the show had been banned on orders from Vučić. B92 also announced in the fall of 2014 that it would shift its focus to entertainment, as opposed to news broadcasting, and would soon begin operating out of the same studio as Serbia's public broadcaster.

Journalists face threats and risk physical attacks in connection with their work. Human Rights Watch reported five attacks against journalists between January and August 2014, and some two dozen more cases of threats or intimidation during the same period. Convictions in such cases are rare. There was some progress in 2014 in the investigation of the 1999 killing of journalist Slavko Ćuruvija. Four former security services officials, including former security service chief Radomir Marković, were indicted for his killing in June 2014; of them, three, including Marković, are in custody. A trial had yet to open at the year's end.

Economic Environment

The public station RTS1 competes with a handful of national commercial broadcasters. The country's approximately 120 television stations give Serbia the most per capita of any country in Europe. Print media are numerous and highly diverse. There are more than 700 print outlets, some 300 radio stations, and roughly 200 online news portals serving a population of about 7.2 million. Online media are increasingly important, and about 54 percent of Serbia's residents accessed the internet in 2014.

Ownership of print and broadcasting outlets is often unclear. The state expects to privatize 79 media outlets it controls under the August 2014 media legislation, according to the Ministry for Culture and Information.

Many news outlets depend heavily on the government's subsidies and advertising purchases, which are allocated through opaque processes. Serbian journalists say state control of these processes lets the government exert great influence over editorial policies. The South East European Media Observatory, a civil society group, reported in 2014 that between 25 and 40 percent of advertising revenue in Serbia comes from the state. There is no regulatory body supervising such public spending.

Most outlets in Serbia's overcrowded media market are not financially self-sufficient and are unable to fund high-quality journalism; the result is a widespread lack of professionalism, with many outlets obtaining news items from social media, and, during the 2014 election campaign, directly from political parties' public relations departments.

Journalists and the media face economic pressures including payment defaults, termination of contracts, changes to business contracts, unreasonably high fees for copyrights and related rights, and financial inspections. Although journalists' associations work to protect members' interests, they lack resources to gain influence. There are three such associations, though none advocate for freelance journalists. Broader economic problems have contributed to an increase in self-censorship and a significant decline in investigative journalism in recent years. Journalists expect that the implementation of the privatization laws approved in August 2014 will force the closure of numerous outlets, leaving many unemployed.

Seychelles

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 50 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	58,PF	56,PF	56,PF	56,PF	52,PF

The media environment in Seychelles over the past decade has featured a government monopoly on radio and television, frequent use of draconian libel laws against opposition newspapers, occasional attacks against and harassment of media workers, and extensive self-censorship. However, conditions have improved somewhat in recent years due to a reduction in the cost of broadcast licenses and the launch of new, independent media outlets. In 2014, these outlets provided increasingly diverse and critical coverage of newsworthy events in the country.

Legal Environment

The constitution protects freedom of expression, but it also limits this guarantee with provisions protecting the reputation, rights, and privacy of citizens and the “interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health.” The Broadcasting and Telecommunications Act grants the minister of information the power to prohibit the broadcast of any material deemed contradictory to the “national interest.”

The use of libel laws against journalists has diminished in recent years, as the government has increasingly taken such issues before the Seychelles Media Commission (SMC), a regulatory body established in 2011, as opposed to the courts. Nevertheless, civil libel suits can still be filed against journalists. Seychelles has no freedom of information legislation in place.

The Seychelles Media Commission Act set up the SMC as an independent media arbitration body, but some critics question its neutrality. In 2013, the commission published codes of conduct and ethics for journalists in the country.

In July 2014, representatives from different media houses established the Association of Media Practitioners Seychelles (AMPS) to serve as an advocacy group for journalists. It replaces the defunct Seychelles Media Association, which had previously been journalists’ main institutional advocate.

Political Environment

New, independent media outlets established since 2011, including a business periodical and a radio station that launched in 2013, have increased the diversity of news content and reduced the role of partisan bias, though politically slanted coverage remains a problem.

A new Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation Act was passed in 2011, replacing legislation from 1992. The act was intended to increase the autonomy of the state-owned Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), which runs the only television station and two radio stations. However, the period surrounding the 2011 presidential election highlighted the continued bias of the SBC in favor of the ruling Parti Lepep and its candidate, President James

Michel, who won reelection. The government still dominates SBC news coverage, giving opposition parties only limited access to the airwaves.

There have been reports of the government monitoring e-mail, chat rooms, and blogs, and opposition activists have accused authorities of blocking their party websites. Individuals have been arrested, detained, and eventually released for posting critical comments about government officials on social-networking sites.

Journalists rarely face physical attacks or harassment. In June 2014, however, a photographer with an opposition-affiliated newspaper was reportedly beaten by Parti Lepep supporters while covering a march organized by the party.

Economic Environment

The state has a de facto monopoly on television broadcasting, and until 2013 it controlled the only radio outlets as well. The government subsidizes 85 percent of the SBC budget, with the remaining 15 percent coming from private advertising. In addition to its own content, the SBC broadcasts foreign news programming from outlets such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the U.S.-based Cable News Network (CNN).

Political parties are barred from obtaining broadcast licenses, and private broadcasters have been slow to develop because of prohibitively large annual licensing fees, though these were reduced in 2012 from 800,000 rupees (\$64,000) to 100,000 rupees (\$8,000) for radio and 250,000 rupees (\$20,000) for television. Since then, authorities have granted two licenses to independent radio stations. In 2013, one of those stations, Pure FM, went on the air, becoming the country's first private commercial radio outlet.

In the print sector, the state-owned daily *Seychelles Nation* rarely publishes stories that are critical of the government. Pressure from advertisers has led to management restructuring at the paper, and low salaries have resulted in the departure of seven journalists since 2010. The independent daily *Today in Seychelles* has grown to become one of the leading newspapers since launching in 2011. The *Victoria Times* began publication in 2013 as an independent, business-oriented triweekly. Three other weeklies, *Le Seychellois Hebdo*, *The People*, and *Le Nouveau Seychelles Weekly* are affiliated with political parties and express corresponding viewpoints. Newspapers reportedly practice self-censorship to protect the interests of major advertisers.

In 2012, Seychelles was connected to the Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System, which provided the country with greater telecommunications bandwidth. About 54 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. Telecommunications companies must submit subscriber information to the government, though the requirement was not enforced during the year.

Sierra Leone

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 15 / 30

Political Environment: 19 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 50 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	55,PF	53,PF	49,PF	49,PF	49,PF

A state of emergency, declared in July 2014 following the outbreak of the Ebola virus in Sierra Leone, gave the president wide executive powers without judicial oversight. These powers—including the unfettered ability to issue arrest and detention orders—significantly restricted the exercise of civil liberties, and were used to target journalists for their criticism of the government.

Legal Environment

Sierra Leone’s constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and the press, although these rights are occasionally restricted in practice. In 2014, powers granted to the president under the state of emergency imposed in the wake of the Ebola crisis led to the widespread use of arrest and detention orders against journalists who were critical of the government. No judicial oversight was required for the exercise of these presidential powers, which severely limited the freedom of expression at large.

Under the colonial-era Public Order Act of 1965, criminal libel is punishable by prison terms of three to seven years, while the separate crime of publishing false news is punishable by up to one year in prison. In 2014, several journalists and media outlets were targeted based on allegations of defamation. In January, an editor and managing director from the company Premier Media were arrested following a complaint by the information minister, who accused them of defaming the government; equipment from the company’s office was confiscated during a related search by security forces. In February, a producer for the Culture Radio station was arrested in connection to on-air comments made by a program participant; the arrest was reportedly encouraged by the vice president. In 2013, the Public Order Act was invoked against two journalists with the daily *Independent Observer* newspaper in connection to an article that referred to President Ernest Bai Koroma as a rat and a dictator. The journalists were arrested and charged with 26 counts of seditious libel against the president, and held for more than two weeks before being released on bail. Several other media outlets were raided in connection with the investigation. In March 2014, the *Independent Observer* journalists plead guilty to one charge of conspiracy to defame the president in exchange for the dropping of all remaining charges.

In 2013, Parliament passed the Right to Access Information Act. Media rights advocates lauded the legislation—which includes penalties for government agencies that fail to comply with its provisions—as an essential instrument in ensuring greater government transparency and accountability.

Media in Sierra Leone are regulated by the Independent Media Commission (IMC), whose members are appointed by the president acting on the advice of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and subject to the approval of Parliament, according to the Independent Media Commission (Amendment) Act of 2006. The IMC provides an alternative to litigation under the Public Order Act; aggrieved parties can register complaints with the commission, which grants them a hearing. If the IMC agrees that a complaint of defamation or falsehood is valid, it can request that the offending media outlet publish a retraction and an apology, or it can levy a fine. The IMC can also summon editors at its own discretion. The body has generally demonstrated independence from the government.

Political Environment

The government frequently interferes with the work of journalists and media outlets in an attempt to censor content. Under the state of emergency declared in 2014, the government adopted measures that curtailed coverage of the Ebola crisis, deterred critical reporting, and limited freedom of movement and access to information. In November, a popular radio journalist from the independent Citizen FM was arrested and accused of incitement after criticizing the government's response to the epidemic on his daily radio program. He was detained for 11 days and released without charge.

Two journalists were known to have died from the Ebola virus in 2014. In June, Eastern Radio journalist Mohamed Mwalim Sherif died following interviews with a Muslim cleric who had cared for an Ebola patient. In September, Victor Kassim, a journalist with the station Radio Maria, died along with his wife and child.

Economic Environment

Sierra Leone has more than 20 regularly published newspapers, approximately 40 radio stations—more than half of which are community stations—and 2 active terrestrial television stations; satellite television is also available to those who can afford it. Most newspapers are independent, though some are associated with political parties, and the print media routinely criticize both the government and opposition parties. All Sierra Leonean newspapers are printed in English, a language spoken by only about a third of the population. A low literacy rate coupled with the high cost of newspapers and televisions make radio the most important and widely accessed medium for obtaining information. Poverty, a lack of regular electricity, and illiteracy are also factors behind the low internet penetration rate, which stood at just 2 percent in 2014, though the government imposes no restrictions on access. The state-owned Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) operates a television service and a radio network. Television and radio programming is available in both English and local languages. The number of community radio stations has proliferated in recent years, but many are not sustainable due to their dependence on foreign grants and the difficulty of meeting high operational expenses, such as the cost of electricity; such problems are particularly pronounced in rural areas. International media operate freely, though foreign outlets are required to register with the government.

Widespread poverty is an obstacle to the financial sustainability of media outlets. Advertising rates are among the lowest in the world, and the management and operational structures of outlets are not always efficient or profitable. Few news providers can afford to station reporters outside the capital, and printing presses and other equipment are scarce and unreliable. Journalists are often untrained and poorly paid; many work without pay, taking second jobs that can cause conflicts of interest. Economic insecurity leaves journalists more vulnerable to editorial pressure from owners, advertisers, and other businesses.

Singapore

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 22 / 40

Economic Environment: 21 / 30

Total Score: 67 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	68,NF	68,NF	67,NF	67,NF	67,NF

Legal Environment

While Article 14 of the constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, there are restrictions on these rights. The Newspaper and Printing Presses Act, the Defamation Act, the Internal Security Act (ISA), and articles in the penal code allow the authorities to block the circulation of news deemed to incite violence, arouse racial or religious tensions, interfere in domestic politics, or threaten public order, the national interest, or national security. The Seditious Act, in effect since the colonial period, outlaws seditious speech, the distribution of seditious materials, and acts with “seditious tendency.”

Parliament has been dominated by the People’s Action Party (PAP) since 1959, and ruling party members are quick to use harsh civil and criminal defamation laws to silence and bankrupt political opponents and critical media outlets. With bloggers and online discussion groups increasingly offering alternative views and a virtual channel for expressing dissent, the government has begun to crack down on postings it deems offensive. In May 2014, blogger Roy Ngerng published a critique of the government’s management of a state pension fund, prompting a defamation lawsuit from Prime Minister Lee Hsien. Ngerng publicly apologized for the blog post and offered to settle the matter out of court for S\$5,000 (US\$3,900) but Lee rejected the offer. In July, Lee requested a summary judgement, asking that Ngerng’s apology serve as proof of wrongdoing and that a court move to assess damages. In November, Singapore’s High Court granted Lee’s request, stating that Ngerng had indeed defamed the prime minister, though the court had yet to decide the damages total at the year’s end. Significantly, this type of ruling is only possible if the judges believe that the accused has already admitted guilt and is unable to present an effective defense against the allegation; media freedom advocates criticized the decision for denying Ngerng an opportunity to defend himself. Additionally, in June 2014, Ngerng was dismissed from his job at a government hospital. In a public statement, hospital officials said Ngerng had improperly pursued personal interests during working hours, and noted that employees “cannot defame someone else without basis.”

The Singaporean judiciary lacks independence and systematically returns verdicts in the government’s favor. Journalists and other commentators who raise questions regarding judicial impartiality are vulnerable to charges of “scandalizing the judiciary,” an offense similar to contempt of court. In a January 2014 decision unrelated to Singaporean politics, an appeals court overturned a lower court’s order for Singapore-based blogger James Dorsey to disclose his sources for an article about the relationship between World Sports Group (WSG), a Singapore-based marketing agency, and Mohamed Bin Hammam, a former vice president of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) who had been banned from the association following bribery allegations. The court also ordered the WSG to pay Dorsey’s legal costs.

Singapore has no freedom of information law, and attempts by opposition legislators to introduce such a bill have not been successful.

Annual licensing requirements for all media outlets and internet service providers have been used to inhibit criticism of the government. Websites offering political or religious content

are required to register with the Media Development Authority (MDA), and a website's owners and editors are criminally liable for any content that the government finds objectionable. Under new regulations that took effect in 2013, any news website posting an average of at least one Singapore-related news article per week for over two months, and with at least 50,000 unique viewers per month over the same period, must apply for an individual license at the cost of S\$50,000 (US\$40,000). In 2014 the MDA ordered two prominent news websites, the *Online Citizen* and the *Mothership*, to obtain licenses under the Broadcasting Act in order to continue publishing. In 2013, the MDA had also ordered the *Independent Singapore* and the *Breakfast Network* to register; the latter moved to close rather than comply with the order. Although the MDA initially said that individuals expressing personal views on their own blogs would not be subject to the licensing fees, it later qualified its remarks, stating that if blogs "take on the nature of news sites, we will take a closer look and evaluate them accordingly."

The new regulations also oblige website owners to remove "prohibited content"—as defined under the Internet Code of Practice—within 24 hours after being notified by the MDA. Any websites that do not comply with the conditions may be fined or suspended. The MDA has suggested that the licensing regime could be extended to foreign news sites covering Singapore news. It defended the regulations as a necessary measure to protect "the social fabric and national interests" of Singapore and restrict content that "incites racial or religious hatred; misleads and causes mass panic; or advocates or promotes violence." Foreign media are also subject to pressure and restrictive laws such as the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act, and are required by the Ministry of Information, Communications, and the Arts to post bond and appoint a local legal representative if they wish to publish in Singapore.

Political Environment

Administration officials encourage journalists to provide favorable coverage of the PAP and its goals. Films, television programs, music, books, and magazines are sometimes censored; recently, the government on several occasions has moved to prohibit material that references same-sex couples. All films with a political agenda are banned unless sponsored by the government. The majority of print and broadcast journalists practice self-censorship to avoid defamation charges or other legal repercussions. Coverage of sensitive socioeconomic and political topics has typically been less restricted online.

Journalists can generally gather news freely and without harassment. Cases of physical attacks against members of the press are extremely rare, and none were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Nearly all print and broadcast media outlets, internet service providers, and cable television services are owned or controlled by the state or by companies with close ties to the PAP. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service is the only completely independent radio outlet available in the country. With a few exceptions, satellite television is prohibited. A substantial variety of foreign newspapers and magazines are distributed uncensored, but the government is authorized to limit the circulation of print editions. About 82 percent of the population used the internet in 2014.

Slovakia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 24 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	22,F	21,F	22,F	23,F

Legal Environment

Press freedom in Slovakia is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected, and independent media outlets freely disseminate diverse views. However, defamation is a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment of up to eight years—the highest possible defamation penalty in the European Union (EU). Certain types of expression, such as denial of the Holocaust or Armenian genocide and the defamation of nationalities, are also subject to criminal prosecution.

Defamation suits brought by politicians, business elites, and members of the judiciary remain a concern, and many suits claim exorbitant damages. While Prime Minister Robert Fico—notorious for bringing libel suits during his previous term in office—has been less litigious in his current term, representatives of the judiciary and police have on numerous occasions turned to legal means to contain media criticism. In the so-called Bonanno case, eight current and former judges sued the publishers of the tabloid *Nový Čas* in 2013 over a 2011 article that included photos of the judges wearing blue ear protectors and sporting mock assault rifles at a party at Penzion Bonanno. The party took place a few months after seven people, among them Roma, were murdered by a gunman wearing blue ear protectors. By 2014, the plaintiffs had filed several lawsuits against the publisher of *Nový Čas*, the Switzerland-based Ringier Axel Springer, that together sought damages of €1.8 million (\$2.3 million). In June, a district court ordered *Nový Čas* to publish an apology to Daniel Hudák, a Supreme Court justice and one of the plaintiffs, for violating Hudák's personal integrity and for publishing his name and picture without his consent. At the end of the year, the court had yet to decide the sum of damages to be awarded to Hudák; Ringier Axel Springer has appealed the decision. The lawsuits have been criticized by domestic and international watchdogs, including both the U.S. mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the OSCE media freedom representative, Dunja Mijatović. In a separate case, in October, prosecutors dropped criminal libel charges against Dušan Karolyi of the *Trend* news magazine. The case was connected to a 2013 article about police misconduct in which Karolyi had disclosed the first name and last initial of an agent with Slovakia's organized crime office (ÚBOK).

In January 2014, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) awarded a total of €30,000 (\$40,000) to Ringier Axel Springer after finding that Slovak courts in two cases had failed to protect the right of *Nový Čas* to free expression. Both cases involved instances in which the tabloid had published individuals' names—one article disclosed the identity of a local prosecutor's son who was killed in a car accident, and the second identified a person accused of cheating on a televised game show. Slovak courts had ruled against *Nový Čas* in lawsuits

connected to each article, but the ECHR found that the courts had failed to strike an appropriate balance between freedom of expression and the right to privacy.

The 2000 Act on Free Access to Information allows anyone to request information from state agencies, and noncompliant officials may be subject to fines. The government signaled intent in 2013 to revise the legislation, following statements by Fico that the act was being “misused by students and private interests.” However, a 2013 survey led by an adviser to Slovakia’s National Council speaker countered the notion that municipalities are overburdened by freedom of information requests; the survey showed that more than 30 percent of municipalities did not receive any requests in the period of 2010–2013, while 75 percent of those that did received no more than six requests. The survey also noted that numerous requests for information submitted by its organizers were unanswered. The law was not modified in 2014.

For the regulation of print media, the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists and the Periodical Publishers Association of Slovakia established the Press Council in 2001. However, the number of complaints handled by the Press Council has been very low in recent years, and it is unclear whether there is substantial public awareness of the body. Broadcast media are regulated by the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission (RVR), whose nine members are elected by the parliament. The state reduced funding for the RVR from €1.19 million (\$1.56 million) in 2013 to a projected €1.13 million (\$1.51 million) in 2014, while doubling the amount the council was expected to collect in fees and fines from €70,000 (\$226,000) in 2013 to a projected €340,000 (\$450,000) in 2014. Media watchdogs have expressed concern that the changes could threaten broadcasting independence and lead to self-censorship by giving the RVR an incentive to issue fines.

Political Environment

Journalists occasionally experience interference while performing their jobs. A regulation that went into effect in April 2014 limits the number of journalists accredited to the parliament, bans them from taking pictures of deputies’ personal belongings, and restricts their movement inside the parliament building. Separately, in 2012, Jaroslav Haščák, co-owner of Penta—a private equity firm implicated in the so-called Gorilla case, a major corruption scandal—unsuccessfully sought court injunctions against several websites that had published the files at the center of the scandal, and against a book about the affair written by the Canadian-Slovakian investigative journalist Tom Nicholson. In a separate case, in 2013, police pressured Nicholson to reveal his sources in an investigation of connections between an adviser to Interior Minister Robert Kaliňák and the head of a criminal organization. In May 2014, unidentified perpetrators stole Nicholson’s car—which contained his computer and documents with sensitive information—while he was traveling in Poland. Nicholson has expressed concern that people who supplied him with information could be at risk following the incident. Physical attacks on journalists are rare, and no major incidents were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

Most Slovak media outlets, including all major print outlets, are privately owned, and the country’s media outlets disseminate diverse views. The main operators in the radio market are Rádio Expres, which is privately owned, and the public Slovak Radio. Even though television remains the main source of information in the country, Slovaks enjoy growing access to the

internet, which the government does not restrict; approximately 80 percent of the population used the medium in 2014. Private as well as public outlets have faced increasing financial pressure in recent years. Broadcasting taxes were reinstated in 2013 to ensure the independence and financial stability of the public broadcaster, Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS); the government also reintroduced state contracts as a form of income for RTVS.

Lack of transparency in media ownership remains a concern, as does the inadequate enforcement of regulations on the cross-ownership of outlets. The print market has seen significant changes in the past few years as a result of increasing concentration of ownership following acquisitions by Penta, whose leadership was infamously implicated in corrupt behavior alongside former government officials in the Gorilla scandal. Numerous journalists left the leading daily *Sme* in October 2014 after Penta announced its intention to buy a 50 percent share in Petit Press, the publisher of *Sme* and of Slovakia’s Hungarian- and English-language newspapers. Penta backtracked at the last minute and acquired a 45 percent share in the publisher, but the purchase nevertheless left press freedom advocates anxious about ownership concentration and potential links between media owners and government officials. Penta also purchased the publishers 7 Plus and Trend Holding in September. Slovakia’s leading financial group, J&T, has indirect links to *Pravda*, a prominent daily, and owns the second-largest commercial broadcaster, TV Joj. Both outlets receive substantial advertising from companies linked to J&T.

Slovenia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 25 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	25,F	25,F	25,F	24,F	24,F

Legal Environment

Slovenia’s constitution and legal system guarantee freedom of speech and of the press. However, the law bars hate speech and incitement to intolerance or violence. Unlike in most countries in the region, defamation remains a criminal offense in Slovenia, and political figures continue to use defamation suits against journalists and media outlets. Local and international media watchdogs have pressured the government to reform defamation legislation, and in 2014, a number of officials indicated willingness to consider reform. The Mass Media Act of 2006 established the “right of correction,” according to which anyone offended or insulted by information published in the media—even truthful information—can demand a “correction” to be published in the same space as the offending article.

Journalists can be legally compelled to reveal their sources. The high-profile case of Anuška Delić, a journalist working for the daily *Delo*, continued in 2014. Delić was indicted on the charge of disseminating classified information in 2013 and could face up to three years in

prison if found guilty. The charges, filed by the state prosecutor, are connected to several 2011 articles alleging ties between members of the Slovenian Democratic Party and a neo-Nazi organization. In 2014, Deliĉ discovered that the prosecution had attempted to secure a warrant to wiretap her phone during investigations, although a court had denied the request. The case was ongoing at year's end.

The 2003 Access to Public Information Act ensures free access to information, and the Office of the Information Commissioner is tasked with handling freedom of information requests. In March 2014, the parliament voted to expand the scope of the act, making it applicable to private organizations that carry out public functions.

The Ministry of Culture is the main regulatory body for print media and supervises the implementation of the Mass Media Act. It also handles complaints against the media from the public. Electronic media are regulated by the Post and Electronic Communications Agency, which monitors the media landscape and ensures compliance with national regulations and directives.

Political Environment

The government does not actively censor the media, and the administration of prime minister Alenka Bratušek appears to be more open and available to Slovenian journalists than its predecessor. A controversial 2013 episode in which some of the board members of the public broadcaster, Radiotelevizija Slovenija (RTV), were abruptly dismissed appears not to have adversely affected public programming, which includes in-depth coverage of the Slovenian government. However, journalists working for the public broadcaster have reported political pressure when covering elections or politically sensitive topics in the past. While media content generally represents a range of opinions and information, some reporters have also complained that the country's major dailies tend to represent a left-leaning point of view, and that the right lacks sufficient representation in the print media. RTV is required by law to air programs that cater to Italian and Hungarian ethnic minorities in Slovenia. Journalists are generally free from physical harassment and intimidation while covering the news, and retaliatory violence against the media is also rare. There were no reports of physical attacks against journalists in 2014.

Economic Environment

A wide variety of media outlets operate in Slovenia. There are eight daily and a number of weekly newspapers. The country's major newspapers are privately owned. The government-operated Slovenian Press Agency publishes news in Slovenian and English, and maintains offices abroad. RTV operates three television channels and two radio channels with national reach, and several private outlets are also available to audiences across the country. The government does not restrict access to the internet, which was accessed by approximately 72 percent of the population in 2014.

Laws compel media outlets to report information about their financing and ownership to the government. However, not all outlets comply with regulations, and the ownership structures of many entities remain opaque. Ownership of media outlets changes often, making the market difficult to monitor. In July 2014, the publishing company Delo sold its ownership stake in the daily *Večer* to Dober Vecer, a firm created weeks prior to the transaction. The Office for the Protection of Competition, which in 2009 had ordered Delo to divest its stake in order to reduce

excessive concentration in the news and advertising markets, approved the sale despite protests from *Večer* journalists.

Newspapers that are critical of the government have faced difficulties securing advertising from state-owned companies in the past. Slovenia's media sector continues to experience substantial financial strain, and conditions for working journalists—particularly those working for print media—are increasingly challenging.

Solomon Islands

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 11 / 30

Total Score: 28 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	29,F	29,F	28,F	28,F	28,F

Somalia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 79 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	84,NF	84,NF	84,NF	84,NF	82,NF

Somalia remained one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists in 2014, though conditions varied between semiautonomous Puntland and the rest of the country, and among different areas within the south-central region itself.

Legal Environment

Somalia's 2012 provisional federal constitution provides for freedoms of speech and of the press. However, pervasive violence restricts reporting in practice. There is no law that guarantees access to public information, and defamation is a criminal offense, though many cases are resolved outside the formal court system, either according to *xeer* (customary law) or in Sharia (Islamic law) courts.

In August 2014, security forces raided the private Radio Shabelle and an affiliated station, Sky FM, and arrested 19 employees. Most were quickly released, but the media group's owner, a director, a host, and a producer were charged in September with defaming the president,

incitement of violence, publishing false information, and attacking “the unity of the Somali State.” Sky FM director Mohamud Mohamed and Shabelle producer Mohamed Bashir remained in custody at year’s end, while the other two were freed on bail.

Vague language in a draft counterterrorism bill approved by the council of ministers in July raised concerns that journalists could be charged with “supporting a terrorist organization” for simply covering such groups’ activities. Press freedom groups urged the parliament to revise the proposed legislation.

The government continued work on legislation to regulate the media sector during 2014. The cabinet of ministers approved a draft media law in September after consultations within the country and among diaspora groups, but Somali and international media organizations criticized the bill, which still had to be passed by the parliament. The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) argued that it could allow Somali authorities to punish their critics and encourage self-censorship. Among other provisions, the bill would empower authorities to force journalists to reveal their sources in court, impose restrictions on who can become a journalist, establish a National Media Council dominated by the Ministry of Information, and prohibit “false news” or “propaganda” against the dignity of individuals, organizations, or the government. Separately, a draft Communications Act appeared to be on hold, and its relationship to the proposed media law had yet to be determined. However, given the government’s inability to impose its authority over much of Somalia, the practical effect of any new laws remained unclear.

In 2013, the Ministry of Information introduced a media licensing system that activists denounced as a blow to freedom of expression, information, and the press. The system requires all print and broadcast outlets to apply for licenses through the ministry, and those without them can be forced to close. However, the application process is opaque, and the government has yet to demonstrate its ability to implement the system across south-central Somalia. The country’s existing media laws do not grant the ministry the authority to operate such a system.

Although the 2012 constitution of semiautonomous Puntland provides for press freedom, a number of laws impose restrictions on journalists. In July 2014, the Puntland legislature passed a new media law that empowered the region’s information ministry to unilaterally issue or revoke the registrations of media outlets and the identification cards of journalists. The measure, which was later signed by Puntland’s president, also specifies penalties, fines, and suspensions for journalists who violate the law.

Political Environment

Violence continued to undermine conditions for the media in south-central Somalia in 2014, as the government and African Union (AU) troops battled the Shabaab, a militant Islamist group, and other local militias for control of areas outside Mogadishu, the capital.

Numerous journalists have been killed in recent years, either for their perceived political affiliations or in crossfire. Media outlets have aligned themselves with political factions as a means of survival, making neutral or objective reporting a rarity. Self-censorship usually falls along partisan or clan-based lines. Concerns about safety also make journalists who gain access to militant leaders reluctant to conduct or edit critical interviews.

Arbitrary arrests and direct censorship also remained problems in 2014. In February, National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) personnel arrested the directors of Radio Danan and Radio Haatuf after the former’s website published photographs of a government official injured by a bomb. The detainees were allegedly threatened and tortured before being

released. In September, security forces arrested and temporarily detained two journalists with the independent station Dalsan Radio in Mogadishu after one of them—Hassan Gessey, who is also chairman of the Somali Independent Media Houses Association—criticized a new government directive instructing the media to restrict reporting on military operations to information issued by the NISA. A number of other short-term detentions were reported during the year.

Journalists in Puntland continued to face threats, attacks, and harassment from security forces and militias, who usually enjoyed impunity for their actions. There was hope among journalists that the government would be more tolerant under President Abdiweli Ali Gas, who took office in January 2014, than under his predecessor. However, restrictions remained harsh, and reporting on political and security issues was particularly difficult for journalists. In December, the Puntland government allegedly ordered the region's largest telecommunications company to block four websites. Also that month, a police chief entered the offices of the popular station Radio Garowe, interrupted a broadcast, and threatened to arrest a presenter after he aired a report on an antitax protest.

Four journalists were killed in connection with their work in 2014, including one in Puntland, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Yusuf Ahmed Abukar, a journalist with Radio Ergo and Mustaqbal Radio, was killed in June when an explosive device attached to his car detonated as he drove to work in Mogadishu. He was reportedly critical of both the Shabaab and the Somali government. In November, freelance journalist Abdirizak Ali Abdi was shot to death by masked gunmen in Galkayo, Puntland. Abdirizak worked for both Radio Daljir and the Somaliland-based HornCable TV, and regularly covered political issues in the region. In December, cameraman Mohamed Isaq of Kalsan TV and Abdulkadir Ahmed, a freelance journalist working with Somali Channel TV and Star FM, were killed in Baidoa when a suicide bomber attacked a restaurant frequented by journalists and local officials. The Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. Several other journalists were wounded in separate attacks during 2014.

Economic Environment

Despite the security situation, nearly two dozen radio stations continue to broadcast in south-central Somalia. The government supports Radio Mogadishu, which carries official news and information and provides some space for various groups and individuals to voice their opinions. The joint UN-AU radio station, Radio Bar Kulan, has sought to operate as a public-service broadcaster, though like Radio Mogadishu it tends to favor viewpoints that are sympathetic to the government and AU forces. Many Somalis also access news via foreign radio transmissions, including the Somali services of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of America. There is one state-run television network, Somali National Television, which broadcasts from Mogadishu. A handful of private networks are based in the autonomous regions of the country but are viewed throughout Somalia. The print media sector is only starting to reemerge after being dormant for years.

The Somali diaspora in Europe, North America, and the Persian Gulf states has established a rich internet presence. There are several websites that offer news content in English and Somali, as well as television stations that broadcast over the internet. While some local journalists operate via web-based platforms, the Somali diaspora has greater economic resources, security, and access to technology, giving it great influence over the media landscape.

Internet service is available in large cities in Somalia, and users enjoy a relatively fast and inexpensive connection, including through mobile devices. Mobile-phone usage has expanded rapidly in recent years, but only about 1.6 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. Although there were no reports of government restrictions on the internet, the Shabaab attempted to ban the medium in areas that it controlled by pressuring providers to terminate their services. The government faced significant criticism for its inability to resist the ban and maintain mobile internet services.

The advertising sector is weak, and advertising revenue is often not enough to sustain media enterprises. Some outlets consequently depend on financial support from wealthy owners or politicians, which compromises editorial independence. Journalists in all regions of Somalia receive low or even no pay and rely on trainings, corruption, or blackmail for additional income. Many media outlets also prefer to hire cheaper, less-skilled workers or relatives over more experienced journalists. Because there is an abundance of journalists, those who complain about low wages usually face threats of dismissal and replacement.

[The scores and narrative for Somalia do not reflect conditions for the media in the territory of Somaliland, which is covered in a separate report for the first time this year.]

Somaliland

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 54 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	--	--	--	--	--

Press freedom is limited in Somaliland, which has declared independence from Somalia but lacks international recognition. Although security conditions in the region were far better than in the rest of the country in 2014, the Somaliland government carried out several arrests and detentions of journalists, and shuttered multiple media outlets for their critical reporting.

Legal Environment

The Somaliland constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and of the press. According to the 2004 Press Law, defamation and libel are not criminal offenses; aggrieved parties may seek redress in civil courts, and disputes are sometimes settled through a clan-based system of arbitration. However, authorities have ignored this legislation and prosecuted journalists for defamation and libel under the penal code.

In May 2014, as part of a broader crackdown on the Haatuf Media Network, police detained Yusuf Abdi Gabobe and Ahmed Ali Igeh—the chairman and a chief editor, respectively—on charges of publishing false news and insulting officials through a series reports

that alleged corruption in government ministries. In June, Gabobe was sentenced to three years in prison, while Igeh received four years. Both were released in July under a presidential pardon.

Ahmed Adan Robleh, editor of Baligubadle Online Media, was arrested in July and accused of spreading false information about the president's health; he was released on bail after several days in detention. In October, authorities arrested two journalists from the television stations SomSat TV and HornCable TV and charged them with defamation and publishing false information in their coverage of a protest in the northwestern town of Gabiley, during which participants set the flag of the ruling party on fire. Both were freed on bail in November.

There is no access to information law in Somaliland, and public officials often withhold information that is unfavorable to the government, though some journalists gain access through close relationships with politicians.

Government officials have argued that the Press Law—drafted by journalists—is excessively lax. In 2013, the government proposed a new version that was condemned by the private media and human rights advocacy groups, who said it had been drafted without sufficient public consultation. No progress on this legislation was reported in 2014.

Political Environment

Somaliland media outlets tend to be aligned with particular political or individual interests, though they generally share a proindependence agenda.

The Somaliland government under President Ahmed Mohamed Mahamoud Silanyo, who took office in 2010, has been accused of dealing harshly with the media, often summoning journalists for questioning at the Central Investigations Department, closing media outlets, or arresting journalists under various pretexts for relatively short periods of time.

In February 2014, the Ministry of Information revoked the license of the popular Universal TV for allegedly insulting the president. The London-based station's owner and press freedom advocates said the order was not issued legally, but the outlet nevertheless ceased broadcasting in Somaliland pending negotiations with the government. Mohamed Aabi, the Somaliland director of Universal TV, was arrested in July without explanation and released several days later.

In March, police raided and shut down *Haatuf*, the Somali-language newspaper of the Haatuf Media Network. Under a court order in April, telecommunications companies blocked the paper's website, along with that of its English-language sister paper, *Somaliland Times*. The media group's license was revoked in June.

Despite such harassment by the authorities, violence against journalists in Somaliland is relatively rare, and no deaths or serious injuries were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

The number of newspapers in Somaliland fluctuates, as some publish intermittently, although there are usually about 10 in regular operation. Newspaper reporting is often critical of the government but has limited reach due the relatively high cost of papers and low levels of literacy.

Radio remains the most accessible and widely used medium for news in Somaliland. The establishment of independent radio stations is banned, and the region's government has been reluctant to liberalize the sector, citing the danger that stations could instigate clan violence;

some people in Somaliland support this argument, given the role of radio in the conflict in south-central Somalia. The government has long maintained that it will issue licenses as soon as the proper legislation is in place.

Government-owned Radio Hargeisa is the main FM station, although the British Broadcasting Corporation is available. There has been a small but notable growth in internet-based radio stations operating both within Somaliland and among the diaspora. There is one government-owned television station, Somaliland National Television. A number of Somali-language satellite stations, such as HornCable TV and Universal TV, broadcast from the Middle East and London, as do private terrestrial stations, which are both accessible and influential.

Internet penetration and especially mobile-phone usage have been on the rise in recent years. In Somalia as a whole, only about 1.6 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014, but there were nearly 51 mobile subscriptions for every 100 residents, raising the prospects of future growth in mobile internet services.

Given the small advertising market, most local media outlets are not self-sustaining and must be heavily subsidized by the diaspora, political parties, or businesses. Many journalists and outlets are not transparent about their sources of funding.

South Africa

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 10 / 30

Political Environment: 17 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 37 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	32,PF	33,PF	34,PF	35,PF	33,PF

South Africa is home to a vibrant media environment, and press freedom advocacy organizations regularly push back against government encroachments on the rights that journalists enjoy. However, such encroachments became more frequent in 2014, as President Jacob Zuma and the governing African National Congress (ANC) party stepped up the use of laws such as the apartheid-era National Key Points Act. The year also featured an increase in political and economic pressure by the ANC on both private outlets and the public broadcaster—the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)—as well as an uptick in violence, including the first work-related killing of a journalist in two decades.

Legal Environment

Freedoms of expression and of the press are protected in the constitution and generally respected in practice. However, several apartheid-era laws and a 2004 Law on Antiterrorism permit authorities to restrict reporting on the security forces, prisons, and any sites or institutions deemed important to the “national interest” by authorities.

Journalists and media outlets at times face the threat of legal action as a result of their work, particularly when reporting on prominent political or business figures. Civil defamation

cases, sometimes involving large fines, are occasionally brought against members of the press. Prosecutions for criminal defamation are rare. In a prominent recent case, the Pretoria High Court in December 2014 overturned the June 2013 conviction of journalist Cecil Motsepe on criminal defamation charges, for which he had been sentenced to a fine of R10,000 (\$950) or 10 months in prison, suspended for four years. The charges related to a 2009 article he had written for the *Sowetan* newspaper about alleged abuse of power by a magistrate in Gauteng Province. Although it reversed Motsepe's conviction, the Pretoria court also found that, contrary to the arguments of the journalist's legal representatives and many civic organizations that filed briefs in the case, the criminal defamation law may be considered constitutional. The ruling had the potential to revive the use or deterrent effect of the seldom-invoked law.

Journalists are unable to access or photograph areas deemed of interest to national security under the apartheid-era National Key Points Act. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of locations designated under the act. As of late 2014, at least 17 new key points had been added during the calendar year, raising the number to an estimated 200. Since the list of sites classified as national key points was not publicly available, journalists risked unknowingly performing investigations or taking photographs at a national key point, for which they could be arrested. Authorities could also claim that a site was a national key point to halt new media investigations. In 2013, the Right2Know Campaign—a coalition of civil society organizations and activists—and the South African History Archive submitted a joint freedom of information application to the minister of police, requesting the disclosure of the full list of national key points; after the minister twice refused, the groups took the matter to the courts. In December 2014, the High Court ruled that the minister's refusal to release the complete list was "unlawful," and ordered its release within 30 days. The minister appealed the judgment, and the list had not been disclosed as of the end of 2014.

The constitution protects the right of access to information, and the country's freedom of information law, the 2000 Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), is designed to implement this guarantee. The PAIA allows citizens to request information from a public—and in some cases a private—body, but it often falls short in practice as requests are frustrated by bureaucratic resistance. According to a 2014 report, PAIA applications were met with full disclosure of information in only 16 percent of cases in the period between August 2012 and July 2013.

The controversial Protection of State Information Bill (POSIB) had not yet been signed into law at the end of 2014. The legislation would grant state agencies broad authority to classify a wide range of information as being in the "national interest" and thus subject to significant restrictions on possession or dissemination, with potential prison terms for violations. Vociferous objections from civic groups and opposition parties forced the government to amend the bill in November 2012. A revised version—passed by the National Assembly in April 2013—narrowed the definition of national security, included a limited public-interest exception, maintained the integrity of the PAIA and constitutionally mandated oversight commissions, and removed most commercial information from the bill's purview. In a surprise move, Zuma, who had been expected to sign the measure, referred it back to Parliament in September 2013, after determining that some elements fell short of constitutional obligations. Continued pressure from civil society and opposition parties resulted in additional positive amendments, but the bill still contained worrying provisions, including the retention of prison terms of up to 25 years for the disclosure of classified information, and the criminalization of possession of classified information. A number of civil society organizations called on Zuma to submit the bill to the Constitutional

Court for a legal review, and stated that they would launch a Constitutional Court challenge if the president signed it.

The government does not restrict internet access, but state monitoring of telecommunications systems is authorized, subject to certain conditions. In 2014, the Film and Publications Board (FPB) released draft regulations, due to be finalized and implemented in 2016, that would require all online content to be classified in terms of the FPB's guidelines. The regulations require web users, including bloggers, who wish to distribute films, games, or certain publications online to apply for an online distributor's agreement or face either sanctions or legal action.

Efforts by the ANC to replace the self-regulating Press Council (PCSA) and press ombudsman with a state-run media tribunal have been thwarted for the time being by PCSA reforms, including the establishment in late 2012 of a system of "independent co-regulation" that features equal public and media representation on the council, under the chairmanship of a retired judge. The overhaul also provided the public with greater legal redress, such as the ability to appeal directly to ordinary courts; an expanded definition of complainant that includes not just those directly affected by a story, but also public advocates; a clearer hierarchy of sanctions for violations; and a ban on hate speech and "harmful" coverage of children. Despite these reforms, the creation of a state-run tribunal remains a formal goal of the ANC.

After the May 2014 national elections, in which Zuma won a second term, he announced the splitting of the Department of Communications into two separate ministries: the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services and the Department of Communications. The latter would oversee "overarching communication policy and strategy, information dissemination and publicity as well as the branding of the country abroad." The Department of Communications, as described by the president, is primarily tasked with the dissemination of government messaging, both locally and abroad, and houses two public relations bodies: Brand South Africa and the Government Communications and Information System (GCIS). Also placed under the purview of the new Department of Communications were the SABC; the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA); and the broadcasting and telecommunications regulator, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), despite the fact that these entities have a measure of statutory independence from the executive branch. The move raised concerns among media watchdogs, as it placed the public broadcaster and other bodies intended to advance freedom of expression in a department dedicated primarily to public relations.

Political Environment

While officially independent in its editorial policies, the SABC has come under fire for displaying a pro-ANC bias, reflecting internal ANC rifts in its management struggles, suffering from financial maladministration, and practicing self-censorship. In recent years, a number of programs have been canceled due to political considerations, and prepublication censorship of critical reporting on the ANC and Zuma has increased. In 2013, the SABC canceled a popular political talk show just hours before its second season premiere on supposedly technical grounds, but activists alleged that it was due to the program's critical reporting and intense scrutiny of government officials.

In January 2014, SABC chair Ellen Zandile Tshabalala reportedly told journalists at the broadcaster that they were working at a national key point and therefore their telephones were being monitored; she warned them against leaking information about the internal practices of the

SABC. A February report published by the Public Protector, South Africa's ombudsman institution, found that there was "abuse of power," "maladministration," and corporate governance deficiencies among the top management at the SABC. It recommended that action be taken against then acting chief operating officer (COO) Hlaudi Motsoeneng, who according to the report had been appointed irregularly, misrepresented his qualifications, and allotted himself three salary increases in one year. During the May national elections, Motsoeneng reportedly instructed SABC journalists not to report on protests or smaller political parties, and to reduce reporting on the main opposition parties. In July he publicly called for the licensing of journalists, comparing them to doctors and lawyers. Nevertheless, he was permanently appointed as COO of the SABC shortly thereafter.

During the 2014 election campaign, the SABC refused to broadcast political advertisements of two major opposition parties, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). In April the station refused to air a controversial DA ad, entitled "Ayisafani," that showed an image of a police officer shooting rubber bullets, on the grounds that it could incite violence against the police and constituted a personal attack on Zuma, violating the Advertising Standards Authority's code of conduct. ICASA later ruled that the ad could be reinstated only if the photograph was removed. The SABC also resisted airing a tamer ad several weeks later, but it eventually gave in to pressure from the DA. In addition, an SABC ban on EFF election ads calling for the physical removal of road tolling stations was upheld by ICASA in late April.

The overall objectivity of the news media is also affected by the growing share of private outlets owned by government allies. A number of key staff members left the newspaper publisher Independent News and Media South Africa, claiming political interference after the company was acquired by the ANC-connected Sekunjalo Investments in August 2013. In December of that year, Sekunjalo threatened to sue *Cape Times* editor Alide Dasnois and reporter Melanie Gosling over a story on a report by the Public Protector alleging irregularities in the awarding of a major government contract to the company. (The *Cape Times* is part of Independent News and Media South Africa.) Dasnois was subsequently removed as editor, though Sekunjalo denied that the change was linked to the story, and she was dismissed from the media group in July 2014. In the aftermath of Dasnois's removal, several prominent editors and journalists either left Independent News or were fired during 2014.

Reporters sometimes face physical attacks, unlawful arrests, or government pressure while attempting to cover sensitive news stories, most often by the police or private security services employed by the ANC. In January 2014, freelance photojournalist Michael Tshele was shot and killed by police while covering a protest in North West Province. He was the first journalist killed in South Africa since the advent of democracy in 1994.

The government also attempts to restrict journalists' ability to cover news stories in person by invoking the National Key Points Act. In recent years, the authorities repeatedly cited the law to prevent journalists' admittance to or disclosure of information regarding Zuma's Nkandla homestead during a controversial remodeling that is estimated to have cost over \$200 million. Nevertheless, media outlets have continued to run pictures of the property without sanction. In November 2014, a journalist for the news website *Netwerk24* was detained for taking photos of a national key point while reporting on a coal silo collapse at the Majuba power station; he was subsequently released after officials made copies of his press credentials.

Journalists are occasionally harassed and threatened by government officials or nonstate actors in reprisal for their professional activities. In January 2014, a reporter for the *Daily Sun*

was arrested and assaulted by police in Rustenburg after photographing them allegedly receiving bribes; he was released five hours later after being threatened with a longer period of detention. In February, a freelancer for the *Daily Sun* was detained for several hours after photographing police officers in Cape Town as they took pictures of a badly injured assault victim and made insensitive remarks. And in April, an ANC official forcibly deleted pictures from a reporter's mobile phone during a campaign event for Zuma in Duduza, Ekurhuleni.

Economic Environment

The print media continue to be dominated by four companies: Avusa, Independent News and Media, Media24, and Caxton/CTP. A number of private investigative newspapers—most notably the *Mail & Guardian*, the *City Press*, the *Sunday Times*, and the online newspaper *Daily Maverick*—remain sharply critical of the government, political parties, and other societal actors. However, print media are consumed in large part by more urban, wealthier South Africans. The majority of the population receives news via radio and television outlets, which are dominated by the state-run SABC. The SABC's three free-to-air television stations and the privately owned free-to-air station e.TV claim most of the television market, though the country's main subscription satellite television service, DSTV, is extending its reach. International broadcasts are unrestricted, but they are often dependent on subscription television services for distribution.

Internet access is expanding rapidly, and more people are able to reach the medium from mobile devices than from personal computers. In 2014, 49 percent of the South African population had access to the internet. Usage is hampered by high costs and the fact that most content is in English, an obstacle for those who speak one of the country's 10 other official languages. Content in local languages is growing, however, especially on social-networking platforms.

A December 2014 ANC National Executive Committee meeting reportedly finalized a plan to withdraw government advertising from newspapers that are critical of the ruling party and the president, to be implemented by the new Department of Communications.

South Korea

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 10 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 9 / 30

Total Score: 33 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	30,F	32,PF	32,PF	31,PF	32,PF

Threats to press freedom in South Korea under President Park Geun-hye continued in 2014. At the center of the concerns was the increased reliance by the Park administration on the National Security Law, which had a chilling effect on working journalists.

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution and generally respected in practice, though Article 7 of the National Security Law prescribes imprisonment for praising or expressing sympathy for North Korea. In December 2014, Shim Eun-mi, a Korean-American author and talk show host, faced multiple rounds of police questioning regarding allegations that she had made comments sympathetic toward North Korea during her speaking tours in South Korea. The National Security Law was also used as the main basis for a 2014 Constitutional Court ruling ordering the dissolution of the small opposition Unified Progressive Party, which was accused by the government of supporting North Korea. In 2012, Park Jung-geun, a photographer and blogger, was arrested on charges of violating the National Security Law. Park had reposted messages from the North Korean government's Twitter account, an action which he argued was intended to lampoon the North Korean regime. Park's 2012 guilty verdict was reversed on appeal in 2013. The selective enforcement of the National Security Law is a concern for working journalists.

Defamation is a criminal offense, with sentences of up to seven years in prison, and charges are occasionally threatened or brought against reporters or commentators who criticize the government. In October 2014, prosecutors indicted Tatsuya Kato, then Seoul bureau chief of the Japanese newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*, on a charge of defaming President Park by citing rumors about the president's activities on the day of the Sewol ferry sinking that killed about 300 people. In November, President Park's aides filed a criminal defamation complaint against six reporters and staff from *Segye Ilbo* after the newspaper reported on a leaked document from the president's office claiming that the aides regularly briefed a nonofficial governmental person.

The Act on Disclosure of Information by Public Agencies protects the right of citizens to access public information, which can be obtained online or in person. According to the act, government agencies must respond to requests within 15 days and are required to provide all requested public information, except when protected for reasons of national security. After taking office in early 2013, President Park announced an initiative called Government 3.0, which is aimed at transforming the country's system of information disclosure. South Korea submitted its first action plan in 2012 to the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an international initiative under which governments commit to increasing transparency and accountability to their citizens. In 2014, the OGP issued a letter of caution to the Korean government for its failure to consult civil society when designing measures to provide citizens with access to information. A current obstruction to journalistic access is the country's press club system, which allows only members to obtain certain interviews and deep background briefings with senior government officials.

Political Environment

In November 2014, South Korea's Supreme Court ruled legitimate the layoffs of three YTN journalists who led strikes against the promotion of former president Lee Myung-bak's close aide to serve as head of the cable news network in 2008. This latest and final ruling for the YTN journalists reversed the 2009 ruling that the layoffs were unfair. Media advocacy groups raised concerns that the 2014 ruling bodes ill for cases involving other journalists who were dismissed during the Lee administration.

The government's online content censorship has invited substantial criticism from national and international freedom of expression organizations. In 2014, the Korea

Communications Standards Commission (KCSC), an official body responsible for monitoring online content, requested that a total of 132,884 cases be rectified, a 27.3 percent increase over 2013. Specifically, 24,581 webpages were deleted, another 97,095 were blocked, and 10,031 were cancelled at the request of the KCSC. This censorship not only covers pornography and gambling, which are illegal in South Korea, but also content deemed threatening to national security by “praising North Korea and denouncing the USA and the [South Korean] government.”

South Korean online media are especially vigorous and innovative. Aside from pro-North Korean content, the internet is generally unrestricted, though the government requires all website operators to indicate whether their sites might be harmful to youth. In 2014, media freedom groups expressed concerns over the adoption of a far-reaching interpretation of South Korea’s copyright law, which allows the Korean Copyright Commission (KCC) to block websites. Under the Korean Copyright Act, only courts, not administrative bodies like the KCC, can order the blockage of sites, raising concerns about the legality of the law and possible censorship. More generally, some self-censorship of media reports and online content does occur.

Cases of physical violence against or harassment of journalists are rare, and no cases were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

South Korea has a vibrant and diverse media sector, with numerous cable, terrestrial, and satellite television stations and more than 100 daily newspapers in Korean and English. South Korea boasts one of the world’s highest internet penetration rates, at nearly 85 percent, and enjoys high-speed broadband. A significant number of young people obtain news exclusively from online sources.

Many newspapers are controlled by large industrial conglomerates and depend on major corporations for their advertising revenue. The television and radio sectors feature both public and private outlets. Five new cable television channels—four general-programming stations and one all-news channel—were launched in 2011 after the government revised a set of media laws to allow investment by conglomerates and newspaper companies in the broadcasting sector. These new channels have influenced the market dominance of KBS, MBC, and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), all of which had previously held exclusive rights to offer general programming, including news. Foreign media sources are widely accessible, with the exception of news from North Korea, which remains severely restricted.

South Sudan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 68 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
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Total Score, Status	NA	NA	59,PF	60,PF	62,NF
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Conditions for the media in South Sudan worsened in 2014 amid a civil war between the government of President Salva Kiir and supporters of the former vice president, Riek Machar. By the end of the year, the United Nations estimated that 1.9 million people were displaced and over 50,000 had been killed in politically motivated ethnic violence that pitted the two main tribes, Kiir's Dinka and Machar's Nuer, against each other. Due to widespread intimidation, self-censorship on sensitive topics became common among all media houses, leaving the public with limited access to independent reporting.

Legal Environment

The transitional constitution guarantees press freedom under Article 32 and calls for all levels of government to uphold this principle. There is, however, an expanding gap between law and practice, as security forces—particularly the National Security Service (NSS)—routinely harass and intimidate the press with impunity.

In September 2014, President Kiir signed into law three media bills, originally introduced in 2007, that were designed to facilitate access to information, set up a public broadcaster, and establish a press ombudsman. However, none of the laws were implemented by year's end. Furthermore, with several versions of the laws in circulation, there was confusion as to which drafts represented the final legislation. The press continued to work in a legal vacuum throughout the year.

In October, the parliament passed the controversial National Security Service Bill, further strengthening the powers of the NSS. The bill grants the agency virtually unfettered authority to arrest and detain suspects, monitor communications, conduct searches, and seize property without clear judicial oversight. Critics said it violated the constitution and was not passed with the necessary quorum. In December, Kiir declined to sign the bill without amendments, but journalists claimed that the proposed amendments were not substantive. Although it had yet to be finally adopted, officials reportedly began taking actions as if the law were in effect.

While it is relatively easy to obtain accreditation and licenses to work as a journalist, such accreditation rarely protected journalists from various abuses by security forces in 2014.

Political Environment

The sustained pressure stemming from the civil conflict during 2014 reduced South Sudan's independent media to just a handful of newspapers and broadcasters, meaning most citizens only had access to one-sided narratives from the two warring parties.

Throughout the year, security forces engaged in extrajudicial detentions, intimidation, and temporary closures of media houses to silence government critics. Such incidents occurred every month in 2014, including raids on all major media houses in the capital, Juba. Most outlets engaged in self-censorship on sensitive topics, including rebel viewpoints, criticism of the president, and threats to petroleum production.

Harassment of the press increasingly took on an ethnic component, and many Nuer journalists were driven to quit the profession and take refuge abroad or in camps for internally displaced persons. In March, the NSS director, Major General Akol Koor, and the Information Ministry accused the independent Arabic-language daily *Al-Mijhar al-Siyasi* of false publication

and supporting the opposition, allegedly citing in part the fact that several staff members were Nuer. The paper was shuttered the following month.

In two press conferences held in March and September, Information Minister Michael Makuei warned journalists that the government would view coverage of rebel activities as a form of collaboration. In August, security agents raided the influential station Bakhita Radio after it aired material from an online news report that quoted a rebel spokesman. Security officers closed the station for a month and detained news editor Ocen David for four days. In December, the government confiscated the pressrun of the private daily *Nation Mirror* simply because it carried a photograph of Machar, the rebel leader. Similarly, by year’s end, security agents had raided and confiscated pressruns from the private daily *Juba Monitor* at least eight times.

Economic Environment

Government-owned South Sudan Television is the sole television station operating in the country. Journalists working at the outlet complain of self-censorship and lack of professional integrity among their superiors. Radio remains the main source of news for most citizens, with several dozen stations in operation across the country; however, many remote areas lie outside the reach of FM broadcasts.

A number of private dailies and weeklies publish regularly, though individuals within the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement own the majority of titles. Papers allied with the ruling party are favored in terms of winning advertising contracts. Print media in South Sudan are burdened with small staffs and budgets, low advertising revenue, and a national illiteracy rate of about 73 percent. Newspapers are largely concentrated in urban areas because of the high cost of transportation and a lack of reliable infrastructure. Newsprint is very expensive, and the country has only two printing presses, meaning most printing is done in Uganda or Kenya. Government seizures of pressruns caused significant fiscal losses to print outlets in 2014. The *Juba Monitor* reported losses averaging approximately \$9,500 each time its papers were confiscated.

There is a lack of reliable statistics regarding internet use in South Sudan. While the International Telecommunication Union reported a penetration rate of nearly 16 percent in 2014, other assessments put it at less than 1 percent, as most of the country lacks electricity and infrastructure. Nevertheless, several professional, critical news websites have emerged, including *Sudan Tribune*, *The Niles*, and *Gurtong*.

Spain

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 28 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	24,F	23,F	24,F	27,F	28,F

In 2014, press freedom continued to suffer from the effects of the economic crisis. Many media outlets have closed or cut staff in recent years, as public expenditures and the advertising market contracted. This has led to a decline in media diversity, expanding political influence, increased self-censorship, and a deterioration in the independence and quality of reporting.

Legal Environment

Freedom of expression is guaranteed in Section 20 of the constitution, and press freedom is generally respected in practice, though the media face legal threats including defamation suits. The authorities monitor websites and social-network accounts that publish hate speech and advocate terrorism or xenophobia. In April 2014, a police operation resulted in 21 arrests for glorifying terrorism or humiliating its victims on Twitter. In November, a new Intellectual Property Act reinforced the blockage of websites containing or linking to copyrighted content that is used without permission. The law also established the so-called Google Tax, a system of mandatory economic charges applied to news aggregators to compensate news producers. Google deemed the new system “not sustainable,” and in December it announced the shutdown of its news service in Spain starting January 1, 2015.

In late 2013, the government proposed a controversial citizens’ security bill, the Ley Orgánica para la Protección de la Seguridad Ciudadana, which would greatly restrict a citizen’s right to protest and had worrying implications for freedom of expression. Although it was revised during 2014, the many remaining areas of concern included fines of up to €600,000 (\$800,000) for “very grave” violations such as organizing demonstrations near critical infrastructure; up to €30,000 for “grave” offenses like causing disturbances outside the parliament or the unauthorized use of images of public officials or members of the security forces when it could endanger the individuals, their families, protected facilities, or a security operation; and up to €600 for minor violations such as lack of respect toward a member of the security forces. All of the bill’s penalties would be imposed as administrative fines, outside a court of law. The legislation was approved by the lower house of parliament in December 2014, and was awaiting approval in the Senate at year’s end.

A new freedom of information law passed in late 2013, the Transparency Act, took effect in December 2014. However, advocacy organizations criticized it for failing to recognize the right to access information as a fundamental right; exempting certain types of government information, such as internal communications, drafts, or opinions; and creating an oversight body that lacks independence.

Political Environment

Although Spanish media continue to cover a wide range of perspectives, journalists and other observers have alleged growing government influence at the Corporación Radio Televisión Española (RTVE), which oversees public media. Under a 2012 reform, the head of RTVE is elected by a simple majority vote in the parliament, down from the previous two-thirds majority. Changes in the body’s leadership at the end of 2014 were interpreted by critics as a sign of increased government control ahead of elections in 2015.

Political interference at private newspapers has also reportedly increased. In February 2014, *El Mundo* dismissed editor in chief and founder Pedro Ramírez. The paper had been particularly active in denouncing institutional and financial corruption among members of the

ruling Popular Party and the royal family. Although the owner, publishing company Unidad Editorial (owned in turn by Italy's RCS Group), said the decision was based on the daily's poor financial performance, Ramírez considered his removal to be the consequence of "a brutal campaign from the government." He continued to publish a weekly opinion article in the paper until November, when *El Mundo* rejected a piece that harshly criticized Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

A similar situation occurred in June, when RBA, publisher of the weekly satirical magazine *El Jueves*, decided to remove a front-page cartoon showing King Juan Carlos passing his son a crown filled with excrement. Cartoonists Manel Fontdevila and Albert Monteyes decided to quit, and six colleagues followed suit in solidarity.

Journalists claim that self-censorship in general has risen due to political pressure and the threat of layoffs amid the ongoing economic crisis.

Violence against journalists has occurred only sporadically in recent years, but reporters have faced physical assaults while covering economic and political protests. In March 2014, police officers attacked at least five journalists during a demonstration, drawing criticism from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe media representative and Spain's Federation of Journalist Unions.

Economic Environment

Spain has a diverse media sector, including both public and private outlets, but still lacks a regulatory framework for private, nonprofit media, as called for in the Audiovisual Law of 2010. Private ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies, particularly after deregulation of ownership rules in 2009 allowed the creation of a de facto duopoly in private broadcasting, with Atresmedia and Mediaset controlling 70 percent of the private television networks. However, a Supreme Court decision in 2014 ordered the closure of nine private channels, including several owned by Atresmedia and Mediaset, on the grounds that their digital terrestrial broadcasting licenses had been issued without a public tender process. The licenses of eight other channels were being reviewed by the court at year's end.

Approximately 76 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. With the decline of traditional media, Spain has experienced a rapid increase in the use of digital media, which has benefited social minorities and supported political pluralism and digital activism.

The economic crisis has seriously affected Spain's media industry. According to the Madrid Press Association, between 2008 and 2014, 364 media outlets closed, and 11,875 journalists lost their jobs, with nearly 2,400 laid off in 2014. Many newspapers receive either large subsidies from the government or funding from banks and large corporations. Lack of transparency regarding the government's advertising purchases is a major problem: More than 75 percent of the €140.6 million invested in 2014 fell under the category of "commercial advertising," as opposed to "institutional advertising," and was consequently out of detailed public control. Although independent editors urged lawmakers to address this issue in the new Transparency Act, no changes were made.

Sri Lanka

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23 / 30
Political Environment: 33 / 40
Economic Environment: 20 / 30
Total Score: 76 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	72,NF	71,NF	72,NF	74,NF	76,NF

Media freedom remained restricted in Sri Lanka in 2014. The regime of President Mahinda Rajapaksa continued to intimidate journalists through a variety of legal and extralegal means. As the presidential election approached at the end of the year, pressure on the media increased.

Legal Environment

The constitution provides for freedom of expression, but it and other laws and regulations place significant limits on the exercise of this right. The 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act contains extremely broad restrictions, such as a prohibition on bringing the government into contempt. The decades-old Official Secrets Act bans reporting on classified information, and those convicted of violating its provisions can be sentenced to up to 14 years in prison. Although no journalists have been charged under the law, it is used as a threat. Criminal defamation laws were repealed in 2003, but government officials and political figures continue to bring civil cases, sometimes involving excessively large fines, against press outlets. A civil defamation suit brought by Defense Minister Gotabhaya Rajapaksa against the newspaper *Sunday Leader* has dragged on for years. In October 2014, reporters were barred from witnessing the minister's cross-examination. At the same time, the paper's new management, installed after the paper was bought out by Minister Rajapaksa's allies after the suit was filed, fired their chief counsel and is thought to be colluding with the regime. Journalists are occasionally threatened with contempt-of-court charges or questioned regarding their sources.

There is no enforceable right to information in the constitution or in separate legislation. In fact, the Establishments Code, the formal administrative code governing civil servants, actively discourages access to information even on public-interest grounds. Attempts by the opposition to introduce a right to information bill in parliament have been defeated several times by the governing majority.

The 1973 Press Council Act, which prohibits disclosure of certain fiscal, defense, and security information and establishes a regulatory body to enforce such measures, was revived in 2009. The government nominates all seven council members under the act, and violations of its provisions can draw prison terms and other punitive measures. After a slow start, the council, whose purview covers all types of media outlets, began operating and handing down judgments in 2012. The broadcasting authority is not independent, and licensing decisions sometimes appear to be arbitrary and politically influenced. Under rules imposed in 2011 regarding licensing for websites that host news content related to Sri Lanka, only about a third of websites that attempted to register were successful, according to international watchdog Article 19. In December 2013, authorities announced that due to a lack of frequencies, no new radio or television stations would be licensed. This policy continued in 2014, although some new stations that were licensed prior to the moratorium launched during the year. The Press Complaints

Commission of Sri Lanka promotes self-regulation in the independent print and online news media based on a code of professional practice.

Local press freedom advocacy groups, such as the Free Media Movement and the Sri Lanka Journalists' Association, face smear campaigns in state-controlled media, and their staff operate under considerable threat. On several occasions during 2014, training sessions for local journalists that had been organized by either local or international nonprofit organizations were interrupted or forcibly broken up by both official and nonstate actors. State authorities reportedly conduct surveillance on the personal communications and activities of individuals, including journalists, known to be critical of the government or who report on sensitive topics.

Political Environment

Misuse of state media to benefit the incumbent, President Rajapaksa, in the run-up to the presidential election at year's end was reported by local monitoring groups. Censorship does not generally take place for traditional media, but web-based media, particularly Tamil-language news sites and other independent outlets such as the *Colombo Telegraph*, are subject to intermittent government-authorized blocks. As the election approached, other instances of censorship emerged, including two cable operators refusing to transmit Sirasa TV's interview with the leading opposition candidate. Levels of self-censorship in the broader news media are high, with the vast majority of journalists avoiding coverage that is critical of the president's family or administration. Many journalists also tend to abstain from coverage of the alleged war crimes surrounding the defeat of the Tamil Tiger rebel movement in 2009.

Access to the internet and to foreign media has occasionally been restricted. Web-based media and blogs have taken on a growing role in the overall media environment, with outlets such as *Groundviews*, its sister site *Vikalpa*, and *The Republic Square* providing news and a range of commentary, even on sensitive stories and events that are barely covered by the mainstream media.

Journalists throughout Sri Lanka, particularly those who cover human rights or military issues, face regular intimidation and pressure from government officials at all levels. Official rhetoric is markedly hostile toward critical or "unpatriotic" journalists and media outlets, with prominent leaders, including Defense Minister Rajapaksa, often making statements that equate any form of criticism with treason. State-controlled media and the Defense Ministry website have been used to smear and threaten individual journalists, activists, and media freedom organizations. Those who appear at international forums such as the UN Human Rights Council or give testimony to visiting UN experts or donor bodies such as the European Union are subject to particular vilification. This pattern recurred in 2014, when the government detained several prominent Tamil journalists in Jaffna and interrogated them on their connections with international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations. Activists believed the crackdown was borne out of a fear that local journalists were attempting to gather information on rights violations in the north to present to the United Nations.

In addition to verbal and physical attacks from official sources, journalists and press advocacy groups that are perceived as supportive of ethnic Tamil interests have drawn the ire of Sinhalese nationalist vigilante groups. While Tamil journalists no longer face the tight restrictions imposed by the Tamil Tigers, they generally refrain from strident criticism of the government, the military, or progovernment Tamil political factions. Tamil-language outlets—such as the *Uthayan* newspaper, based in Jaffna—face regular harassment and operate under

considerable duress and threat to their staff. They are also subject to regular attacks and harassment, including when several hundred soldiers surrounded the *Uthayan's* headquarters in May.

Sunil Jayasekara, the convener of the Free Media Movement, received death threats in July, and on several other occasions journalists who attempted to attend trainings or workshops also received threats. Several dozen journalists and media freedom activists have gone into or remain in exile—one of the highest numbers in the world, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists—leaving the sector without many of its most experienced professionals.

On a number of occasions during the year, reporters attempting to cover sensitive news stories were physically harassed by police in the course of their work. In May 2014, reporters who were attempting to film a public appearance by Defense Minister Rajapaksa and the proceedings at a defamation court hearing against a newspaper were threatened by police; some were prevented from covering the story altogether. In June, journalists were instructed not to report on sectarian clashes between Muslims and Buddhists in southern Sri Lanka that had been instigated by a radical Buddhist group. Reporters continued to encounter difficulties accessing former war zones and internment camps and in covering the resettlement process in the north and east. In October 2014, the Defense Ministry announced a new policy requiring all foreign passport holders to obtain official permission to enter Jaffna province, emphasizing journalists will also be subject to this restriction. The move came days after several foreign journalists were denied entry to cover the president's visit to the region.

Past attacks on journalists and media outlets, such as the 2009 murder of Lasantha Wickrematunge, then editor of the *Sunday Leader*, and the 2010 disappearance of cartoonist Prageeth Eknaligoda, have not been adequately investigated, leading to a climate of complete impunity.

Economic Environment

A shrinking number of privately owned newspapers and broadcasters attempt to scrutinize government policies and provide diverse views, and most of those do not engage in overt criticism or investigative reporting for fear of potential repercussions. Media outlets have also become extremely polarized, shrinking the space for balanced coverage. The Free Media Movement has noted that state-run media—including Sri Lanka's largest newspaper chain, two major television stations, and a radio station—are heavily influenced by the government, citing cases of pressure on editors, several unwarranted dismissals of high-level staff, and biased coverage. In recent years, ownership has grown more concentrated, with many private outlets now held by government officials or their close associates as part of an overall strategy to further tame the press. Business and political interests exercise some control over media content through selective advertising and bribery, but the government's share of the advertising market is expanding. Critical news outlets face difficulties in attracting private advertising or loans from the major state-owned banks. Those publishing opposition print media occasionally face difficulties in printing and distribution. The *Uthayan* newspaper in particular has faced a number of attacks on its production and distribution in the past several years. While the government has built a new transmission tower in the north of the country, it has blocked some private stations from using the tower and has also restricted the construction of towers by private companies.

Approximately 26 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014, with many residents deterred by the high costs involved, although mobile-phone usage continued to increase rapidly.

Sudan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 26 / 30

Political Environment: 33 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 81 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	76,NF	78,NF	78,NF	80,NF	81,NF

Media repression by the Sudanese government continued in 2014. There were numerous reports of government confiscation of entire newspaper press runs, and of the outright suspension of independent newspapers. The practice of prepublication censorship persisted, and the government continued to arrest and detain journalists without charge.

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press and expression are nominally protected under Article 39 of the 2005 Interim National Constitution—adopted as part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Khartoum government and the then insurgent Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM). Following the independence of South Sudan in 2011, a permanent Sudanese constitution has not yet been implemented. While the CPA initially created some space for journalists to report more freely and reduced the common practice of prepublication censorship, the legal environment for Sudanese media remains extremely difficult. The 2009 Press and Publications Act allows for restrictions on the press in the interests of national security and public order, contains loosely defined provisions related to bans on the encouragement of ethnic and religious disturbances and the incitement of violence, and holds editors in chief criminally liable for all content published in their newspapers. Several other laws have been used against the press, including elements of the 1991 penal code, the 2010 National Security Forces Act, and emergency measures that have been enacted in the states of Darfur and Kordofan. A new media law proposed in 2013 would expand the restrictions of the 2009 Press and Publications Act, extending editorial liability to journalists and printing houses in addition to chief editors. The proposed law was pending further consultation as of the end of 2014.

Defamation is a criminal offense under the penal code, and there is no freedom of information law, making access to public information difficult.

The press law requires journalists to register with the National Council for Press and Publications (NCP), an entity supervised by the president that also has authority to shut down newspapers for three days without a court order. The NCP, a large proportion of whose members are appointed by the president, regulates the journalism profession and entry into the field. Journalists are required to pass a test prior to receiving accreditation and a license. The

Ministry of Information manages broadcast licensing in a highly politicized manner, allowing progovernment stations to acquire licenses more easily than independent outlets.

Political Environment

Authorities in Khartoum maintain a tight grip on Sudan's media sector. National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) agents have been known to summon editors to issue censorship directives, or insist that certain journalists be banned from writing or else face suspension as the penalty for noncompliance. The longstanding practice of prepublication censorship persisted throughout the year. Sudan's information minister in May also announced plans to create a "special commission" comprised of government officials to examine proposed news reports about corruption ahead of publication.

Another censorship tactic commonly employed in 2014 was the suspension of newspapers. For example, the government temporarily suspended *Al-Jarida* in January after it reported on alleged corruption within the government and about commodity shortages. *Al-Saiha* was similarly suspended in May after it published a series of articles implicating government figures in corrupt activity. In a positive step, Sudan's Constitutional Court in March overturned the suspension of the independent daily *Al-Tayar*, which NISS had shut down in 2012 after it had published a news report about suspected corruption within a government-owned company. According to the advocacy group Reporters Without Borders, NISS during 2014 seized 35 complete newspaper issues, confiscating all copies after they came off the printer. No grounds were ever provided for the confiscations, but they typically occurred following an outlet's publication of critical articles on corruption within the government, or about conflict areas.

Monitoring and censorship of online content was pervasive in 2014. The National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) closely monitors the internet, including e-mail correspondence, and a "cyberjihadist" unit housed within the NISS proactively monitors online activities and hacks into activists' social-media accounts. The NTC has also blocked websites and proxy servers that purportedly violate norms of public morality. In March 2014, the body announced that "negative" websites would be blocked, but did not offer further details. The government has also sporadically blocked websites, including YouTube and the news website *Sudanese Online*, for publishing content perceived by the regime as highly sensitive—such as the 2013 antigovernment demonstrations and articles on the war in Darfur. The popular online news outlet NubaReports.org—which focuses on events in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur, where Sudanese forces continue fighting rebel groups—was hit by a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack in September and was temporarily knocked offline. The government's repressive acts against journalists continue to encourage self-censorship.

Journalists faced harassment, attacks, and arbitrary arrests and detention in 2014. In June, journalist Hassan Ishaq of *Al-Jarida* was arrested after attending a speech by an opposition party leader in West Kordofan. Ishaq was reportedly tortured while in custody and remained in detention without charge at year's end. In July, the office of *Al-Tayar* was attacked by armed men who destroyed equipment, confiscated laptops, and beat two journalists, including the paper's editor in chief, Osman Mirghani. A group identifying itself as the "Hamza Group Against Atheism and Heresy" claimed responsibility for the attack, which was evidently motivated by Mirghani's calls for Sudan to normalize relations with Israel. In September, NISS agents arrested journalist Abdul Rahman al-Ajib of *Al-Youm Al-Tali* and freelance photographer Eisa Aizain and held them for more than a week without charge. In October, prominent journalist

Al-Nour Ahmed Al-Nour of the London-based *Al-Hayat* was arrested in Khartoum and held for six days without charge.

Economic Environment

Despite constraints on journalists, media outlets have proliferated in recent years. There are nearly 20 political dailies operating in the country, plus dozens of sports and social affairs publications. However, all are subject to serious government intrusion, ranging from interference in management decisions to censorship of content. Newspapers are generally too expensive for most citizens. The state dominates the broadcast media, which are the main source of information for much of the population. Television programming continues to be formally censored, and radio content largely reflects the government's views. Many private radio stations broadcast on FM frequencies, in addition to the state radio network. As the licensing of radio stations remains firmly under government control, private stations avoid reporting on political affairs and focus instead on entertainment and music. Internet penetration in Sudan is relatively high for sub-Saharan Africa, with 25 percent of the population accessing the web in 2014.

Ownership of media outlets is generally not transparent, and no laws require the release of ownership information. Moreover, many owners refrain from acknowledging their status in order to evade taxes and avoid possible attacks.

Journalists work for low pay, and many freelancers do not earn enough to cover the cost of living. Some analysts claim that difficult economic circumstances have fostered corruption within the media by encouraging journalists and editors to sell coverage to politicians. The authorities withhold state advertising from newspapers that are critical of the government.

The economic viability of newspaper outlets was further threatened in 2014 by the government's frequent practice of confiscating entire press runs of newspapers as a deliberate strategy to censor, intimidate, and financially cripple critical publications. Each confiscated edition resulted in significant losses for economically fragile outlets.

Suriname

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8 / 30

Political Environment: 14 / 40

Economic Environment: 7 / 30

Total Score: 29 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	23,F	23,F	24,F	28,F

Legal Environment

The government generally respects freedom of expression and the press, as guaranteed under Article 19 of the country's constitution. However, Suriname continues to lack freedom of information legislation and has some of the most severe criminal defamation laws in the Caribbean. These include prison sentences of up to seven years for "public expression of enmity,

hatred, or contempt” toward the government, and up to five years’ imprisonment for insulting the head of state. Defamation cases have been brought against journalists in recent years. In May 2014, lawmaker Noreen Cheung threatened to sue the monthly magazine *Parbode* for libel after it quoted her as expressing doubt about controversial 2012 amnesty legislation that granted President Dési Bouterse immunity from prosecution in a murder case.

Bouterse, a former dictator, had returned to the presidency in 2010 after winning a democratic election, despite being on trial since 2007 for the 1982 murders of 15 political opponents, including five journalists. The 2012 amendment to the Amnesty Law then granted immunity to Bouterse and the 24 other suspects in the murders. Bouterse was planning to run for reelection in 2015. These circumstances made any conviction unlikely and contributed to a climate of impunity for crimes against journalists and the media.

While there are no legal restrictions on internet access, journalists have accused the government of monitoring their e-mail and social-media accounts.

Political Environment

There are indications that self-censorship significantly hampers freedom of expression in the Surinamese media. The head of the Association of Surinamese Journalists (SVJ) said in an interview in October 2014 that although there are no cases of physical harassment, the government undermines press freedom. Little investigative journalism takes place due to pressure and intimidation from government officials, who often refuse to give information to journalists affiliated with opposition papers and instead limit their media contacts to state television. Coverage of certain issues, such as drug trafficking and the human rights abuses that took place under the Bouterse dictatorship in the 1980s, is also discouraged.

In November 2014, the Surinamese government denied entry to Dutch journalist John van den Heuvel, allegedly because of a criminal investigation. However, van den Heuvel said the decision may have stemmed from his plans to report on the presidential candidates, including Bouterse, in the run-up to the 2015 election. Van den Heuvel had previously produced critical coverage of the Bouterse administration.

Economic Environment

Suriname has a fairly diverse media sector, with numerous print publications. The two main daily newspapers, *De Ware Tijd* and *De West*, are both privately owned and maintain independent websites. There are many radio stations, including government-owned Stichting Radio Omroep Suriname (SRS), as well as several private and two state-owned television stations. Many media outlets are affiliated with particular political parties, which sometimes exert influence over news coverage. Chinese investment has recently surged in Suriname, resulting in an upgrade of the state television network. The growing Chinese community has created two daily newspapers and a television station that operates in Mandarin.

Approximately 41 percent of the population had access to the internet in 2014. Access is readily available in urban areas but much more limited in interior sections of the country.

The SVJ has reported that low salaries and poor training for journalists have hurt the profession, and in January 2013 it raised concerns about plagiarism in the industry. Government advertising is reportedly often allocated in a politicized manner.

Swaziland

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 28 / 40

Economic Environment: 26 / 30

Total Score: 79 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	76,NF	76,NF	76,NF	77,NF	78,NF

In 2014, the government of King Mswati III further restrained an already weakened media environment in Swaziland, and both journalists and media outlets were targeted by officials through the use of restrictive legislation. The government withholds advertising contracts from critical media outlets.

Legal Environment

Although the constitution protects freedom of expression and the press, the king has the power to suspend these protections at his discretion; these freedoms are already severely restricted in practice, especially when concerning political issues or the royal family. Numerous laws restrict media freedom, including harsh defamation laws; the Suppression of Terrorism Act of 2008, which the government has threatened to apply to critical journalists; and legislation that penalizes sedition with a prison sentence of up to 20 years. In December 2014, the Supreme Court ordered the privately owned daily *Times of Swaziland* to pay a fine of 550,000 lilangeni (\$49,000) to Senate president Gelane Simelane-Zwane, who launched a defamation case over a 2009 article that had questioned her family lineage and thus her claim to the chieftaincy of the KoNtshingila community. The fine was the highest ever issued in Swaziland for defamation, and media freedom advocates expressed concern that the financial burden could drive the newspaper into bankruptcy.

The king has absolute authority to appoint and remove judges, which significantly compromises judicial independence. In July 2014, the High Court sentenced human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko and editor in chief of the *Nation* magazine Bheki Makhubu to two years in jail for contempt of court. Their convictions were linked to the publication in early 2014 of separate articles in which Maseko and Makhubu each criticized Chief Justice Michael Ramodibedi, who subsequently initiated the contempt case. In April, Ramodibedi reportedly summoned Mbongeni Mbingo, managing editor of the *Swazi Observer* daily, for a meeting at which Ramodibedi demanded that the newspaper cease covering Maseko and Makhubu's case. In August, Ramodibedi's office issued a statement warning journalists against "adversely" commenting on ongoing court cases.

Swaziland does not have a freedom of information law, and accessing government information is difficult. The opening of the Swaziland Media Complaints Commission, a self-regulatory body of journalists and other media workers, was announced in 2013. However, the commission is underfunded and has low visibility, and some press freedom advocates have

raised concerns about its independence. At the end of 2014, it remained unclear whether the body had resolved any complaints.

From the many media law reforms promised several years ago, there has only been progress on the establishment of the Swaziland Communication Commission, which was approved in 2013. The commission itself, whose mandate includes regulation of the broadcasting sector, appears to lack both the operational capacity and the legislative framework necessary to fulfill its duties.

Political Environment

Swazi media content is marked by a high degree of both official censorship and self-censorship on political and royal matters, often encouraged by hostile rhetoric and threats from officials. Concerns about sanctions or criminal prosecution have resulted in significant self-censorship among journalists at both public and privately owned outlets. Journalists are reluctant to criticize advertisers for fear of losing contracts, and also experience pressure to provide favorable coverage of state-supported cultural events. The authorities have restricted media coverage of recent prodemocracy protests and public-sector strikes, among other controversial issues.

Journalists risk harassment and assault by both state and nonstate actors, although no major attacks against media workers were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

The country's two daily newspapers—the *Times of Swaziland* and the *Swazi Observer*—are read almost exclusively in urban areas. The *Times* is privately owned, and *Observer* is effectively owned by the king through a royal investment company. Some analysts claim that the *Times* encounters more government scrutiny than does the *Observer*, and that the latter has more editorial freedom. The Swaziland Television Authority dominates the airwaves and generally favors the government in its coverage. The government treats state media as its mouthpiece. In August 2014, Information Minister Dumisani Ndlangamandla rejected calls from Parliament to transform the state-run Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service and Swazi TV into public broadcasters, reportedly stating that the entities were primarily intended to serve state interests. State broadcasters are prohibited from reporting on the activities of labor unions, and private individuals cannot express opinions through state outlets without prior approval. Swazis with sufficient funds can freely purchase and use satellite dishes to receive signals from independent South African and international news media. Most Swazis, however, receive their news from the radio. There is one government-owned radio station and one independent station, Voice of the Church, which focuses on religious programming.

The government does not restrict internet-based media, though civil society and prodemocracy organizations have alleged that authorities monitor electronic communications and social-networking websites. Few Swazis can afford access to the internet. In 2014, 27 percent of people in Swaziland had access to the medium.

Advertisers, including the government, regularly exert financial pressure on media outlets to deter negative coverage, and their influence is significant in Swaziland's small economy. The government withholds advertising from critical outlets; for instance, it holds no direct contracts with the *Nation*, a monthly magazine that is often critical of Swazi authorities, and whose editor

in chief received a two-year prison sentence in July 2014 for contempt of court. Further economic pressure can be exerted on outlets through frequent legal claims for damages. Journalists are poorly paid, and many have left the industry to work for the government or elsewhere in the private sector.

Sweden

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 2 / 30

Political Environment: 4 / 40

Economic Environment: 4 / 30

Total Score: 10 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	10,F	11,F	10,F	10,F	10,F

Legal Environment

There are strong legal protections for media in Sweden under the Freedom of the Press Act of 1766, the first press freedom law in the world, as well as the 1991 Fundamental Law of Freedom of Expression. However, these laws criminalize expression considered to be hate speech, and prohibit threats or expressions of contempt directed against a group or member of a group. While freedom of the press in general is greatly valued in the country, there is considerable debate in Swedish media about the limits of free speech regarding contentious issues like immigration or Islam. While immigration-skeptic blogs and the right wing nationalist Sweden Democrats party decry what they see as self-censorship in the Swedish press, most of the mainstream media see criticizing immigration as a form of hate speech. In 2013, the government made it possible for police to access IP addresses in order to identify when online hate crimes occurred, and granted the Swedish Media Council SEK 1 million (\$153,000) for initiatives to combat online xenophobia, sexism, and similar forms of intolerance among youth.

The penal code criminalizes defamation, and offenders may face up to two years in prison. The editors of Swedish newspapers are accountable for all content published on the newspaper's website, including those filed in archives, and are thus legally responsible for material approved by their predecessors. In June 2014, Fredrik Vejdeland, an editor of Nordfront, a website for the extremist Swedish Resistance Movement, received a four-month prison sentence in connection to almost 30 Nordfront reader comments containing racism and hate speech. Vejdeland had originally faced a fine for a single post and a comment published on the website in June 2013, before Sweden's attorney general launched a broader case in December 2013. In 2012, the previous editor of Nordfront, Emil Hagberg, had been sentenced to a month in prison for a user comment containing hate speech and threats against Jews.

Several other legislative initiatives and cases in recent years have raised concern. In February 2013, a court of appeals upheld a 2012 verdict against the editor in chief and a news editor of the tabloid *Expressen*, who were fined for inciting a journalist to purchase illegal firearms as part of a story on the ease of obtaining weapons in Malmö. Leading journalists saw the case as government harassment and a blow to investigative reporting. In July 2013, the

Shooting Prohibition Act was ratified to regulate the use of publicly taken photographs. Authorities portrayed the law as an instrument for safeguarding the integrity of private citizens, while critics raised concerns that the law can be used to hinder the work of press photographers.

The Freedom of the Press Act provides protections to journalists' sources and guarantees access to information. Swedish public bodies respect freedom of information in practice, and the government overall has exhibited high and rapid response rates to both domestic and international requests.

The self-regulatory Swedish Press Council was established in 1916 and has jurisdiction over print and online content. It consists of a judicial board as well as industry representatives and independent members. Complaints are investigated by an appointed ombudsman who can choose to dismiss them for lack of merit or forward them to the council with a recommendation to uphold. The council ultimately rules on complaints and can impose a fine of up to 30,000 kroners (\$4,400). Although the council does not have authority over broadcast media, it does operate an ethical code across all platforms. The code is applied to broadcast media by the Swedish Broadcasting Authority, which has a separate body—the Review Board—for examining the content of radio and television programs.

The Review Board issued several decisions in 2014, particularly on content considered to be partial or unbalanced. In December 2014, the board ruled that a series of news reports aired in March about wind power in Sweden were biased and unfair in conveying a one-sided negative image of wind turbines. In November, the board ruled against Sveriges Radio (SR), finding that the station had denied a local physician's right to reply following a broadcast that criticized his treatment methods. Complaints against several programs were also dismissed in 2014. In March, the board cleared P1 Debatt, an SR program, from accusations of partiality in connection to the host's views on the Sweden Democrats party and questions of racism.

Political Environment

Physical violence and harassment directed at media workers or outlets are rare. However, Utgivarna, an interest group representing the major Swedish media publishers, held a meeting with Swedish intelligence authorities in January 2014 to discuss police protection for its members. In June, Utgivarna published a survey showing that four out of ten news outlets had received threats against their staff or property in 2013.

In March 2014, Kamil Ryba from the Swedish Defense League, a right-wing organization, received a six-month prison sentence. He had threatened the Gothenburg-based paper *GT* on two accounts, in December 2013 and January 2014, and was convicted of issuing bomb threats as well as endangering civil liberties by attempting to suppress the freedom of the press.

Economic Environment

Buoyed by a high level of readership, Sweden's newspaper market is very diverse, with many local and regional papers. The government offers subsidies to newspapers regardless of political affiliation in order to encourage competition, and media content in immigrant languages is supported by the state. Public broadcasting, consisting of Sveriges Television (SVT) and SR, has a strong presence in Sweden. Public television and radio are funded through a license fee, but there are more than 100 private radio stations, and television has considerable competition from

private stations, with the main competitor being TV4. Private ownership in the broadcast sector is highly concentrated under the media companies Bonnier and the Modern Times Group.

In December 2014, the Swedish Broadcasting Authority released a report on the impact of 2008 changes to the Radio and Television Act that increased the advertising maximum to twelve minutes per hour of broadcasting. The report found that advertising investments in the media sector as a whole had changed little between 2006 and 2013. However, while spending on internet and television advertising increased substantially, spending on daily press advertising decreased.

Access to the internet is unrestricted by the government, and the medium was used by about 93 percent of the population in 2014. Since February 2013, every household that has a television receiver has had to pay an annual fee of SEK 2,076 (\$307), as required by the Act on Financing of Radio and Television. In 2014, a Swedish court ruled that computers, tablets, and mobile phones are not television transmitter devices, thus making them exempt from the fee.

Switzerland

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4 / 30

Political Environment: 4 / 40

Economic Environment: 5 / 30

Total Score: 13 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	13,F	13,F	12,F	12,F	12,F

Legal Environment

Article 17 of the Swiss constitution guarantees freedom of the press, while Article 93 explicitly outlines the independence of broadcast media. The penal code prohibits public incitement to racial hatred or discrimination, spreading racist ideology, and denying crimes against humanity. The law does not specifically prohibit anti-Semitic speech or Holocaust denial, but there have been convictions for such expression in the recent past. In 2013, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that a Swiss law against genocide denial violates freedom of expression principles. The government announced an appeal to the Grand Chamber of the ECHR in March 2014, and the case remained pending at year's end.

It is a crime to publish information based on leaked "secret official discussions," particularly regarding banking information. Public awareness of a 2006 transparency law remains low, and the law is rarely used.

Political Environment

Partisan interests occasionally influence media coverage, especially in the print sector. In November 2014, rumors surfaced that Christoph Blocher, leader of the right-wing populist Swiss People's Party (SVP), had plans to invest in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ), a leading daily newspaper. Blocher already owns shares in the daily *Basler Zeitung* and has been accused of

influencing the newspaper's content. Blocher initially denied reports of his involvement with *NZZ*. However, speculation intensified when the board of *NZZ Mediengruppe*—the newspaper's owner—indicated intent to replace *NZZ* chief editor Markus Spillmann with Markus Somm, a known Blocher ally and co-owner and editor of *Basler Zeitung*. Spillmann had announced in September that he would resign at the end of 2014. A number of *NZZ* journalists and editors expressed concern with reports of dialogue between Somm and the board, with some claiming that the talks were motivated by intent to influence the newspaper's coverage of political issues. The board ultimately decided against selecting Somm for the position, but no appointment was announced before the conclusion of the year.

Journalists are free from interference while covering the news, and retaliatory violence is also rare. No physical attacks against the media were reported in 2014. In 2013, Swiss authorities searched an apartment and a hotel room belonging to journalist Ludovic Rocchi in connection with a libel investigation, seizing several documents. In May 2014, the Federal Court ruled that the searches had been illegal and ordered the confiscated documents to be returned to Rocchi.

Economic Environment

Large publishing houses control most of the print sector, and the concentration of ownership has forced many stand-alone newspapers to merge or cease operations. In a report published in December 2014, the Swiss Government expressed concern about the growing concentration of media ownership and the lack of independent print media in many of Switzerland's 26 cantons. The report found the financial situation of a significant number of print outlets to be unsustainable and suggested subsidies for media outlets as a way of bolstering independence; no such measures had been implemented by year's end. The broadcast sector is dominated by the public-service Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR), which is obliged to carry content in each of Switzerland's four official languages—French, German, Italian, and Romansh. SRG SSR operates three German, two French (also broadcasting in Romansch), and two Italian television channels in addition to 17 radio stations. There are also more than a dozen private regional television channels. Radio has maintained its popularity; because of the country's linguistic divisions, most private stations are local or regional. Swiss television viewers also have extensive access to cable services and foreign channels. The internet is generally unrestricted and was accessed by 87 percent of the population in 2014.

To accommodate multiplatform access across the country, in 2013 the Swiss parliament instructed the Federal Council, or cabinet, to revise the 2007 Federal Radio and Television Act. The changes would substitute the radio and television reception fee with a universal fee paid by every household. This fee would also help fund public service radio and television.

Syria

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29 / 30

Political Environment: 38 / 40

Economic Environment: 23 / 30

Total Score: 90 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	83,NF	84,NF	89,NF	88,NF	89,NF

As the civil war raged on, Syria remained one of the world’s deadliest places to practice journalism in 2014. At least 17 journalists were killed and dozens more were injured, abducted, or imprisoned by the government of President Bashar al-Assad, various Syrian opposition factions, and the Islamic State (IS) militant group. The regime’s loss of control in many parts of the country has resulted in the emergence of new media outlets and reduced censorship in some rebel-held territories, particularly in Kurdish regions that have declared autonomy from Damascus. However, IS brutally suppressed independent media and freedom of expression in the expanding area under its de facto rule.

Legal Environment

Article 38 of the Syrian constitution provides for freedoms of speech and of the press, while a 2011 media law prohibits a “monopoly on the media,” guarantees the “right to access information about public affairs,” and bans “the arrest, questioning, or searching of journalists.” In practice, however, these protections are virtually nonexistent in government-held areas. The media law bars outlets from publishing content that affects “national unity and national security” or incites sectarian strife or “hate crimes,” and forbids the publication of any information about the armed forces. It holds editors in chief, journalists, and spokespeople accountable for violations, and prescribes fines of up to 1 million Syrian pounds (\$6,600). Article 3 states that the law “upholds freedom of expression guaranteed in the Syrian constitution” and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but Article 4 says the media must “respect this freedom of expression” by “practicing it with awareness and responsibility.” The broad wording of this article gives the authorities leeway to crack down on independent outlets.

A National Media Council (NMC) was established under the new media law to regulate the information sector. Among other duties, it sets conditions for licenses, issues them to private media outlets, and specifies rules on funding. However, the NMC lacks independence, effectively serving as a mouthpiece for the government’s media policy and a vehicle for state propaganda. Although the law requires authorities to consult the NMC before detaining or arresting journalists, searching or seizing their equipment, or investigating their activities, this process is a mere formality. The NMC is the sole entity authorized to issue media credentials to journalists, and in March 2014 it began to crack down on outlets that provided press cards and other professional identification to journalists without going through official channels. The NMC maintains a stringent registration and licensing regime and closely monitors outlets to ensure compliance. After setting advertising limits that threatened to strain economic support for independent outlets in 2013, the NMC proposed to reduce application and licensing fees in April 2014, a reform that the Ministry of Finance approved in September.

In addition to media laws, the government has used security-related legislation to control and punish journalists. Mazen Darwish, president of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), was arrested in 2012 and tried in March 2014 alongside four SCM colleagues for allegedly “publicizing terrorist acts,” an offense outlined in a 2012 antiterrorism law. The case was postponed repeatedly, and a verdict was still pending at the end of 2014. Meanwhile, Darwish and his associates remained in detention under harsh conditions, and faced up to 15 years in prison if convicted. Separately, Louay Hussein, a veteran journalist and leader of a

partly tolerated opposition movement, was arrested in November 2014 for “reporting false news” and undermining the national spirit after he published an article in the pan-Arab daily *Al-Hayat* that criticized the Syrian government. He remained in detention through the end of 2014, and the status of his case was unclear.

The legal environment for the media in territories outside the government’s influence varies depending on the group in control. In 2014, IS gained control over large parts of the country’s north and east and began to systematically enforce its own legal regime, including provisions pertaining to the media. In October, observers obtained a list of 11 restrictions issued by the IS press office, such as a rule requiring journalists to swear loyalty to the group’s self-declared caliphate and submit most of their work to official censorship bodies. There were reports that month that IS had instructed its fighters to execute any journalists who produced negative coverage of the group’s activities. Areas under IS control have been described as news “black holes” in which repression is so severe that the news media are unable to function as such.

Legal conditions are somewhat more permissive in Syrian Kurdistan, known locally as Rojava, or Western Kurdistan, where local Kurdish leaders and militias have established functional autonomy during the civil war. In January 2014, Rojava formally declared local autonomy and established its own constitution, which includes protections for the media and freedom of expression. Article 24 affirms “the right to freedom of opinion and expression; including freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media.” However, the same article also provides that such freedoms may be curtailed to ensure the “security of the autonomous regions, public safety and order, the integrity of the individual,” and other interests, seemingly opening the door to restrictive laws on issues like sedition and libel.

Other elements of Rojava’s media regime are also problematic. In August 2013, the authorities established the Union of Free Media (YRA), a government body with numerous press-related functions that continued to operate after autonomy was declared. All news media in the Kurdish cantons must obtain permits from the YRA in order to function legally. The Democratic Union Party (PYD), the dominant Kurdish political party in Rojava, has reportedly pursued lawsuits against figures with ties to opposition groups, including journalists, for allegedly “attacking the achievements of the people in Western Kurdistan and spreading lies.” However, despite such internecine disputes, a variety of print and broadcast outlets are allowed to operate, including those that are critical of the ruling party. The YRA also provides training and support to journalists operating in Rojava.

Political Environment

Authorities in government-held areas continued to forcibly restrict news coverage during 2014. False statements and propaganda are common on state-run outlets, and all media are subject to official censorship. The General Corporation for the Distribution of Publications is responsible for prior censorship and distribution of all printed materials in Syria. It regularly excises controversial content prior to circulation and fully blocks distribution of certain publications, a long-standing practice that has intensified with the conflict. Visas for the foreign press are restricted; journalists from allied countries, such as Russia and Iran, have almost uninhibited access, while those from democratic states are often arbitrarily denied or issued extremely short or limited permits. All journalists are subject to onerous restrictions on their

movements and activities, but they are sometimes able to flout these strictures given the chaotic security situation, which weakens the government's ability to police the media.

The loss of government control over parts of the country has led to a proliferation of new media outlets, including an estimated 500 print publications based in rebel-held territories. Most are small and primarily serve local audiences. A coalition of local activists and foreign donor organizations has helped to organize a grassroots network of several television and radio stations, a dozen newspapers, and several dozen media offices across opposition-controlled Syria. However, critical media working in regime-held territory do so at great risk, and thus circulate their materials primarily underground or online. In government zones, the use of cameras in the street, including mobile-phone cameras, is grounds for arrest. Despite these risks, citizen journalists help to fill the gap created by restrictions on mainstream media and have played an integral role in documenting protests and atrocities. Citizen journalists tend to work in decentralized "media centers" based in residential spaces, using simple equipment that is often funded by outside actors, such as Syrian expatriates and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The government regularly uses violence and arbitrary detentions to punish dissent and critical reporting. By the end of 2014, at least 12 journalists were in government custody; at least six were being held without charge, and some had been in detention for years. While some three-quarters of the journalists killed in Syria during 2014 died while covering the fighting, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, several were deliberately targeted for their work. Government troops are believed to have purposefully destroyed a news van in a missile strike in Daraa Province in December, killing three employees of the opposition television station Orient News.

IS also employed a combination of propaganda, censorship, arbitrary detention, and violence to control the media environment in its territory. In June, the group distributed a feature-length movie online to promote its ideology and recruit new supporters. It also began producing a multilingual magazine, *Dabiq*, based in its de facto capital, Raqqa. By late 2014, IS had taken over two television stations in the city that were previously controlled by local broadcasters, and began disseminating its propaganda over the airwaves. The group also achieved notoriety for its sophisticated use of social media, which included an active Twitter and Facebook presence and even a smartphone application.

IS was thought to be holding multiple journalists in Syria, and it murdered at least three of the captives during 2014. Al-Moutaz Bellah Ibrahim, a correspondent for the independent Shaam News Network who had reported critically on IS activity in Raqqa, was kidnapped by the group in March and killed just north of the city in May. In August and September, IS released two videos of the beheadings of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff. Other captive foreign journalists were used as props in IS propaganda videos. In a widely disseminated video in September, British journalist John Cantlie—under apparent duress—denounced U.S. and British policies in the Middle East.

In Rojava, where independent and Kurdish-language media were banned prior to the civil war, many new local outlets have been established in recent years, and foreign media are allowed to enter and operate with fewer restrictions than in the rest of Syria. However, the local Kurdish media are highly politicized. Most outlets, and all television stations, are affiliated with political parties and are often critical of their partisan rivals. The main division is between the PYD and its supporters on the one hand, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)—the largest party in Iraqi Kurdistan—and its affiliates on the other.

This rivalry has led to the harassment of some Kurdish opposition journalists in Rojava. In May, Reporters Without Borders released a report documenting arrests, interrogations, and threats directed against numerous journalists, most of them affiliated with the Iraqi Kurdish television stations Rudaw and Zagros TV. Physical assaults by security forces and threats of expulsion from the territory were also reported. However, detentions were short in duration, and no journalists reportedly remained in custody at year's end. In February, local authorities ordered the independent Arta FM radio station to suspend news coverage and broadcast only music, with no official explanation. The station halted all broadcasting in protest, and the order was rescinded under international pressure, allowing the station to resume its news programming the next day.

Economic Environment

In regime-held territory, the government and allied businessmen own most newspaper-publishing houses and tightly control editorial policy. Although the government opened up space for private print media in 2001, the owners of most private outlets—including *Al-Watan*, *Al-Iqtisad*, and *Al-Khabar*—have close ties to the regime. As a result, genuinely independent print media are virtually nonexistent. All television channels are state owned, and the government directly controls all programming and content. New print and broadcast outlets have emerged in opposition-controlled territory, but their financing—which relies on Syrian expatriates and international NGOs—hinders viability, and staff are mostly volunteers. Syria's war-ravaged economy is not conducive to sustaining private outlets, and the overall economic situation grew worse in 2014.

Rojava is home to a number of local media outlets, including Ronahi TV, Arta FM, the bimonthly newspaper *Nudem*, the news agency Hawar News, and the website Welati. However, these too suffer from economic woes, relying on volunteers and subsidies from local and foreign Kurdish benefactors. Even foreign television stations operating in the territory, such as Kurdish outlets from northern Iraq, are economically dependent on affiliated political parties.

Approximately 28 percent of Syrians accessed the internet in 2014, and social-media websites and communication tools such as Skype are increasingly used to transmit news. War-related damage to infrastructure and deliberate interference by combatants cause frequent power outages and disruption of telecommunications. Opposition groups have begun to circumvent these problems by using satellite devices to access the internet and telephone service.

Taiwan

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 27 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	24,F	25,F	25,F	26,F	26,F

Taiwan's media environment is one of the freest in Asia, and the vigorous and diverse press reports aggressively on government policies and alleged official wrongdoing. However, political polarization, self-censorship, and indirect Chinese influence somewhat limit the diversity of opinions represented in mainstream media. In 2014, Taiwan's vulnerabilities were highlighted by rare violence against journalists covering protests and cyberattacks against an important media outlet that has been critical of Beijing. The authorities launched investigations in response to the incidents.

Legal Environment

The constitution provides for freedoms of speech and of the press, and the government and independent courts generally respect these rights in practice. Publication of defamatory words or pictures can be punished with a maximum of two years in prison. Media freedom advocates have urged the government to decriminalize defamation.

Taiwan's Freedom of Government Information Law, enacted in 2005, enables public access to information held by government agencies, including financial audit reports and documents about administrative guidance.

Print media are free of state regulation, and following reforms in recent years, broadcast media are no longer subject to licensing and programming reviews by the Government Information Office (GIO), which was formally dissolved in 2012. The National Communications Commission (NCC) is Taiwan's main regulatory body tasked with awarding licenses and enforcing broadcasting guidelines. It is generally regarded as independent, though it has faced criticism for some licensing decisions in recent years, and contentious cases draw public and political pressure.

Political Environment

Media coverage is often critical of the government, though the sector is politically polarized. Most outlets are sympathetic to either the governing Kuomintang party or the opposition Democratic Progressive Party. In the run-up to municipal elections in November 2014, local journalists told the Committee to Protect Journalists that their news outlets were pressuring them to take sides in national political controversies.

Journalists also occasionally face pressure to self-censor on topics of importance to the Chinese government. Many Taiwanese media owners have business interests in China or draw advertising revenue from Chinese companies, making them wary of upsetting Beijing.

Physical violence against journalists is rare, and both local and foreign reporters are generally able to cover the news freely. However, several journalists encountered violence during student-led demonstrations, known as the Sunflower Movement, in the spring of 2014. Reporters covering the student occupation of Taiwan's executive building, the Executive Yuan, accused police of pushing, dragging, and attacking them as the officers evicted demonstrators from the building in March.

In April, Taipei police officers beat two journalists and dragged them away from the scene of an antinuclear protest, allegedly to prevent them from taking pictures of police as they moved to disperse demonstrators occupying an area near the city's main train station. The police department subsequently issued an apology, promised to compensate the journalists for damaged property, and launched an investigation into the incident. Another journalist was jostled by

police and threatened with arrest during a June protest against a Chinese official's visit to New Taipei City. At year's end the Taipei police were reportedly considering a policy under which journalists would be asked to remain inside designated "press zones" to avoid clashes with officers during protests.

Cyberattacks pose a significant threat to press freedom in Taiwan. In August 2014, the minister of science and technology warned that the country was under constant attack by Chinese cyberwarfare units. Two months later, Prime Minister Jiang Yi-huah said Chinese cyberattacks against government and civilian websites were increasing. These warnings followed major attacks on the Hong Kong and Taiwan websites of *Apple Daily*, a popular tabloid newspaper that is often critical of the Chinese government. In February, *Apple Daily's* parent company, Next Media, reported that a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack had effectively shut down its Hong Kong and Taiwan websites for several hours. Then, during an unofficial referendum on election reform organized by Hong Kong prodemocracy activists in June, the media outlet suffered the largest DDoS attack in history, leading to a "total collapse" of its websites on June 18. The effects of the attack reportedly lasted for several weeks, with some overseas readers unable to access *Apple Daily's* Taiwan site. The computer systems of *Apple Daily* and Next Media sustained further attacks during Hong Kong prodemocracy protests that began in September, as did the e-mail accounts of Next Media executives. On June 20, prosecutors in Taipei launched an investigation into the attacks on Next Media.

Economic Environment

Taiwan is home to more than 360 privately owned newspapers and numerous radio stations. Satellite television systems carry more than 280 channels. Legislation approved in 2003 barred the government and political party officials from holding positions in broadcast media companies, and required government entities and political parties to divest themselves of all broadcasting assets. The internet is not restricted by the government; about 84 percent of the population accessed the medium as of 2014.

Despite public support, efforts to pass an anti-media monopoly act stalled in the legislature in 2013. Lawmakers were unable to reach consensus on the scope of the restrictions, and companies complained that the bill would only target those with significant business activities in China. No substantial progress on the proposed law was reported in 2014.

In August 2014, the Korean private equity firm MBK Partners agreed to sell its majority stake in China Network Systems (CNS), one of Taiwan's largest cable television operators, to Ting Hsin International Group, a Taiwanese-owned conglomerate. In 2013, the NCC had blocked an attempt by MBK to sell its CNS shares to a company owned by Tsai Eng-meng, a pro-Beijing businessman who already owned several Taiwanese media enterprises. Though there was no reason for authorities to block the new MBK-Ting Hsin deal on similar competition-related grounds, opponents of the sale argued that it was not in the public interest due to Ting Hsin's substantial investments in China and the company's alleged involvement in three major food-safety scandals in 2014. Among other concerns, some feared that Ting Hsin's control of CNS might discourage Taiwanese news media from reporting on future food-safety scandals. As of the end of 2014, the proposed deal was on hold.

Tajikistan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 32 / 40

Economic Environment: 25 / 30

Total Score: 82 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	78,NF	78,NF	79,NF	79,NF	80,NF

In 2014, the government frequently blocked access to online media outlets, social-networking websites, and other portals, and continued using restrictive media legislation and regulations to curb independent reporting. The ability of journalists to cover politically sensitive news was further constrained in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, located in eastern Tajikistan, in the wake of the high-profile arrest and detention of an academic researcher in the region's capital.

Legal Environment

Freedom of speech is guaranteed by the constitution, although authorities regularly curtail this freedom in practice. In 2013, the parliament of Tajikistan passed the law "On periodical print and other mass media," which took effect in March of that year. The law contains a number of protections for media workers, broadens the definition and rights of a journalist, attempts to limit the formation of media monopolies, and guarantees access to public information. The information provision strengthens Tajikistan's access to information law, which is poorly structured, little known by the public, and virtually ignored by officials. However, the new law's provisions for registration have already been used to shutter media outlets critical of the government's policies. The Culture Ministry withdrew the licenses of the independent weekly newspapers *Hafta* and *Paik* in February and April 2014, respectively, based on alleged technical violations of registration requirements. However, the revocations were perceived by media workers and watchdogs as retaliatory measures for the papers' publication of articles on sensitive social, economic, and governance issues in Tajikistan. In July 2014, authorities amended the Law on Emergency Situations, empowering the government to limit the use of video recording equipment and mobile and internet networks, and permitting authorities to censor mass media in order to "maintain peace."

A law decriminalizing libel was adopted in 2012, but journalists still face criminal penalties for insulting President Emomali Rahmon and other public officials. In February 2014, *Asia-Plus* editor Olga Tutubalina and the Asia-Plus Media Group were found guilty of collective libel in a Dushanbe civil court. Tutubalina had been charged with causing "physical and mental suffering" to the country's intelligentsia through a blog article she published in 2013. The media agency and she were fined 30,000 Tajikistani somoni (\$6,200) and required to publish an apology. The defendants in the case, who had not been identified in the blog post by name, included state-sponsored institutions.

Tajikistan's media licensing committee routinely denies licenses to independent and foreign media outlets or otherwise obstructs the licensing process. The government has repeatedly denied license renewal for radio broadcasting to the British Broadcasting Corporation

(BBC). No member of an independent media outlet has ever been included in the licensing committee, which retained its closed structure and nontransparent practices throughout 2014.

Political Environment

In 2013, Tajikistan adopted the “Ethics Code for an e-Citizen,” which, although not legally enforceable, outlines a set of ethical guidelines for internet and telephone users. Some have deemed the code to be a way of justifying the blocking of websites that are critical of the government, noting that the document requires respecting “the norms of the state language and national values in virtual space.” The authorities continued to periodically block access to independent social-networking and news websites in 2014. Throughout the year, internet service providers (ISPs) and mobile phone operators were instructed to block access to over 200 websites, including YouTube, Facebook, Google, Wikipedia, independent Tajik news portals, and popular Russian social-networking websites. While ISPs claimed that they received instructions from the Communications Service of the Tajik government to block websites, the agency has denied involvement and linked the outages on technical problems.

Investigative reporting has developed to some degree in Tajikistan, although ethical standards are not always respected. The law allows journalists to keep their sources confidential, except when ordered to disclose them by a court. However, officials often pressure journalists to reveal their sources of information, especially when concerning critical or analytical articles. This leads many journalists to publish their work under pseudonyms and to rely on anonymous sources.

Journalists reporting on sensitive issues face threats, attacks, libel suits, and other forms of harassment. Alexander Sodiqov, a Tajik blogger and academic researcher affiliated with a Canadian university, was arrested in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region in June 2014 after conducting an interview with a local opposition leader. He was charged with espionage and high treason, and released into house arrest after 36 days in detention. In September, he was allowed to return to Canada, although the charges against him remained standing at the end of the year. While Sodiqov was acting in the capacity of an academic researcher while conducting interviews in the region, his arrest had a chilling effect on the coverage of politically sensitive topics, particularly in the eastern part of the country. Tajik journalists claim that state-run media outlets often publicize letters from fabricated entities in which independent journalists and opposition figures are smeared.

Economic Environment

In a November 2014 speech, President Rahmon announced that there are 307 private and 209 state-owned publications, 49 private and 19 state-owned broadcasters, and dozens of private news agencies in Tajikistan; however, accurate figures are difficult to establish because of a lack of regular disclosure as well as frequent suspensions and closures. Most print publications are circulated on an irregular schedule, and are often issued only once or twice a month. The broadcast sector is dominated by state-controlled national television stations that praise Rahmon and deny coverage to independent or opposition points of view. Several regions in Tajikistan lack access to independent broadcasting. While analysts point out that there are few independent television stations in Tajikistan, international television broadcasts, including those from Russia, are becoming increasingly available through satellite services. However, electricity shortages

limit overall access to electronic media, and government control over distribution limits the reach of print media. Internet use remains limited, and only 17 percent of the population accessed the medium in 2014. Widespread poverty, a small advertising market, and the concentration of wealth in the hands of political leaders and their associates hamper the emergence of financially robust and independent media outlets.

Tanzania

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 21 / 40

Economic Environment: 15 / 30

Total Score: 54 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	50,PF	48,PF	49,PF	51,PF	55,PF

Although threats and attacks against the press decreased in 2014, journalists were still victim to political tensions between Tanzania’s ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party and the main opposition Chadema party ahead of 2015 general elections. Hopes for reform of antipress laws through a constitutional review process expected before the elections did not materialize in 2014.

Legal Environment

The current constitution provides for freedom of speech, but at least 17 laws encourage self-censorship and limit the ability of the media to function effectively. The most notorious and widely enforced of these laws is the 1976 Newspaper Registration Act, which empowers authorities to ban publications “in the interest of peace and good order.” The law was not actively used against the press in 2014, but private publications self-censored to avoid potential closure. In April, authorities threatened to close private newspaper *Mawio* for publishing a story concerning the union between the island Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania; no further punitive action was taken. In January, a court acquitted three journalists from the daily opposition paper *Tanzania Daima* of sedition charges brought under the Newspaper Registration Act in 2011 on the grounds that there was insubstantial evidence. Another restrictive law, the National Security Act, allows the government to take action against any piece of investigative journalism that touches on information it considers classified. Libel is a civil offense, but officials have used libel suits to weaken cash-strapped media houses.

President Jakaya Kikwete and Deputy Information Minister Jumia Nkamia told Tanzanian legislators that a much-postponed access to information and media bill would be tabled in February 2015. Journalists were able to participate in the constitutional draft review process that includes additional clauses supporting press freedom and access to information, but the process was not completed by the end of 2014 and a litany of antipress legislation remains on the books. A number of laws, such as the Civil Service Act and the Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act, block access to information for journalists. Many public officials face legal restrictions on providing information to the media.

The 1993 Broadcasting Services Act allows the state to regulate electronic media, and the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), a nominally independent agency, can close stations at will. There is concern that the TCRA may be subject to government influence, as its board chairman and director general are both appointed by the president. The independent Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) was established by media groups in 1995 as an alternative to government regulation.

Conditions in the semiautonomous Zanzibar archipelago remain more restrictive than on the mainland. There, the private media generally avoid criticizing the leadership, as implicating Zanzibar lawmakers in criminal activities can result in a minimum fine of approximately \$200 or three years' imprisonment, according to the semiautonomous region's defamation laws. The laws are rarely used to imprison journalists, but authorities have revoked journalists' permits as a means of silencing criticism.

Political Environment

Foreign media content is freely available in Tanzania. In Zanzibar, the government still largely controls the content of the national radio and television broadcasts that the islands receive, and even censors the state-owned national television station, which is aired on a delay to enable pre-broadcast review. The government controls the Zanzibar Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and publishes the only daily newspaper, *Zanzibar Leo*. Cable television and private local (FM) radio stations are given more leeway than mainland media on the islands; articles from mainland dailies criticizing the Zanzibari government are often read on the air. Opposition politicians have access to state media outlets. Residents can also receive private broadcasts from the mainland.

Direct attacks and threats against journalists in Tanzania decreased during 2014. However, authorities and the public alike attacked and threatened journalists for their perceived political affiliations ahead of the 2015 general elections. Police were the most egregious perpetrators of violence against journalists. In September, police attacked and injured three journalists—Josephat Isango, Shamimu Ausi, and Yusuf Badi—who were covering the arrival of an opposition leader at police headquarters in Dar es Salaam. The same month, police detained freelance journalist Abdallah Nsabi in northern Tanzania for reporting on an opposition rally. Police did not attend a high-level function, also in September, that was designed to improve relations and cooperation between the press and security organs.

Economic Environment

There are numerous media outlets in Tanzania as a whole, including dozens of daily and weekly newspapers. The government controls two daily newspapers, and the two main political parties own one each. According to the TCRA, there are 86 licensed radio stations and 28 licensed television stations; only a small percentage of the population has access to television due to high costs. Internet penetration in Tanzania continues to increase, with a usage rate of nearly 5 percent in 2014. Social-media outlets and online forums have grown in popularity in recent years. In Zanzibar, three cable television stations and nine local private (FM) radio stations compete with the ZBC.

Private individuals and nongovernmental organizations are the main media owners, but control is concentrated in the hands of a few proprietors. Only five radio stations have national

reach—state-run Radio Tanzania and privately owned Radio One, Radio Free Africa, Radio Uhuru, and the youth-oriented Cloud FM—and all are viewed as sympathetic to the ruling CCM.

The government reportedly continues to withhold advertising from critical newspapers and websites, especially those that favor the opposition. Private firms that are keen to remain on good terms with the government allegedly follow suit, making it difficult for critical media outlets to remain financially viable. The problem is exacerbated by the influence advertisers have over editorial content combined with media houses' dependence on advertising revenue.

Thailand

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27 / 30

Political Environment: 31 / 40

Economic Environment: 17 / 30

Total Score: 75 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	58,PF	62,NF	60,PF	62,NF	64,NF

Press freedom in Thailand suffered significantly in the wake of the military coup on May 22, 2014, which ousted the elected government and installed a junta, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). The coup leaders, headed by General Prayuth Chan-ocha, suspended the 2007 constitution and promulgated a temporary constitutional charter on July 22. In August, an appointed legislature selected Prayuth as prime minister. The new regime aggressively enforced existing laws against defamation and *lèse-majesté*, imposed draconian new military orders to bar criticism of the coup, and shut down media outlets en masse. Many journalists faced intimidation, summonses from authorities, and arbitrary detention throughout the year.

Legal Environment

The declaration of martial law and the suspension of the 2007 constitution in May effectively annulled any legal safeguards for freedom of expression. Among other powers, martial law enabled authorities to detain anyone for up to seven days without charge or evidence. The interim constitution issued in July gave unchecked power to the NCPO. Also that month, the junta issued Orders 97 and 103, which prohibited the media from disseminating information that could cause disorder or that criticized the coup regime. Thanapol Eawsakul, editor of the online magazine *Fah Diew Gan (Same Sky)*, was arrested on July 5 and spent four days in jail for posting a critical Facebook message. He had already spent seven days in custody in May for participating in a peaceful anticoup demonstration.

Restrictive legislation that had been in place before the coup continued to limit media independence throughout 2014, with enforcement reportedly intensifying after the coup. The adjudication of related cases was affected by the inability of courts to act independently. After the coup, the NCPO ordered that courts must hear and process cases according to its decrees.

Thailand's laws on *lèse-majesté* have had a particularly chilling effect on freedom of expression. Article 112 of the criminal code assigns penalties of up to 15 years in prison for

anyone who “defames, insults, or threatens the King, Queen, the Heir-apparent, or the Regent.” Prosecutors have been able to increase sentences beyond this threshold using the 2007 Computer Crimes Act (CCA), which assigns prison terms of up to five years for the online publication of forged or false content that endangers individuals, the public, or national security, as well as for the use of proxy servers to access restricted material. Article 112 complaints can be brought by one citizen against another, and authorities are required to investigate them. Lèse-majesté defendants are almost always denied bail. The independent legal monitor iLaw reported that the number of cases increased in the months after the coup following a slowdown under Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in 2011–13. A total of 23 people were charged under Article 112 between the coup and the end of 2014, according to the group.

In November, Nut Rungwong (penname Somsak Pakdeedech), editor of the online news aggregator Thai E-News, was sentenced to four and a half years in prison on lèse-majesté charges for an article by a political science professor that he published in 2009. Another journalist, editor Somyot Preuksakasemsuk, had been sentenced in 2013 to 11 years in prison for publishing two articles deemed critical of the monarchy in his *Voice of Taksin* newsmagazine in 2010. The law was first used to criminally convict a Thai journalist in 2012, when *Prachatai* webmaster Chiranuch Premchaiporn was given a suspended jail sentence for allowing 20 days to pass before the removal of comments deemed critical of the monarchy from the website’s discussion forum. In December, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) instructed internet service providers (ISPs) to monitor and shut down all websites carrying lèse-majesté content.

Criminal defamation laws also continue to be used to silence criticism of the regime. In December 2013, the Royal Thai Navy filed criminal defamation and computer crime charges against journalist Alan Morison, an Australian national, and his Thai colleague, Chutima Sidasathien, for writing in the independent online paper *Phuketwan* about a Pulitzer Prize-winning Reuters article that tied navy personnel to human trafficking. The two were charged in April, but their trial was postponed until 2015. Morison’s passport was seized, restricting his ability to travel outside Thailand. Separately, a number of regulatory disputes have led to defamation cases in recent years. In September, for example, Channel 3 filed a defamation suit against three NBTC commissioners for alleged malfeasance and CCA violations after they accused the channel of hindering the country’s broadcast digitization process. The suit was dropped in early December.

Thailand’s legal framework for access to public information includes exceptions for information that might put the monarchy in jeopardy, threaten national security, or impede law enforcement. Historically the law has been poorly understood and unevenly applied. The Office of the Official Information Commission falls under the prime minister’s office.

The NBTC, responsible for allocating broadcast licenses and regulating both broadcast and online media, is not independent in practice. After the coup it worked closely with the NCPO to enforce military orders and shut down or block media outlets as deemed necessary by the junta.

Journalists and their professional organizations were subject to increased monitoring by the authorities following the coup, affecting their ability to operate freely. The NCPO actively encouraged civilian informants to report anticoup activity or opinions.

Political Environment

Prior to the coup, the Thai media were highly polarized between royalists opposed to the government of Yingluck, sister of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and those who supported Thaksin. As the military seized control in May 2014, however, soldiers were sent to media offices and newsrooms to monitor content, ensure the broadcast of junta-supplied material, and force the closure of all cable and satellite television channels as well as thousands of community radio stations. While entertainment television channels were allowed to resume broadcasting shortly afterward, 14 cable and satellite channels remained shuttered. Those targeted were newer, more politicized stations that had recently expanded media diversity beyond the largely compliant mainstream print media and the state- or army-controlled terrestrial broadcast media, which remained operational during martial law. By August, the suspended television stations had been allowed back on air, but they were banned from discussing politics and granted only temporary, one-year licenses.

The radio stations shut down after the coup included over 7,000 community outlets, including many that had operated without licenses and were considered illegal. In order to resume operating, independent stations had to register with the NBTC and undergo examination. Some were later allowed back on the air, but many remained unable to operate at year's end.

Among other restrictive measures taken by the junta, foreign broadcasts were blocked, journalists were barred from interviewing critics of the coup, and ISPs were pressured to suspend service for users who hampered the work of NCPO officials. According to a July 1 report by the Thai Netizen Network, the junta had blocked at least 1,500 websites by that date. For about an hour in late May, Facebook was completely inaccessible in the country.

Beyond website blocking, the NCPO took a number of steps to increase control over the internet in the future. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) began planning a national internet gateway that would enable more efficient and comprehensive censorship of online content. Working groups were set up to monitor and analyze content, block problematic sites, and combat online crimes, including dissemination of illegal information.

Propagandistic content became more common in the media following the coup. Activist Kritsuda Khunasen, who was arrested in May and held illegally for 29 days, appeared on the military's Channel 5 television station with a junta spokesman on the day of her release, saying she was "happier than words can say." She later fled the country and said she had been badly beaten, asphyxiated with a plastic bag, and forced to make the television appearance. Other forms of propaganda included the song "Bring the Happiness Back," reportedly written by General Prayuth, as well as the television and radio program *Prayuth Talks With the People*. In an ostensible attempt to foster reconciliation, the regime also organized free concerts in many areas, distributed free tickets to nationalist movies, and ordered the World Cup soccer tournament to be shown on free-to-air television.

Self-censorship on topics involving the monarchy remained the norm throughout the year, and many media outlets, including newspapers known for their spirited commentary and analysis of domestic politics, became more subservient after the coup. True Visions, one of the largest cable television providers, stopped carrying 14 international news channels because it was unable to censor content that might violate NCPO orders. In June, *Fah Diew Gan* informed its subscribers that it would indefinitely delay publication due to the climate of fear. In August, *ASTV-Manager Weekly Magazine* published an issue with a black cover and announced that it would temporarily stop publishing in response to the junta's intimidation. A week later the publisher of *Matichon Weekly* decided not to distribute that month's issue, fearing charges of lèse majesté.

Even state-owned media faced interference from the authorities regarding its coverage. In June, the news production and program director of state-run NBT Channel 11 was suspended for presenting news that was deemed unacceptable under NCPO orders. In November, authorities similarly forced the suspension of Thai PBS reporter Nattaya Wawweerakup for an episode of her program that featured interviews with citizens who criticized the junta.

Journalists faced harassment and violence during antigovernment protests led by the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) in the months leading up to the coup, particularly when they were seen as unsympathetic to the demonstrators' cause. In January, a news agency photographer was reportedly seized by protesters until others came to his assistance. In April, Kamon Duangpasuk (also known as Mainueng Kor Kunttee), a pro-Thaksin poet and contributor to *Matichon Weekly*, was shot and killed in Bangkok. Nick Nostitz, a German freelance photojournalist, was rescued by police in early May 2014 after PDRC security guards assaulted him. Two days later, PDRC leaders and supporters entered five major television stations in Bangkok and demanded that they stop airing news from government sources.

Following the coup, the NCPO used summonses, arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, and harassment as means of silencing dissent. As of November 30, the organization iLaw had documented 626 cases of people apprehended under martial law, leading to 340 arrests; those affected included journalists as well as prodemocracy politicians, academics, and activists, some held incommunicado and without access to lawyers. In areas outside the capital, many were quietly "invited" for discussion without public announcements. Public summonses later stopped due to criticism by human rights groups, making it more difficult to track cases. As a condition for their release, detainees had to sign agreements that they would not engage in politics or travel without permission. In many cases, authorities collected detainees' personal information, including passwords for social-media accounts, details about people they knew, their sources of funding, political activities, and opinions. A number of detainees were reportedly tortured in custody.

Economic Environment

Large conglomerates and prominent families, some with political ties, own the majority of print outlets, while state entities—including the armed forces and police—have traditionally controlled the country's free-to-air television stations and the roughly 700 officially registered radio stations. The state's long-standing domination of broadcast media has been undermined in recent years by the availability of cable, satellite, and internet-based television, and the growth of community radio. Internet penetration reached nearly 35 percent in 2014, and social-media platforms like Facebook and Line are extremely popular. Mobile-telephone penetration exceeds 100 percent, meaning many Thais have more than one phone. Although the internet and social-networking sites contain a greater diversity of content and debate than traditional media, online censorship and self-censorship has increased since the coup.

The NBTC held an auction for 24 commercial digital terrestrial television licenses in December 2013, which reshaped the media landscape and ended an oligopoly enjoyed by the country's six analog channels. However, the digital transition process still favored major players with the resources and market share to run a successful broadcast station in a newly competitive sector. In addition, many viewers still lacked access to digital receivers, and the licensing process remained a matter of concern. The commercial license auction was set to be followed by

allocation of 12 public and 12 community digital television licenses, but the plan stalled during 2014.

In 2012, the NBTC approved a draft regulation that would allow the issuing of one-year “trial” licenses to more than 7,000 community radio stations in anticipation of a more permanent licensing scheme. After the 2014 coup, those stations that met NCPO criteria were issued temporary licenses in September, but they had to sign a memorandum of understanding—agreeing to comply with NCPO and NBTC rules—while awaiting a more thorough examination, whose timeframe had yet to be determined.

Togo

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 20 / 30

Total Score: 62 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	74,NF	73,NF	69,NF	70,NF	65,NF

The gradual opening of Togo’s media environment continued in 2014, particularly through the launch of a number of new private broadcast stations and increased audience access to diverse perspectives. However, press freedom still faced constraints including a state regulatory body with broad power to sanction journalists and media outlets, the lack of a freedom of information law, and impunity for attacks against journalists.

Legal Environment

While the constitution and other laws protect the freedoms of speech and the press, enforcement has long been a problem. A 2004 amendment to the Press and Communications Code abolished prison terms for press offenses, but retained fines ranging from 100,000 to 5 million CFA francs (\$200 to \$10,000) for defamation, depending on the status of the aggrieved party, with offenses against the president drawing the heaviest penalties. Article 58 of the penal code also prescribes fines for defamation. Judges have traditionally applied the penal code rather than the press code in such cases. However, after a spike in prosecutions in 2010, particularly concerning President Faure Gnassingbé and his family, defamation cases have declined in recent years.

Togo does not have a law guaranteeing access to information, and in practice official information is difficult to obtain, particularly for private media outlets. Print media are not required to seek permission from state authorities before publishing, and there is no law restricting the practice of journalism to those with a certain academic background. Increasingly, journalists and media workers are forming associations to oversee the professionalization of the sector, as well as to advocate for journalists’ rights, and many of these groups became more outspoken over the course of 2014.

The power of the state regulatory body, the High Authority of Broadcasting and Communications (HAAC), has gradually increased in recent years. A 2009 law enables the HAAC to impose severe penalties—including the suspension of publications or broadcasts for up to six months and the confiscation of press cards—if outlets or journalists are found to have made “serious errors” or to be “endangering national security.” In February 2013, the law was amended to give the HAAC, among other powers, the ability to shut down media outlets without a court order. However, following journalist protests and a nationwide media blackout in March 2013, the constitutional court struck down the amendments.

In 2014, although journalists were still wary of the HAAC’s ability to crack down on critical reporting, there were indications that the regulator was operating with more independence from the government, and was more willing to resolve media disputes fairly. The authority also intensified its engagement with press associations and civil society during the year, collaborating on issues such as regulating violent and erotic content on television, in what was billed as a move to protect children. In March 2014, the HAAC adopted an order aimed at improving access to the public media for political parties and private institutions, and followed up with an outreach campaign to educate civil society about their rights of access.

Licensing of media outlets, particularly broadcast outlets, has long been problematic in Togo. In 2013, police shut down the private station Radio Légende FM when it aired accusations—which ultimately proved to be false—of electoral fraud during the July legislative elections. This action led to angry protests in which two police officers were taken hostage, requiring the intervention of an independent mediator. The HAAC subsequently suspended the station, and refused to renew its license that August, forcing its permanent closure. However, the station continued to maintain a website and broadcast online. Reflecting the increasing prevalence of online news content, the HAAC targeted a news website for the first time in September 2014. It delayed the launch of the site, Afrikaexpress.info, and ordered the outlet’s main office in Lomé to be shut down for not obeying licensing requirements. The regulator accused the site’s director, Carmel Max Savi of Benin, of engaging in a “disinformation campaign” against Togo.

In a positive step, the HAAC approved three new commercial radio stations and five new community radio stations during 2014. Resistance to such approvals in previous years had been blamed on the limited availability of frequencies. According to the government, licensing costs for television stations outside of the capital have been lowered in an effort to increase access among rural populations, although no new television stations opened during the year.

Political Environment

Government control over the editorial content of state media—the daily *Togo-Presse*, Television Togolaise (TVT), Radio Togolaise, and the Togo News Agency (ATOP)—continues to be a problem. Meanwhile, the private and independent media have become more active and expressed a wider variety of viewpoints in recent years.

Journalists in Togo have traditionally operated in fear of violent attacks and harassment for their reporting, and some continue to engage in self-censorship, particularly on issues concerning corruption, national security, the military, and Gnassingbé’s family. The incidence of direct attacks on journalists has fluctuated over the last few years, with increases reported around election periods or during antigovernment protests. Journalists faced several violent clashes with security forces in 2013, mostly in relation to their attempts to cover protests. While the number

of attacks decreased in 2014, impunity for past crimes against journalists remains a serious concern. No individuals were prosecuted for any of the 2013 attacks, and at least one victim was still in exile in 2014.

Of the attacks that took place in 2014, the majority were perpetrated by members of the paramilitary police—the gendarmerie—often while the reporters in question were trying to cover the gendarmerie’s own activities. For example, in January, a journalist with the private radio station Océan FM was arrested and detained for several hours after attempting to report on the seizure of illegally acquired fuel by members of the gendarmerie. The coverage of a similar incident led to the detention and brutal assault of a journalist with the bimonthly *Focus Info*, who also had his equipment seized and his photographs destroyed.

Economic Environment

Togo boasts a particularly large number of print outlets for a country of its size. According to statistics released by the HAAC and verified by the Togolese Media Observatory (OTM), in 2014 there were more than 430 private newspapers (of which some 230 published semi-regularly), 85 private radio stations, and 11 television channels operating in the country. The number of radio stations increased significantly in 2014 as the HAAC began issuing licenses that it had previously withheld.

Despite the number of private media outlets, state media still enjoy dominance, as each has the greatest reach in its medium. Nevertheless, the state-run outlets continue to suffer from poor infrastructure and mismanagement. Most media companies, both public and private, are economically vulnerable. Journalists receive meager wages, and the small pool of private advertising comes primarily from international organizations. Media content is still highly politicized, influenced by special interests, and susceptible to corruption due to low pay; government subsidies are frequently used to reward favorable coverage. Printing facilities are outdated, and while the government owns a more modern press, it too suffers from disrepair.

Nearly 6 percent of the population was able to access the internet as of 2014, a relatively high penetration rate by regional standards, and mobile telephone usage is rapidly increasing. The country was connected to undersea fiber-optic cables in 2012, but internet activity remains constrained by poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and high access costs. While the government generally does not impose restrictions or censorship on internet content, local authorities do reportedly slow down or cut off access if it serves their interests, as during an election.

In December 2012, the National Assembly adopted a law on electronic communications, amended in early 2013, with the aim of encouraging competition among network providers and expanding the options available to consumers. In 2014, the government’s attention was focused on preparing for the transition to digital broadcasting, planned for 2015.

Tonga

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 10 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 10 / 30

Total Score: 29 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	32,PF	31,PF	29,PF	29,F	29,F

Trinidad and Tobago

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7 / 30

Political Environment: 12 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 27 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	24,F	25,F	26,F	25,F

Legal Environment

Freedom of the press is enshrined in the constitution and is generally respected in practice. However, libel remains a criminal offense. In February 2014, the government amended Trinidad's Libel and Defamation Act to abolish "malicious defamatory libel" as a criminal offense; however, it preserved "malicious defamatory libel known to be false." The Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago expressed concern, saying passage of the amendment without full decriminalization could continue to limit press freedom, since journalists still face the threat of heavy fines and up to two years' imprisonment under the remaining provisions.

Journalists are also subject to exorbitant civil libel judgments. In April 2014, a High Court judge ordered the *Trinidad Express* newspaper to pay Ken Julien, former president of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, over \$500,000 in damages for articles criticizing his management of the university. The award was one of the highest ever for a defamation case in Trinidad and Tobago.

In May 2014, the Cybercrime Bill was introduced in Parliament. Press freedom advocates criticized a number of the bill's provisions, which included jail time and fines for defamatory online content and rules requiring internet service providers to disclose customer information under court order. However, the bill stalled in Parliament in July, and had not passed by year's end.

While freedom of information legislation is in place, the government has been criticized for gradually narrowing the categories of public information that are available under the law.

Political Environment

There were no reports of physical attacks on journalists in 2014. However, several journalists faced threats and harassment. Mark Bassant, an investigative reporter for the Caribbean Communications Network, was forced to flee the country in May 2014 after learning that criminals had put a bounty on his head in connection with his investigation into the murder of former politician Dana Seetahal. Acting police commissioner Stephen Williams said Bassant

had made irresponsible comments, which sparked a debate in the country about the police commissioner’s lack of support for Bassant, with some calling for Williams to resign. Bassant returned to Trinidad and Tobago in late July to continue reporting, and his case remained ongoing at year’s end. Also in July, a TV journalist and his cameraman reported that soldiers had pointed their weapons at them and threatened their lives after the two attempted to record the soldiers, who were accused of abusing residents while on patrol in the capital.

Economic Environment

There are three daily newspapers—*Trinidad Express*, *Newsday*, and the *Trinidad Guardian*—and three political weeklies, all of which are privately owned. About a dozen television stations are in operation, including the state-owned Caribbean New Media Group (CNMG), though the privately owned TV6 dominates ratings. There are several dozen radio stations, including three operated by CNMG. The government and state-owned businesses disproportionately place their advertising with state-owned media and private outlets that favor the government. Several outlets reported that the government withheld official advertising in 2014 as a result of their critical reporting. There are no government restrictions on the internet, which was accessed by 65 percent of the population in 2014.

Tunisia

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16 / 30

Political Environment: 16 / 40

Economic Environment: 16 / 30

Total Score: 48 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	85,NF	85,NF	51,PF	52,PF	53,PF

Tunisia’s new constitution, adopted in January 2014, contained numerous protections for media independence, indicating an important break from the repressive policies of former president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. However, some of the charter’s provisions left open the possibility of arbitrary restrictions on journalists, and various laws dating to the Ben Ali era remained in force. Journalists and outspoken bloggers continued to face charges during the year for defamation and other offenses.

Legal Environment

Tunisia’s 2014 constitution represents a considerable improvement over its predecessor with respect to press freedom, though observers noted some shortcomings. Article 31 guarantees “freedoms of opinion, thought, expression, information, and publication,” and adds that these rights may not be subjected to prior control. The widely praised Article 32 enshrines the right to access information and communication networks. Article 49 states that the “law determines the

modalities regarding the rights and freedoms guaranteed in this constitution and the conditions for exercising them, without endangering their essence,” and proceeds to list circumstances in which restrictions on press freedom would be justified. Although the provision specifies that any limitations must show “respect for proportionality,” the inclusion of “public morals” as criteria for limiting free speech was criticized by international press freedom groups.

Article 20 of the charter gives international treaties a “sub-constitutional and supra-legislative” status, and the text makes no reference to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the international baseline for press freedom. Moreover, Article 6 attempts to reconcile Tunisia’s secular and religious populations by identifying the state as the guardian of religion and belief, a role that could be used to justify press freedom violations in cases of alleged blasphemy and similar offenses.

Despite the new constitution, the legal framework in which the media operate remains a mixture of new and Ben Ali–era elements. In November 2011, the transitional government passed Decrees 115 and 116, which were intended to replace the restrictive 1975 press code and create an independent audiovisual regulatory authority. These decrees enabled journalists to access information and publish without prior authorization from the Interior Ministry. However, they include some restrictive provisions, and the Ben Ali–era penal code also continues to be enforced, allowing journalists to be prosecuted for defamation and other crimes.

For example, in January 2014, a court in Tunis sentenced blogger Yassine Ayari in absentia to six months in prison under Articles 50 and 51 of the 2011 press code for denouncing a political analyst he linked to Ben Ali. Ayari was known for criticizing Ben Ali’s regime as well as Beji Caid Essebsi, who was elected president in late 2014. The blogger appealed the decision, but he was arrested in another case upon his return to Tunisia in December; a military court had sentenced him to three years in prison in absentia in November, for allegedly defaming the armed forces. Final judgements in both cases were still pending at year’s end. Separately, Jabeur Mejri, who was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison in 2012 for publishing online articles and cartoons deemed offensive to Islam, was released in March under a presidential pardon.

Journalists’ access to information and sources has improved, but it remains a challenge. While a draft law on access to information was released in August 2013, press freedom groups criticized it for broad exceptions, the absence of a public-interest override clause, and the lack of an independent body to oversee implementation. Similar shortcomings had been identified in two earlier measures on the topic—a 2011 decree by the transitional government and a 2012 government directive detailing the criteria and procedures for releasing public records. The parliament had yet to adopt the 2013 draft law at the end of 2014.

In May 2013, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (HAICA) was established as an independent self-regulatory body after the dissolution of the National Authority to Reform Information and Communication (INRIC). During debates over the constitution in January 2014, HAICA members protested provisions pertaining to the body’s functionality and prerogatives. Article 127 of the constitution states that the authority will be consulted on relevant draft laws, which some of its members deemed insufficient and a threat to the body’s decision-making capacity. Its diluted authority was evident in July, when then prime minister Mehdi Jomaa unilaterally closed a radio station and an affiliated television station without consulting the HAICA; the outlets, which were accused of carrying extremist views, were shuttered shortly after a militant attack that killed 15 soldiers.

In other cases, the authority played a strong supervisory role, issuing fines to radio and

television stations totaling 703,000 dinars (\$413,000) in 2014. Its decisions have generally been considered reasonable, despite external pressure from public and private actors. However, some moves have been more controversial. In October, the HAICA placed a one-month ban on *Liman Yajroo Faqat*, a popular talk show, after a guest on the program discussed his amicable relationship with terrorist leader Abou Iyadh. The suspension meant that the program would not be able to cover that month's parliamentary elections.

In November 2013, the Ministry of Communication and Technologies issued a decree creating a new Tunisian Technical Agency for Telecommunications (ATT), to "provide technical support for judicial investigations on cybercrimes." Press freedom advocates argued that the ATT's bylaws violated international law and disregarded UN recommendations regarding online surveillance. Critics also said the legal foundation for the agency—and for the crimes it was meant to address—was unclear, and warned that it could reprise the role of a Ben Ali-era predecessor that had routinely censored blogs and other websites. In August 2014, the ATT established a monitoring committee dominated by ministerial appointees.

The July 2014 leak of a draft law on cybercrimes drew strong opposition from bloggers and other freedom of expression advocates. The draft mandated fines and a six-month prison sentence for individuals who use "information and communications systems to spread content showing obscene acts and assaulting good morals." The sentence could be increased to three years if the content "incites immorality." The legislation was not adopted during 2014.

Since 2011, press freedom groups and professional organizations like the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) have been active in pushing back against legal restrictions and providing assistance to journalists who are prosecuted or dismissed for their work.

Political Environment

There is no longer official censorship, and self-censorship has decreased since the fall of Ben Ali. The media on the whole were free to cover opposition parties and leaders without government interference in 2014, including in the period surrounding parliamentary and presidential elections. However, polarization of the media landscape has left news organizations divided by ideology, political affiliation, and economic interests. Media outlets tend to favor either progovernment or opposition voices, and adopt Islamist or secularist viewpoints. Polarization was exacerbated in December 2013, when the office of then president Moncef Marzouki released a controversial report listing journalists who had received payments from the Ben Ali regime in exchange for favorable reporting.

The environment for online expression has improved significantly since the revolution. In 2012, Tunisia joined the Freedom Online Coalition, a partnership of countries committed to supporting internet freedom. There were no reports of internet censorship in 2014, nor were there substantive reports that internet forums or private e-mail were being monitored. However, activists remained concerned that the ATT could lead to a regression in online freedom.

Physical assaults on journalists in the course of their work, while not systematic, have become common, particularly in encounters with police during demonstrations. In May 2014, when clashes broke out between police and protesters outside a courthouse during a controversial trial in Kasserine, five journalists and photographers were injured at the scene. Also in May, police detained journalist Abir Saidi, who was reporting on the release of a former regime official in Tunis. She was held without charges and questioned for several hours. That same day, police threw photojournalist Jalel Ferjani to the ground during a protest and destroyed his

camera—though the officers were later punished for the incident. In July, police violently attacked journalist Nabil Ben Oueddou at a protest in Djerba. He reported severe injuries to his face, legs, and back, and stressed that he presented his press credentials to the police in an attempt to defuse the confrontation. During the parliamentary and presidential elections in October and November, journalists did not experience widespread harassment, but some incidents were reported. Journalists have also reported receiving death threats in connection with their work.

Economic Environment

Prior to the revolution, the media landscape in Tunisia was dominated by a handful of state-owned outlets and private firms owned by figures tied to the Ben Ali family and the ruling party, all of which served as mouthpieces for the regime. Since 2011, state-owned media have been restructured to include more diverse viewpoints, although figures from the Ben Ali era remain influential. There was a spike in the number of private, independent media outlets immediately after the revolution, but many of these enterprises later dissolved, leading to major fluctuations in the number of operational media outlets. Nevertheless, several strong, private companies have taken hold in print, television, and radio, ensuring a greater diversity of political and regional representation. Numerous commercial radio, community radio, and television stations were authorized in 2014, as the HAICA granted licenses to over 20 new or provisionally approved outlets. Those whose applications were denied, typically for technical or financial reasons, would have the opportunity to reapply.

There is no longer a state intermediary between advertisers and the media, and the debilitating limits on advertising that existed under Ben Ali are no longer a factor for privately owned outlets. However, Tunisia’s weak economy has made it difficult for media companies to sustain themselves financially without backing from wealthy, politically connected investors. State media have also faced economic difficulties.

Approximately 46 percent of the population used the internet in 2014. Social-media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are increasingly popular, and a growing number of other online services and websites are contributing to the news and information environment. However, access remains inhibited by high prices and underdeveloped infrastructure. Despite the popularity of mobile telephones, with over 14 million subscriptions countrywide, mobile internet service is beyond the financial reach of most Tunisians.

Turkey

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 27 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 65 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	51,PF	54,PF	55,PF	56,PF	62,NF

Conditions for media freedom in Turkey continued to deteriorate in 2014 after several years of decline. The government enacted new laws that expanded both the state's power to block websites and the surveillance capability of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT). Journalists faced unprecedented legal obstacles as the courts restricted reporting on corruption and national security issues. The authorities also continued to aggressively use the penal code, criminal defamation laws, and the antiterrorism law to crack down on journalists and media outlets.

Verbal attacks on journalists by senior politicians—including Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the incumbent prime minister who was elected president in August—were often followed by harassment and even death threats against the targeted journalists on social media. Meanwhile, the government continued to use the financial and other leverage it holds over media owners to influence coverage of politically sensitive issues. Several dozen journalists, including prominent columnists, lost their jobs as a result of such pressure during the year, and those who remained had to operate in a climate of increasing self-censorship and media polarization.

Legal Environment

Constitutional guarantees of press freedom and freedom of expression are only partially upheld in practice. They are generally undermined by provisions in the penal code, the criminal procedure code, and the harsh, broadly worded antiterrorism law that effectively leave punishment of normal journalistic activity to the discretion of prosecutors and judges.

The constitutional protections are also subverted by hostile public rhetoric against critical journalists and outlets from Erdoğan and other government officials, which is often echoed in the progovernment press. Since the Gezi Park protests of 2013, Erdoğan has accused the foreign media and various outside interest groups of organizing and manipulating unrest in the country. He has also blamed foreign-based conspiracies for corruption allegations against his family and ministers. In August 2014, during a speech at a campaign rally just prior to the presidential election, Erdoğan denounced *Economist* correspondent Amberin Zaman as a “shameless militant” and told her to “know [her] place.” In the following months, Zaman was deluged with threats of violence on social media. In September, *New York Times* reporter Ceylan Yeğinsu suffered a similar verbal attack over a photograph caption that accompanied her piece on Islamic State recruiting in Turkey. Progovernment media depicted her as a traitor. The U.S. State Department criticized Turkey for such attempts to intimidate and threaten her.

New laws and amendments that took effect in 2014 significantly eroded freedom of expression. In February, amendments to Law No. 5651, commonly known as the Internet Law of Turkey, expanded the power of the Telecommunication Authority (TİB) to order the blocking of websites, allowing it to do so on vaguely defined grounds related to the right to privacy, without prior court approval, though a court had to uphold the order within 48 hours for a block to remain in place. In September, Erdoğan approved another amendment to Law No. 5651 that would also allow the TİB to block sites if deemed necessary “for national security, the restoration of public order, and the prevention of crimes,” but in October the Constitutional Court overturned those conditions as valid grounds for blocking by the authority.

A measure adopted in April, the Law Amending the Law on State Intelligence Services and the National Intelligence Organization, granted the MİT much greater powers, including the ability to access any personal data without a court order. It also gave MİT personnel immunity for legal violations committed in the course of their work, and criminalized reporting on or

acquiring information about the MİT. Media workers faced up to nine years in prison for publishing information from leaked intelligence material.

A 2004 press law replaced prison sentences with fines for violations of its provisions, but elements of the penal code and several other restrictive laws have led to the imprisonment of dozens of journalists and writers in recent years. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), there were seven journalists behind bars in Turkey as of December 1, 2014. Figures compiled by the independent Turkish press agency Bianet were higher, showing 22 journalists and 10 publishers in prison at the end of 2014; the majority were Kurds charged with associating with an illegal organization under either the penal code or the antiterrorism law.

Defamation remains a criminal offense and frequently results in fines and prison terms. According to a report by Bianet, 10 journalists were convicted of defamation, blasphemy, or inciting hatred in 2014. Among other cases during the year, Azerbaijani journalist and *Today's Zaman* columnist Mahir Zeynalov was deported in January after Erdoğan filed a criminal complaint against him for posting links on Twitter to articles on a corruption scandal that had surfaced in December 2013. In February, Erdoğan won compensation in a defamation suit against author İhsan Eliaçık for comments published on his Twitter account during the Gezi Park protests of 2013. In April, columnist Önder Aytaç was sentenced to 10 months in prison for “insulting public officials” in a tweet he wrote about Erdoğan. Aytaç said his message contained a typo and he did not intend to insult the government. In May, Erdoğan sued *Cumhuriyet* columnist Can Dündar for defaming him in an article published the previous month. In August, *Taraf* columnist Mehmet Baransu was arrested for defamation after criticizing the authorities. Although he was released the next day, Baransu faced the possibility of a lengthy prison term in a separate case for allegedly publishing classified documents from a National Security Council meeting in 2004. In September, writer, journalist, and publisher Erol Özkoray was given a suspended jail sentence of 11 months and 20 days for defaming Erdoğan in a book about the Gezi Park protests.

Article 301 of the penal code, which prescribes prison terms of six months to two years for “denigration of the Turkish nation,” can be used to punish journalists who state that genocide was committed against the Armenians beginning in 1915, discuss the division of Cyprus, or criticize the security forces. While a set of 2008 amendments to the article were largely cosmetic, the maximum prison sentence was reduced from three years to two, and a requirement that the Ministry of Justice would have to approve use of Article 301 significantly curbed its application in practice. Very few of those prosecuted under Article 301 receive convictions, but the trials are time-consuming and expensive, and the law exerts a chilling effect on speech. Article 216 of the penal code, which bans incitement of hatred or violence based on ethnicity, class, or religion and carries a prison term of up to three years, is also used against journalists and other commentators.

Article 314 of the penal code, with its broad definition of terrorism and membership in an armed organization, continued to be invoked against journalists, especially Kurds and those associated with the political left. According to statistics compiled for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and published in June 2014, the majority of the 22 journalists in prison in Turkey at the time had been charged or found guilty under Article 314. Many of those incarcerated or detained under Article 314 face a minimum sentence of seven and a half years in prison.

Turkey also has a separate antiterrorism law, officially called the Law on the Fight against Terrorism, which was adopted in 1991 and has been used to charge and jail journalists for activities that, according to Human Rights Watch, amount to “nonviolent political

association” and speech. The antiterrorism law has been widely criticized, and the European Court of Human Rights has found in multiple rulings that specific provisions of the law amount to censorship and violations of free expression.

In response to such criticism, and in light of the government’s efforts to renew negotiations with Kurdish rebels, the parliament enacted the Fourth Judicial Reform package in April 2013. It was generally regarded as falling short of international human rights standards regarding freedom of expression. Articles 6/2 and 7/2 of the antiterrorism law were amended to be less restrictive regarding the publication of the statements of illegal groups; publication would only be a crime if the statement constituted coercion, violence, or genuine threats. Nevertheless, the reform package did not alter problematic penal code provisions such as Articles 125 (on criminal defamation), 301, and 314. A Fifth Judicial Reform package was passed in February 2014; in one of its most important provisions, it reduced the maximum period of pretrial detention from 10 to 5 years. This resulted in a number of journalists being released from jail pending trial.

However, amendments to the penal and criminal procedure codes passed by the parliament in December 2014 lowered the threshold of evidence required for searches of people or premises to “reasonable suspicion,” from “strong suspicion based on concrete evidence.” Even before the amendments had been approved, police reportedly used these grounds to raid the home of a journalist in October. Aytekin Gezici, a press adviser for the city of Adana, was detained, his computer examined, and his house searched after he criticized the government on Twitter.

Media outlets were raided and journalists detained in 2014 as part of an ongoing crackdown on supporters of exiled cleric Fethullah Gülen. On December 14, security forces conducted raids across the country against outlets suspected of affiliation with the Gülen movement, such as the newspaper *Zaman*. Several media workers and journalists were arrested, including Ekrem Dumanlı, *Zaman*’s editor in chief, under suspicion of “establishing and managing an armed terror organization” with the intent of seizing state power. Dumanlı and the majority of the other detainees were later released pending trial, but Hidayet Karaca, general manager of the Samanyolu Broadcasting Group, was still in jail at the end of the year.

The government in 2014 continued to prosecute individuals suspected of having links to the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK), the alleged urban branch of the separatist Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) militant group. A crackdown on the KCK in late 2011 resulted in the arrest of 46 journalists for their suspected role in the “press wing” of the group. They were charged under the antiterrorism law for membership in an illegal group; nearly all have been released pending trial. The owner of Belge Publishing House, Ragıp Zarakolu, and his son Deniz, an editor at Belge, were arrested in the 2011 crackdown; Ragıp was released pending trial in April 2012, and Deniz was released in March 2014, while awaiting the continuation of his trial.

In November 2013, three journalists were sentenced to life in prison on charges that they were senior members of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP), which is banned under the antiterrorism law. One of the journalists was Füsün Erdoğan, founder of Özgür Radio. The three had been arrested in 2006 and held in pretrial detention, but they were released in May 2014 under the reduced legal limit set by the Fifth Judicial Reform; an appeal was still pending in the case, meaning the sentences had not yet taken effect.

Throughout 2014, the courts’ actions on media-related cases—especially those linked to the corruption scandal surrounding Erdoğan and his associates—cast further doubt on the

independence and impartiality of the judiciary. In December, the Turkish Journalists' Association and the Turkish Journalists' Union estimated that 60 journalists were prosecuted over the past year for reporting on corruption allegations, and that the number of lawsuits topped 100, in addition to a large number of orders to newspapers to publish corrections or denials.

Moreover, Turkish courts and regulators issued several reporting bans on issues of public interest. In February, a ban on allegations of MİT involvement in weapons shipments to Syria was imposed. In March, a gag order was issued concerning the leaked audio recordings of a national security meeting at the Foreign Ministry. In May, following a mining disaster near the town of Soma, the Supreme Council of Radio and Television (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcast regulator, warned broadcasters to refrain from showing material that may be "disrespectful to feelings of the families of victims." Progovernment media followed the instruction to the extent that the country's worst mining disaster—which caused 301 deaths and raised serious questions about the industry's safety record—was absent from most mainstream outlets. In June, an Ankara court imposed a ban on reporting about the kidnapping of 49 Turkish citizens from the Turkish consulate in Mosul, Iraq. Another court in the capital issued an unprecedented reporting ban on a parliamentary inquiry into corruption allegations concerning four former ministers in November.

Turkey adopted a freedom of information law in 2003. However, state secrets that may harm national security, economic interests, state investigations, or intelligence activity, or that "violate the private life of the individual," are exempt from requests. In practice, access to official information remains challenging.

The RTÜK, whose members are elected by the parliament, has the authority to sanction broadcasters if they are not in compliance with the law or the council's expansive broadcasting principles. The body is frequently subject to political pressure, and its board is currently dominated by members affiliated with the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). According to Bianet, RTÜK in 2014 issued 78 warnings and 254 fines to television channels, and 12 warnings and 7 fines to radio stations. Print outlets can be closed if they violate laws restricting media freedom.

Political Environment

In addition to punitive measures applied by law, systematic political pressure from the executive branch in 2014 led to the firing of journalists and media workers for critical reporting on the Erdoğan government. According to Bianet, 339 journalists, columnists, and media workers were laid off or forced to quit during the year, often due to government pressure on state-run outlets or private media owners. In August, the editor in chief of *Hürriyet* newspaper, Enis Berberoğlu, resigned just prior to the presidential election. According to some media reports, Berberoğlu was forced to resign after clashing with the paper's parent company, Doğan Holding, over a number of issues, including election coverage and the editor's refusal to fire a *Hürriyet* columnist. Erdoğan had publicly criticized the Doğan group the day before Berberoğlu's resignation. However, *Hürriyet* denied that the move was a result of Erdoğan's criticism and said Berberoğlu had left of his own accord.

Leaked documents and wiretaps, particularly in 2013 and 2014, have revealed the extent of government efforts to create a loyal media. Many of Erdoğan's leaked conversations with journalists, media executives, and owners, in which he is heard giving instructions or admonishments for undesirable content, were not denied by either side. Leaks have also revealed

managers of corporations being pressured by cabinet-level officials to pool capital for the purpose of buying major media outlets in exchange for the chance to win lucrative government contracts.

The state broadcaster, Turkish Radio and Television Broadcasting Company (TRT), and the semiofficial news agency, Anadolu Ajansı, experienced tighter government control during 2014, and several private television outlets exercised self-censorship in response to direct political pressure. Biased coverage by progovernment media was evident during the March local elections and the August presidential election. RTÜK issued warnings to TRT for disproportionate coverage of the AKP during the local elections, and the Supreme Board of Elections fined the broadcaster for allocating coverage to Erdoğan's campaign while not reporting at all on other presidential candidates between August 6 and 8. International observers from the Council of Europe and the OSCE also raised concerns about the media advantage enjoyed by Erdoğan ahead of the election.

Media outlets are sometimes denied access to events and information for political reasons. In December 2013, after law enforcement agencies unveiled the political corruption case implicating top government officials, the national police department announced that journalists would no longer be able to enter police facilities, except in the event of a formal press conference, and that the press rooms at two major stations in Istanbul would close. Discriminatory accreditation policies against independent media worsened in 2014. Critical outlets were denied access to the AKP's party congress and meetings, and the government prevented certain journalists from attending official news conferences and visits abroad. Foreign dignitaries were forced to hold separate news conferences in order to include unaccredited media.

Censorship of content occurs both offline and online. Sensitive topics include Kurdish issues, the Armenian genocide, and subjects deemed offensive to Islam or the Turkish state. Enforcement of the relevant laws is arbitrary and unpredictable, and many publications on such subjects are available. As part of the Third Judicial Reform package in 2012, all prior bans on publications were voided unless renewed by court order prior to a January 2013 deadline. Most of the prior bans on leftist and Kurdish publications were renewed. In September 2014, police raided the offices of online newspapers *Gri Hat* and *Karşı Gazete*, which had published reports about the political corruption scandal. Despite having a court order only to search the premises, the police demanded the removal of news items about the allegations.

Law No. 5651 allows the authorities to block sites that insult Turkish Republic founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk or contain content that "incites suicide, pedophilia, drug abuse, obscenity, or prostitution," among other criteria. Websites are also blocked for intellectual property infringement, particularly file-sharing and streaming sites; for reporting news on southeastern Turkey and Kurdish issues; and for defaming individuals. Over 60,000 websites are blocked in Turkey, and the TİB reportedly blocked 22,645 websites without prior court approval during 2014. In March, access to Twitter was blocked for two weeks before a court ruling lifted the ban. Similarly, a ban on YouTube was lifted by court order after it was blocked for more than two months starting in March. In addition to wholesale blocking, state authorities are proactive in requesting the deletion or removal of specific online content.

Fear of legal reprisals or loss of employment has led to widespread self-censorship within the Turkish media. There is nevertheless critical reporting, and some journalists do attempt to cover sensitive political, religious, and social issues. The media environment is diverse but strikingly polarized, with most outlets representing distinct political and social viewpoints and reporting news from predetermined angles. A side effect of the ongoing mass firings is that many

prominent commentators now write for smaller online outlets that are less susceptible to political pressure. However, their audiences are also considerably smaller.

Harassment and intimidation of journalists and disruption of their work in the field were more common than retaliatory violence in 2014, as in previous years. According to Bianet, more than 140 journalists were subjected to some form of attack in 2014. Many reporters faced obstructions, tear-gas injuries, and direct physical assaults by police in Istanbul while covering a demonstration against internet censorship in February, attempts by labor activists to mark May Day, and demonstrations surrounding the first anniversary of the Gezi Park protests later in May. CNN International's Istanbul correspondent Ivan Watson was briefly detained and roughed up while reporting live about the Gezi anniversary. In October, Turkish security forces fired tear gas at journalists working near the border adjacent to the besieged Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane.

In an apparent case of arbitrary detention and deportation, Rauf Mirkadirov, an Ankara-based correspondent for the Azerbaijani newspapers *Ayna* and *Zerkalo*, was seized by Turkish authorities and put on a plane to Baku without access to a lawyer. Upon arriving in Azerbaijan, he was remanded to three months in pretrial custody, pending an investigation on espionage charges. Mirkadirov had written articles critical of both governments.

According to CPJ, there was one media-related killing in 2014. In October, Kadir Bağdu was shot and killed while delivering the pro-Kurdish daily *Azadiya Welat* in the southern city of Adana. In other apparent cases of targeted violence, Mustafa Kuleli, the general secretary of the Turkish Journalists' Union, and journalist Hasan Cömert were attacked in February by unidentified perpetrators and had to seek medical treatment. Another journalist, Mithat Fabian Sözmen, was reportedly hospitalized after a similar assault in March.

Economic Environment

According to government data, there are approximately 3,100 newspapers operating in Turkey, including some 180 national papers; however, only about 15 percent of these are published daily, and many have small circulations. Independent domestic and foreign print media are able to carry diverse views, including criticism of the government and its policies, though Turkish print outlets contain a high proportion of columns and opinion articles as opposed to pure news.

The country's broadcast media are also numerous, with hundreds of private television channels, including those available via cable and satellite, and more than 1,200 commercial radio stations. State television and radio outlets provide some content in minority languages, with several local radio and television stations broadcasting in Kurdish. The introduction of Kurdish-language stations in recent years marked a major step forward for freedom of expression, although critics say that the broadcasts are too tightly restricted and their quality is poor. An Armenian-language radio outlet, Nor Radio, began broadcasting over the internet in 2009.

An estimated 51 percent of the population accessed the internet in 2014. There are reportedly 30,000 internet cafés in Turkey, and they require a license from the local government in order to operate. Social media are used at very high rates. In light of restrictions on traditional media, social media have emerged as an alternate forum for public debate on a number of contentious political and social issues.

Media ownership remains concentrated in the hands of a few large, private holding companies that earn the majority of their revenue from nonmedia assets. The centralization of public procurement decisions within the prime minister's office under AKP rule has led to

increasing use of economic leverage against these holding companies to force them to toe the party line. The prime minister's office directly controls the Privatization High Council (OİB), the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ), and the Defense Industry Executive Committee, which together account for tens of billions of dollars in procurement contracts per year. In one of the most flagrant examples of the use of economic leverage to shape media ownership, wiretap recordings leaked in December 2013 indicated that the government dictated which holding companies would purchase the Sabah-ATV media group in exchange for a multibillion-dollar contract to build Istanbul's third airport. The Savings Deposit and Insurance Fund (TMSF) has also been used to transfer media assets to supportive businessmen, as in November 2013, when Ethem Sancak, a Turkish businessman with close ties to Erdoğan, bought three media outlets previously owned by the Çukurova Group from TMSF.

Turkmenistan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 36 / 40

Economic Environment: 29 / 30

Total Score: 95 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	95,NF	96,NF	96,NF	96,NF	95,NF

President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov's autocratic government continued to maintain near-total control over the media in 2014. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) noted reports of some changes in the treatment of libel in 2014, including a reduction of criminal penalties for the offense. However, there were few changes in the overall media environment throughout the year.

Legal Environment

The constitution's nominal protections for press freedom and freedom of expression are not observed in practice. A January 2013 media law ostensibly protects freedom of expression and prohibits censorship and government interference in the activities of the media. Although the law was the first of its kind to be approved in Turkmenistan since independence in 1991, there has been little progress in creating space for genuinely independent media amid the country's repressive legal, political, regulatory, judicial, and economic structures. As of July 2014, no new media outlets had been registered since the enactment of the law.

Following public remarks by Berdymukhammedov about the need to reform the constitution, the government established a commission for this purpose in August 2014. Draft amendments were subsequently announced, including for the creation of a human rights ombudsman position and stronger legal protections for citizens. However, it remained unclear whether these steps will lead to substantive improvements to basic civil liberties in the country.

Although libel is a criminal offense, it is rarely invoked due to the intensity of official media control and self-censorship, and the scarcity of critical reporting. Amendments to the

Criminal Code that went into effect in January 2014 allow for financial compensation as an alternative to imprisonment for libel. The OSCE noted in June 2014 that some minor cases of libel and insult had been moved from the Criminal Code to the Code of Administrative Wrongdoings, but the impact of these legislative changes on the country's media environment has otherwise been limited.

In December, the government adopted a new law for the regulation of the internet, ostensibly with the goal of increasing internet access in Turkmenistan. The law requires that internet access be available in all government bodies as well as scholarly, educational, and cultural institutions. It also requires government bodies to create websites with information about their work, and to respond to online inquiries. However, a number of the law's provisions restrict the freedom of expression on the internet. The law holds individuals liable for the truthfulness of information they publish online, makes it illegal to insult the president online, and restricts access to websites that advocate illegal behavior, among other things. The low rate of internet penetration in the country limits the capacity of the law.

Political Environment

Censorship remains extensive, and an atmosphere of fear discourages reporting on a wide range of sensitive topics. While public criticism of the government remained virtually nonexistent in 2014, the Turkmen service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reported in April that dozens of individuals had recently contacted the outlet with complaints about the government and low living conditions. Some of those individuals had even consented to being identified and filmed.

Journalists who are critical of the government are blacklisted and face restrictions on both international and domestic travel. The few independent media professionals who remain in the country—and at times even their relatives—face persecution, attacks, harassment, and surveillance. RFE/RL is among the few remaining independent sources of information on Turkmenistan, even though the government has failed to reply to the outlet's requests for the accreditation of its journalists.

In 2014, several RFE/RL journalists faced interference from security forces while attempting to cover newsworthy events on multiple other occasions throughout the year. One local RFE/RL correspondent was detained at a local police station for attempting to report on long lines for tickets at a train station in Mary. Police questioned another RFE/RL correspondent for six hours for attempting to report on a long line for automobile certification.

No information was available at year's end on the death of human rights activist and journalist Ogulsapar Muradova, who died in prison in 2006 as a result of severe beatings, according to her family and human rights groups. The government has refused requests to account for her death.

Economic Environment

There are approximately 39 newspapers, four state radio broadcasters, seven television stations, and one press agency active in Turkmenistan. State-run newspapers are used to disseminate government propaganda and ignore many issues that are relevant to Turkmen citizens. With more than 100,000 subscribers, the *Turkmen Dili* newspaper has the largest circulation in the print market. The government forces institutions and individuals to subscribe to

state newspapers, which are reportedly not widely read. The privately owned business magazine *Rysgal* is produced by the government-controlled Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. In 2012, *Rysgal* owner and Berdymukhammedov ally Aleksandr Dadayev helped to establish the new Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, nominally ending the political monopoly of the ruling Democratic Party of Turkmenistan. In practice, the new party is loyal to the regime.

Authorities maintain a ban on almost all foreign newspapers and periodical subscriptions—including Russian newspapers—and routinely confiscate foreign publications from travelers. Many citizens have some access to international media through satellite dishes: Russian and Turkish television channels, as well as the France-based Euronews, are available via satellite. Repeated government attempts to crack down on such receivers have been largely unsuccessful, but cost barriers continue to limit access to satellite television. In late 2013, the government announced plans to launch its first telecommunications satellite, to be made by the French firm Thales Alenia Space and controlled by the Turkmenistan National Space Agency. The satellite had not been launched by the end of 2014.

Fixed-line internet services are provided primarily by Turkmen Telecom, while Russian operator Mobile TeleSystems (MTS) dominates the mobile market. The company was allowed to return in 2012 after being expelled by the government in 2010. MTS provides a faster connection speed than the state-owned Altyn Asyr and allows users to access banned social media. The Communications Ministry oversees and controls both Altyn Asyr and Turkmen Telecom. Access to the internet is intermittent, slow, and highly restricted. Opposition and foreign news websites, including Gundogar.org and Ferghana.ru, are blocked, as are social-networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LiveJournal, and YouTube. These websites are, however, available through proxy servers. Mobile messaging applications such as WeChat, WhatsApp, and Viber have been blocked since November 2013. Authorities monitor electronic correspondence and internet activity. State agents posing as ordinary users regularly publish provocative comments on Russian social-networking websites such as Odnoklassniki.ru to draw unwitting users into criticism of the government, for which they can be punished. Internet cafés require visitors to present identification documents, and monitor users' online activities. It is also necessary to present identification when purchasing a SIM card. Continued government restrictions and high costs kept the internet penetration rate low in 2014. Approximately 12.2 percent of Turkmen citizens accessed the internet in 2014.

Tuvalu

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 3 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 13 / 30

Total Score: 27 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	26,F	26,F	26,F	26,F	27,F

Uganda

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 19 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 14 / 30

Total Score: 56 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	54,PF	54,PF	57,PF	55,PF	58,PF

Uganda's press freedom environment improved slightly in 2014. Journalists registered some progress in expanding access to information by successfully challenging a magistrate's order for closed court proceedings. Moreover, government agencies and regulators such as the Uganda Communications Commission did not interfere with media content to the same extent as in the previous year, and independent outlets remained vibrant. However, journalists continued to face intimidation and harassment from state and nonstate actors, at times engendering self-censorship.

Legal Environment

The country's constitution provides for freedoms of expression and of the press. However, several laws undermine these guarantees. Although the Constitutional Court declared the law on sedition unconstitutional in 2010, the state has used other provisions of the penal code, including those on criminal libel and treason, against journalists. In October 2014, a magistrate sentenced CBS Radio journalist Ronald Ssemuusi to a fine of \$350 or a one-year jail term for criminal defamation. The verdict came after a two-year trial over a report suggesting that the former chairman of Kalangala District had stolen solar panels meant for the community. An appeal was pending at year's end.

In February 2014, the president signed two laws that threatened to limit media freedom. One, the Anti-Pornography Act, defines pornography in broad terms and sets up a nine-member Pornography Control Committee with wide latitude to determine what amounts to pornographic material. The committee is also empowered to step up surveillance measures through the installation of software in mobile telephones, computers, and television sets that will allow the detection and suppression of pornography. Opponents of the measure warned that news outlets could easily run afoul of its sweeping provisions.

The second law, the Anti-Homosexuality Act, criminalized same-sex relations as well as actions that "promoted" or "aided and abetted" them. Journalists and rights advocates charged under the law could have faced up to seven years in prison or stiff fines. The Constitutional Court overturned the legislation in August on the grounds that it was passed without a quorum, but lawmakers soon began working to resubmit it in Parliament.

In 2011 the government promulgated long-stalled regulations implementing the 2005 Access to Information Act. Even after the release of the regulations, many government departments have continued to deny requests for information. Other laws related to national security and confidentiality often impede open access to information in practice, and officials regularly block critical journalists from covering official proceedings. In October 2014, journalists scored a victory on this issue when the High Court reversed an order issued months earlier by a chief magistrate to exclude journalists and the public from a trial involving the theft

of audio recordings from the head of the Uganda Police Force. The magistrate had ruled that the trial would expose confidential and sensitive security information. However, prosecutors dropped the charges in December.

The Press and Journalist Act requires journalists to register with the government-established National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (NIJU) and obtain a license from the Media Council, the statutory press regulator, which has been criticized for lacking independence. Journalists must also meet certain standards, including possession of a university degree, to be full members of NIJU, which has been inactive for years. Journalists are further required to renew their licenses annually.

In February, Information Minister Rose Namayanja issued two new regulations under the Press and Journalist Act. The first, Statutory Instrument No. 4 of 2014, stipulated the types of fees that must be paid in order to practice journalism. Journalists and media freedom advocates protested, saying the fees would lock some people out of the profession. The second new regulation, Statutory Instrument No. 5 of 2014, tightened the code of ethics contained in the law. Critics argued that elements of the code, particularly one barring persistent questions by reporters, would seriously harm investigative journalism. Three free speech organizations subsequently filed a joint challenge of the constitutionality of several sections of the Press and Journalist Act.

Broadcast and telecommunications licensing procedures have been criticized as arbitrary and opaque, and are susceptible to influence and manipulation by the executive. Although the Uganda Communications Commission, which regulates broadcast media, interfered with private radio broadcasting during 2013, there were no similar incidents in 2014.

Political Environment

Political pressure on the media eased somewhat in 2014 compared with the previous year, when two independent outlets had faced denunciations, temporary closures, and police raids for reporting allegations of elite infighting over the president's succession plans. Nevertheless, preparations for the 2016 general elections continued to affect the media. In March, a social-media posting listed about 150 journalists who were accused of providing favorable coverage on behalf of Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi, a potential rival to longtime president Yoweri Museveni. (Mbabazi was fired as prime minister in September.) The claims left some journalists effectively unable to cover election-related stories.

To safeguard their investments, some private media owners reportedly comply with government requests, both explicit and implicit, including onerous instructions as to which journalists they may employ or which political leaders to interview. In April 2014, for example, the owner of Spice FM in Hoima dismissed his station manager for hosting opposition politicians on a talk show. The owner, Edgar Agaba, is a former government official.

Journalists face harassment, occasional violence, and various other obstacles in the course of their work. Physical assault and confiscation of cameras were the most common forms of abuse during 2014, and police or low-level officials were often the perpetrators. For instance, in April, the head of traffic police in the northern district of Lira seized the camera of journalist Joseph Ekol for photographing the district police commander without permission. In May, two radio journalists—Brian Luwaga of Uganda Radio Network and Herbert Zziwa of KFM Radio and Dembe FM—were allegedly assaulted by police in separate incidents while covering by-elections in Luweero. In July, district chairman Constantine Ben Moru ordered the arrest and

temporary detention of two reporters from the newspapers *New Vision* and *Bukedde* for going to his home without permission. The journalists, who said they never reached his property, were pursuing allegations that the official had taken for personal use a borehole meant for the community.

Nonstate actors also engage in attacks on journalists. In January, Vision Group photojournalist Mubiru Kakebe was stabbed in the hand by a woman who demanded that he delete a photo he had taken; he died two months later, apparently of a related infection. In March, a court sentenced private security guard Aziz Kemba to a four-year prison term for assaulting *Red Pepper* journalist Solomon Hamala as he covered protests by market traders in January. In April, a group of teachers in Mpigi attacked Bukedde TV journalist Andrew Mugonza as he covered the aftermath of a fire at their school; police soon came to his aid. Also in April, officers rescued Ismail Ddamba of *Bukedde* newspaper from an assault by motorcycle-taxi drivers who accused him of being a police spy.

In addition to harassment in the field, media outlets sometimes face reprisals for their coverage. In two incidents in March, police raided the Voice of Kigezi radio station and Kasese Guide Radio to halt talk shows featuring Mugisha Muntu, head of the opposition Forum for Democratic Change party. In May, parliament member Odo Tayebwa stormed the studios of Bushenyi Model FM to assault journalist Moses Byendwa for broadcasting Tayebwa's criticism of a presidential agricultural initiative in the area and allowing listeners to respond.

Economic Environment

There are more than two dozen daily and weekly newspapers and more than 180 private radio stations in Uganda. The daily *New Vision*—in which the government holds a controlling stake—generally shows some editorial independence, although it tends to side with the government during elections and political protests. Other print outlets, such as the *Daily Monitor*, the *Observer*, and the *Independent*, are more critical of the government and offer a range of contending views.

Radio remains the most widely accessed news medium, though very few stations dedicate significant time to news and public affairs programming. In recent years, the number of community stations has grown across the country. While it is technically a public broadcaster, the Ugandan Broadcasting Corporation remains subservient to the interests of the ruling party and the government. Six private television stations also operate. There is unrestricted access to foreign news sources, and domestic outlets draw on and reference these sources in their reporting.

Declining circulation numbers have compromised the sustainability of newspapers in recent years. Threatened or actual advertising boycotts by corporations and the government—especially problematic for smaller media outlets—further limit media diversity and pluralism. Low salaries leave journalists vulnerable to bribery. In 2014, there were reports that the ruling National Resistance Movement party was using favors and gifts to co-opt journalists and obtain positive coverage.

Nearly 18 percent of Ugandans accessed the internet in 2014. The government places no restrictions on the medium, though access is limited in practice by high costs and a lack of infrastructure, especially in rural areas. In the last decade, mobile-phone usage has expanded rapidly, and in 2014 there were over 20 million subscriptions in Uganda. Social-media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are gaining popularity as a means of disseminating news and

information. Although such services had previously enjoyed relative freedom from government oversight, the government announced in 2013 that it was setting up a social-media monitoring center, ostensibly in search of content that would threaten national security. It was not clear in 2014 whether the center had begun operating.

Ukraine

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14 / 30

Political Environment: 26 / 40

Economic Environment: 18 / 30

Total Score: 58 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	53,PF	56,PF	59,PF	60,PF	63,NF

Note: The scores and narrative for Ukraine do not reflect conditions in Russian-occupied Crimea, which is assessed in a separate report.

Status change explanation: Ukraine's status improved from Not Free to Partly Free due to profound changes in the media environment after the fall of President Viktor Yanukovich's government in February, despite a rise in attacks on journalists during the Euromaidan protests of early 2014 and the subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine. The level of government hostility and legal pressure faced by journalists decreased, as did political pressure on state-owned outlets. The media also benefited from improvements to the law on access to information and the increased independence of the broadcasting regulator.

Conditions for press freedom in Ukraine were affected by tumultuous political events in 2014. During the first two months of the year, a protest movement known as Euromaidan occupied central Kyiv and withstood waves of attacks by security forces loyal to President Viktor Yanukovich, who ultimately fled the country in late February. Russian forces then occupied Crimea and actively supported separatist militants in Ukraine's two easternmost regions, Donetsk and Luhansk. Even as fighting escalated in the east, the country held democratic elections for the presidency and parliament in May and October, respectively. These events led to an overall improvement in the media environment, although concerns remain, especially regarding the government's handling of pro-Russian propaganda, the concentration of ownership of private outlets in the hands of a small group of wealthy businessmen, and the high levels of violence against journalists in the country, especially in the east.

Legal Environment

The constitutional and legal framework for the media in Ukraine is among the most progressive in Eastern Europe, though its protections have not been always upheld in practice and came under growing pressure during Yanukovich's presidency.

Libel was decriminalized in 2001, and in 2009 the Supreme Court instructed judges to follow the civil libel standards of the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights, which granted lower levels of protection to public officials and clearly distinguished between value judgments and factual information. However, officials continued to use libel lawsuits filed in the country's politicized court system to deter critical news reporting. In mid-January 2014, as confrontations between Euromaidan protesters and government forces intensified, the parliament passed a series of draconian laws that recriminalized libel, required internet-based news outlets to obtain registration or face steep fines or closure, restricted the independence of media regulatory bodies, and required all mobile-telephone users to identify themselves and sign contracts with providers, enabling greater monitoring. The legislation was then repealed on January 28 in a concession to the protesters. Civil suits continued to be filed against the media by public officials and private companies during 2014, but they were less common than in the previous year.

In March, the parliament adopted legislation on access to public information that had been under consideration for nearly two years. The new law, signed by the acting president in April, incorporated the highest international standards and introduced fines for officials who improperly refuse, delay, or falsify responses to information requests. However, at year's end the judiciary had yet to conform to the changed legal framework in its rulings.

After Yanukovich fled the country in late February, the parliament declared no confidence in the leadership of the state broadcast regulator, the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine, which had regularly applied regulations and made licensing decisions in a secretive and highly partisan manner. New appointees were in place by July, and the reconstituted council was seen as more politically independent than its predecessor.

Political Environment

During January and February 2014, while Yanukovich remained in power, the government continued to exert influence over media content through politically loyal managers at state-run outlets and pressure on private media owners, editors, and journalists. This changed after the president fled, as was noted by many observers of Ukrainian media. Almost immediately, most major media outlets began openly discussing what had occurred during the Euromaidan protests, including the violence and its causes. State pressure on the media remained at a reduced level for the rest of the year. There were some instances of political pressure or attempts at de facto censorship by officials on the regional level. In Kirovohrad in December, the head of the regional administration ordered a subordinate to review the newspaper *Zorya* before publication. The main private broadcast outlets—which are controlled by a handful of powerful businessmen—displayed a variety of political orientations or biases, especially during the 2014 election campaigns.

A law signed in May called for the state television and radio broadcasters to be converted into editorially independent public-service broadcasters by 2015, and a number of other measures were subsequently adopted to facilitate this process. However, opposition surfaced among numerous employees and managers at the state outlets who feared for their positions. Separately, Kharkiv journalist Zurab Alasaniya was appointed in March as director of the state television company. A committed supporter of public-service broadcasting, he had been one of the founders of the nonprofit station Hromadske TV in 2013.

The issue of censorship arose in March, as Russian state-owned news outlets carried aggressively propagandistic content that was apparently designed to support the Kremlin's occupation of Crimea, encourage pro-Russian separatism in Russian-speaking areas of the east and south, and discredit the new government in Kyiv. The broadcasting regulator began obtaining court orders to temporarily suspend the retransmission of certain Russian channels in Ukraine, and by September it had suspended 15 channels pending a full judicial review of allegations that they had incited hatred, threatened national security, or supported separatism. A final ruling was expected in 2015.

Also in September, Ukrainian security forces raided the offices of Russian-language newspaper *Vesti* as part of a criminal investigation into allegations that the paper had violated Ukraine's territorial integrity; the allegations reportedly were related to *Vesti*'s coverage of the conflict in the east. Investigators seized property and computer servers, temporarily shutting down the newspaper's website. Security forces had also searched the *Vesti* offices in May as part of a money-laundering investigation. Additionally, Ukrainian authorities denied entry to dozens of Russian journalists throughout the year, barring some from entering the country for three to five years.

In December, the parliament passed legislation to create a Ministry of Information Policy, tasked in part with combating Russian propaganda; former journalist Yuriy Stets, a politician allied with President Petro Poroshenko, was named to head the new ministry. The move was widely criticized by journalists and media freedom organizations, but Stets said it was necessary to protect the country's "information and communications space" from "enemy attacks."

In Donetsk and Luhansk, Russian-backed separatists took over local broadcasting facilities beginning in April as they seized control of large parts of the two regions. Transmissions of Ukrainian channels were replaced with pro-Kremlin channels from Russia. Cable operators were similarly affected. The process was repeated whenever transmission sites changed hands in the conflict.

The year's Euromaidan clashes and warfare in the east made Ukraine one of the world's most dangerous and difficult places for journalists to carry out their work. According to the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), a Ukrainian nongovernmental organization, there were at least 995 documented violations of free speech in 2014, double the number in 2013 (496) and triple that of 2012 (324). The totals included data from Crimea. Five journalists and two media workers were killed during 2014. One, Vyacheslav Veremiy of *Vesti*, was shot and killed in Kyiv in February by masked men. The other six fatalities took place amid the fighting in Donetsk and Luhansk.

There were 286 documented physical assaults on journalists, according to IMI. The largest numbers occurred during the Euromaidan period (82 incidents in January and 70 in February), then the frequency gradually declined for the rest of the year. In a category that was new to the IMI monitoring system, a total of 78 journalists were abducted and illegally detained by a variety of actors, including progovernment and separatist combatants. Twenty of these incidents took place in April in Donetsk, though a handful of the year's kidnappings were recorded in areas far from the combat zone. In July, pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk interfered with international and Ukrainian journalists who were attempting to cover the downing of a Malaysia Airlines airliner in the region, using arbitrary detention and intimidation to inhibit journalists' access to the crash area and other key sites.

In another new phenomenon, many journalists were internally displaced, having fled separatist-controlled parts of the eastern regions after facing threats for their reporting. Donetsk-

based investigative journalist Oleksiy Matsuka, for example, left for Kyiv after his car was torched in April; he had recently coauthored an article that identified many of the key personalities associated with the separatist movement as Russian citizens or individuals with significant connections to Russia. Others who fled during the year included Luhansk blogger Serhiy Ivanov and Serhiy Harmash, editor of the independent Donetsk news website *Ostrov*. Eventually the entire editorial staff of *Ostrov*, like many other editorial teams, left Donetsk and Luhansk. Separately, many Russian and other foreign journalists working for Russian outlets were detained by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and expelled from the country.

Additional restrictions on press freedom during 2014 included police barring press access to public buildings or meetings, physical attacks on editorial offices, and cyberattacks on news websites, including *Glavnoe*, *Gordon*, and UNIAN. These occurred in various parts of the country. In Kyiv, for example, a firebomb was thrown at the television station 112 Ukraine in July.

Economic Environment

Most media in Ukraine are privately owned. According to the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council, at the end of 2014 there were 1,563 valid broadcast licences in Ukraine, of which 1,229 were held by private stations, 298 by communally owned broadcasters, and 36 by state broadcasters.

Although a bill proposed in February 2014 would require outlets to disclose more information about their owners, media ownership remained nontransparent in practice. It is nevertheless widely understood that most of the sector is controlled by a small number of wealthy businessmen with interests in politics and other industries. The Inter Media Group is reportedly owned by gas trader Dmytro Firtash and Serhiy Lyovochkin, who served as head of Yanukovich's presidential administration before resigning in January 2014. Star Light Media, reportedly owned by billionaire industrialist Viktor Pinchuk, is composed of six television stations and an assortment of other media and advertising companies. 1+1 Media Group is reportedly owned by Ihor Kolomoyskyi, who was appointed governor of Dnipropetrovsk in March. Rinat Akhmetov, considered Ukraine's wealthiest person, reportedly controls Media Group Ukraine.

Petro Poroshenko, also a powerful businessman, retained ownership of his 5 Kanal television station after winning the May presidential election, despite widespread calls for him to give up the outlet as a conflict of interest.

Two independent, internet-based broadcast outlets, Hromadske Radio and Hromadske TV, were launched by journalists in 2013 to provide an alternative to state media and politically influenced commercial outlets. They gained considerable prominence during the Euromaidan protests. In another new project, 1+1 Media Group created an English-language television channel called Ukraine Today in August 2014.

The government does not restrict access to the internet, which was used by about 43 percent of the population in 2014. Ukrainians have increasingly turned to online platforms, including social media, for their news and information.

Zeonbud, the country's only digital terrestrial television transmission company, was declared a monopoly by the state antimonopoly committee in December 2014. It had obtained its exclusive license through an opaque process in late 2010, and the new designation would expose it to enhanced government oversight.

Advertising revenue for print media has declined in recent years, leaving newspapers even more financially dependent on politicized owners. Paid content disguised as news, known as *jeansa*, remains widespread in the media and weakens the credibility of journalists, particularly during elections.

United Arab Emirates

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25 / 30

Political Environment: 28 / 40

Economic Environment: 23 / 30

Total Score: 76 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	71,NF	71,NF	72,NF	74,NF	76,NF

Legal Environment

While the United Arab Emirates (UAE) constitution provides for freedom of speech, the government uses its judicial, legislative, and executive powers to limit this right in practice. UAE Federal Law No. 15 of 1980 for Printed Matter and Publications regulates all aspects of the media and is considered one of the most restrictive press laws in the Arab world. It authorizes the state to censor both domestic and foreign publications prior to distribution, and prohibits criticism of the government, UAE rulers and ruling families, and friendly foreign governments. The law also bans publication of information that “causes damage to the national economy.” Violations of the law can result in fines and prison sentences.

Defamation is a criminal offense. Journalists can also be prosecuted under other articles of the penal code and a cybercrime law that was tightened in 2012 through a presidential decree. The cybercrime law criminalizes the use of the internet to commit a range of offenses—including violating political, social, and religious norms—and subjects perpetrators to prison terms and fines. Although the law centers on information technology, it has detrimental implications for both traditional journalism published online and citizen journalism. Article 24 makes it a crime to use a computer network to “damage the national unity or social peace.” Article 28 of the law states that the publication or dissemination of information, news, or images deemed “liable to endanger security and its higher interests or infringe on the public order” can be punished with imprisonment and a fine of up to 1 million dirhams (\$270,000). Under Article 29, “deriding or harming the reputation, stature, or status of the state, any of its institutions, its president or vice president, the rulers of the emirates, their crown princes or their deputies,” as well as a number of national symbols, is also punishable with imprisonment and a fine of the same amount. Article 41 allows the government to close websites related to the commission of these crimes.

A number of people were charged and convicted under the cybercrime law during 2013 for their social-media commentary, and the measure continued to be enforced against prominent users in 2014. In November, the Federal Supreme Court sentenced Osama al-Najjar to three years in prison for tweeting about the mistreatment of his father and other political prisoners while in detention. He was charged under the cybercrime law for “insulting the state,” inciting

hatred and violence, and being a member of the banned party Al-Islah. He also received a fine of \$136,000. Separately, in late 2013, online activist Obaid Yousef al-Zaabi criticized the lack of free speech and due process in the country in an interview with the U.S.-based Cable News Network (CNN). He was subsequently detained by security forces and charged under the cybercrime law with “offending the Supreme Court,” “offending the state security apparatus,” and “instigating people against the rulers and the security of the state.” Al-Zaabi was acquitted in June 2014, but he reportedly remained in detention without a legal basis at year’s end.

An antiterrorism law passed in August 2014 includes vague language prohibiting any speech that “antagonizes the state,” among other offenses. This raised concerns that peaceful dissent or critical journalism could be punished as a form of “terrorism.” The law carries potential penalties including death, life in prison, and fines of up to 100 million dirhams.

The National Media Council (NMC) is responsible for licensing all publications and issuing press credentials to editors. Members of the council are appointed by the president. The UAE has four “media free zones” (MFZs)—areas in which foreign media outlets produce news content intended for foreign audiences—located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah. The Dubai and Abu Dhabi MFZs house bureaus of international media outlets such as CNN, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya, and Agence France-Presse. Broadcast media outlets based in the MFZs are regulated by the Technology and Media Free Zone Authority, but are also subject to the 1980 press law and the penal code. All free zones must obtain approval from the NMC before licensing any print or broadcast activities. In practice, foreign media in the MFZs operate with relative freedom.

Political Environment

Journalists, especially foreign journalists working for Emirati media outlets, have reported having their stories censored by their editors, most often when they are covering sensitive issues such as religion, politics, or foreign allies of the UAE.

Online censorship is extensive, although the government claims that it only censors pornographic sites. The UAE regularly blocks access to websites, particularly Arabic-language news sites such as the popular U.S.-based *Al-Watan*. The government appears more willing to leave English-language sites unfettered in order to burnish its international image. Users are directed to a proxy server that maintains a list of banned websites and blocks material deemed inconsistent with the “religious, cultural, political, and moral values of the country.” Websites that are considered indecent include those featuring pornography, dating or personal advertisements, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) content. Some websites based in Israel or covering religions other than Islam, notably the Baha’i faith, are also blocked. Many users reportedly employ circumvention tools, such as virtual private networks (VPNs), to access blocked content.

Due to vaguely defined redlines on permissible speech, extreme forms of self-censorship are widely practiced. Emirati journalists often face warnings and threats if they push the limits of acceptable media coverage. However, noncitizen journalists account for the overwhelming majority of those working in the UAE, and they face harsher measures, including dismissal and deportation. Yasin Kakande, a Ugandan journalist for the English-language daily the *National*, lost his job in April 2014 after he published a book that discussed self-censorship in the UAE. He said the *National*’s Emirati editor in chief, Mohammed al-Otaiba, fired him because he failed to ask permission to publish the book and portrayed his employer in an unfavorable light. The book

alleged that public-relations executives for large, state-owned corporations behave as de facto censors on behalf of the ruling sheikhs, and argued that journalists mostly ignore the exploitation of migrant workers and are wary of reporting on the actions of the security forces.

Economic Environment

About a dozen newspapers are published in Arabic and English in the UAE, and there are several terrestrial-broadcast radio and television stations. Most media outlets are either government owned or have close government affiliations. The Arab Media Group and Dubai Media Incorporated operate as the Dubai government's media arm, publishing several newspapers and operating television and radio stations. Privately owned newspapers such as the Arabic daily *Al-Khaleej* and its English-language sister paper, *Gulf Today*, are heavily influenced by the government. Almost all Arabic-language broadcast media that target the domestic audience are state owned and provide only the official view on local issues. However, satellite television service is widespread and provides uncensored access to international broadcasts.

Most major papers receive government subsidies and rely predominantly on the official Emirates News Agency (WAM) for content and guidance on whether or how to cover sensitive local news. Only a small minority of working journalists are native Emiratis, and observers note that expatriate journalists with relatively good pay have little reason to engage in risky critical or investigative journalism.

About 90 percent of the UAE population had regular access to the internet in 2014. There are two internet service providers, Etisalat and Du, both of which are owned and operated by state corporations. Despite broad restrictions, a majority of news consumers in Dubai rely on the internet, including blogs and news forums, to obtain information, according to the Dubai Press Club's *Arab Media Outlook 2009–2013* report. The UAE has an extremely high mobile-telephone penetration rate, making such devices one of the most popular ways to receive news content.

United Kingdom

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 9 / 30

Political Environment: 9 / 40

Economic Environment: 6 / 30

Total Score: 24 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	19,F	19,F	21,F	21,F	23,F

Although the United Kingdom (UK) maintained a largely open press environment in 2014, the use of counterterrorism and surveillance legislation by the authorities had a negative effect on media freedom.

Legal Environment

The legal framework provides for freedom of the press, and the government generally respects this right in practice. While antiquated legal provisions that criminalized both blasphemy and blasphemous libel were abolished in 2008, several laws that weaken press freedom remain in place. In the aftermath of the 2005 terrorist bombings on London's mass transit system, the government passed the 2006 Terrorism Act, certain provisions of which criminalize speech that is considered to encourage terrorism, even in the absence of a direct, proven link to a specific terrorist act. David Anderson, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, warned in his 2014 review that bringing "journalism and blogging within the ambit of 'terrorism' (even if only when they are practised irresponsibly) encourages the 'chilling effect.'" The 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act criminalized incitement of religious hatred or violence, and using threatening words or behavior or displaying or broadcasting any threatening material is considered an offense if the intended purpose is inciting religious hatred. While there have not been relevant cases against media organizations under this legislation, the UK's interpretation of hate speech tends to be restrictive.

The media can be required to turn over reporting materials to the police under the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act. In a scandal that broke in October 2014, police admitted they had used the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) to obtain journalists' phone records, thereby bypassing legislation that protects journalistic sources.

In July 2014, Parliament passed the Data Retention and Investigatory Powers (DRIP) Act in an emergency procedure to substitute for existing legislation. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) had struck down the basis for the previous, 2009 law in April. Like its predecessor, DRIP compels telecommunications companies to store communications data for up to 12 months. The far-reaching regulation also authorizes the interception of communications outside the UK, enabling the authorities to, for example, tap webmail servers based outside the country.

A privacy injunction can be sought to prohibit the publication of private or confidential information. The number of injunctions has declined in the past few years, and there were no new applications for an injunction during the first half of 2014. On rare occasions in the past, the courts have imposed so-called superinjunctions that forbid the media from reporting on the existence of the injunction itself.

In a positive step, libel laws in England and Wales that heavily favored the plaintiff and led to the emergence of the infamous phenomenon of "libel tourism" were significantly overhauled in 2013. The Defamation Act redefined the threshold for defamation to include only "serious" harm, shifting the balance between reputation and free speech in favor of the latter. The act protects website operators, internet service providers (ISPs), and other intermediaries from being sued based on user-generated content, such as comments; it also makes it more difficult for foreigners to bring libel cases in the UK unless they prove it is "clearly the most appropriate" place for the suit. In addition, the act codified a public interest defense, replacing the so-called Reynolds defense under common law with a more streamlined procedure under which a statement is protected if its content is in the public interest and the person expressing it reasonably believed its publication to be in the public interest. Despite these changes, the number of libel suits increased in 2014 over the previous year, and the number of suits over social media posts increased disproportionately, with more than four times as many complaints as in the same period a year earlier.

In a small victory, legislators removed the offense of insult from the 1986 Public Order Act in 2013. Insult is still an offense on the internet, however. The 2003 Communications Act prohibits any message from being sent through a public electronic communications network that

is “grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character.” After several controversial cases of internet users being prosecuted for posting comments online, the Crown Prosecution Service set up new guidelines for social media in 2013. The guidelines set a high threshold for prosecuting social media communications and advised prosecutors not to pursue a case if the poster “expresses genuine remorse.” In September 2014, the courts sentenced a man to 18 months in prison for sending threatening messages to a member of Parliament on Twitter.

The 2000 Freedom of Information Act, which came into force in 2005, contains a number of broad exceptions. “Absolute” exemptions act as unconditional barriers to the disclosure of information. With “qualified” exemptions, a determination is made as to whether the public interest is better served by withholding or disclosing the information, and a ruling is made on whether to reveal which information has been withheld. Although the law includes 23 such exemptions, civil society groups have praised the Information Commissioner’s Office, which addresses freedom of information complaints. More than 400,000 requests were made between 2005 and 2014. In March 2014, an appeals court ruled that the letters of Prince Charles—written to British politicians and government officials and referred to as the “black spider memos”—could be handed over to the *Guardian*. The newspaper first requested them in 2005, and former attorney general Dominic Grieve vetoed their publication in 2012, arguing it could undermine the perception of the prince as a politically neutral actor.

Broadcast media are regulated by the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Until recently, the print sector operated under a voluntary, self-regulating mechanism, overseen by a Press Complaints Commission whose rulings had no legal force. In response to the 2011 *News of the World* phone-hacking scandal, the 2012 Leveson report stemming from a public inquiry recommended the establishment of an independent regulatory body for print media with statutory underpinnings. In 2013, the government created a new regulatory system through an arcane legal mechanism, the royal charter. Proponents of the model argued that the mechanism provides a press regulator that is free from interference from both the political sphere and the newspaper industry. Critics and the majority of the newspaper industry, however, claimed that any regulation beyond self-regulatory mechanisms could be harmful. Under this new system of “co-regulation,” a recognition panel of six independent members was established in November 2014. The body will assess self-regulatory organs set up by the industry and decide whether they adhere to the Leveson criteria, such as independence from the industry and politics, the existence of a speedy complaints mechanism, and appropriate sanctions. Once the system is set up, newspapers that decline to participate could be subject to punitive damages. A provision added to eliminate political interference makes amendments to the charter possible only by a two-thirds majority in both houses of Parliament and the unanimous agreement of the recognition panel. The newspaper industry argued that the process of adopting the new regulator was not transparent and launched its own regulator, the Independent Press Standards Organization (IPSO), in September 2014. Although it received staunch criticism from victims of press intrusion, the vast majority of national newspapers—except for a few major outlets such as the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Independent*—supported the new organization. IPSO already announced they will not seek recognition under the royal charter. An alternative body, the IMPRESS Project, was also launched in 2014.

In 2014, a jury acquitted the former head of the *News of the World*, Rebekah Brooks, of all charges related to the phone-hacking scandal, in which it was revealed in 2011 that her paper and others published by News International were hacking telephones, bribing police, and engaging in other improper as well as criminal conduct in pursuit of stories. Five other

defendants were found guilty, including Andy Coulson, communications director of Prime Minister David Cameron between 2007 and 2011.

Surveillance laws gained public attention in 2013 after the story broke of large-scale surveillance of telephone and internet communications by the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) and its British counterpart, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). Police have used surveillance legislation to obtain journalistic material.

Political Environment

There are no restrictions on internet access in the UK. Physical attacks on the media are rare. However, journalists working in Northern Ireland have repeatedly faced threats and harassment. As of the end of 2014, no one had been brought to justice for the 2001 murder of journalist Martin O'Hagan, who is believed to have been killed for his investigations into cooperation among Northern Ireland police, military intelligence officials, illegal armed groups, and drug gangs. In September, Dunja Mijatović, the media freedom representative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), called for a new investigation into his death.

The offices of the *Guardian*, which published the leaks received from former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, came under various types of pressure from authorities during 2013, including the forced destruction of journalistic material and computers in the *Guardian* offices and the detention of David Miranda—the partner of investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald, who broke the story—under the Terrorism Act. The High Court ruled Miranda's detention lawful in February 2014, but no further incidents took place that year.

Economic Environment

The United Kingdom has a strong tradition of public broadcasting, and the BBC, which is publicly funded, is editorially independent. A string of sex-abuse scandals involving former and current BBC employees and the awarding of large severance payments to senior staff has seriously damaged the broadcaster's reputation over the past two years.

Ownership of private media outlets is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies, including Rupert Murdoch's News UK, but a variety of national newspapers cover the full range of the political spectrum. At the local level, 60 percent of the market has no local newspaper or only one title serving an area. Following the *News of the World* scandal, critics of the existing media structure, including Lord Justice Brian Leveson, argued for stricter ownership rules and caps on market shares. The BBC offers a wide range of regional and local radio stations, but few commercial news radio stations exist, and the handful in operation are reportedly struggling financially. There are a number of independent terrestrial television news channels, including ITV and BSkyB, and satellite and cable channels are capturing a growing share of the market. In 2014, about 91 percent of UK households had internet access.

United States

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40
Economic Environment: 5 / 30
Total Score: 22 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	18,F	17,F	18,F	18,F	21,F

The United States retains a diverse media landscape and strong legal protections for freedom of expression. Nonetheless, a combination of developments has placed journalists under new pressures in recent years, and these persisted during 2014. The most serious problems stem from tensions between press freedom and U.S. national security and counterterrorism efforts. They include government surveillance of journalists, government attempts to compel reporters to reveal the sources of leaked information, and Obama administration policies that severely limit interactions between journalists and officials.

Legal Environment

The United States has one of the world's strongest systems of legal protection for media independence. The First Amendment of the U.S. constitution provides the core guarantee of press freedom and freedom of speech. While those rights have come under pressure at various times in the country's history, the independent court system has repeatedly issued rulings that uphold and expand the right of journalists to be free of state control. The courts have also given the press broad protection from libel and defamation suits that involve commentary on public figures, though libel formally remains a criminal offense in a number of states.

In a case that could have important implications for online journalism, Barrett Brown, a journalist and activist, pleaded guilty in April 2014 to charges related to his posting of a link in a chat room; the link led to a file that was publicly available on the internet, but that contained stolen data (obtained via hacking) from Stratfor Global, an intelligence contractor. Brown was not involved in obtaining the data. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and other media watchdogs expressed concern over the case, as it could result in the criminalization of linking to documents that were already made public by others in online articles, a common journalistic practice. Brown was awaiting sentencing at year's end.

Some 40 states have shield laws that give journalists either absolute or limited protection from orders to reveal confidential sources or other information gathered in the course of their work. The federal government, however, offers no such protection, and efforts to adopt a federal shield law have been unsuccessful to date. The latest congressional attempt to enact shield legislation expired in 2014 after the Senate failed to bring the bill to a vote.

Over the past decade, federal prosecutors have provoked a series of controversies by attempting to compel testimony from journalists in high-profile cases, including some centered on government workers charged with leaking information to the media or lobbyists. While some of the cases were initiated by the Justice Department under President George W. Bush, the administration of President Barack Obama has proven even more zealous in pursuing government secrecy cases and issuing demands for information from reporters. Indeed, the Obama administration has brought more criminal cases against alleged leakers than were brought by all previous administrations combined.

In 2013, the Justice Department revealed that it had secretly subpoenaed and seized records for more than 20 telephone lines used by reporters at the Associated Press (AP). The Justice Department also acknowledged that it had secretly subpoenaed and seized the e-mail and telephone records of James Rosen, a Fox News correspondent. Both actions were taken as part of national security leak investigations. After a firestorm of criticism, the department issued new guidelines that significantly narrowed conditions under which the government could gain access to records of journalists' communications with sources.

In a positive development related to the new guidelines, the Justice Department in late 2014 largely abandoned a lengthy campaign to force James Risen, a *New York Times* reporter and author of several books on national security themes, to testify about information he may have received from Jeffrey Sterling, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee, in the course of researching a book about American efforts to disrupt Iran's nuclear program. Risen was set to appear in court in early 2015, but it was agreed that he would not be compelled to identify sources or any information they supplied.

The right to access official information, with some exceptions, is protected under the 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In one of its first acts after taking office, the Obama administration announced a more expansive interpretation of the law than had prevailed under President Bush. In 2009, the attorney general declared that records should be released to the public unless doing so would violate another law or cause foreseeable harm to protected interests, including personal privacy and national security. Despite this and other pro-disclosure rhetoric, the administration has drawn criticism for its record on transparency. Complaints have focused on the government's refusal to release many documents concerning national security and counterterrorism issues, and its heavy redaction of documents that are made available. According to an AP analysis, the administration censored or denied a record 39 percent of all FOIA requests in fiscal year 2014. Legislation to reform FOIA practices advanced in Congress during 2014, but failed to win final passage by year's end, meaning it would have to be reintroduced by the new Congress in 2015.

Official regulation of media content in the United States is minimal, and there are no industrywide self-regulatory bodies for either print or broadcast media, although some individual outlets have an ombudsperson. By law, radio and television airwaves are considered public property and are leased to private stations, which determine content. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is charged with administering licenses and reviewing content to ensure that it complies with federal limits on indecent or offensive material in terrestrial broadcasts. While the judiciary has declined to issue a broad ruling on the FCC's authority to regulate indecency on the airwaves, recent decisions have chipped away at the agency's power.

Although the government does not restrict political or social engagement over the internet, there are laws banning or regulating promulgation of child-abuse images, exposure of minors to indecent content, dissemination of confidential information, online gambling, and the use of copyrighted material.

In 2013, former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden's revelations of extensive surveillance by the signals-intelligence agency generated widespread criticism of American policy, from both domestic and foreign sources. Civil libertarians and press freedom advocates pointed to the potential effect of the data collection on the rights of Americans, and free speech organizations asserted that the surveillance revelations were causing writers to practice self-censorship. In late 2014, Republicans in the Senate blocked legislation

that among other things would have restricted the NSA's ability to engage in bulk collection of metadata from Americans' phone calls and other communication records. However, the law authorizing the activity was set to expire in mid-2015, meaning the issue would likely be revisited by the new Congress.

Political Environment

While self-censorship among journalists remains rare in the United States and official censorship is virtually nonexistent, an increasing number of news outlets are aggressively partisan in their coverage of political affairs. The press itself is frequently a source of contention, with conservatives and liberals alike accusing the media of bias. The appearance of enhanced polarization is driven, to some degree, by the influence of all-news cable television channels and blogs, many of which display an obvious editorial slant. The popularity of talk-radio shows, whose hosts are primarily conservative, has also played an important role in media polarization. Nonetheless, most U.S. newspapers make a serious effort to keep a wall of separation between news reporting, commentary, and editorials. The long-term trend toward fewer family-owned newspapers and more newspapers under corporate control has contributed to a less partisan, if blander, editorial tone. Most terrestrial broadcasters and major news agencies similarly avoid partisan reporting.

The Obama administration has come under fire for effectively limiting journalistic access to federal officials, as well as official events. The president held fewer press conferences in his first term than did his predecessors, although the rate of these conferences increased in 2014. He also favors interviews with friendly media to present his perspective to the public. Journalists have complained of an environment in which officials are less likely to discuss policy issues with reporters than during previous administrations, noting that "minders" representing the administration often sit in during meetings involving reporters and federal officials.

Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, journalists have had mixed success in gaining access to proceedings and facilities related to counterterrorism, including the military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where over 100 detainees continue to be held. The military and the courts have typically granted accommodations that represent improvements on the initial restrictions, but that still make full and effective coverage a challenge for reporters.

While foreign journalists are generally able to physically cover news stories with few impediments, from time to time there are cases of foreign journalists being denied entry to the United States, usually on the basis of vague national security rationales. In September 2014, Jordanian-born poet Amjad Nasser, who is also an editor at the London-based newspaper *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, was barred from a flight to New York, where he was to speak at a literary event. Separately, the authorities in some jurisdictions have denied press credentials to those representing nontraditional media.

In recent years there have been few physical attacks on journalists in reprisal for their work, and none were reported in 2014. However, journalists covering demonstrations or other breaking news events are occasionally denied access or even detained briefly by police. In 2014, reporters encountered an unusual number of abuses during protests in Ferguson, Missouri, over the death of Michael Brown, an unarmed, 18-year-old black resident who was shot and killed by local police in August. The PEN American Center noted at least 52 alleged violations of press freedom surrounding the demonstrations, including 21 journalists arrested, 13 threatened verbally or with weapons, and 7 incidents in which journalists were assaulted or hit with crowd-

control devices such as tear gas and rubber bullets. The group's analysis concluded that on numerous occasions, the police deliberately attempted to obstruct news coverage. Local law enforcement also reportedly asked the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to impose a no-fly zone over Ferguson in order to hamper media coverage; the request was granted for 11 days in August. There were few claims of interference with journalists during subsequent demonstrations in New York, the scene of another controversial death of an unarmed black suspect at the hands of police, or in other cities where similar protests took place during the latter part of the year.

Economic Environment

Media in the United States are overwhelmingly under private ownership. Nevertheless, National Public Radio (NPR) and television's Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)—editorially independent networks that are funded by a combination of government allocations and private contributions—enjoy substantial audiences. Meanwhile, cable television providers in some markets carry a variety of foreign news sources, including Al-Jazeera America, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Spanish-language services, and state-controlled television channels from Russia and China.

Traditional media, including print and broadcast outlets, have suffered financially from the increasing popularity of the internet as a news source. The newspaper industry in particular is undergoing a period of decline and readjustment. There were an estimated 1,300 daily newspapers, geared primarily toward local readerships, in circulation in 2014—a record low. The Newspaper Association of America reported in 2014 that overall newspaper revenue had declined by 2.6 percent in 2013 compared with the previous year, and an October 2014 analysis from the Brookings Institution found that total advertising revenue for newspapers had fallen by nearly two-thirds since 2000.

Even the largest and most prestigious papers have faced falling print circulations and advertising revenues and been forced to cut staff. The *New York Times* announced in September 2014 that it was cutting 100 newsroom jobs and several more administrative positions, representing a 7.5 percent decline in its newsroom staff. The *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* also eliminated dozens of newsroom positions each in 2014. To compensate for reduced staff, many outlets are increasingly turning to freelance journalists. However, a survey conducted by Harvard University in 2013 concluded that employed journalists are more likely to be granted press credentials than are freelance journalists. Most newspapers have rebalanced their operations to emphasize website and multimedia content. A few have dropped print editions entirely, while others publish only a few times a week. Financial weakness has affected outlets' news coverage as a whole, but particularly their ability to conduct investigative reporting and cover foreign news, which require considerable resources. It has also led to increased pressure from advertisers and the growing use of "sponsored content."

A number of prominent city and state newspapers have folded in recent years, weakening the media's ability to provide scrutiny of local affairs, ferret out corruption, and ensure accountability in government. A July 2014 study from the Pew Research Center revealed that there had been a 35 percent decline in the number of reporters assigned to statehouses across the United States since 2003. Less than a third of local newspapers and just over 14 percent of local television stations assign any reporters to cover the statehouse. Nonprofit online outlets, financed by grants and donations and staffed by veteran local reporters, have emerged in response, though most struggle to attract funding and establish readerships on par with former print publications.

Similarly, to combat the broader decline in investigative journalism, philanthropic foundations have sponsored projects that focus on in-depth coverage of education, criminal justice, and corruption issues. For example, ProPublica was established in 2007 as a nonprofit, independent news agency dedicated to investigative journalism; it is financed by a variety of foundations. In 2013, Pierre Omidyar, billionaire founder of the online auction site eBay, created First Look Media, composed of a nonprofit media and investigative journalism site as well as a profit-seeking “media concern” whose proceeds will support independent journalism. While such initiatives have helped to fill the vacuum created by the deterioration of newspapers, questions have been raised about the long-term sustainability of enterprises that depend on large private donations. These projects have also featured clashes between career journalists and the managers selected by wealthy donors who have little experience in the news industry.

Both local television stations and major cable news channels remain profitable, despite a recent slump in viewership for the latter. And overall, television continues to enjoy dominance as a medium of news consumption. However, most Americans get their news from a variety of devices and platforms. Approximately 87 percent of Americans used the internet in 2014, and the number and influence of news-focused websites and blogs have grown rapidly over the past decade. Social-media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have also gained prominence as a means of breaking news and mobilizing public opinion on political and policy issues. Sites like BuzzFeed and Mashable have taken steps to improve their journalistic credentials, while Vice News, a relatively new online venture, has quickly established itself as a source for international news.

Media ownership concentration is an ongoing concern in the United States. Pew reported a spike in local television station sales in 2013, including the purchase of 63 stations by Sinclair, already the country’s largest owner of local stations. At the end of 2013, Sinclair owned 167 stations across 77 markets. Mergers and acquisitions of local stations continued in 2014, though the number of outlets changing hands declined to 171, from nearly 300 in 2013. While they are prohibited by FCC rules from owning more than one top-four local station in any one market, many media companies have flouted these restrictions through “joint service agreements,” which allow them to operate stations that are owned on paper by others. The FCC in March 2014 enacted a new rule to curb the practice, holding that responsibility for selling 15 percent or more of a station’s advertising time amounts to an ownership stake.

Uruguay

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 10 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 24 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	25,F	25,F	26,F	26,F	26,F

Uruguay's media environment remained one of the freest in Latin America in 2014. A package of legal reforms enacted in December were expected to have a positive effect on the broadcast sector.

Legal Environment

The 1967 constitution provides for press freedom and freedom of expression, and the government generally respects these rights. Uruguay's legal framework for the press is considered one of the best in the Americas, with effective community media regulations and laws protecting access to information. However, some defamation laws and bureaucratic adherence to the 2008 access to information law remain problematic. Although a 2009 reform decriminalized defamation of public officials in cases involving the public interest, as well as insults to foreign dignitaries and national symbols, other forms of defamation remain criminal offenses.

In December 2014, the parliament approved a new Audiovisual Communications Services Law (LSCA) that was welcomed by press freedom organizations. The groups praised the inclusive consultation and drafting process, which led to improvements such as the narrowing of provisions on hate speech to restrict only speech that expressly praises or incites violence, and to clarify that these restrictions should not interfere with the reporting of information in the public interest. Public-interest exceptions were also added to clauses on the protection of children from harmful content. The law was signed by the president later in December, but it still faced a possible court challenge, as the Uruguayan Broadcasters Association raised concerns about certain content requirements, such as the obligation to provide free airtime for political parties' electoral campaigns.

Among other changes, the LSCA calls for the distribution of broadcast frequencies to commercial, public, and community media. It imposes safeguards to prevent a few media groups from dominating the commercial market, and prohibits any single cable company from serving more than 25 percent of the country's households. The law diversifies content creation and programming by requiring that 30 percent of national broadcast content be produced by independent producers, and that no single producer supply more than 40 percent of the programming aired by a given outlet. And it protects national content by reserving 60 percent of television programming and 30 percent of radio programming for Uruguayan producers.

The LSCA also reforms what had been an arbitrary system of broadcast licensing, creating an Audiovisual Communication Council responsible for licensing and enforcement. The council is made up of five members, with one, the president, appointed by the executive branch and the remaining four elected by a two-thirds majority in the legislature. Licenses for television will last 15 years, while radio licenses will be granted for 10-year terms.

Some existing statutes and practices continue to present obstacles to the press, especially when investigations involve crimes committed during the country's 1973–85 military dictatorship. In 2014, at the request of defense lawyers, a judge ordered three journalists to name confidential sources for articles that provided information helpful to the prosecution in a case against four former military officers and a police official charged with crimes against humanity. All three journalists refused, but they were not jailed. Supreme Court justices told the Uruguayan Press Association that even though journalists are constitutionally protected from revealing their sources, the defense in a criminal trial has a right to ask judges to require their presence in court.

Political Environment

The media present a range of views and are generally free from external pressure to alter their coverage. Journalists rarely face any form of physical attack or harassment. However, 31 journalists were killed or disappeared during the dictatorship's "dirty war" period, and progress on investigating those crimes has been slow. In September 2014, Chile and Uruguay signed an agreement to facilitate collaboration on the investigation of crimes committed during their respective dictatorships.

Economic Environment

The press is privately owned, and Uruguay hosts more than 100 daily and weekly newspapers. The broadcast sector is mostly private, with the exceptions of a state-owned television station and radio outlet. Ownership of commercial free-to-air and subscription television stations is concentrated in the hands of three major companies, but community media and nongovernmental advocates of media diversity successfully lobbied for the inclusion of diversity and pluralism safeguards in the LSCA to help counter such concentration. There are no government restrictions on internet access, and penetration is high relative to the rest of Latin America, with about 61 percent of the population using the medium in 2014.

Uzbekistan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 37 / 40

Economic Environment: 28 / 30

Total Score: 95 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	92,NF	94,NF	95,NF	95,NF	95,NF

Uzbekistan's legal framework ostensibly prohibits censorship and guarantees freedom of speech and the right to information. In practice, however, such protections are systematically ignored by President Islam Karimov's autocratic government, which in 2014 implemented new restrictions on online content that further limited space for the free flow of information.

Legal Environment

Convictions for libel and defamation can result in fines and jail time, and publicly insulting the president is punishable by up to five years in prison. Journalists can also face legal penalties for "interference in internal affairs" and "insulting the dignity of citizens." Although a law granting access to information exists, it is not enforced. Journalists working for unaccredited foreign outlets or unregistered domestic outlets are not legally recognized as journalists and risk persecution by the government.

Virtually all local media outlets are linked directly or indirectly to the state, and the National Security Service actively manipulates press reports to present a carefully constructed image of the country, occasionally allowing limited criticism of local corruption. Widespread self-censorship is a serious problem, as investigative journalists fear reprisals in the form of harassment, loss of employment, or jail time. In September 2014, the government passed a law banning online content that is extremist, inaccurate, separatist, pornographic, or untrue, among other things. Several important provisions of the law are loosely worded, allowing for broad and arbitrary interpretations. Observers believed the law to be a reaction to the growing popularity of social-networking websites and blogs as platforms for free discussion.

Political Environment

Both government censorship and self-censorship are pervasive. State-owned telecommunications carrier Uztelecom maintains control over internet services in Uzbekistan, blocking access to the websites of foreign news organizations, human rights groups, and exile publications. Uznews.net, a Germany-based independent news portal that regularly published content critical of the Karimov government, announced its closure in December 2014. The website had suspended operations for “technical reasons” a month before the announcement, following the reported hacking of chief editor Galima Bukharaeva’s computer and email account. Information acquired through the attack, including the names of Uznews contributors working inside Uzbekistan, was subsequently posted on various social-media websites. Bukharaeva attributed the attack to the Uzbek National Security Service.

In August 2014, a Facebook campaign emerged urging Uzbeks to send a message to the Karimov government by posting “Qorqmayman!” (“I am not afraid!”). The campaign page gained thousands of members, including former government officials, professors, and students, with one-third of the posts originating from within the country.

The few remaining independent journalists in Uzbekistan—most of whom contribute to foreign media outlets because local independent outlets are virtually nonexistent—continue to face pressure from Karimov’s regime, including harassment, intimidation, assault, and detention. In June 2014, independent journalist Said Abdurakhimov (known under the pseudonym Sid Yanyshv) was convicted of the charges of working without accreditation and threatening social order, and fined 9.6 million soms (\$4,000). The charges followed an article Abdurakhimov published on Fergana, a Moscow-based news portal, about displaced residents of Tashkent who had not been compensated for the demolition of their homes by the government. Media watchdogs noted several irregularities in the trial. Abdurakhimov’s two court-appointed lawyers made no attempts to provide defense, and he was not permitted to present video evidence to contest incriminating witness testimonies. Following the trial, two of the five witnesses for the prosecution admitted to receiving scripted testimony.

Throughout 2014, the government targeted journalists and activists who covered or brought attention to taboo subjects. These topics include the ongoing feud between President Karimov and his daughter, Gulnara Karimova (under house arrest as of year’s end), low living conditions and the lack of basic necessities, and international protest movements. In January, photographer Umida Akhmedova and eight others, including one journalist, staged a peaceful protest outside the Ukrainian Embassy in Tashkent in solidarity with the Euromaidan protest movement. Three days later, the participants were detained and questioned by the National

Security Service without access to lawyers, and fined approximately \$2,000. Three of the participants were sentenced to 15 days in jail.

Uzbekistan remains among the world's most notorious jailers of journalists and free expression activists. According to Human Rights Watch, at least three-dozen journalists, activists, writers, and intellectuals are being held in Uzbek jails and penal colonies as a result of their work. Muhammad Bekjanov and Yusuf Ruzimuradov of the opposition newspaper *Erk* have been imprisoned since March 1999, which makes them the longest-jailed reporters in the world, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Economic Environment

The state dominates the media industry. Most broadcasting comes from four state-run television channels. Ownership of non-state media outlets is opaque, though journalists report that there is low public demand to make ownership structures transparent, as outlets generally report the same version of the news. The government controls most publishing houses and printing presses. A number of regional and local television and radio stations are privately owned, and a few private printing presses produce independent publications that avoid politically sensitive topics and have limited circulation. Low pay within Uzbekistan's media industry encourages journalists to accept bribes.

Approximately 43 percent of the population used the internet in 2014. The small minority of citizens who access foreign news outlets curtail state restrictions by using proxy servers. In spite of the relatively small internet penetration, social-media platforms and blogs have increasingly become spaces to critically discuss issues with state-provided services and to disseminate independent reporting. Uzbek state-owned media continue to warn audiences against the dangers of the internet, although authorities have simultaneously attempted to use alternative social-networking websites—such as Bamboo.uz, a platform similar to Twitter that was launched in Uzbekistan in February 2014—to combat the popularity of foreign platforms.

The country's leading mobile phone operator, Uzdurobita, filed for bankruptcy in 2013 after a prolonged and unsuccessful bid to defend itself against tax evasion and antitrust charges. The case against Uzdurobita—a subsidiary of the Russian telecommunications company Mobile TeleSystems (MTS)—highlights the hostile environment for foreign investors in the sector.

Vanuatu

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6 / 30

Political Environment: 11 / 40

Economic Environment: 8 / 30

Total Score: 25 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	23,F	25,F	26,F	25,F	25,F

Venezuela

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 26 / 30

Political Environment: 31 / 40

Economic Environment: 24 / 30

Total Score: 81 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	75,NF	76,NF	76,NF	76,NF	78,NF

Press freedom deteriorated in Venezuela in 2014 as journalists were caught up in President Nicolás Maduro’s attempts to clamp down on antigovernment demonstrations. The unrest had spread to cities across the country following a harsh government response to student-led protests in February. More than 40 people were killed and at least 900 injured by the time the demonstrations began winding down in June; journalists covering the events were subject to arrests, harassment, and violence. Separately, the July sale of influential newspaper *El Universal* in an opaque transaction, which led to the softening of its critical editorial stance toward the government, was seen as another blow to press freedom after two other major outlets suffered similar fates in 2013. Media independence was also threatened by currency controls that prevented key publishers from acquiring newsprint, rules requiring private media to air state promotional advertisements for free, and the risk of administrative and legal actions against private outlets that anger the government.

Legal Environment

Article 57 of Venezuela’s 1999 constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but this right is not respected in practice. Reforms to the penal code in 2005 expanded the scope of defamation as a criminal offense; when directed at the president, it can result in a prison term of up to 30 months. The 2004 Law on Social Responsibility in Radio, Television, and Electronic Media (Resorte Law), amended in 2010, contains vaguely worded restrictions that can be used to severely limit freedom of expression. For example, the law bans content that could “incite or promote hatred,” “foment citizens’ anxiety or alter public order,” “disrespect authorities,” “encourage assassinations,” or “constitute war propaganda.” The government is particularly sensitive about news reports that feature criticism of the Maduro administration or its policies.

Alleging that “democratic security” is at stake, the National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) uses the Resorte Law to stifle critical coverage of national and international news, partly by imposing heavy fines on private television and print media. Many outlets have responded by softening their reporting. At the onset of the mass antigovernment demonstrations in February 2014, CONATEL director William Castillo announced that those reporting on violence at the demonstrations would face sanctions under the Resorte Law. Days later, CONATEL blocked the transmission of a Colombian news channel, NTN24, after it aired footage of a student protester being shot and killed. Similarly, Maduro threatened to expel U.S.-based television network CNN due to its coverage of the protests, calling it “war propaganda.”

Over the course of 2014, Maduro used the Resorte Law 103 times to interrupt regular programming on the nation’s television and radio stations and deliver live official broadcasts (known as *cadenas*), including announcements of new presidential decrees and attacks on the

president's political opponents. The Resorte Law obliges national stations to carry the messages, which the government issues frequently, at random, and without regard for regular programming. The state does not pay for these institutional publicity spots.

The judicial system is highly politicized at all levels, and journalists and private media outlets cannot rely on impartial adjudication of cases involving attacks against the press or violations of press freedom. In May 2014, the Supreme Court rejected the lawsuit of a journalist who claimed that the government violated her right to freedom of expression by prohibiting reporters from entering the National Assembly to cover hearings. In a separate case in November, the Caracas Appeals Court denied a motion to reopen an investigation into attacks by police on journalists from the Cadena Capriles newspaper chain that had occurred while the journalists were covering a 2009 rally against the government.

Article 51 of the constitution guarantees the right of citizens to access public information, but in practice heavy restrictions are placed on freedom of information. Journalists are routinely rebuffed in their efforts to obtain official documents, and the Maduro administration is quick to clamp down on the spread of information that might reflect poorly on its policies. The government's propensity to withhold news of critical national importance was illustrated by Maduro's attempts in September 2014 to quash reports of a possible outbreak of Chikungunya disease in the state of Aragua. The president accused those who attempted to warn the public of practicing "terrorism" and ordered their prosecution.

CONATEL retains broad powers to suspend or revoke licenses at its discretion, and under a 2010 amendment to the Resorte Law, the commission is permitted to regulate internet activity. Although theoretically an autonomous agency, it has largely functioned as a part of the executive branch. In August 2014, CONATEL suspended a program on Radio Caracas Radio (RCR), alleging that it had violated the Resorte Law by speaking ill of Maduro. Days later, CONATEL officials and members of the National Guard entered the studios of Sensacional 94.7 FM and ordered the 22-year-old independent station off the air. Within hours, a new station was broadcasting on the same frequency.

In February 2014, Venezuela's official gazette published governing regulations for a new agency, the Strategic Center for Security and Protection of the Fatherland (CESPPA), which was created by presidential decree in October 2013. The stated goal of the new political-military agency is to unify information on issues of strategic importance for national security and the preservation of public order. In a potential threat to freedom of expression, the agency was given broad, vaguely defined powers, including the ability to monitor communications over the internet and to classify or censor information deemed threatening.

Contrary to norms established by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the 1995 Law on the Exercise of Journalism requires journalists to hold journalism degrees and to be members of the National College of Journalists. Those who practice without these credentials can face penalties of three to six months in prison.

Political Environment

Politicization of the press is an ongoing problem. Coverage in state-run media favors the president and his cabinet members, and public outlets adopt a clearly progovernment editorial line in news stories and opinion shows. During the peak months of the political unrest in 2014, state television and radio stations provided scant coverage of the protests, and what little coverage did air had a strong progovernment slant.

Meanwhile, many previously opposition-aligned outlets have altered their editorial stances as a result of direct and indirect pressure from the government. The shadowy sales of critical media outlets to business interests partial to the government have narrowed opportunities for members of the political opposition to reach the public. When the moderate opposition leader Henrique Capriles gave a speech at a rally organized by student protesters in February 2014, no broadcast media covered the event.

At the outset of the Maduro government in early 2013, the private press enjoyed relatively open access to presidential events and press conferences, and some government figures were interviewed on private channels. However, media access to government offices and agencies has been increasingly restricted. Journalists covering the National Assembly are limited to viewing legislative proceedings on a closed-circuit television feed inside the official press room. In March 2014, several journalists were denied access to a Supreme Court hearing. State channels, particularly Venezolana de Televisión (VTV), have consolidated their role as the principal venues for statements by senior government officials, who rarely give press conferences with open question periods.

Censorship and self-censorship are pervasive in radio, television, and print. The nongovernmental media watchdog Press and Society Institute (IPYS) found that in 2014, nearly one-third of the nation's journalists declined to report information of vital public interest in order to protect their personal security, and more than 40 percent reported being pressured by authorities to change their coverage of a story. During the 2014 demonstrations, the government blocked or disabled hundreds of websites and made images of injured protesters inaccessible on Twitter. Mobile-phone applications used by demonstrators to organize, such as Zello and Tunnel Bear, were also blocked. In the interior state of Táchira, CANTV, a state-owned telecommunications company, blocked broadband internet service for 30 hours.

Murders of journalists are relatively rare in Venezuela, and no journalists were killed as a result of their work in 2014. However, IPYS documented 347 attacks on journalists during the year, including arbitrary detentions, harassment, and physical violence against reporters covering the protests. While government security forces were responsible for the bulk of these attacks, including an incident in May in which two journalists were shot while covering a demonstration in Caracas, at least 38 journalists reported being attacked by armed civilian groups. Journalists who criticize the Maduro government or its policies are also subject to smear campaigns, arbitrary arrests, and physical attacks by authorities.

Economic Environment

The Bolivarian Communication and Information System (SIBCI), which manages state-run radio and television outlets, continued to expand rapidly in 2014. Although privately owned newspapers and broadcasters continue to operate alongside state outlets, the overall balance has shifted considerably toward government-aligned voices in recent years. The government officially controls 13 television networks, more than 65 radio outlets, 1 news agency, 5 newspapers, and a magazine. In addition, since 2002 CONATEL has broadened the platform of public and alternative community media outlets to include 235 radio stations, 44 television stations, and 120 community newspapers, which primarily carry government-produced content.

In February 2013, CONATEL initiated the transition to digital broadcasting in urban areas. Although the decree announcing the switch promoted pluralism in the diffusion of ideas and emphasized more efficient use of the broadcast spectrum, 8 of the 11 stations selected for

digital transmission are state run. Only two private channels, Venevisión and Televen, were selected for digital transmission, and each focuses more on entertainment than on news programming. Globovisión, long the most vocal opposition-oriented station, was excluded from the transition.

As of 2014, 57 percent of the Venezuelan population had access to the internet. However, low-speed connections make the internet an inefficient news source for many residents, a problem that is more common in smaller cities and rural areas. Venezuelans are very active on social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, with usage rates among the highest in South America. Mounting pressures on traditional media outlets have fueled the growth of internet-based outlets specializing in investigative journalism, but their audiences are relatively small. International media outlets continue to be a popular alternative to national sources.

In 2013, private business interests linked to the government purchased the Cadena Capriles newspaper conglomerate and Globovisión, two outlets that had carried criticism of the government. Within months of the ownership changes, news coverage and commentary grew more favorable to the authorities, and a number of prominent editors and reporters resigned their positions, alleging editorial pressure. In 2014, the daily *El Universal*, the country's oldest circulating newspaper, likewise underwent a notable change in its editorial line after an undisclosed buyer took control in July. In the months following the sale, more than 25 columnists were dismissed, several journalists resigned over censorship by their editors, and award-winning cartoonist Rayma Suprani claimed she was fired for an illustration that criticized the public health system.

Since 2012, currency controls have made acquiring newsprint difficult. Maduro has exacerbated the problem by centralizing distribution in the government-operated editorial complex where all newspapers, magazines, and books bearing the state's official seal are printed. More than a dozen newspapers have been shuttered, and several others were forced to cut pages or reduce the frequency of circulation as a result of the shortage. However, in September 2014 Maduro announced the launch of two additional state newspapers, prompting journalists to accuse the government of restricting access to newsprint in order to censor critical voices.

Vietnam

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 30 / 30

Political Environment: 34 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 86 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	82,NF	83,NF	84,NF	84,NF	84,NF

Vietnam remained one of Asia's harshest environments for the media in 2014. Authorities employed both legal mechanisms and physical harassment to punish and intimidate critical journalists, and the government increased its arrests of bloggers and other online reporters of news.

Legal Environment

Although the 1992 constitution recognizes freedom of expression, the criminal code prohibits speech that is critical of the government. The definition of such speech is vaguely worded and broadly interpreted. The government frequently brings charges under Article 88 of the criminal code, which prohibits the dissemination of “antigovernment propaganda”; Article 79, which imposes a broad ban on activities aimed at “overthrowing the state”; and Article 258, which prohibits the “abuse of democratic freedoms” to undermine state interests. A 2006 governmental decree defined more than 2,000 additional violations of the law in the areas of culture and information, with a particular focus on protecting “national security.” In 2011, the government issued Decree No. 2—Sanctions for Administrative Violations in Journalism and Publishing—to restrict the use of pseudonyms and anonymous sources and exclude bloggers from press freedom protections. The 2013 Decree on the Management, Provision, and Use of Internet Services and Internet Content Online, or Decree No. 72, prohibits the sharing of news articles and other information on social media. Decree No. 72 also requires social networks to provide user information upon request for broadly defined reasons, and includes harsh measures designed for online surveillance. In November 2014, the government arrested blogger Hong Le Tho, and in December it arrested blogger Nguyen Quang Lap, charging both with “abusing freedom and democracy” for writing blogs containing uncensored news and opinions.

Under the 1999 Law on Media, the press is prohibited from reporting information that is “untruthful, distorted, or slanderous and harmful” to an individual or organization. Although prison terms are not prescribed for defamation, various other speech-related offenses carry the potential for jail time under the penal code, including those referencing government figures.

The judiciary is not independent. Individuals are held for months or longer in pretrial detention and are sometimes not released after completing their sentences. Many trials related to free expression last only a few hours. The right to access information is not mandated by law, and in practice access to official information and sources is heavily restricted.

In 2014, the government allowed several foreign embassies to hold seminars on journalism and human rights, though it reportedly blocked some Vietnamese journalists from attending.

Political Environment

The ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) generally views the media as a tool for the promotion of party and state policy, and authorities often intervene directly to either place or censor content. The CPV’s propaganda and training departments control all media and set press guidelines. Calls for democratic reform, religious freedom, and land rights, as well as criticism of relations with China, are the issues that most commonly attract official censorship or retribution. Journalists are occasionally permitted to report on corruption at the local level, as it serves the interests of the party’s national anticorruption platform, but open criticism of the state is not tolerated. Due to the threat of dismissal or legal action, many journalists engage in self-censorship.

International periodicals, while widely available, are sometimes censored. Decision 20/2011, which came into effect in 2013, requires all foreign news, education, and information content on television to be translated into Vietnamese and censored by the MIC before airing. At

least 21 stations, including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the U.S.-based Cable News Network (CNN), and Channel News Asia, were blocked from retransmission into Vietnam in 2013 until they agreed to comply with the decree. The Vietnamese-language services of the BBC, Voice of America, and Radio Free Asia are blocked intermittently.

For a time, the Vietnamese press were able to extensively cover anti-China protests that broke out in May 2014 after China moved an oil rig into disputed waters in the South China Sea. However, as the protests became more violent and threatened to target Hanoi, the government cracked down and reporting decreased. Vietnamese press also failed to report that the protests not only aired grievances against China but also, in some instances, condemned harsh labor conditions and the lack of regulation in Vietnamese factories. Later in the year, some Vietnamese news outlets freely reported on anti-China, prodemocracy protests in Hong Kong. Officials from the Chinese embassy in Hanoi reportedly called Vietnamese publications on more than one occasion to complain about coverage of Beijing.

Censorship and monitoring of online content is increasingly common. The Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) formed an agency in 2008 to monitor the internet and blogosphere. Internet service providers (ISPs) are legally required to block access to websites that are considered politically unacceptable. However, many users report that the government's capacity to censor the internet remains limited.

Foreign reporters are sometimes denied entry into the country after covering politically sensitive topics. However, in 2012, the government issued a decree that expanded visa permissions for foreign journalists and allowed foreign press agencies to establish a presence outside Hanoi for the first time.

At the end of 2014, a total of 16 journalists were behind bars in Vietnam, fifth-most in the world, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. During the year, the government's arrests of bloggers, online reporters, and other online writers increased, part of a growing campaign to crack down on online dissent. In March, blogger Truong Duy Nhat was sentenced to two years in prison for a post discussing territorial disputes with China. In August, a Vietnamese court sentenced blogger Bui Thi Minh Hang to three years in prison on charges of "causing public disorder" for traveling to visit a prominent former political prisoner. In November, blogger Nguyen Huu Vinh and his assistant Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy were charged with "abusing freedom and democracy to infringe upon the interests of the state" for posting articles critical of the government; if convicted, they could be jailed for up to seven years. In late December, the government arrested blogger Nguyen Dinh Ngoc, who had written numerous articles about other online and print journalists in Vietnamese jails. Another blogger, Nguyen Quang Lap, was held in jail for "anti-state" writings despite previously having suffered a stroke and reportedly suffering from serious health complications as a result.

Police often use violence, intimidation, and raids of homes and offices to silence journalists who report on sensitive topics. Several prominent journalists have fled into exile in the past five years. In 2014, there were numerous reports of assailants physically attacking bloggers and authorities preventing family members of defendants from attending trials. In November, journalist Truong Minh Duc was reportedly beaten unconscious by plainclothes police in Ho Chi Minh City. In December, plainclothes police reportedly attacked blogger Nguyen Hoang Vi and several friends in Ho Chi Minh City, beating them extensively.

Malicious programs attached to downloadable Vietnamese-language software and distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, which overwhelm servers and websites with traffic, frequently target politically sensitive websites.

Economic Environment

Almost all of Vietnam's 850 print media outlets are owned or controlled by the CPV, government institutions, or the army. Independent outlets are prohibited, though some companies are permitted to maintain private newspapers. Several of these newspapers—including *Thanh Niên*, *Người Lao Động*, and *Tuổi Trẻ* (owned by the CPV Youth Union)—have attempted to become financially self-sustaining. Along with the popular online news site VietnamNet, they have a fair degree of editorial independence, though ultimately they are subject to the CPV's supervision. Several underground publications have been launched in recent years, including *Tự Do Ngôn Luận* (*Free Speech*), whose former editor, Father Nguyễn Văn Lý, is currently serving an eight-year prison sentence.

Radio is controlled by the Voice of Vietnam (VOV) or other state entities. State-owned Vietnam Television (VTV) is the only national television provider, though cable services do carry some foreign channels, for those who can afford them. Many homes and local businesses in urban areas have satellite dishes, allowing them to access foreign programming.

The internet continues to be the main outlet for free expression, despite a growing crackdown by the state. Nearly 50 percent of the population accesses the web, with the vast majority using internet cafés and other public providers. Rising internet penetration has created opportunities for discussion and debate about salient public issues, a situation that has generated a permanent tension between the CPV's distinct goals of promoting new technology and restricting online criticism. Website operators continue to use ISPs that are either wholly or partly state-owned. The largest is Vietnam Data Communications, which is controlled by the state-owned Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Group and serves nearly a third of all internet users. One study released in 2014 suggested Vietnam has roughly 25 million Facebook users.

West Bank and Gaza Strip

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27 / 30

Political Environment: 35 / 40

Economic Environment: 22 / 30

Total Score: 84 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	84,NF	83,NF	83,NF	84,NF	82,NF

Press freedom in the West Bank and Gaza Strip deteriorated in 2014, particularly during Operation Protective Edge, Israel's 50-day military campaign against Hamas militants in Gaza. Journalists were killed by shelling and air strikes that also hit local media offices and severely damaged Gaza's infrastructure. The Hamas-led authorities in Gaza harassed journalists throughout the year. In the West Bank, journalists were affected by a security clampdown and remained subject to a range of constraints and abuses by both the Fatah-controlled Palestinian

Authority (PA) and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Neither the PA nor Hamas eased long-standing legal restrictions in their respective territories.

Legal Environment

The Palestinian Basic Law guarantees a free press, enshrines the right to establish media outlets, and prohibits government censorship. However, the 1995 Press and Publication Law imposes burdensome administrative regulations and bans content that undermines “the general system” or “national unity,” or that is “inconsistent with morals.” Defamation is a criminal offense, and journalists have been prosecuted for publishing criticism of Palestinian officials. In September 2014, the PA arrested two West Bank media workers, Mujahed al-Sa’di and Bara’ al-Qadi, on defamation charges for online commentary that was critical of senior Fatah or PA officials. Al-Sa’di was released after about 36 hours and al-Qadi after nine days.

A draft law on freedom of information that would authorize Palestinians to request data from PA public bodies was under review during 2014, but it had yet to be enacted at year’s end.

The PA regulates all television and radio licenses in the West Bank. In order to obtain a broadcast license, applicants must gain approval from the interior, information, and telecommunications ministries, which review financing sources, content, and technical issues, respectively. Licenses must be renewed each year. Critics accuse the PA of arbitrarily increasing licensing fees—even though prices are supposed to correspond to the strength and reach of the broadcast frequency—in order to force outlets off the air. Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since 2007, has introduced a system of accreditation that requires all outlets and journalists to register with its authorities.

In addition to Palestinian laws, as administered by the different authorities in the West Bank and Gaza, journalists in the territories are subject to controls imposed by the Israeli military, including measures banning incitement to terrorism. In June 2014, during an IDF crackdown on Hamas in the West Bank, Israeli forces raided media companies that were accused of providing services to Al-Aqsa TV and other Hamas-affiliated outlets, confiscating crucial equipment. Israel, along with many other countries, considers Hamas a terrorist organization, and media outlets linked to the group have carried calls for violence. Aziz Kayed, Al-Aqsa TV’s West Bank director, was arrested at his home in June and remained in Israeli administrative detention at year’s end. A cameraman with the station was placed in administrative detention in July, and a correspondent was similarly detained in October.

Political Environment

Media outlets and journalists in the West Bank and Gaza are affected by political pressure, censorship, and violence from both Palestinian authorities and the IDF. Negotiations between Fatah and Hamas led to a reconciliation agreement in April 2014 and the announcement of a unity cabinet in June, but Hamas remained in de facto control of Gaza at year’s end, and the political developments had little effect on press freedom in the territories.

Although the two factions moved to lift bans on each other’s newspapers, Israeli forces continued to suppress Hamas-affiliated outlets and interfere with other Palestinian media. In May, the IDF raided the printing facilities of the West Bank newspaper *Al-Ayyam* in Ramallah after it started printing Gazan newspapers, and warned staff to cease publishing Hamas-linked content on the grounds that it incited hatred against Israel. In June, the Israeli police raided

Palmedia, the PA's East Jerusalem media center, confiscated its files and equipment, and interrogated its staff. During the raid, the news program *Good Morning Jerusalem* was taken off the air as it reported on a hunger strike by Palestinians in Israeli administrative detention.

Israeli forces in the West Bank also obstructed the work of journalists in the field during the year. Checkpoints, which entail searches, interrogations, and sometimes short detentions, have long hindered movement and limited journalists' ability to report within the occupied territories. In addition, the IDF has increasingly curbed coverage of regular protests near the Israeli security barrier in the West Bank by declaring such areas "closed military zones." These physical restrictions grew more intense after the security crackdown began in June 2014. Journalists were interrogated and detained at checkpoints, and injured by Israeli security personnel while covering protests. In July, reporters from Palestine Today TV came under fire while broadcasting live amid unrest in East Jerusalem and sustained numerous injuries. Also that month, the IDF reportedly fired on journalists covering demonstrations in Shuafat, injuring several, and searched journalists affiliated with Bethlehem 2000 radio.

Meanwhile, mounting tensions between Israel and Hamas, including an escalation in Hamas rocket fire from Gaza, led to Operation Protective Edge, an Israeli military campaign in Gaza that stretched from early July to late August. Amid air strikes, shelling, and incursions by Israeli ground troops, as many as 17 journalists and other media workers were killed, including some who died at home in Israeli bombardments of apartment complexes. The Committee to Protect Journalists found that the deaths of four journalists and three media workers during the conflict occurred in the course of their professional duties.

The IDF targeted buildings housing media offices during the operation in Gaza. In mid-July, Israeli aircraft reportedly attacked two buildings in Gaza City that hosted media outlets including the Watania Media Agency and the Sawt al-Watan radio station. On July 22, Qatar's Al-Jazeera television network said an Israeli warplane fired on its offices in Gaza City, forcing employees to evacuate, although none sustained injuries. The headquarters and offices of Hamas's Al-Aqsa television and radio services were attacked repeatedly, but the stations were able to continue broadcasting from other locations. Israeli officials denied allegations that the IDF intentionally targeted journalists; press freedom organizations insisted that all suspected violations be fully investigated, and that media outlets' links to Hamas or propagandistic content did not make their offices a legitimate military target.

Separately in 2014, journalists in the West Bank continued to encounter arbitrary arrests, detentions, and assaults by PA security forces, particularly when they covered politically sensitive issues or criticized the government. According to the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA), the Palestinian side was responsible for 90 media freedom violations in the West Bank in 2014, or more than a quarter of the total, with Israeli forces accounting for the remainder.

Hamas similarly abused journalists' rights in Gaza during the year, with Palestinians perpetrating 24 of 136 violations recorded by MADA in that territory. Hamas security personnel assaulted a group of reporters near the Nahel Aouz border fence in May as they attempted to cover demonstrations during Nakba Day. Hamas also detained and interrogated several journalists in 2014, including Alforat Iraqi TV correspondent Ayman Mustafa Ala'loul and freelance journalist Tawfeek Abu Jarad, over reporting and commentary taken to be critical of Hamas. In April, the Government Media Center in Gaza fired journalist Oruba Othman after she published an article in a Lebanese newspaper that described Hamas security officials giving sermons in mosques while in uniform. A Hamas spokesperson in August admitted that the

organization expelled foreign journalists who were covering Hamas military operations during Operation Protective Edge.

Economic Environment

The PA and Hamas fund four of five major Palestinian newspapers, and they are not editorially independent in practice. In the West Bank, *Al-Hayat al-Jadidah* is exclusively funded by the PA, which partially finances *Al-Ayyam* as well. Hamas funds the twice-weekly *Al-Risala* and the daily *Filistin*. *Al-Quds*, a family-owned, Jerusalem-based newspaper established in 1951, is considered less vulnerable to partisan influence. Its East Jerusalem location, however, makes it subject to Israeli military censorship.

There are more than a dozen West Bank television stations and between 60 and 70 radio stations, in addition to the handful of television stations and approximately two dozen radio stations operating in Gaza. West Bank broadcasters are generally small outlets that focus on local issues. The PA permits Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV to operate in most West Bank towns with relative freedom. In Gaza, Hamas allows transmission of the PA-controlled Palestine TV, based in Ramallah. Much like the subsidized print outlets, these channels are seen as mouthpieces for Hamas and the PA. The Voice of the People radio station, run by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, is generally allowed to operate but occasionally blocked. Residents also have access to a variety of foreign broadcasts.

The PA does not restrict access to the internet, which is a popular source of news and opinion. Statistics on penetration vary. The International Telecommunication Union reported an access rate of nearly 54 percent in the West Bank and Gaza as of 2014. MADA reported that only 34 percent of West Bank residents and 28 percent of Gaza Strip residents had access to the internet due to a lack of infrastructure and the high cost of service delivery. Access to reliable telecommunications technology in the territories remains severely constrained by Israeli restrictions. Neither the West Bank nor Gaza is permitted to have independent telecommunications infrastructure; all routing switches, cell towers, and gateway switches that provide phone service are located in Israeli-controlled territory. In addition, Israel, which controls the electromagnetic spectrum across the territories, does not permit Palestinian companies to offer 3G mobile internet services, leaving that market in the hands of Israeli carriers.

Yemen

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24 / 30

Political Environment: 31 / 40

Economic Environment: 23 / 30

Total Score: 78 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	80,NF	83,NF	83,NF	79,NF	76,NF

Media workers in Yemen operated in an extremely difficult environment in 2014, characterized by a breakdown in security and rule of law during the second half of the year, and an increase in political pressure from both the government and armed opposition groups.

Legal Environment

The constitution allows for freedom of expression “within the limits of the law,” and the relevant laws are restrictive. The Press and Publications Law of 1990 requires journalists to uphold “national unity” and adhere to the “goals of the Yemeni revolution.” Article 103 bans criticism of the head of state and defamation of “the image of Yemeni, Arab, or Islamic heritage.” Article 104 prescribes fines and up to a year in prison for violations. The government has ignored calls to repeal problematic portions of the 1990 law. In March 2014, Majed Karout, a reporter for the *Online* news website, was sentenced to one year in jail and fined 100,000 rials (\$450) for circulating false news; the case was connected to information Karout had posted on Facebook that implicated a former government official in corrupt activity.

In direct contravention of the Yemeni constitution, which forbids exceptional courts, two specialized courts are regularly employed to prosecute journalists. The Specialized Criminal Court, established in 1999 to handle national security cases, targets political dissidents and journalists, while the Specialized Press and Publications Court (SPPC), established in 2009, tries cases related to the media. Judges at the SPPC may choose from a variety of laws, including the penal code, to punish journalists, and prosecutors can refer cases to the court at their discretion. Yemen finalized a freedom of information law in 2012, becoming just the second Arab country, after Jordan, to enact such legislation. Although a commissioner was appointed to manage the new law’s implementation in 2013, institutional mechanisms have not been adequately funded, and the information agency authorized by the bill had yet to be established by the year’s end.

Yemeni news outlets and journalists must obtain licenses annually from the Ministry of Information, and printing houses must maintain a registry of printed materials and submit copies to the ministry. Additionally, high capital requirements to establish print publications can exclude new competitors from entering the market. There is no regulation of broadcast media in Yemen, creating legal ambiguities. In May 2014, the information ministry presented a stopgap measure to parliament that would grant the ministry and Yemen’s Public Corporation for Radio and Television provisional authority to regulate broadcast media, but it had not been approved by the year’s end.

Political Environment

New television and radio stations and news websites have sprung up in the wake of the 2011 uprising that led to President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s resignation. Most offer news that is slanted to match the views of their owners, and employees feel pressure to adhere to specific editorial agendas. The government controls editorial policies on certain sensitive issues, such as rebel groups, at state-owned outlets, but public media are granted significant latitude in some elements of their reporting. In 2014, many state outlets featured strident criticisms of the government, particularly when reporting on corruption.

The government in 2014 placed restrictions on reporters operating in Yemen and denied them access to key sites in the country. In May, an official at the information ministry ordered a reporter and a cameraman with Al-Jazeera to leave an area in southern Yemen where

government troops were fighting Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The two complied after the reporter was threatened with revocation of his journalist visa. Also in May, the government expelled a U.S. freelance journalist without explanation, and denied entry to another U.S. freelancer; he was forced to board a flight back to Turkey after arriving in Sana'a from Istanbul.

Censorship is common. In February 2014, the government temporarily prevented a state-operated press from printing copies of *Aden al-Ghad*, a newspaper linked with a separatist group based in southern Yemen. In June, authorities shut down the television station Yemen Today and a newspaper of the same name, both of which were owned by former president Saleh, and which had been critical of the administration of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Authorities also reportedly seized equipment from the outlets. Self-censorship is common, with many journalists avoiding coverage of so-called "red-line" topics such as the movement of rebel groups.

According to the local media advocacy group Freedom Foundation, the first half of 2014 saw a decrease in reported violations against the media compared to the same period in 2013. However, there were still dozens of reported incidents, including physical attacks, threats, and interference with journalistic work, about half of which were perpetrated by agents of the government. The pace of violations increased in the second half of 2014, as fighting between the government and the Houthi rebel movement intensified, and particularly after the capture of Sana'a by Houthi forces in September. Whereas in the first half of the year the government was responsible for most attacks on the press, in the second half of the year armed groups, including the Houthis, took the lead amid almost total state failure that created an environment of lawlessness and impunity.

During their initial assault on Sana'a in September, Houthi forces shelled the offices of state-run Yemen TV, killing six of its employees and temporarily forcing it off the air. The station resumed broadcasting later that month, but Houthi forces maintained tight control over its management. After occupying the capital, Houthis rebels undertook a harassment campaign against outlets they deemed hostile to their cause, primarily those affiliated with the Islamist Islah party; they reportedly insulted, interrogated and detained journalists, and confiscating reporters' equipment. The rebels shortly after entering the capital raided the offices of Suhail TV, which is financed by Sheikh Hamid al-Ahmar, head of the Islah party. It remained off-air at the year's end.

Several journalists were killed in Yemen in 2014. In August, the director of the state-run Sana'a Radio, Abdul Rahman Hamid al-Din, was fatally wounded in a shooting by unknown assailants in Sana'a. Also in August, an explosive device was discovered under the car of the director of Yemen TV, Ibrahim al-Abiad, though it was defused without incident. In December, U.S. freelance journalist Luke Somers, who had been held by AQAP since 2013, was killed during a failed rescue attempt by Yemeni and American forces.

Economic Environment

The government controls most terrestrial television and radio stations. However, privately owned television and radio stations have proliferated since 2012, with radio experiencing the strongest growth. In the absence of legislation or regulations to control broadcasting, each radio station adheres to its own standards. A number of private television stations broadcast into Yemen from outside the country, increasing the diversity of news coverage. The development of broadcast media is significant because due to low literacy rates and other factors, most Yemenis

get their news from television and radio. Print media remain strictly regulated under the Press and Publications Law; only a handful of newspapers provide independent views. The state also controls press distribution outlets and print advertising, undermining the ability of the press to operate without economic pressure. In 2014, about 23 percent of the population had access to the internet, though poor infrastructure makes connections unreliable. The majority of internet users connect at public cafes, which are susceptible to state surveillance. The government owns the country's two internet service providers, and costs are prohibitive for most Yemenis. While news websites often operate with a small budget, the internet has given some newspapers greater reach. The English-language weekly *Yemen Post* has reported receiving more than 60,000 visits to its website per day, far exceeding its print circulation.

Zambia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 18 / 30

Political Environment: 25 / 40

Economic Environment: 19 / 30

Total Score: 62 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	64,NF	61,NF	60,PF	60,PF	61,NF

For much of 2014, President Michael Sata's Patriotic Front (PF) government continued a pattern of harassment and intimidation of independent journalists and news outlets, cracking down on reports of the president's declining health as well as coverage of the opposition and criticism of the government. After Sata's death in October, the ensuing campaign for a January 2015 presidential election heightened the existing political polarization of Zambia's media environment.

Legal Environment

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but the relevant language can be interpreted to allow legal restrictions on various grounds. Journalists and media outlets face such restrictions under criminal and civil defamation laws, sedition and obscenity laws, and provisions of the penal code including the State Security Act.

In 2014, Sata continued to pursue a defamation case against the *Daily Nation*, one of the few remaining independent print outlets, and its owner Richard Sakala in connection with a 2012 article alleging that the president had interfered with the adjudication of a financial scandal involving Zambian Airways. In May 2014, Sata himself took the unusual step of testifying at the defamation trial, which was ongoing at year's end. Separately, in a victory for press freedom, the Lusaka High Court ruled in December that provisions of Section 67 of the penal code prohibiting the publication of false information were unconstitutional because they violated the right to freedom of expression. The ruling came as part of another case involving Sakala; he had been charged in December 2013, alongside *Daily Nation* editor Simon Mwanza and democracy

activist McDonald Chipenzi, with “publication of false information with intent to cause public alarm” under Section 67 in connection with an article about police recruitment methods.

In July 2013, the authorities arrested three journalists suspected of writing for the critical online outlet *Zambian Watchdog*—Clayson Hamasaka, Thomas Zyambo, and Wilson Pondamali—on charges including sedition, possession of pornography, malicious damage to property, and attempted escape from lawful custody. Pondamali was ultimately acquitted in September 2014, but the cases against Hamasaka and Zyambo remained unresolved. In January 2014, the *Zambian Watchdog* leaked a version of the much-anticipated draft constitution, prompting the government to threaten new restrictions on internet media. The government finally released the official version of the draft constitution in October.

A freedom of information bill that had been shelved by previous administrations received fresh support when Sata and the PF took power in 2011. Although the government repeated its pledges to pass the legislation through 2014, it had yet to submit the existing bill to the parliament at the end of the year.

The governance structures of the state broadcaster and the broadcasting regulator leave both agencies vulnerable to political interference. The 2010 Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Act authorizes the information minister to select the corporation’s board without first seeking nominations from an appointments committee, though the selections must be ratified by the parliament. The board is responsible for appointing the head of the state-owned Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC).

The 2002 Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act was modified in 2010, granting the information minister similar powers of direct appointment for the board of the IBA, the broadcast media regulator, which is responsible for issuing licenses. In June 2013 the government appointed Josephine Mapona, a former journalist, as IBA director general, and a board was appointed in October 2014, after considerable delay. In September 2014, the IBA began processing applications for broadcasting licenses, a task that had previously been the responsibility of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services. The IBA also launched a code of ethics, which, according to Information Minister Joseph Katema, was based on recommendations that media outlets made to the Zambia Media Council (ZAMEC), a voluntary, independent organization for Zambia’s media workers. However, the IBA remains under the control of the government and continues to make politicized threats. In March, the information minister at the time, Mwansa Kapeya, warned Radio Mano, a community station in Northern Province, that its license would be revoked unless it could guarantee that its programming was “professional” and not “inflammatory.” The station, which had hosted several opposition figures, was the subject of several acts of harassment and intimidation by regulators and government officials throughout 2014.

As of February 2014, the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) required all citizens to register their mobile phone SIM cards under their real names. Those who failed to do so would have their phones deactivated. Although the government claimed that this requirement was intended to promote security, it had the effect of compromising the ability of Zambians to communicate anonymously.

Political Environment

Upon taking power, the Sata government had pledged to free the public media—consisting of the ZNBC and the widely circulated dailies *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Times of*

Zambia—from government control. However, according to media monitoring groups, these outlets have generally continued to report along progovernment lines. Self-censorship at public media outlets allegedly remains common, and journalists from mainstream outlets often turn to anonymous blogging to express themselves freely due to the threat of legal action and attacks by PF cadres. The only large-circulation private daily, the *Post*, has long been a vocal supporter of the PF, meaning all major print and broadcast outlets have favored the PF government since Sata took office. However, after a split in the PF caused by the August 2014 firing of Justice Minister Wynter Kabimba—an ally of *Post* owner Fred M'membe—the *Post* took a more critical stance toward the government.

Smaller, independent outlets, such as the *Daily Nation* newspaper and two critical websites, the *Zambian Watchdog* and *Zambia Reports*, have faced increasing legal and extrajudicial harassment. From June 2013 through April 2014, the *Zambian Watchdog* and *Zambia Reports* sites were blocked for varying lengths of time inside Zambia, although their content could be accessed on mobile devices, using circumvention tools and mirror sites, and via Facebook and Twitter.

The election campaign period in late 2014 featured an increase in media freedom violations, including editorial pressure, harassment, and intimidation of journalists and outlets. There were several reports of PF officials and party cadres warning media outlets not to cover opposition campaigns. The state media—which have the widest reach—generally favored the PF candidate, Edgar Lungu, while some private outlets showed a clear bias in favor of the opposition. The ZNBC itself was the subject of threats in November, when high-ranking PF officials stormed the newsroom and ordered the news director, Kenneth Maduma, to remove stories on Inonge Wina, the PF minister of gender, and Hakainde Hichilema, the presidential candidate of the opposition United Party for National Development (UPND). In a statement, ZNBC chairman John Mulwila alleged that the officials, who included Minister of Youth and Sports Chishimba Kambwili, threatened to fire Maduma and told ZNBC journalists not to run stories with opposition views. Soon after the incident, Katema, the information minister, voiced his support for Mulwila. In December, PF legislator Freedom Sikazwe threatened to close Radio Walamo, in the northern town of Mpulungu, and have its staff fired if it continued to cover the region's opposition parties.

In December, the UPND filed a lawsuit against the ZNBC for failing to cover Hichilema's presidential campaign in its radio and television broadcasts, while giving full coverage to the PF general conference and other events. Also in December, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) issued a statement calling for a halt to election-related attacks on journalists and acts of censorship.

Until his death, the government remained secretive about the state of Sata's health, which had been the subject of speculation since 2012. Rumors increased in 2014 when the president made several foreign trips, including a weeks-long "working vacation" in Israel, that were apparently related to his medical treatment. He missed key events during the year, including the high-profile United States–Africa Leaders Summit in Washington in August, and a speech at the UN General Assembly in September. However, the government consistently denied that he was ill, describing such reports as "outlandish and unsubstantiated," and threatened outlets that reported on or discussed Sata's health. In May, the IBA issued a warning to privately owned Hot FM for airing discussions of Sata's health; in June, the Lusaka police delivered a similar rebuke to the independent Muvi TV. Opposition parties and analysts argued that the secrecy surrounding

Sata's health and activities made it difficult for the public to know who was running the government.

At the opening of the parliament in September, Sata's first public appearance since June, only the ZNBC was allowed to broadcast live, and only journalists from the state media and the *Post* were allowed in the chamber's press gallery. Journalists from the rest of the private media were barred from the chamber and forced to watch the ailing president deliver a generally incoherent address from a press room via a live ZNBC feed. The Zambia chapter of MISA filed an official complaint with the Lusaka High Court over the incident, reportedly the first time that the private media had been barred from the opening of the parliament since independence.

For much of 2014, journalists and outlets faced harassment and physical attacks both in the course of their work and in retaliation for their reporting, and media practitioners reported a general climate of increased intimidation. Community and privately owned radio stations encountered intensified harassment and threats by local government officials and PF party cadres, especially after hosting opposition figures on call-in shows or criticizing local officials on the air. In April, PF cadres raided Sun FM in Copperbelt Province during an interview with Hichilema, forcing the candidate to flee. In September, PF cadres went to the offices of independent Breeze FM, in the eastern town of Chipata. They threatened to assault the news editor in retribution for statements made during a live program about the party's poor showing in a recent by-election.

Economic Environment

Although the media market is dominated by the ZNBC, the two state-owned papers, and the *Post*, there are several private television stations with smaller audiences, some independent papers, and a growing number of private radio stations. There are also more than 70 community radio stations, though they are limited to broadcasting within a 150-kilometer radius. International broadcast services are not restricted. Some radio stations, including Radio Phoenix, UNZA Radio, and Pan African Radio, carry call-in shows that express diverse and critical viewpoints. Radio remains the medium of choice in most of the country because of its relatively low cost of access, but many stations face financial difficulties due to their dependence on sponsored programming and the small advertising market. Reception of both state and private television signals throughout the country remains poor. There is also a state-owned national news agency, the Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS).

Despite the blocking of some critical websites, the internet remains one of the freest spaces for journalists and bloggers to express criticism of the government. However, few Zambians are able to access the medium; internet penetration in 2014 was only around 17 percent of the population. Access is more prevalent in urban areas, where there is a greater number of internet cafés and mobile signals are stronger. In rural areas, access to mobile internet service remains difficult in practice due in part to poor signals and high costs.

The costs of newsprint and ink (which include substantial import duties and taxes), printing, and distribution remain very high, hampering print outlets' ability to increase their readership. The majority of advertising comes from the government, which places its ads exclusively in the state media. There have also been reports of private companies withholding advertising from critical private outlets due to fear of government retaliation.

Zimbabwe

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23 / 30

Political Environment: 23 / 40

Economic Environment: 24 / 30

Total Score: 70 / 100

Edition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Score, Status	84,NF	81,NF	80,NF	77,NF	73,NF

Press freedom in Zimbabwe remained restricted in 2014, though the media environment improved slightly following a Constitutional Court ruling on criminal defamation and a comparative lessening of physical attacks against journalists in a nonelection year. However, a continued lack of movement to enact regulatory reforms, particularly in the broadcast sector, remained a primary concern.

Legal Environment

The 2013 constitution provides for freedom of expression and access to information, subject to some limitations, and was seen as an improvement on its predecessor. However, an otherwise draconian legal framework continues to inhibit the activities of journalists and media outlets. The 2002 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) requires all journalists and media companies to register, and gives the information minister sweeping powers to decide which publications can operate legally and who is able to work as a journalist. Unlicensed journalists can face criminal charges and a sentence of up to two years in prison. In addition, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act severely limit what journalists may publish and mandate harsh penalties—including long prison sentences—for violators. The 2007 Interception of Communications Act allows officials to intercept telephonic and electronic communications and to monitor their content to prevent a “serious offense” or a “threat to national security.”

Authorities continued to exploit these and other laws to harass and punish journalists in 2014. In April, two journalists were charged with criminal defamation in response to an article they wrote in the privately owned *Newsday* accusing a local police chief of ineptitude. In an unusual case, in June the editor of the state-controlled *Sunday Mail*, Edmund Kudzayi, was charged with “attempting to commit an act of insurgency, banditry, sabotage or terrorism”; authorities accused him of being the blogger Baba Jukwa, whose commentary on political infighting within the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party gained particular popularity around the 2013 elections. He pleaded guilty to a minor weapons charge and was released in September.

Positively, criminal defamation charges filed in 2011 against Nevanji Madanhire, editor of the independent weekly *Standard* newspaper, and *Standard* reporter Nqaba Matshazi were dismissed in June 2014, after the Constitutional Court ruled in a landmark case that Section 96 of the Criminal Law (Reform and Codification) Act, which contained the criminal defamation provisions, was unconstitutional. The ruling followed on the heels of the court’s October 2013 decision in favor of two journalists, Constantine Chimakure and Vincent Kahiya, and visual artist

Owen Maseko, vacating sections 31 and 33 of the act, which criminalized publishing falsehoods about the state and undermining the authority of the president. However, this ruling applied only to defamation cases that occurred under the previous constitution. Journalists can still face criminal defamation charges under the 2013 constitution. Politicians and other prominent figures also continued to file civil defamation cases against journalists, demanding exorbitant amounts in damages. Although many of the cases are eventually dismissed by the courts, charges can remain pending for months, leading to financial and logistical hardships for the journalists involved.

Although the right to information is theoretically provided for under AIPPA—subject to a number of exemptions—in practice the relevant provisions of the law are not operational and accessing official information remains extremely difficult. The colonial-era Official Secrets Act is also used to keep tight control over information.

The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) is tasked with regulating the licensing of publications and journalists. In 2012, the ZMC announced the creation of the 13-member Zimbabwe Media Council, as provided for under AIPPA. The council is charged with developing codes of conduct for print media and has the power to impose punishments on media houses that transgress the codes. However, as of 2014, chronic underfunding has greatly constrained its capacity to fulfill this mandate. Meanwhile, the independent Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ), a self-regulatory body covering all types of media that is supported by a majority of print outlets, has continued to develop its scope of activities, hearing several dozen formal complaints and adjudicating a number of other disputes regarding media content in the past several years. Since its establishment in 2009, it has heard approximately 35 complaints from members of the public per year. In 2014, it also began conducting training workshops for journalists on operating in Zimbabwe's complex legal environment. The potential for competition between these dual regulatory frameworks has raised concern among local analysts.

Broadcasting licenses have been consistently denied to independent and community radio stations. Critics allege that the board of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), which is responsible for granting radio and television licenses, was illegally appointed in 2009 by the information minister and stacked with loyalists to President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party. In early 2014, the government began to move forward with a plan to license 25 new community radio stations, but by July, only 18 contenders had been shortlisted for consideration at a requisite public inquiry, and six of these dropped out of the process as they were unable to pay the steep fees associated with the process. Civil society groups lodged several complaints about the process, including the extraordinary cost of the complex, multistep licensing process; the politically motivated selection of shortlisted stations; and unnecessary procedural delays. The process remained ongoing at year's end, with no station gaining a license. Zenzele Ndebele, the editor of Radio Dialogue, a community radio station that broadcasts outside the legal framework, has faced consistent harassment. In March, he was summoned to court on charges of contravening the Broadcast Services Act for possession of a radio receiver without a license.

Professional and media-monitoring organizations such as the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), and the local chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) are also occasionally subject to official pressure.

Political Environment

Journalists have traditionally faced verbal intimidation, physical attacks, arbitrary arrest and detention, interception of communications, and financial pressure at the hands of the police, government officials, and supporters of both political parties. They are particularly prone to harassment when attempting to cover sensitive news events or political issues. Such instances declined somewhat in 2014, but on a number of occasions throughout the year, reporters were roughed up or detained. Additionally, in February, a newspaper vendor was temporarily abducted by police and beaten, after officers accused him of being an informant for the independent *NewsDay* newspaper. In November, MISA-Zimbabwe raised concern regarding a number of cases of verbal intimidation directed at the press by high-ranking officials, including First Lady Grace Mugabe and Media and Broadcasting Services Secretary George Charamba.

Faced with legal restrictions as well as the threat of extralegal intimidation, some journalists practice self-censorship, particularly regarding sensitive issues such as corruption or factional fighting within ZANU-PF. However, in the past few years, there has been relatively more reporting on issues such as official corruption and malfeasance, with coverage ranging from low-level officials to Mugabe and his family. Some of this opening can be attributed to the state-owned press being used as a weapon in intra-party disputes, with rival factions seeking to undermine each other in the media. In June, Mugabe blasted his information minister, Jonathan Moyo, for appointing editors to state papers with a history of hostility to Mugabe and the ruling party, allegedly a move to position himself as a potential presidential successor. In recent years, a number of exiled journalists have returned to Zimbabwe, and new cases of exile have not been reported since 2009, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Steep accreditation fees introduced in 2011 for foreign media bureaus and their local correspondents remain in place. Foreign journalists can encounter restrictions on residing full-time in the country and are sometimes denied visas to file stories from Zimbabwe. Locally based correspondents for foreign publications have also been refused accreditation or threatened with lawsuits and deportation. However, no such cases were reported in 2014.

Economic Environment

The government, through the Mass Media Trust holding company, controls the two main daily newspapers, the *Chronicle* and the *Herald*, whose propagandistic coverage generally favors Mugabe and ZANU-PF. The private Alpha Media Holdings group publishes a number of the country's independent papers, including *NewsDay*, the *Standard*, the *Zimbabwe Independent*, and the regionally focused daily *Southern Eye*, launched in Bulawayo in 2013. The *Daily News*, published by Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, resumed operations in 2011 after being shuttered in 2003 and is generally aligned with MDC viewpoints. The *Zimbabwean* is produced in South Africa for the Zimbabwean market, and some foreign newspapers, mainly from South Africa, are available despite a 2012 ZMC directive banning the distribution of unregistered foreign newspapers.

Newspapers typically have poor distribution networks outside urban areas, and they have been buffeted by soaring prices for newsprint in recent years. Vendors and distributors of independent newspapers are occasionally harassed by soldiers or ruling party supporters. According to MISA's African Media Barometer, state-run companies do not advertise in private papers, and state-run media outlets do not accept advertising from companies thought to be aligned with the opposition. Owing to poor economic conditions and salaries that do not keep

pace with inflation, journalistic corruption and cash incentives for coverage have become rampant, according to a recent report by the VMCZ.

The state-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) runs the vast majority of broadcast media outlets, which are subject to overt political interference and censorship; ZBC coverage overwhelmingly favors ZANU-PF. In 2012, two new private radio stations—Star FM and ZiFM—commenced operation. Despite initial concerns over their owners' close ties to ZANU-PF, local analysts noted that the stations' news and talk radio content presented a diversity of views. The Broadcasting Services Act bans foreign funding and investment in this capital-intensive sector, making it very difficult for private players to enter the market. Radio broadcasts are currently the main source of information in rural areas. However, access to broadcast media in these districts is hampered by deteriorating equipment and a lack of transmission sites, although the government has reached an agreement with China to help upgrade transmission infrastructure. By mid-2014, the government was less than halfway through with a digitization project which, in addition to converting all analog TV broadcasting to a digital platform, would also upgrade transmission infrastructure to the benefit of analog radio broadcasting. However, the project faces huge financial shortfalls, amounting to nearly US\$200 million.

Official attempts to jam the signals of popular foreign-based radio stations that broadcast into Zimbabwe—including the VOA's Studio 7 service and the Voice of the People—continued to be a concern. In August, SW Radio Africa, a London-based station run by exiled Zimbabwean journalists that regularly faced government transmission disruptions, shut down due to lack of funding. Local authorities occasionally raid homes in rural areas and confiscate the shortwave radios used to access foreign broadcasts. Radio listeners in Zimbabwe are also required to obtain a license for each radio in their possession, which must be renewed annually, with profits accruing to the ZBC. After some talk at the beginning of 2014 of scrapping the licensing rules, the government doubled down on enforcement later in the year, going so far as to make car radio license renewal a required element of updating vehicle registration. Satellite television services that carry international and regional news programming remain largely uncensored and are being accessed by a rapidly growing share of the population, thanks to new technology such as free-to-air decoders. It is estimated that just under half of the population has a working television in their homes, and of these, about two-thirds access content via satellite dishes.

Access to the internet is limited by service disruptions caused by frequent power outages, though costs have significantly decreased due to greater competition in the telecommunications sector. Zimbabwe has a relatively high rate of internet penetration for Africa, at nearly 20 percent of the population in 2014. Online newspapers, news portals, and blogs run by Zimbabweans living abroad are increasingly popular among those with internet access, and diaspora media also distribute news and information via mobile-telephone text messaging. Social media have also taken on a more important role in the news and information environment, with politically focused posts by the "Baba Jukwa" profile on Facebook attracting a significant following prior to the 2013 elections.

Methodology

The 2015 edition of *Freedom of the Press*, which provides analytical reports and numerical ratings for 199 countries and territories, continues a process conducted by Freedom House since 1980. Each country and territory is given a total press freedom score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) on the basis of 23 methodology questions divided into three subcategories. The total score determines the status designation of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Assigning numerical scores allows for comparative analysis among countries and facilitates an examination of trends over time. The ratings and reports included in *Freedom of the Press 2015* cover events that took place between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2014.

Criteria

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

All states, from the most democratic to the most authoritarian, are committed to this doctrine through the UN system. To deny it is to deny the universality of basic human rights. We recognize that cultural distinctions or economic underdevelopment may affect the character or volume of news flows within a country, but these and other differences are not acceptable explanations for infringements like centralized control of the content of news and information. We seek to assess media freedom using common criteria for all settings, in poor and rich countries as well as in countries of various ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

Research and Scoring Process

The report's findings are reached after a multilayered process of analysis and evaluation by a team of regional experts and scholars. Although some degree of subjectivity may be unavoidable, the process emphasizes intellectual rigor and aims for consistent and unbiased judgments.

The research and scoring process involves more than 90 analysts—including outside consultants and members of the core research team headquartered in New York—who prepare the draft ratings and country reports. They gather information from professional contacts in a variety of countries, staff and consultant travel, international visitors, the findings of other human rights and press freedom organizations, regional specialists, the reports of governments and multilateral bodies, and a variety of domestic and international news media. We would particularly like to thank the other members of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) network for providing detailed and timely analyses of press freedom violations in a variety of countries worldwide, on which we rely to make our judgments.

The ratings are reviewed individually and on a comparative basis in a set of six regional meetings involving analysts, advisers, and Freedom House staff. The ratings are compared with the previous year's findings, and any proposed changes are subjected to added scrutiny. These reviews are followed by cross-regional assessments in which an effort is made to ensure comparability and consistency in the findings.

Methodology

Through the years, we have refined and expanded our methodology. Recent modifications have been intended to capture changes in the news and information environment without altering the comparability of data for a given country over the 35-year span of the index, or the comparative ratings of all countries over that period.

Our examination of the level of press freedom in each country and territory currently comprises 23 methodology questions and 132 subquestions divided into three broad categories: the legal environment, the political environment, and the economic environment. For each methodology question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher number of points is allotted for a less free environment. A country's final score (from 0 to 100) represents the total of the scores allotted for each question. A total score of 0 to 30 results in a press freedom status of Free; 31 to 60 a status of Partly Free; and 61 to 100 a status of Not Free.

The diverse nature of the methodology questions seeks to address the varied ways in which pressure can be placed on the flow of information and the ability of print, broadcast, and internet-based media to operate freely and without fear of repercussions. In short, we seek to provide a picture of the entire "enabling environment" in which the media operate. We also seek to assess the diversity of the news and information available to the public in any given country or territory, from either local or transnational sources.

The **legal environment** category encompasses an examination of both the laws and regulations that could influence media content, and the extent to which they are used in practice to restrict the media's ability to operate. We assess the positive impact of legal and constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression; the potentially negative aspects of security legislation, the penal code, and other criminal statutes; penalties for libel and defamation; the existence of and ability to use freedom of information legislation; the independence of the judiciary and official regulatory bodies; registration requirements for both media outlets and journalists; and the ability of journalists' organizations to operate freely.

Under the **political environment** category, we evaluate the degree of political control over the content of news media. Issues examined include the editorial independence of both state-owned and privately owned outlets; access to information and sources; official censorship and self-censorship; the vibrancy of the media and the diversity of news available within each country; the ability of both foreign and local reporters to cover the news in person without obstacles or harassment; and reprisals against journalists or bloggers by the state or other actors, including arbitrary detention, violent assaults, and other forms of intimidation.

Our third category examines the **economic environment** for the media. This includes the structure of media ownership; transparency and concentration of ownership; the costs of establishing media as well as any impediments to news production and distribution; the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors; the impact of corruption and bribery on content; and the extent to which the economic situation in a country affects the development and sustainability of the media.

METHODOLOGY QUESTIONS AND BULLETED GUIDELINES

—Each country is ranked on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being the best and 100 being the worst.

—A combined score of 0–30 = Free, 31–60 = Partly Free, and 61–100 = Not Free.

—Under each question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher number of points is allotted for a less free environment.

—The subquestions listed are meant to provide guidance as to what sorts of issues can be addressed under each methodology question; it is **not** intended that the author necessarily answer each one.

—The index is focused on the ability of print, broadcast, or internet-based news organizations to operate, but it can also address blogs, social media, and mobile communication systems that carry news content. Similarly, while the index refers primarily to conditions for professional journalists, it also covers citizen journalists and bloggers where applicable.

A. LEGAL ENVIRONMENT (0–30 POINTS)

1. Do the constitution or other basic laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of the press and of expression, and are they enforced? (0–6 points)

- Does the constitution contain language that provides for freedom of speech and of the press?
- Do the Supreme Court, Attorney General, and other representatives of the higher judiciary support these rights?
- Does the judiciary obstruct the implementation of laws designed to uphold these freedoms?
- Do other high-ranking state or government representatives uphold legal protections for media freedom?
- Do high-level government leaders contribute to a hostile environment for the press, for example by engaging in repeated animosity toward or negative verbal rhetoric against the media?
- Are crimes that threaten press freedom prosecuted vigorously by authorities?
- Is there implicit impunity for those who commit crimes against journalists?

2. Do the penal code, security laws, or any other laws restrict reporting and are journalists or bloggers punished under these laws? (0–6 points)

- Are there restrictive press laws?
- Do laws restrict reporting on ethnic or religious issues, national security, or other sensitive topics?
- Are penalties for ‘irresponsible journalism’ applied widely?
- Are restrictions of media freedom closely defined, narrowly circumscribed, and proportional to the legitimate aim?
- Do the authorities restrict or otherwise impede legitimate press coverage in the name of national security interests?
- Are journalists or media owners regularly prosecuted or jailed as a result of what they write or broadcast?
- Are writers, commentators, or bloggers subject to imprisonment or other legal sanction as a result of accessing or posting material on the internet?

- Is there excessive pressure on journalists to reveal sources, resulting in punishments such as jail sentences, fines, or contempt of court charges?

3. Are there penalties for libeling officials or the state and are they enforced? (0–3 points)

- Are public officials especially protected under insult or defamation laws?
- Are insult laws routinely used to shield officials' conduct from public scrutiny?
- Is truth a defense to libel?
- Is there a legally mandated 'right of reply' that overrides independent editorial control?
- Is libel made a criminal rather than a civil offense?
- Are journalists or bloggers prosecuted and jailed for libel or defamation?
- Are excessive monetary fines routinely imposed on journalists or media outlets in civil libel cases in a partisan *or* prejudicial manner, with the intention of bankrupting the media outlet or deterring future criticism?

4. Is the judiciary independent and do courts judge cases concerning the media impartially? (0–3 points)

- Are members of the judiciary subject to excessive pressure from the executive branch?
- Are the rights to freedom of expression and information recognized as important among members of the judiciary?
- When judging cases concerning the media, do authorities act in a lawful and non-arbitrary manner on the basis of objective criteria?
- Are contempt of court charges filed against journalists who attempt to cover court proceedings or cases?
- Are bans on coverage or gag orders frequently imposed by the judiciary on legal cases?
- Is there improper use of legal action or summonses against journalists or media outlets (e.g. being subjected to false charges, arbitrary tax audits etc.)?

5. Is Freedom of Information legislation in place and are journalists able to make use of it? (0–2 points)

- Are there laws guaranteeing access to government records and information?
- Is there enabling legislation and/or an administrative framework in place to make such laws usable in practice?
- Are restrictions to the right of access to information expressly and narrowly defined?
- Are journalists able to secure public records through clear administrative procedures in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost?
- Are public officials subject to prosecution if they illegally refuse to disclose state documents?

6. Can individuals or business entities legally establish and operate private media outlets without undue interference? (0–4 points)

- Are registration requirements to publish a newspaper or periodical unduly onerous or are they approved/rejected on partisan or prejudicial grounds?
- Is the process of licensing private broadcasters and assigning frequencies open, objective and fair?
- Is there an independent regulatory body responsible for awarding licenses and distributing frequencies or does the state control the allocations process?
- Does the state place extensive legal controls over the establishment of internet web sites and ISPs?
- Do state or publicly funded media receive preferential legal treatment?
- Are nonprofit community broadcasters given distinct legal status?
- Are laws regulating media ownership impartially implemented?

7. Are media regulatory bodies, such as a broadcasting authority or national press or communications council, able to operate freely and independently? (0–2 points)

- Are there explicit legal guarantees protecting the independence and autonomy of any regulatory body from either political or commercial interference?
- Does the state or any other interest exercise undue influence over regulatory bodies through appointments or financial pressure?
- Is the appointments process to such bodies transparent and representative of different interests, and do representatives from the media have an adequate presence on such bodies?
- Are decisions taken by the regulatory body seen to be fair and apolitical?
- Are efforts by journalists and media outlets to establish self-regulatory mechanisms permitted and encouraged, and viewed as a preferable alternative to state-imposed regulation?

8. Is there freedom to become a journalist and to practice journalism, and can professional groups freely support journalists' rights and interests? (0–4 points)

- Are journalists required by law to be licensed and if so, is the licensing process conducted fairly and at reasonable cost?
- Must a journalist become a member of a particular union or professional organization in order to work legally?
- Must journalists have attended a particular school or have certain qualifications in order to practice journalism?
- Are visas or exit permits for journalists to travel abroad delayed or denied based on the individual's reporting or professional affiliation?
- Are journalists' or bloggers' professional actions or means of communication subject to either electronic or physical surveillance with the object of interfering in their work or ascertaining their sources?
- May journalists and editors freely join associations to protect their interests and express their professional views?
- Are independent journalists' organizations able to operate freely and comment on threats to or violations of press freedom?

B. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT (0–40 POINTS)

1. To what extent are media outlets' news and information content determined by the government or a particular partisan interest? (0–10 points)

- To what degree are print and broadcast journalists subject to editorial direction or pressure from the authorities or from private owners?
- Is media coverage excessively partisan, with the majority of print, broadcast, or internet-based outlets consistently taking either a pro- or antigovernment line?
- Is there government editorial control of state-run media outlets?
- Is there provision for public-service broadcasting that enjoys editorial independence?
- Does the government attempt to influence or manipulate online content?
- Is there opposition access to state-owned media, particularly during elections campaigns? Do outlets reflect the views of the entire political spectrum or do they provide only an official point of view?
- Is hiring, promotion, and firing of journalists done in a nonpartisan and impartial manner? Are journalists subject to job loss because of what they write?

2. Is access to official or unofficial sources generally controlled? (0–2 points)

- Are the activities of government—courts, legislature, officials, records—open to the press?
- Is there a ‘culture of secrecy’ among public officials that limits their willingness to provide information to media?
- Do authorities hold regular press conferences or other briefings to inform the media?
- Do media outlets have a sufficient level of access to information and is this right equally enforced for all journalists regardless of their media outlet’s editorial line?
- Does the regime influence access to unofficial sources (parties, unions, religious groups, etc.), particularly those that provide opposition viewpoints?

3. Is there official or unofficial censorship? (0–4 points)

- Is there an official censorship body?
- Are print publications or broadcast programs subject to pre- or postpublication censorship?
- Are local print and broadcast outlets forcibly closed or taken off the air as a result of what they publish or broadcast?
- Are there shutdowns or blocking of internet sites or blogs, or of mobile-phone networks?
- Is access to foreign newspapers, TV or radio broadcasts, websites, or blogs censored or otherwise restricted?
- Are certain contentious issues, such as official corruption, the role of the armed forces or the political opposition, human rights, religion, officially off-limits to the media?
- Do authorities issue official guidelines or directives on coverage to media outlets?

4. Do journalists practice self-censorship? (0–4 points)

- Is there widespread self-censorship in the state-owned media? In the privately owned media?
- Are there unspoken rules that prevent a journalist from pursuing certain stories?
- Is there avoidance of subjects that can clearly lead to censorship or harm to the journalist or the institution?
- Is there censorship of or excessive interference in journalists’ stories by editors or managers?
- Are there restrictions on coverage by “gentlemen’s agreement,” club-like associations between journalists and officials, or traditions in the culture that restrict certain kinds of reporting?

5. Do people have access to media coverage and a range of news and information that is robust and reflects a diversity of viewpoints? (0–4 points)

- Does the public have access to a diverse selection of print, broadcast, and internet-based sources of information that represent a range of political and social viewpoints?
- Are people able to access a range of local and international news sources despite efforts to restrict the flow of information?
- Do media outlets represent diverse interests within society, for example through community radio or other locally focused news content?
- Do providers of news content cover political developments and provide scrutiny of government policies or actions by other powerful societal actors?
- Is there a tradition of vibrant coverage of potentially sensitive issues?
- Do journalists or bloggers pursue investigative news stories on issues such as corruption by the government or other powerful societal actors?
- **NOTE:** When scoring this question, please take into account the level of penetration of different types of media, e.g. print, broadcast, internet, foreign.

6. Are both local and foreign journalists able to cover the news freely in terms of harassment and physical access? (0–6 points)

- To what extent are journalists harassed or attacked while attempting to cover the news?

- Are certain geographical areas of the country off-limits to journalists?
- Does a war, insurgency, or similar situation in a country inhibit the operation of media?
- Do authorities require journalists working in danger zones to be “embedded”?
- Is there surveillance of foreign journalists working in the country?
- Are foreign journalists inhibited or barred by the need to secure visas or permits to report or to travel within the country?
- Are foreign journalists deported for reporting that challenges the regime or other powerful interests?

7. Are journalists, bloggers, or media outlets subject to extralegal intimidation or physical violence by state authorities or any other actor as a result of their reporting? (0–10 points)

- Are journalists or bloggers subject to murder, injury, harassment, threats, abduction, expulsion, arbitrary arrest and illegal detention, or torture, as a result of their professional activities?
- Do armed militias, organized crime, insurgent groups, political or religious extremists, or other organizations regularly target journalists?
- Have journalists fled the country or gone into hiding or exile to avoid such repercussions?
- Do journalists under threat from nonstate actors receive adequate protection from state authorities?
- Have media companies been targeted for physical attack or for the confiscation or destruction of property?
- Are there technical attacks (such as distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks) on news and information websites or key online platforms for information exchange?

C. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT (0–30 POINTS)

1. To what extent are media owned or controlled by the government and does this influence their diversity of views? (0–6 points)

- To what extent do state-owned media dominate the country’s news and information system?
- Does a state monopoly of TV or radio exist?
- Are there privately owned print, broadcast, or internet-based media that carry substantial, serious news reports?
- Do private news agencies provide news for print, broadcast, and online media?
- In the case of state-run or funded outlets, are they run with editorial independence and do they provide a range a diverse, nonpartisan viewpoints?
- **NOTE:** This question is usually scored to provide 0–2 points each for print, radio, and TV forms of news media, with the idea of measuring the balance between state and private ownership in each medium.

2. Is media ownership transparent, thus allowing consumers to judge the impartiality of the news? (0–3 points)

- Is it possible to ascertain the ownership structure of private media outlets?
- Do media owners hold official positions in the government or in political parties, and are these links intentionally concealed from the public?
- Are privately owned media seen to promote principles of public interest, diversity and plurality?

3. Is media ownership highly concentrated and does this influence diversity of content? (0–3 points)

- Are publications or broadcast systems owned or controlled by industrial or commercial enterprises, or other powerful societal actors, whose influence and financial power lead to concentration of ownership of the media and/or narrow control of the content of the media?
- Is there an excessive concentration of media ownership in the hands of private interests who are linked to state patronage or that of other powerful societal actors?
- Are there media monopolies, significant vertical integration (control over all aspects of news production and distribution), or substantial cross-ownership?
- Does the state actively implement laws concerning concentration, monopolies, and cross-ownership?

4. Are there restrictions on the means of news production and distribution? (0–4 points)

- Is there a monopoly on the means of production and distribution, such as newsprint supplies, internet service providers (ISPs), or telecommunications companies?
- Are there private and nonstate printing presses?
- Are channels of news and information distribution (kiosks, transmitters, cable operators, internet, mobile-phone operators) able to operate freely?
- Does the government exert pressure on independent media through the control of distribution facilities?
- Is there seizure or destruction of copies of newspapers, radio or television transmitters, satellite dishes, or production equipment?
- Does geography or poor infrastructure (roads, electricity, etc.) limit dissemination of print, broadcast, internet, or mobile-based news sources throughout the country?

5. Are there high costs associated with the establishment and operation of media outlets? (0–4 points)

- Are there excessive fees associated with obtaining a radio frequency, registering a newspaper, or establishing an ISP or website?
- Are the costs of purchasing paper, newsprint, or broadcasting equipment subject to high additional duties?
- Are media outlets subject to excessive taxation or other levies compared to other industries?
- Are there restrictions on foreign investment or non-investment foreign support/funding in the media?

6. Do the state or other actors try to control the media through allocation of advertising or subsidies? (0–3 points)

- Are state subsidies for privately run newspapers, broadcasters, or websites allocated fairly, i.e., on the basis of market share?
- Do private media subsidies distort the market, or are they intended to drive the competition out of business?
- Is government advertising allocated fairly and in an apolitical manner?
- Is there use of withdrawal of advertising (i.e., the government stops buying ad space in some papers or pressures private firms to boycott media outlets) as a way of influencing editorial decisions?

7. Do journalists, bloggers, or media outlets receive payment from private or public sources whose design is to influence their journalistic content? (0–3 points)

- Do government officials or other actors pay journalists in order to cover or to avoid certain stories?

- Are journalists often bribed?
- Are pay levels for journalists and other media professionals sufficiently high to discourage bribery?
- Do journalists or media outlets request bribes or other incentives in order to cover or hold certain stories?

8. Does the overall economic situation negatively impact media outlets' financial sustainability? (0–4 points)

- Are media overly dependent on the state, political parties, big business, or other influential political actors for funding?
- Is the economy so depressed or so dominated by the state that a private entrepreneur would find it difficult to create a financially sustainable publication or broadcast outlet?
- Is it possible for independent publications or broadcast outlets to remain financially viable primarily by generating revenue from advertising or subscriptions?
- Do foreign investors or donors play a large role in helping to sustain media outlets?
- Are private owners subject to intense commercial pressures and competition, thus causing them to tailor or cut news coverage in order for them to compete in the market or remain financially viable?

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