

# LIST OF MEDIA RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY JOURNALIST SAFETY INDICATES (JSIS), MAY 2018 TO APRIL 2019

The media violations are categorised by the Journalist Safety Indicators. Other notable incidents are media violations recorded by the IFJ in its violation mapping.

\*Other notable incidents are media violations recorded by the IFJ. These are violations that fall outside the JSIs and are included in IFJ mapping on the South Asia Media Solidarity Network (SAMSN) Hub - [samsn.ifj.org](http://samsn.ifj.org)

## AFGHANISTAN

**JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 12 (Journalists: 5, Media staff: 7. Male: 12, Female: 0)**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS: 8**

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: None recorded**

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 61 (Journalists: 52; Media staff: 9)**

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 3**

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 3**

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 26**

### JOURNALIST KILLINGS

**June 4, 2018: Helmand**

Unknown gunmen attacked the Helmand National Television and killed its security guard.

**July 22, 2018: Kabul**

Mohammed Akhtar, 31, a driver for Agence France Presse, was on his way to work when he was killed in a suicide bombing near Hamid Karzai International Airport. The attack targeted supporters of Afghan Vice President, Abdul Rashid Dostum, there to welcome him on his return from exile. In total, 25 people died in the attack which was claimed by the Islamic State.

**August 10, 2018: Ghazni**

Mohammad Dawood Anwari, a technician at State-run broadcaster Radio Television Afghanistan, was killed in a Taliban attack on the provincial capital of Ghazni, about 150 km from Kabul. Fierce fighting for four days left about 100 policemen and 20 civilians dead. About 200 insurgents were also killed in the battle.

**September 5, 2018: Kabul**

Reporter Samim Faramarz and cameraman Ramiz Ahmadi, of TOLO News, were killed while reporting at the scene of an earlier suicide attack. The second blast was believed to have been targeted at first responders of the initial bombing which targeted a wrestling event in Kabul. In total, 25 people were killed in the twin attacks and a further 80 were injured.

**October 13, 2018: Takhar**

Photojournalist M Asif Hakimi was killed in a blast that claimed the lives of 22 people when a motorcycle bomb was detonated at the campaign rally of a local politician. With Afghanistan due to hold parliamentary and district council elections on October 20, election-related attacks surged from the registration of candidates and commencement of voting in July. At least eight candidates and many other civilians were murdered in attacks.

**October 18, 2018: Kandahar**

Mohammad Saleem Angar, photographer with the Kandahar branch of Radio Television

Afghanistan, was killed in an attack on the police chief of Kandahar, General Abdul Raziq. The Taliban-claimed attack took place in the governor's compound during a high-level official meeting. Angar, along with others, was killed in the cross-fire.

**December 4, 2018: Nangarhar**

Engineer Zalmay, director and owner of Enikass radio and TV stations was kidnapped at 5pm during a shopping trip. He was taken by armed men who arrived in an armoured vehicle. His driver was shot and taken to hospital where he later died. Zalmay was later released on April 10, 2019. No group claimed responsibility for the kidnapping and killing of the driver.

**January 5, 2019: Farah**

Jawed Noori, 27, a local radio host was executed by suspected Taliban insurgents in an attack in Nadarabad district of Farah province in south-western Afghanistan. Noori was travelling in a car with relatives that was stopped at a checkpoint. After being identified as a journalist, he was taken aside and killed.

**February 6, 2019: Takhar**

Shafiq Aria, and Rahimullah Rahmani, both in their 20s, were killed by unknown armed men in the office of Radio Hamsada in the northern Takhar province city of Taluqan. Two unidentified gunmen entered the office building on false pretences and shot and killed the two journalists. Four arrests were made in connection with the murders.

**March 15, 2019: Khost**

Sultan Mahmood Khairkhan, a journalist working for Zan TV in Khost province, died after sustaining lethal injuries in an attack by unidentified armed men. Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) claimed responsibility for the killing.

### NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

**May 6, 2018: Kabul**

Independent investigative reporter Naimatuallah Taneen was attacked by an unknown group for his new reports about corruption.

**May 12, 2018: Nangarhar**

Safullah Osmani, Islamic Programs Operator for Elham TV, was injured in shotgun fire early in the morning as he was going to the mosque in the Teachers town area.

**May 18, 2018: Nangarhar**

Safaa Radio Director, Qarar Azizi, was injured in a mine blast in a cricket field in Jalalabad. Mobarez Atal, a technician and reporter for Safaa Radio was also injured.

**June 3, 2018: Kabul**

Mirza Hafezi, photographer for Wolesi Jerga TV;

Sayeed Ali ina Zafari, political programs operator on Wolesi Jerga TV; and a Wolesi Jerga TV driver were entering the MOFA road for an interview in Zanaq square when they were confronted by a policeman.

**June 5, 2018: Takhar**

Milli TV Takhar province reporter Merajuddin Sharifi was beaten up by the head of the community after a verbal disagreement.

**June 11, 2018, Ghor**

*Saam Weekly* Director, Nadeem Ghori, had his office attacked by a local force, destroying its cultural heritage.

**June 19, 2018: Kabul**

Karim Amini, a Tolo News Reporter, and Mujeeb Mashal, a *New York Times* reporter, were insulted by the guards of the president during a visit to the President of Helmand's peace caravan.

**June 24, 2018: Herat**

Abdul Karim Azeem, reporter with Nedaye Agaah Reporting Agency, and Najeeb Marzban, a Shamshad TV reporter, were verbally assaulted while covering a rally in Herat.

**July 2, 2018: Ghazni**

Faisal Naweed, a 1 TV reporter, and Jamshid Ahmady, a Bakhtar News Agency reporter, were beaten by National Security Staff when they arrived to report at the Public Health Directorate.

**July 3, 2018: Baghlan**

Noorgul Andarwal, reporter with Passban TV, was threatened by a Baghlan official for publishing a report.

**July 10, 2018: Herat**

Farhad Joya, reporter with 1 TV, was confronted by unidentified gunmen who allegedly planned to attack and shoot the reporter.

**July 10, 2018: Pakhtiya**

Hekmat Niazi, reporter with Shamshad TV, was verbally assaulted after publication of a report on a disagreement between two ethnic groups.

**July 11, 2018: Ghazni**

Rahmatullah Nikzad, reporter with *Al Jazeera*, was verbally assaulted by special security personal in Ghazni.

**July 11, 2018: Kabul**

Reshad Zareer, a political program announcer on Noor TV, was attacked by unidentified gunmen and sustained injuries in the attack.

**July 26, 2018: Kabul**

While in the area of an explosion, National security forces blocked access to Pazhwok News Agency reporters Zainullah Mahboobi and Jaweed Hamdard and beat the pair up.

**August 1, 2018: Kabul**

Abdul Moshred Kohistani, reporter for Maaref TV, was beaten by hospital security guards while writing a report.

**August 11, 2018: Ghazni**

During a Taliban offensive, ten reporters from various media outlets in the province were threatened. This included Farif Omari, director of Ghaznavian TV.

**September 3, 2018: Balkh**

Mostafa Moheb, a director of Meher TV, was beaten up by an unknown group.

**September 5, 2018: Kabul**

Reporters Hussain Rastee Manesh and Ahmad Khalid Nikzad, Photographer Ahmad Sier Yonesi for Khurshid TV were injured in a suicide attack in Western Kabul. Ahman Farhang, reporter with 1 TV and Jamshid Ahmady, reporter with Maiwant TV were also injured. The attack was targeting media and emergency services responding to an initial attack.

**September 27, 2018: Faryab**

Ayoob Amini, reporter with Ayeena TV, was beaten by national security officers.

**September 30, 2018: Balkh**

Bakhtar director of News Agency, Laal Mohamma, was verbally assaulted by police and denied access to the Balkh governor's office.

**October 10, 2018: Nangarhar**

Elhamuddin Elham, director of Haqeeqat Radio, was threatened by unidentified gunmen after a bomb exploded near his home.

**October 20, 2018: Kabul**

Samiulhaq Patman, a reporter with Ekhlis Turkey News Agency, was returning from an interview on the way to the office when he was beaten up by unidentified gunmen.

**October 20, 2018: Balkh**

Officials of the election commission insulted and prevented photographer Sayed Sameem Sadaat of Afghan Voice News Agency from photographing parliamentary election proceedings.

**October 20, 2018: Kapisa**

Abdul Fatah Fayez, of Radio Resalat, was physically assaulted by a candidate for filming of alleged fraud.

**October 30, 2018: Kabul**

Zameer Quraishi, a Melli TV Announcer, was attacked on his way to his office in the fifth district of Kabul by unknown gunmen and was wounded in the attack.

**November 5, 2018: Ghazni**

Sayed Wahdat Abdali, of Bakhtar News Agency, was threatened by the Taliban to quit the media. This was following the assault of Ghazni by the Taliban.

**November 7, 2018: Zabul**

Anwarulla Anwari, reporter with Bakhtar News Agency, was arrested and beaten for

publishing a report on police corruption.

**November 12, 2018: Badghis**

Abdul Razaq Sediqui, director of Sameem Radio, was insulted by a local governor for photographing children in dilapidated school.

**November 25, 2018: Kabul**

Haseebullah Noori, a Killid Radio reporter, was physically assaulted by protesters during a marching campaign.

**November 26, 2018: Kabul**

Haseebullah, a reporter with Kurshid TV, was physically assaulted by protesters during the marching campaign.

**December 4, 2018: Balkh**

Mewise Bezhana, a reporter with Voice of America, was physically assaulted by police on Jawzhan highway.

**December 10, 2018: Kabul**

Haroon Panah, a technician with Tolo TV, was returning home from work when unidentified gunmen physically assaulted him.

**December 14, 2018: Uruzgan**

Esmat Sahar, broadcast manager with Dahrawood Radio, was attacked when ANA soldiers entered the station without permission.

**December 27, 2018: Kabul**

Wesal, a Kabul News TV reporter, was shot at and his camera damaged by guards during a public protest in front of the Pakistani embassy.

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS****June 11, 2018: Ghor**

Local militants entered the *Saam* monthly office and museum and destroyed the premises.

**August 10-11, 2018: Ghazni**

During the Taliban offensive on Ghazni, Taliban insurgents attacked radio station Melli TV Ghazni and set fire to an antenna. They also attacked Ranaa Radio and set fire to an antenna and broke down the door of Samaa Radio, entered the station and destroyed its equipment. Ghaznavian radio TV was also attacked and destroyed.

**August 25, 2018: Kandahar**

Police shut down Emerge Media's media office for unknown reasons and Emerge Media Director, Faheem Atal, was threatened by police.

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS****October 16, 2018: Afghanistan**

In the lead up to the elections the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan refused to issue "coverage cards" to give reporters access to cover polling stations. Provincial journalists said that electoral officials had not only refused to grant the cards but treated them with contempt and ordered them to go to Kabul to get the required permissions.

**December 22, 2018: Nooristan**

Unidentified gunmen attacked the Alina radio station and set an antenna on fire.

**December 27, 2018: Herat**

Unidentified gunmen attacked radio station Nedaye Sobh in the Ghorian district of Herat.

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*****ARREST/DETENTIONS****July 25, 2018: Kabul**

Borhan Marzi, reporter with Noorin TV, was illegally detained by police and released after 17 hours. He alleged he had been beaten in custody.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION****May 22, 2018: Ghazni**

Reporters in Ghazni complained to local authorities about the lack of access to information.

**May 19, 2018: Badakhshan**

Reporters in Badakhshan complained to local authorities about the lack of access to information.

**May 20, 2018: Daikundi**

Daikundi reporters complained to local authorities about the lack of access to information.

**June 5, 2018: Herat**

Khalil Amirir, a Faryaad TV director, was threatened with murder due to non-payment of taxes to the Taliban.

**June 11, 2018: Kandahar**

Twelve reporters and photographers from different media outlets in Kandahar were prevented from covering the president's visit to Kandahar. The Mubarak Trustees and the president's press team blocked the reporters to take Mubarak's pictures.

**June 20, 2018: Uruzgan**

Local authorities refused to give information to Najib Latif, a reporter for Shamsha TV.

**October 20, 2018: Balkh**

Meerwais Bezhana, a reporter for Voice of America; Habib Najahi Zada, a reporter with 24 TV; Waheed Orya, a reporter with *Salaam Watandar*; and Raheema Yazdani, a reporter with Afghan Voice News Agency, faced obstacles due to lack of access to information on parliamentary election day.

**November 21, 2018: Ghazni**

Journalists Asaduullah Jalalzai, of BBC; Muhammadullah Mominzada, of Aryana News; and Asef Hussaini, of Voice of America; were not permitted to cover the important summit meeting at the governor's office.

**December 5, 2018: Badakhshan**

Reporters from various media outlets complained of lack of access to information by local authorities.

## BANGLADESH

**JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 2 (Male: 2, Female: 0; Journalist: 2)**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS: 0**

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: 0**

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 13**

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 1**

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0**

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 3**

### JOURNALIST KILLINGS

**June 11, 2018: Kalkadi**

Shahjahan Bachchu, the publisher of Bishakha Prokashoni and acting editor of *Amader Bikrampur* was attacked as while visiting a local pharmacy. Four hooded youths detonated a bomb adjacent to the building and then proceeded to drag Shahjahan onto the street to shoot him. He died at the scene.

**August 28, 2018: Pabna**

Suborna Nodi, 32, the Pabna correspondent for Ananda TV and a journalist for the *Daily Jagroto Bangla* newspaper, was hacked to death at the door of her home in the Northern town of Pabna. Nodi's murder was alleged to be the outcome of a family feud, according to the victim's family members and investigators. A murder case was filed against Nodi's ex-husband and six others, all were arrested. The case is still under investigation.

### NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

**July 22, 2018: Kushita**

Mahmudur Rahman, editor of *Amar Desh* daily, was brutally attacked by a mob of more than 100 people appearing to be associated with the Bangladesh Chhatra League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League. Rahman had been confined to the courthouse despite having been granted bail for a defamation case over fears of the mob which awaited him outside. When he finally left, he and his car were attacked; he then sought shelter in an advocate's room where he was beaten. Fearing reprisals, he decided not to treat his injuries in a local hospital and flew to Dhaka. The case was linked to alleged defamatory remarks about former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2017.

**August 5, 2018: Dhaka**

More than a dozen journalists covering mass demonstrations by student protesting for safer roads were attacked by unidentified men in helmets and carrying sticks and metal rods. The attacks were part of a broader crackdown on media and dissent during the street protests.

### THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

**June 1, 2018: Dhaka**

*Daily Star's* website was blocked for almost 18 hours following an order from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission after publishing a story related to the alleged killing of Teknaf Municipal Councillor Akramul Haque.

### OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*

#### ARREST/DETENTION

**August 5, 2018: Dhaka**

Photojournalist Shahidul Alam, 63, was arrested and detained by police for making allegedly 'provocative' posts on Facebook concerning ongoing student protests in the city. A group of plain clothed people identifying themselves as detectives at 10:30pm stormed into Shahidul's apartment. Building CCTV cameras were broken, the intercom connection of the building was disconnected and the men forcibly removed him in a van. Alam was released on bail November 21, 2018. He has been charged under Bangladesh's ICT Act and, if convicted, faces 14 years in jail.

#### REGULATIONS

**September 19, 2018: Dhaka**

Telecommunication and Information Communication Minister, Mustafa Jabbar, cleared the Digital Security Bill, 2018 for immediate passage and the 350-member parliament passed the bill by voice votes with only 11 lawmakers. The proposed law has been criticized for its draconian provisions that could impact free speech.

**October 15, 2018: Dhaka**

Bangladesh's Cabinet endorsed the restrictive Broadcasting Bill under the provisions of which media outlets would be punished with a maximum of seven years jail and a fine of BDT 50 million (USD 588,000) for publishing material "harmful to the country's history and image, public interest or law and order". The legislation also included the establishment of a broadcasting commission, which would be responsible for licenses and monitoring media content. The draft bill was approved simultaneously with a draft Mass Media Employees (Services and Conditions) Bill which redefined journalists as 'mass media employees', taking them out of the purview of the Bangladesh Labour Law, 2006.

## INDIA

**JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 4 (Journalists: 4;**

**Media staff: 0; Male: 4, Female: 0)**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS: 4**

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: 0**

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 30**

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 1**

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 3**

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 14**

### JOURNALIST KILLINGS

**June 14, 2018: Jammu & Kashmir**

Shujaat Bukhari, editor of the *Rising Kashmir* newspaper, was shot dead outside his office by unidentified gunmen. He was in his car with security guards who were also killed in the attack. He had previously survived multiple murder attempts and had been provided police protection since 2010. No group so far has claimed responsibility for the killing. Police later claimed that Lashkar-e-Taiba commander, Naveed Jatt, was among three prime accused shot dead in a gun battle.

**October 30, 2018: Chhattisgarh**

Achyutananda Sahu, a video journalist for state-owned Doordarshan, was killed in crossfire during a shoot-out between police and Maoist rebels. Sahu was embedded with local police at the time. Two other embedded media workers in the group escaped unscathed.

**October 30, 2018: Jharkhand**

Chandan Tiwari, a reporter for Aaj News, was found unconscious in the jungle. Tiwari later died in hospital. He previously lodged two complaints over threats he had received to the police.

**December 8-9, 2018: Jharkhand**

The body of Amit Topno, 35, an Adivasi journalist who had been covering the Pathalgadi movement over tribal land rights, was found on the Namkum-Doranda road near state capital Ranchi. He had been shot at point-blank range. Topno was working with the media company Newscode and was also a community correspondent of Video Volunteers.

### JOURNALIST KILLINGS - ACCIDENTAL

**July 23, 2018: Kerala**

Whilst on assignment to cover the conditions of a relief camp during the Kerala flood, locals rescued the bodies of bureau chief KB Sreedharan, cameraman Abhilash S Nair and ferryman Abhilash. It is understood they had possibly been swept away by a strong current. Their bodies were found a day later on July 24.

### THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS

**May 25, 2018: New Delhi**

Journalist Ravish Kumar, of NDTV, alleged a high frequency of abusive calls and death threats over a month period. This included a video message from an ex-CISF soldier threatening to shoot him in his office. Another person claimed to be from the extreme Hindu right-wing group Bajrang Dal in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, had also sent details of his residential address, the route he takes from home to office, threatening to kill him and rape the women in his family. He noted that most of them were not anonymous trolls, but had been emboldened by the lack of consequences, to step up the intimidation.

**May 27, 2018: New Delhi/New York**

A group of UN Special Rapporteurs called on the Government of India to protect journalist Rana Ayyub and investigate online threats posing a real risk to her life. Ayyub had received threats of rape and sexual violence after the release of her book *The Gujarat Files: Anatomy of a Cover-up* in 2016, which detailed the anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002. The experts included the Special Rapporteurs for extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard; human rights defenders, Michel Forst; promotion and protection the right to freedom of opinion and expression David Kaye; freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed; and violence against women, Dubravka Šimonović.



Indian journalist and photojournalist protest in Kolkata against the 2018 attacks on journalists in Bangladesh during the student movement on August 8. CREDIT: DIBYANGSHU SARKAR / AFP

#### October 3, 2018: Bihar

Amit Bhelari, a journalist with *The Telegraph*, based in Patna, received death threats for reporting on Lalu Prasad Yadav, chief of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). A caller from an identified number used foul and abusive language and threatened to shoot him dead. Bhelari filed a police complaint and investigations were launched.

#### March 7, 2019: New Delhi

Attorney of India General K K Venugopal threatened to invoke the Official Secrets Act, a relic of British colonial rule, against *The Hindu* for publishing an expose on the Rafale defence deal which the government claimed was based on allegedly stolen documents.

### NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

#### June 7, 2018: West Bengal

TV journalists Astik Chatterjee, of ABP Ananda, and Barun Sengupta, of 24Ghanta, were severely beaten with iron rods and sticks by goons affiliated with the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC). The journalists were reporting a murder allegedly committed during a TMC faction fight. One journalist was dragged into a room and doused with petrol and was almost set on fire before being rescued by local residents.

#### July 30, 2018: Punjab

Two journalists for News18 TV Sandeep Kumar and Neeraj Bali suffered injuries after being surrounded by a mob that attacked them and damaged their video equipment while they were investigating illegal mining. Police failed to respond to their calls for 30 minutes and only took action after the reporters went to make a complaint about the incident to the Deputy Superintendent of Police.

#### October 11, 2018: Jammu and Kashmir

Personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) beat up two reporters, Fayaz Lulu and Deen Imran, with national TV channels Munisif and Aalmi Sahara. The pair were beaten while covering clashes over the killing of Hizb commander, Manan Wani in Anantnag.

#### October 16, 2018: Kerala

Following the Supreme Court allowing women of all ages to worship at the Sabarimala shrine, women journalists were targeted. Pooja Prasanna, of Republic TV; Saritha Balan, of The News Minute; Radhika Ramaswamy, of CNN-News 18; and Maushumi Singh, of India Today; came under mob attack as tension prevailed throughout the duration of the shrine's opening. On January 3, 2019, Shajila Abdulrahman of Kairali TV suffered massive blows from protesters, but kept the camera rolling through the attack. She was hospitalised with neck injuries.

#### October 17, 2018: Jammu & Kashmir

Around ten journalists were beaten up by security forces while covering a shoot-out between security forces and militants in Fateh Kadal area of Srinagar. According to eyewitnesses, police attacked the journalists for taking photos of the scene, as senior officers looked on.

#### October 18, 2018: Jammu and Kashmir

A joint team of Jammu and Kashmir police and Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) beat three journalists and detained them for about 30 minutes in the Nawab Bazar area of Srinagar city. The three journalists working with a local news portal were outside their office in Nawab Bazar when the forces party attacked them and took them away in a Rakshak vehicle.

#### October 29, 2018: Jammu and Kashmir

Aijas Ahmad Dar, a journalist with Zee News, was injured during clashes between protesters and government forces following a cordon and search-operation (CASO) in Meemandar village, of south Kashmir's Shopian district. Dar and his colleague, both wearing press jackets, held up their hands and identified themselves as media persons, but were not spared in the clash.

#### January 21, 2019: Jammu and Kashmir

Waseem Andrabi, of the *Hindustan Times*, was hit in the face and hands by pellets, while three other photojournalists Nasir ul Haq, of *Rising Kashmir*; Junaid Gulzar, of *Kashmir Essence*; and Mir Burhan, of ANI; were also injured when security forces fired pellets and tear gas shells to disperse protesters. Demonstrators were protesting against the killing of three local militants in south Kashmir's Shopian district.

#### February 2, 2019: Chhattisgarh

Four BJP functionaries beat journalist Suman Pandey who was working with a local website Voices, in Raipur. Pandey was attacked by BJP Raipur president, Rajiv Agarwal; Vijay Vyas and Dina Dongre after recording a scuffle that had ensued between party workers at an event venue. His footage was deleted after his phone was snatched away, and party workers proceeded to beat him up. Police arrested four people after Pandey filed an FIR. But they were immediately released on bail. Upon their release, the culprits went back to the dharna venue and roughed up protesting journalists.

#### April 18, 2019: Jammu and Kashmir

Junaid Bazaz, correspondent with the *Kashmir Reader* was assaulted by a mob while covering polling in Mir Behri polling booth in Srinagar

parliamentary constituency. Polling agents and supporters of a particular party grabbed Bazaz by the collar and attempted to trample upon him after they suspected him of recording a video the incident of intimidation and threats to election staff. He was rescued from the mob by security forces.

## THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

### March 11, 2019: Meghalaya

The Meghalaya High Court held the editor, Patricia Mukhim, and publisher, Shobha Chaudhuri, of Shillong Times, to be in contempt of the court for a report on the judgement of the court regarding retirement facilities for judges. They were imposed a fine of Rs 200000 each with the fine to be paid in a week. If not paid, they were liable for six-month imprisonment and the newspaper 'banned', the court ordered. Mukhim and Chaudhuri obtained a stay in the Supreme Court of India on the Meghalaya High Court order.

## ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

### August 1, 2018: New Delhi

Punya Prasun Bajpai and Milind Khandekar, editors at ABP News, resigned after the proprietor's attempts to dumb-down Bajpai's TV show Master Stroke which was considered anti-government. Milind Khandekar, managing editor, also resigned. ABP had begun experiencing government pressure, as well as withdrawal of advertising, leading the network to block the broadcast on a government satellite network which Bajpai labelled as censorship.

### August 29, 2018: New Delhi

As many as 297 workers from the Press Trust of India (PTI) were made redundant. According to reports, all but 52 of the group's non-journalist staff were terminated. PTI management claimed that maintaining financial viability was the motive behind the decision. On October 1, employees and union held sit-in protests at PTI centres across the country. On November 27, the retrenchments were halted by the Delhi High Court on the grounds that the move did not follow the required rules of retrenchment. The decision was a result of a petition filed by the Federation of PTI Employees Union.

### October 3, 2018: Tripura

*Daily Desher Katha*, the second largest circulated daily in Tripura had its registration cancelled due to a change in leadership. The newspaper termed it as undue political influence. On October 10, the Tripura High Court stayed the de-registration and allowed the newspaper to resume publication.

## OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*

### ARREST/DETENTION

#### August 27, 2018: Jammu & Kashmir

Aasif Sultan, assistant editor of *Kashmir Narrator*, was arrested, hand-cuffed and illegally detained for six days and questioned about stories published for his magazine. After concerns were raised by local journalist unions, Sultan was presented to court on September 1 but continues to remain in custody over an alleged involvement in militancy-related activities. Police seized his laptop, cell phones and other documents.

Sultan's family and colleagues claim the allegations of militancy were fabricated by police.

#### October 21, 2018: Chhattisgarh

Three journalists were detained by the Chhattisgarh Police for eight hours in Narayanpur in Bastar district without any specific charges. Siddhartha Roy, with *The Diplomat*, freelance journalist Kamal Shukla, and video journalist Bhushan Choudhari were covering the run-up to the state Assembly elections slated for November 12. They claimed that despite showing the police their identity documents, they were hauled off to the local police station, made to switch off their phones and not allowed to speak to anyone. Their equipment was confiscated and the police copied their camera's memory card before returning it. The police claimed that they had taken the journalists to the station as part of their "regular check-ups" ahead of the elections and held that this did not qualify as detention.

#### November 27, 2018: Manipur

Kishorechandra Wangkhem, anchor and sub-editor for Information Service Television Network, was arrested on "charges of misusing social media with the intention of inciting public mischief". Wangkhem posted four videos on Facebook criticizing the state government and terming the chief minister a "puppet" of the BJP government at the centre. He has been detained for one year under the National Security Act, which allows for detaining a person considered to be a "threat to public order" or the security of the state for up to one year without framing formal charges in court or even conducting a trial. He was released on April 10, 2019 on orders of the Manipur High Court.

## REGULATIONS

#### July 14, 2018: Jammu & Kashmir

Auqib Javed Hakim, a journalist for *Kashmir Observer*, was ordered to New Delhi for questioning by India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) regarding an alleged connection to a sedition case filed against a Kashmiri separatist leader, as well for his past interviews and stories.

#### October 8, 2018: Maharashtra

Mohd. Hizbullah and Divyesh Singh, journalists for *India Today*, were labelled by political group Sanatan Sanstha as terrorists for reporting their involvement in bomb blasts in 2008. The political group posted images on their website depicted the two men as terrorists and asking members of the public to inform the police if they sighted the pair. An official complaint was lodged against the Sanstha and journalists' organizations condemned this attempt to intimidate the media.

## HARASSMENT

#### October 2018: India

Over several days, women journalists came out with stories of sexual harassment and abuse at the hands of senior editors and publishers. At least two newspapers launched investigations, while *Hindustan Times'* chief of Bureau and political editor, Prashant Jha, stepped down from management roles. Seven women wrote to the *Times of India* with allegations of sexual misconduct against its Hyderabad resident editor, KR Sreenivas, for unwanted touching, explicit messages and sexual propositions. Another seven

female journalists went on record accusing former journalist and editor and now Minister of State for External Affairs, M J Akbar, of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour during his time in the media. After further pressure, Akbar resigned as minister but is pursuing a defamation case against a woman journalist. Many other journalists followed in the wake of the stories to name other reporters and editors with accusations of sexual misconduct.

#### November 29, 2018: Tamil Nadu

Two French journalists, Arthur Ronald Rene and Jules Daimen, were charged for entering the high security zones of Indian Rare Earths (IRE) Limited at Manavaalukurichi and videographing areas where beach sand minerals were being mined and processed by a unit owned by the Indian government. The two French nationals had left the country before the cases of trespass and violating visa regulations were registered. However, two local journalists Ananth Kumar and M Sriram were illegally detained and questioned on grounds of abetting the crime.

#### January 29, 2018: Jammu & Kashmir

Six journalists were blocked entry into Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar by the security wing of the police as they attempted to cover a Republic Day function. The journalists were prevented from entering the stadium despite carrying passes issued by the Information and Public Relations department.

## NEPAL

### JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 0

### THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF

### JOURNALISTS: 2

### OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: 0

### NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 14

### THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0

### ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0

### OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 7

## THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS

#### July 22, 2018: Udayapur

Bidur Katuwal, a journalist and the joint secretary of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) for Udayapur district, was threatened by the mayor and vice-mayor of Triyga Municipality as well as a Provincial Assembly member regarding a report.

#### September 29, 2018: Pokhara

Journalist Jamal Paudel Athak was threatened regarding news about fraud. Paudel received threatening phone calls from an anonymous caller.

## NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

#### June 6, 2018: Kathmandu

A group of seven members from the All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU) entered the headquarters of news portal hamrakura.com. The group demanded the website remove all news regarding MP and ANNSFU chairperson, Nabina Lama, and remained at the offices for more than half an hour.

#### July 18, 2018: Karnali

LB Devkota, a journalist for *Kantipur* daily, and Prakash Upadhyay, a journalist for AP1 TV,



Nepalese journalists and photojournalists holding a candlelight vigil condemning the killing of journalists in Afghanistan, in Kathmandu. Afghanistan's slain journalists were remembered on World Press Freedom Day on May 3, days after the deadliest attack on the country's media since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. CREDIT: BIKASH KARKI / AFP

were attacked by police whilst covering clashes between police and demonstrators at a protest concerning a hunger strike. Police attempted to snatch the journalists' cameras and harass them. Both journalists sustained minor injuries.

#### July 21, 2018: Kathmandu

Five journalists were attacked by Nepal police officers while covering clashes between police and demonstrators near Kathmandu's parliament. Ajaya Babu Shiwakoti, editor of hamrakura.com and general secretary of NPU; Maheshwor Gautam, of *Rajdhani* daily; Nivesh Kumar, of News24 TV; Skanda Gautam and Prabin Maharjan, both of *The Himalayan Times*, were all victims of the attack.

#### August 5, 2018: Rupandehi

Three journalists were attacked by a mob of students organizing a protest over the death of a fellow student at the Universal College of Medical Sciences. Radheshyam Biswokarma, a journalist with Buddha TV and Butwal Today; Salman Khan, a journalist with *Annapurna Post*, and Deepak Ghimire, of *Khabar* weekly; were victims of the attack during which protesters also damaged the journalists' equipment.

#### August 9, 2018: Parbat

Two journalists, Chhabilal Tiwari and Om Prakash Gayal, were attacked by local construction businessman Puskal Sharma. Gayal was injured in the attack and Sharma's clothes were torn. The motive behind the attack was unclear.

#### November 9, 2018: Rukum

Lokendra Khanal, a reporter for *Nagarik* daily newspaper, was attacked by about a dozen

knife-wielding cadre of the ruling Nepal Communist Party on his way to a religious ceremony. Khanal sustained head injuries and required stitches.

## OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*

### ARREST/DETENTION

#### September 10, 2018: Lalitpur

Editor-in-chief of the *Khojtalash* weekly newspaper was arrested on cybercrime charges that related to a news report concerning the pressuring of lawmakers to illegally sell government-owned factory land. Basnet's wife claimed that the police refused to take him to hospital in relation to an ongoing illness. He was charged under the Electronic Transaction Act, 2008.

#### November 27, 2018: Kathmandu

Editor for online news outlet postpati.com, Gopal Chand, was arrested under Nepali cyber law for publishing news about a co-chairman of the ruling party. The Central Intelligence Bureau arrested Chand for spreading false information relating to an attack on former Prime Minister and co-chairman of the ruling communist party, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, by a member of the public.

#### December 13, 2018: Kathmandu

Police arrested Barsha Shah, a photojournalist for *Deshanchar.com*, as she was taking pictures of protesters at the president's residence. The protesters were handing over a crowdfunding toy car as a symbolic protest against the government's decision to purchase an expensive luxurious bullet-proof car. Police arrested Shah despite identifying herself as a photojournalist and showing her press card. Nepal Police

maintained she was in a prohibited zone but the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Phadindra Prasai, apologized for the police misbehaviour, releasing her after three hours.

### CENSORSHIP

#### May 15, 2018: Mustang/Kathmandu

Nepali media were barred from covering Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Muktinath temple and Mustang and ceremonies in Kathmandu. Despite the fact that the Indian media and other foreigners had access to the event, Nepali media were refused entry.

#### June 2, 2018: Morang

Dinesh Giri, editor for *nirantarkhabar.com* and treasurer of the Morang Branch of the Nepal Press Union, was called out of his house and attacked by three assailants over unspecified news coverage. Giri sustained head and back injuries and was taken to hospital. Bishal Thapa was arrested whilst the two other assailants Jagen Gurun and Chitra Khadka remain at large.

#### June 12, 2018: Kathmandu

Minister for Communication and Information Technology, Gokul Prasad Baskota, allegedly ordered state-run Nepal Television to shut down the program after its host, Raju Thapa, questioned the minister for his alleged dishonesty in accounting his personal expenses on June 9. Three days after the incident, the 12-year running show was cancelled.

#### November 11, 2018: Kathmandu

The Nepali government withheld the decision of the meeting of the Council of Minister from the media. The *Kathmandu Post* reported that the Cabinet hid their decisions to avoid immediate

public backlash and legal challenges from the Supreme court.

## LEGISLATION

**August 17, 2018: Kathmandu**

Nepal's Criminal Code Act 2018 replaced 15 laws, including 55-year-old civil and criminal laws. Some provisions of the Act were noted as being restrictive to the press freedom and criminalizing expression. Section 293 of the Act prohibits listening or recording conversations without consent; Section 294 prohibits publicizing private information without consent; Section 295 prohibits taking photos without consent; Section 296 prohibits selling or publishing of photos for commercial purpose without the consent of the subject in the photographs; Section 298 prohibits receiving or sending or publishing unauthorized information on an electronic medium; Section 305 prohibits slander; and Section 306 prohibits libel, including those in satirical ways.

## MALDIVES

**JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 0**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS: 0**

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 0**

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: 0**

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0**

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 1**

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 1**

## ATTACKS ON INSTITUTIONS

**August 8, 2018: Male**

Maldives Broadcasting Commission fined Raajje TV for 2 million MVR (130,000 USD) for live broadcasting a politician's speech from an opposition demonstration. The speech was deemed defamatory toward the Maldivian President and a threat to national security. The MBC didn't specify which speech during the broadcast had violated the law. *Raajje TV* had to pay the fine within 30 days or risk losing its broadcast license; and could only appeal the decision once the fine is paid. *Raajje TV* viewed the move as an obstructionist attack on its broadcasting.

## OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*

### CENSORSHIP

**September 12, 2018: Male**

The joint opposition issued a statement expressing concerns over reports that several international journalists had visa applications to cover the presidential elections rejected. The Election Commission responded stating that 11 out of 37 applications for visas by foreign journalists had been rejected on account of insufficient documentation. Strict requirements were then set for foreign journalists wanting to cover the presidential elections including deadlines, application for business visas with a Maldivian sponsor, completion of a 'vetting form' including details of employment, travel history and qualifications, as well as a police certificate. In August 2018, the Immigration Department issued a press release stating that the elections were open to monitoring by foreign media but warned that foreign journalists would be subjected to "punitive measures" should they report on the elections without the appropriate visa.

## PAKISTAN

**JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 4 (Journalist: 4;**

**Media staff: 0; Male: 3, Female: 0)**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS: 0**

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: 3**

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 3**

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0**

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0**

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 3**

## JOURNALIST KILLINGS

**April 30, 2019: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

Aman Ullah Gharro, a senior Pakistani journalist, was killed by unknown bikers who opened fire on him in the jurisdiction of University Police Station near Lunda Sharif.

**August 23, 2018: Punjab**

Muhammad Abid, a journalist with *Daily Sagemail*, died after being attacked by two men. Tahir Hussain and Muhammad Imran targeted Abid for exposing their alleged involvement in drug trafficking. Abid sustained serious head injuries as a result of the attack and later died in hospital.

**October 16, 2018: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

After breaking a story on a local drug cartel, journalist Sohail Khan was shot dead. Khan had just left the District Police Office after filing a police-protection application relating to multiple death threats when he was shot several times.

**December 3, 2018: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

Noor ul Hassan, of Royal News TV, was killed and cameraman Sabir was injured in an attack in Peshawar. Two gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire on the moving car carrying the journalists to Hassan's hometown of Nowshera. The journalists were taken to a nearby hospital where Hassan died. Police investigated the incident as a targeted killing.

## OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

**June 5, 2018: Pakistan**

Major General Asif Ghafoor, a spokesperson for Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies, accused journalists Ammar Masood, Fakhar Durrani, Umar Cheema, Azaz Syed and Matijullah Jan of sharing anti-state remarks on social media at a press conference. Ghafoor stated that the Inter-Services Intelligence agency was monitoring anti-state and anti-military 'internet trolls' and those who engaged with them, including journalists.

**June 21, 2018: Lahore**

The home of Marvi Sirmed, a journalist and correspondent for *Daily Times*, was ransacked while she and her family were away. Two laptops, a smartphone and passports were taken among other travel documents. This was seen as part of a broader campaign to intimidate journalists as well as influence reporting in the lead-up to the 2018 Pakistan election.

**June 27, 2018: Pakistan**

*Dawn* published an editorial lamenting the government's campaign of censorship against Pakistani media beginning in late 2016. The editorial claimed that the attacks on *Dawn* had escalated since May 2018, including actions such

as distribution of the paper being halted in multiple areas. *Dawn* claimed that efforts intensified as a reprisal against the publication of an interview with former PM, Nawaz Sharif, in which he criticised the military.

## NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

**June 5, 2018: Lahore**

British-Pakistani journalist Gul Bukhari's vehicle was intercepted in a military-controlled area, whilst on her way to Waqt TV studio. She was abducted by unidentified men in plainclothes. She was held for three hours and later was able to return home safely. Bukhari is a vocal critic of the military.

**June 6, 2018: Lahore**

A senior journalist for BOL TV network Asad Kharal was driving home when he was intercepted by masked assailants, dragged out of his car and assaulted. He went to hospital for treatment for injuries sustained on his neck.

**August 1, 2018: Lahore**

Unidentified gunmen fired shots at the house of Imran Khan, a TV anchor at Express News TV in Lahore.

## OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*

### ARREST/DETENTION

**July 13, 2018: Punjab**

Kadafi Zaman, a journalist for Norwegian station TV 2, was arrested and beaten by police while covering a political rally. He was released three days later but faced multiple criminal charges ranging from attempted murder to tearing a police uniform

**September 24, 2018: Lahore**

The Lahore High Court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Cyril Almeida, an assistant editor of *Dawn*, regarding an interview with former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in relation to an ongoing trial against him for treason. Almeida was required to attend the next hearing on the treason case and was barred from international travel.

**December 16, 2018: Pakistan**

2000 media workers for the Jang Group of Newspapers were fired without warning after the paper unexpectedly shut down five newspapers across Pakistan. The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) estimated total job losses to be around 2500.

## SRI LANKA

**JOURNALIST KILLINGS: 0**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS: 3**

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS: 1**

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS: 9**

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 0**

**ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: 1**

**OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\*: 2**

## THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS

**July 25, 2018: Colombo**

The Minister for Sustainable Development,



Pakistani police try to stop journalists during a rally to mark World Press Freedom Day in Islamabad on May 3, 2018. CREDIT: AAMIR QURESHI / AFP

Wildlife and Regional Development, Sarath Fonseka, threatened news editor of Neth FM radio, Hemantha Kahawalage, after he refused to comply a request to take down an article. The report concerned links between criminals and an anonymous senior minister.

#### November 20, 2018: Sri Lanka

Since the beginning of the constitutional crisis in Sri Lanka, members of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association (SLWJA) have received threats for speaking out against impunity and advocating journalists' rights. The Federation of Media Employees' Trade Union (FMETU) said developments in the constitutional crisis represented a serious threat to media freedom and democracy in the country.

#### December 13, 2018: Colombo

Supporters of the United National Party (UNP) gathered outside the state-owned Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited (ANCL), after a Supreme Court's ruling that the dissolution of parliament by President Maithripala Sirisena was unconstitutional. A group of UNP supporters gathered outside Lake House offices, demanding posters placed on the building wall supporting former President Mahinda Rajapaksa be removed. They also insisted that the management of Lake House be returned to the UNP following the ruling. Police intervened and removed the UNP supporters. Newsrooms at Lake House were earlier targeted and editorial staff harassed following the controversial appointment of Rajapaksa as the new Prime Minister by Sirisena on October 26, 2018.

### OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

#### November 20, 2018: Colombo

Sri Lanka's government transferred police

inspector Nishantha Silva from the post of investigating suspicious deaths of journalists during the regime of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa. Rajapaksa had recently been declared Sri Lanka's prime minister against the will of parliament and the design of the constitution.

### NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

#### November 28, 2018: Colombo

Several journalists were attacked while attempting to cover the court appearance of Chief of Defence staffer Ravindra Wijegunaratne. Photojournalists and camera crew were attacked by several men who arrived on motorcycles and ordered them not to take photographs of Wijegunaratne as he left court. Wijegunaratne's security detail assaulted Indika Handuwala, a photojournalist for the *Sunday Morning* newspaper, as he attempted to take a photograph of the accused; an officer was then detained by police. Wijegunaratne is accused of protecting a naval intelligence officer who allegedly murdered 11 young men in 2009. Wijegunaratne had personally assaulted a reporter over a news report in 2016.

#### February 19, 2019: Jaffna

Nadarajah Kugaraj, of DAN TV, was assaulted and threatened by the Acting OIC of Kopai police station. He was admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital with injuries.

### ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

#### October 26, 2018: Colombo

Newsrooms of the state-owned media in Sri Lanka including *Daily News*, *Dinamina* and *Silumina* were targeted and editorial staff harassed following the appointment of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa as the new

prime minister by President Maithripala Sirisena on October 26, 2018. A mob of members belonging to a union associated with the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna Unions entered the newsroom and threatened several others, forcing them to leave the premises.

### OTHER NOTABLE INCIDENTS\* CENSORSHIP

#### August 28, 2018: Colombo

A novel, radio drama and stage play came under attack for allegedly containing anti-Buddhist remarks and "offensive" language. The Office of National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) headed by former president, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, was forced to amend the titles of several episodes of a radio drama after monks and other religious organizations labelled some episodes as anti-Buddhist and an insult on the religion. The performance certificate of the play *Mama Kelin Minihek*, directed by Asanka Sayakkara, was also revoked by the Public Performance Board and was only allowed to be reinstated after some of its 'anti-Buddhist' dialogues were changed.

#### October 5, 2018: Jaffna

*Demons in Paradise*, a film by Jude Ratnam exploring the violence of the Sri Lankan Civil War, was cut from a Jaffna film festival by organisers after pressure from a sectarian group known as the 'Community'. The film won Best Film award at the Film South Asia 2017 festival in Kathmandu.

# JOURNALISTS DETAINED IN SOUTH ASIA

## (MAY 1, 2018 – APRIL 30, 2019)

The IFJ has documented cases of 24 journalists detained or jailed in South Asia in the period from May 2018 to April 2019.

Most notable is the significant drop in the number of journalists detained or jailed compared with the previous reporting period. Between May 2017 and April 2018, the IFJ recorded 68 detentions or jailings of journalists, with a drop of nearly 70 percent for this reporting period. The biggest drop has been in the Maldives which recorded 11 arrests in 2017-18 and none in 2018-19. This is largely linked to the shifting political climate in the Maldives which saw the exit of the previous government. Pakistan and Nepal also saw sharp declines in the number of arrests compared to 2017-18.

India bucked this regional trend, however, with more journalists jailed in the period. India has seen an increasing number of journalists arrested over their use of social media, raising serious concerns about freedom of expression in the online space. Journalists in Jammu and Kashmir were targeted, most evident in the illegal detention and arrest of Aasif Sultan in August.

The sharpest decline was in the number of journalists detained for 24 hours or less, which is a positive shift away from the intimidatory practice. Nepal's previous high number of arrests and detentions around the country's election schedule dropped in the period from 19 in 2017-18 to 4 in 2018-19.

The arrest of Shahidul Alam in Bangladesh in August under the draconian ICT Act captivated the region and the world and saw journalists across South Asia protest in solidarity demanding his release. Solidarity continues in his case across South Asia with calls for the draconian charges to be dropped.

### TOTAL JAILED OR DETAINED:

Currently in jail: 4  
Detained for more than one week: 6  
Detained for less than a week: 7  
Detained for one day or less: 7  
Women jailed: 1

### TOTAL JAILED OR DETAINED BY COUNTRY IN SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan: 1  
Bangladesh: 6  
Bhutan: 0  
Nepal: 4  
India: 8  
Maldives: 0  
Pakistan: 5  
Sri Lanka: 0

### JAILED JOURNALISTS - CURRENTLY IN JAIL

#### BANGLADESH

**Name:** Azharul Huq Islam  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 9/03/19  
**Job:** Journalist with *Daily Jugantor*  
**Location:** Nawabgunj, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Azharul Haq is one of five journalists accused in a case under the Digital Security Act, 2018, filed by a local ruling party leader, Md Polash, with Dohar police station.  
**Status:** Currently in jail.

**Name:** Mehedi Hasan Mithu  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 06/03/19  
**Job:** Journalist with *Daily Jugantor*  
**Location:** Ashulia, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Mehedi Hasan Mithu is one of five journalists accused in a case under the Digital Security Act, 2018, filed by a local ruling party leader, Md Polash, with Dohar police station.  
**Status:** Currently in jail.

**Name:** Shamim Khan  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 11/03/19  
**Job:** Journalist with *Daily Jugantor*  
**Location:** Dhamrai, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Shamim Khan is one of five journalists accused in a case under the Digital Security Act, 2018, filed by a local ruling party leader, Md Polash, with Dohar police station.  
**Status:** Currently in jail.

#### INDIA

**Name:** Aasif Sultan  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 27/8/18 (illegally held in police lock-up until formally announced arrested on 31/8/18)  
**Job:** Assistant editor *Kashmir Narrator*  
**Location:** Srinagar, Kashmir, India  
**Accusation:** Charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, an anti-terror law which has come under sharp criticism for curtailing freedom of expression. He had featured a story in July 2018, on the second anniversary of the death of the young Kashmiri militant Burhan Wani, a killing that sparked months of strife on the streets.  
**Status:** Currently in jail.

### JOURNALISTS JAILED FOR MORE THAN ONE WEEK

#### BANGLADESH

**Name:** Shahidul Alam  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 5/8/18  
**Job:** Freelance photojournalist and activist  
**Location:** Dhaka, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Alam was arrested under the ICT Act for making allegedly false and provocative statements on Al-Jazeera television as well as his Facebook during student protests.  
**Status:** Released on bail on November 20, 2018.

**Name:** Abu Zafar  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 19/02/19  
**Job:** Journalist with *Daily Jugantor*  
**Location:** Keraniganj, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Abu Zafar, the Keraniganj correspondent of *Daily Jugantor* and also general secretary of Keraniganj Press Club, was the second journalist to be arrested under the Digital Security Act, 2018. He is one of five journalists accused in a case filed by a local ruling party leader, Md Polash, with

Dohar police station.

**Status:** Released on bail on March 26, 2019.

#### NEPAL

**Name:** Gopal Chand  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 27/11/18  
**Job:** Editor of online newsportal postpat.com  
**Location:** Kathmandu, Nepal  
**Accusation:** Chand was arrested under the Electronic Transactions Act by the Central Intelligence Bureau of the Nepal police after the portal published allegedly 'fake news' about an attempted attack on former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.  
**Status:** Released on bail on December 14, 2018.

#### PAKISTAN

**Name:** Nasrullah Chaudhry  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 12/11/18  
**Job:** Journalist with *Nai Baat* (Urdu)  
**Location:** Karachi, Pakistan  
**Accusation:** Chaudhry was detained by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) under the Anti-Terrorism Act, pertaining to "printing, publishing, or disseminating any material to incite hatred, and offer support and hold meetings for a proscribed organisation".  
**Status:** Released on bail on November 28, 2018.

#### INDIA

**Name:** Abhijit Iyer-Mitra  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** 23/10/2018  
**Job:** Independent commentator and columnist  
**Location:** New Delhi, India.  
**Accusation:** in September 2018 was ordered to be arrested by police in Odisha, after a Twitter post which allegedly ridiculed the iconography of some of the state's most revered temples. Iyer-Mitra was granted bail but went on to cast slurs against the elected legislators of Odisha. On October 23, a month after the initial arrest warrant was issued, Iyer-Mitra was taken in to custody from his home in Delhi by Odisha police, on the additional charges of breach of legislative privilege.  
**Status:** Iyer-Mitra walked free on December 6, 2018, after all charges were dropped.

## INDIA HAS SEEN AN INCREASING NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS ARRESTED OVER THEIR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, RAISING SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE ONLINE SPACE.

**Name:** Kishorechandra Wangkhem

**Gender:** Male

**Detained:** Arrested and detained twice. The first arrest was made on November 26, 2018 and the second preventive detention was on November 27, 2018.

**Job:** Anchor and sub-editor at Information Service Television network (ISTV)

**Location:** Imphal, Manipur, India.

**Accusation:** In August 2018, Wangkhem had posted videos on Facebook criticizing the ruling party in Manipur which is also leading the government at the centre. He was charged on August 9, 2018, under sections 505(2) and 506 of the IPC related to disturbing communal harmony. After he was charged under the draconian sedition law, he was arrested on November 21, but was granted bail on November 26, 2018. He was remanded to preventive detention for one year under the draconian National Security Act on November 27.

**Status:** In relation to the first arrest, Wangkhem was released after 10 days. Following the second arrest on November 27, he was released on April 10, 2019 on orders of the Manipur High Court dated April 8, 2018.

### JOURNALISTS DETAINED FOR LESS THAN ONE WEEK

- Zafarullah Achakzai, Pakistan, 25/6/18
- Kadafi Zaman, Pakistan, 13/7/18
- Aqib Javed Hakim, India, 14-15/7/18
- Raju Basnet, Nepal, 10/9/18
- Hedait Hossain Mollah, Bangladesh, 01/01/2019, released on 03/01/2019
- Rizwan Razi, Pakistan, 9/2/2019, released on 10/2/19
- Arjun Giri, Nepal, 15/4/2019, released on 18/4/2019

### JOURNALISTS DETAINED 24 HOURS OR LESS

- Borhan Marzi, Afghanistan, 25/7/18
- Siddhartha Roy, India, 21/10/18.
- Kamal Shukla, India, 21/10/18.
- Bhushan Choudhari, India, 21/10/18
- Ananth Kumar, India, 28/11/18
- M.Sriram, India, 28/11/18
- Barsha Shah, Nepal, 13/12/18

### ARREST WARRANTS

- Cyril Almeida, Pakistan, 24/9/18



Aasif Sultan, assistant editor with *Kashmir Narrator* magazine was picked up from his home on the night of August 26-27, 2018 on suspicion of harbouring militants. Five days later, he was produced in court in handcuffs and charged under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. He remains in jail. CREDIT: FAISAL KHAN