

VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS

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Attacks Against the U.S. Press

- U.S. Press Freedom Trackers documents press freedom violations, including cases of arrests, physical harm, denials of access to information, and the search or seizure of equipment.
- 193 attacks reported in 2020 so far — an increase from recent years
- The rate of attacks against journalists is currently on the rise in many places across the globe, and particularly during protests and demonstrations.



Offline and Online Violence

- Violence against journalists is correlated to rhetorical attacks against journalists in elite discourse.
- Scholars and advocates worry that Trump's actions serve to vilify journalists and incite public attacks against them.
- Because the U.S. has long been viewed as a bastion of press freedom, this sets a dangerous example for other countries.
- Reporters Without Borders' most recent World Press Freedom Index ranks the United States at number 45 of 180 countries.



Violence Against Journalists Abroad

- Violence against journalists is even more prevalent and pernicious in some places outside of the United States, such as the Middle East and Latin America.
- It is estimated that more than 800 journalists around the world have been killed on the job during the last 10 years. (This is likely an underestimate.)
- The disappearance of Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi has become a terrible symbol of the need to increase protections for journalists worldwide.
- The most frequent targets of violence are TV and freelance journalists.



Attacks Against Female Journalists

- Women in journalism are even more susceptible to violence than their male counterparts, particularly online.
- Gendered online violence includes acts like cyber-bullying and online harassment, targeted toxic attacks, copycat accounts and other forms of misrepresentation, threatened sexual violence, and violations of digital security and online privacy.
- Female journalists and journalists belonging to minority ethnic groups are more likely to face online harassment. And when they do, the attacks are more personal.



Key Takeaways:

- Journalists across the world face physical, mental, and emotional violence — both online and offline — as a result of doing their jobs.
- Violence against journalists is especially acute in countries where freedom of the press is less protected than in the United States, but it remains a problem in the U.S. as well.
- Offline violence against journalists is correlated to rhetorical attacks against journalists in elite discourse. Because the United States has long been viewed internationally as a bastion of press freedom, the anti-journalist behavior and rhetoric of recent years has set a dangerous example for other countries.
- Women in journalism are even more susceptible to violence than their male counterparts, particularly online.