



# STATES OF CONTROL: COVID, CUTS AND IMPUNITY

SOUTH ASIA PRESS FREEDOM REPORT — 2019-20

# JOURNALISTS DETAINED IN SOUTH ASIA

## (MAY 1, 2019 – APRIL 30, 2020)

The IFJ documented cases of 50 journalists detained or jailed in South Asia from May 2019 to April 2020.

In Afghanistan, ten journalists were arrested or detained for short periods for crimes such as criticism of government or alleged links to the Taliban but most were released within hours after the intervention of media advocacy groups, unions and the joint committee on government and media. In the period, 30 journalists were detained for 24 hours or less, highlighting issues of threat and intimidation to silence journalist reporting in the region.

India again was the region's leader in detention and incarceration of journalists for longer periods, with ten journalists detained or jailed in the year, compared to eight the previous year, including the ongoing incarceration of Asif Sultan from 2018. Concerningly, a large number of journalists continued to be charged for sharing content on social media platforms, with an overwhelming majority of cases relating to politicians or political media coverage.

Four journalists currently remain behind bars in the region; two in Bangladesh, one in India and one in Pakistan. The case of Pakistan's Mir Shakil-ur-Rehman remained in news headlines in March and April 2020. The editor-in-chief of the Jang and Geo Media Group was arrested on March 12 on a case dating back 34 years.

Bangladesh still sits on a critical watch list for the IFJ with six journalists detained or in continuing incarceration in the period.

Detainment and arrests increased drastically in Nepal, from four the year prior to 24 in the current period. This was largely a result of police propensity to round up and detain journalists at protests.

Of the 50 detained, at least 10 journalists were released on bail. Nasrullah Chaudhry, who was arrested in Karachi on allegations of carrying journals and booklets about Afghan Jihad and the Punjabi Taliban on December 11, 2019, was acquitted by the Sindh High Court on April 9, 2020.

### TOTAL JAILED OR DETAINED:

Currently in jail: 4  
Detained for more than one week: 14  
Detained for less than one week: 4  
Detained for one day or less: 30  
TOTAL: 52  
(Women jailed: 1)

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

Afghanistan: 11  
Bangladesh: 3  
Bhutan: 0  
Nepal: 23  
India: 10  
Maldives: 0  
Pakistan: 3  
Sri Lanka: 1

### JAILED JOURNALISTS – CURRENTLY IN JAIL

#### BANGLADESH

**Name:** Abul Asad  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** December 13, 2019  
**Job:** Editor, *Daily Sangram*  
**Accusation:** Asad was arrested for describing an executed opposition leader convicted for war crimes as a “martyr” in a Bengali-language newspaper published on December 12. The article referred to Abdul Quader Molla, who was hanged over crimes committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence. When the article was published, Hatirjheel Police Station filed a case against Asad under the Digital Security Act.  
**Status:** Currently in jail.

**Name:** Ariful Islam  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained Date:** March 13, 2020  
**Job:** Journalist, *Bangla Tribune*  
**Location:** Kurigram, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Islam was charged and convicted with alleged possession of

450ml of liquor and 100g of hemp by a mobile court after a midnight raid. The court sentenced him to one year in prison and a fine of BDT 50,000 (USD 560).

**Status:** Currently in jail.

#### INDIA

**Name:** Asif Sultan  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** August 27, 2018 (Sultan was held in police lock-up from August 27 until being formally arrested on August 31)

**Job:** Assistant editor, *Kashmir Narrator*

**Location:** Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Accusation:** Sultan was charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, an anti-terror law which has come under sharp criticism for curtailing freedom of expression. The journalist was charged for publishing a feature 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.

#### PAKISTAN

**Name:** Mir Shakil-ur-Rehman  
**Gender:** Male

**Detained:** March 12, 2020  
**Job:** Editor in chief, Jang & Geo Media Group

**Location:** Karachi, Pakistan

**Accusation:** Rehman was arrested following an investigation by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) into allegations that a property he purchased 34 years prior had been bought illegally. Jang & Geo Media Group is one of the largest media groups in Pakistan and is famous for its critical investigations of Pakistani politicians.

**Status:** In solitary confinement in a NAB facility. Yet to be formally charged.

### JOURNALISTS JAILED FOR MORE THAN ONE WEEK

#### BANGLADESH

**Name:** Mohammad Abdul Kaium,  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** May 12, 2019  
**Job:** Editor, *Mymensinghlive*  
**Location:** Mymensingh District, Bangladesh  
**Accusation:** Kaium, a journalist and IT professional, was arrested

for illegally carrying US dollars and dealing in currency exchange. He was detained after he allegedly received US currency for a provided IT service to a client who was a relative of a member of parliament for the ruling Awami League. He was charged with digital/electronic fraud and for publishing or sending of offensive, false or fear inducing or defamatory information.  
**Status:** Released on bail on July 3, 2019

#### INDIA

**Name:** Anuj Shukla (M) & Ishita Singh (F)

**Detained:** June 8, 2019

**Job:** Journalists, Nation Live News

**Location:** Uttar Pradesh, India

**Accusation:** Shukla and Singh were arrested for sharing a video on Twitter which was deemed to defame the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath. The video contained claims made by a woman against the minister.

**Status:** Released on bail on June 19, while Shukla was released on bail on July 21.

**Name:** Qazi Shibli

**Gender:** Male

**Detained:** July 25, 2019

**Job:** News editor, *The Kashmiriyat*

**Location:** Kashmir, India

**Accusation:** Shibli was arrested after tweeting an official order regarding the deployment of paramilitary troops across the Kashmir region that allegedly leaked crucial details about imminent troop movements in Jammu and Kashmir. He was charged under the Public Safety Act.

**Status:** Released on April 23, 2020.

**Name:** Santosh Jaiswal

**Gender:** Male

**Detained:** September 6, 2019

**Job:** Journalist, *Jansandesh Times*

**Location:** Uttar Pradesh, India

**Accusation:** Arrested for taking photos and videos of children mopping floors at a local primary school in Uttar Pradesh on September 6 and sending them to police to bring to notice the illegal practice. Jaiswal was arrested over accusations of “extortion and obstructing public servants from doing their duty”.

**Status:** Released on bail on November 20, 2019.

**Name:** Zubair Ahmed

**Gender:** Male

**Detained:** April 27, 2020



**IN THE PERIOD, 30 JOURNALISTS WERE DETAINED FOR 24 HOURS OR LESS, HIGHLIGHTING ISSUES OF THREAT AND INTIMIDATION TO SILENCE JOURNALISTS REPORTING IN THE REGION.**

**Job:** Freelance journalist  
**Location:** Andaman, India  
**Accusation:** Freelance journalist Zubair Ahmed is arrested and taken to Aberdeen police station for his tweet asking why a family has been put under quarantine for a phone call with Covid-19 quarantine patients. Police charged Zubair under the Disaster Management Act for obstruction, disobedience and the publishing of information that may cause alarm to the public.  
**Status:** Released on bail on April 28, 2020

## NEPAL

**Name:** Khem Thapaliya  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** August 10, 2019  
**Job:** Editor-in-chief, *Jaljala*  
**Location:** Kathmandu, Nepal  
**Accusation:** Police arrested Thapaliya for alleged involvement in the outlawed Chand-led Nepal Communist Party after the party was declared a criminal outfit by the government and all its activities banned in March 2019.  
**Status:** Released on August 26, 2019.

**Names:** Rabi Lamichhane & Yubaraj Kandel  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** August 15, 2019  
**Job:** Journalists, News24  
**Location:** Chitwan, Nepal  
**Accusation:** Lamichhane and Kandel were arrested for their alleged connection to the suspicious death of journalist Shalikram Pudasaini, who was found hanging in a hotel of Chitwan on August 5. The journalist had accused them and others for the suicide in a video that was said to be taken by Pudasaini before killing himself.  
**Status:** Released on bail on August 26, 2019.

**Name:** Om Bahadur Hamal  
**Gender:** Male

**Detained:** August 23, 2019  
**Job:** Editor, *Janasanchar.com*  
**Location:** Pokhara, Nepal  
**Accusation:** Charged with sedition for allegedly supporting the banned Communist Party of Nepal led by Netra Bikram Chand.  
**Status:** Released on September 10, 2019.

**Name:** Jitendra Maharjan  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** April 9, 2019  
**Job:** Editor, *Nhugu Jwojoloppa*  
**Location:** Kathmandu, Nepal  
**Accusation:** Police arrested and charged Maharjan under crimes connected to state and organised crime. He was alleged to have close relations with the Netra Bikram Chand-led Communist Party of Nepal, which was branded a criminal outfit by the government in March 2020.  
**Status:** Released on bail on April 30, 2019

## PAKISTAN

**Name:** Azhar-ul Haq Wahid  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** January 16, 2020  
**Job:** Reporter, Channel Five TV & *Khabrain*  
**Location:** Karachi, Pakistan  
**Accusation:** Wahid was detained for criticising the Pakistani government for comments on Facebook, that were alleged to be 'anti-state' and defamatory, including comments against former military general Pervez Musharraf. He was also accused of sharing an offensive version of Pakistan's national anthem on social media.  
**Status:** Released on bail on March 26, 2020.

**Name:** Nasrullah Chaudhry  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained:** December 11, 2019  
**Job:** Journalist, *Nai Baat*  
**Location:** Karachi, Pakistan  
**Accusation:** Chaudhry was arrested on the allegations of carrying

journals and booklets about Afghan Jihad and the Punjabi Taliban. The items were said to include materials that help sow disharmony on sectarian grounds and motivate people to take part in jihad. The charge-sheet alleged Chaudhry had links with al-Qaeda leader Khalid Mukshi.  
**Status:** Acquitted by the Sindh High Court on April 9, 2020.

## SRI LANKA

**Name:** Mohammed Rizvi Maharroof  
**Gender:** Male  
**Detained Date:** May 27, 2019  
**Job:** Journalist  
**Location:** Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka  
**Accusation:** Maharroof was arrested on suspicion regarding the possession of 326 CDs alleged to contain sermons and other publicity material of the National Thowheed Jamath, which was accused of carrying out the Easter Sunday attacks in April 2019.  
**Status:** Released on bail after one week.

## JOURNALISTS DETAINED FOR LESS THAN ONE WEEK

- **Gawhar Safi (M), 08-10/4/20, Kunar Province, Afghanistan:** Arrested for criticizing the Kunar governor's office about its use of the of the 'anti-corona' budget. Released after intervention from media advocacy groups.
- **Prashant Kanojia (M), 08-11/06/19, Uttar Pradesh, India:** Arrested for sharing a video deemed as 'defaming' the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, on Twitter. Released on bail.
- **Ghulam Jeelani Qadri (M), 24-25/06/19, Kashmir, India:** Arrested for alleged involvement in terrorist and disruptive activities 27 earlier linked with his news agency JAK News. Released on bail.
- **Rahul Kulkarni (M), 14-16/04/20, Osmanabad, India:** Arrested over a report on the recommencement of trains in Bandra after it allegedly prompted mass gathering of migrants during the Covid-19 lockdown. Released on bail.

## JOURNALISTS DETAINED 24 HOURS OR LESS

- **Nine (9) journalists detained together at a protest in Dhanusha, Nepal – 12/06/19 –** RN Biswas (M), Shyam Sundar Yadav (M), Baidhanath Yadav (M), Nabin Kumar Gupta (M), Bhusan Kumar Singh (M), Bindu Yadav (M), Dharmapal Raut (M), Gopal Gupta (M), Parish Karna (M).
- **Asadullah Samim, Paktika, Afghanistan, 23/07/19 (M)**
- **Sajan Saud, Pokhara, Nepal – 02/08/19 (M)**
- **Nine (9) journalists detained together at a protest in Kathmandu Nepal – 16/09/19 –** Ram Prasad Dahal (M), Ajaya Babu Shiwakoti (M), Janmadev Jaisi (M), Yam Prasad Sharma (M), Min Bam (M), Dilip Paudel (M), Chakra Kuwar (M), Yogendra Balayar (M), Prakash Bahadur Bam (M).
- **Six (6) journalists from Taleem-ul-Islam radio arrested for alleged links to the Taliban in Farah, Afghanistan, 25/09/19 –** Noorul Haq Mazhari (M), Bismillah Amini (M), Habibullah Amini (M), Abdul Qahar Hanif (M), Abdullah Taeb (M), Mohammadullah Imran (M).
- **Abdul Rahim Sekandari, Khost, Afghanistan, 02/10/19 (M)**
- **Habib Kamran, Khost, Afghanistan, 02/10/19 (M)**
- **Kamran Yousuf, Kashmir, India – 16/02/2020 (M)**
- **Gawhar Safi, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 08/04/20 (M)**



## MEDIA RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA BY JOURNALISTS' SAFETY INDICATORS (JSI) MAY 1, 2019 – APRIL 30, 2020

IFJ-SAMSN violations monitoring is undertaken by the IFJ Asia-Pacific, together with IFJ affiliates in South Asia. IFJ mapping provides specific categorisation of violations of journalists' rights across the region by UNESCO Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSIs). These indicators are further categorised by IFJ classifications.

### SOUTH ASIA VIOLATIONS BY JOURNALIST SAFETY INDICATORS (JSIS)

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 19
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 80
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 65
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 16
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 35
  6. ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 4
- TOTAL: 219 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**

#### \*\* IFJ INDICATORS:

- A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 52
- B. ATTACKS/THREATS AGAINST FREELANCERS: 2
- C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 81
- D. DEFAMATION CASES/THREATS: 4
- E. DISAPPEARANCES: 2
- F. GENDER-BASED ATTACKS: 8
- G. LEGAL CASES: 3
- H. LEGISLATION/GOVERNMENT CONTROLS: 8
- I. ONLINE ATTACKS/INTERNET SHUTDOWNS: 9

**Notes:** Internet shutdowns for the purpose of monitoring are recorded as an attack on the media. Intimidation and harassment are considered as threats to journalists. The shutdowns recorded here indicate those where IFJ has issued statements. A more detailed listing of shutdowns is recorded on the IFJ Shutdown Listing. Arrests and jailing are listed under threats to journalists but further detailed under the IFJ indicators above.

## AFGHANISTAN

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 11
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 19
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 25
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 6
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 5
- TOTAL: 66 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**

#### \*\* IFJ INDICATORS:

- A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 11
- C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 48
- F. GENDER-BASED ATTACKS: 5

### THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS

**May 9, 2019: Puli Khumri (C)**

Ismail Sadat, from Sima radio, is threatened by armed men.



Mina Mangal, parliamentary adviser and former journalist is shot dead on May 11 in Kabul on her way to work. Mangal received death threats for months before her murder. CREDIT: AIJA

**May 19, 2019: Takhar (C)**

Irfan Bazgar and Shafiqullah Poya journalists of Salam Watandar radio and Khorshid TV are threatened by the provincial commander of Takhar for sharing news without coordination with the commander.

**July 6, 2019: Uruzgan (C)**

Fazal Ahmad Basharmal and Sardar Wali Samsoor, radio reporters with Paiwastoon Ghag, are threatened by the Taliban.

**July 7, 2019: Ghazni (C)**

Ramizullah, manager of Samaa radio, is threatened by the Taliban.

**November 5, 2019: Baghlan (C)**

Adiburahman Fazli, a publisher at a local television station in the Baghlan province is threatened by unknown armed men.

**December 2, 2019: Logar (C)**

Matiullah Sarwar, manager of Paiwand Milli radio, is threatened by Shahpor Hasanai, a member of parliament from Logar.

**December 7, 2019: Uruzgan (C)**

Sharifullah Sharafat, reporter with Azadi radio, is threatened by local scholars for publishing a report about an unregistered madrassa in Uruzgan province.

**December 15, 2019: Nangarhar (C)**

Hamid Ahmadi, a reporter with Enekaas Radio Television, is threatened by the Taliban. Local officials provided temporary security.

**January 18, 2020: Badghis (C)**

Sayed Abdul Rahim, editor-in-chief of Haniza Radio, is threatened by unidentified men. A protection plan is put in place.

**January 18, 2020: Kabul**

Najib Payman, the editor-in-chief of radio and television channel Music Afghanistan, receives threats over the telephone.

**January 27, 2020: Farah (C)**

Mohammad Ibrahim, a reporter for Uroj TV;

Ahmad Shah Fikrat, editor-in-chief of Dunya Radio; and Hamidullah Hamidi, editor-in-chief of Neshad Radio receive death threats over the telephone.

### OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

**May 15, 2019: Semangan (C)**

Abdul Rahman Saeed, a journalist with Shahrwand radio in Samangan province, is insulted by the assistant governor.

**June 18, 2019: Kabul**

Photographer and comedians Naweed Nayel, Qudratullah and Qais, of Maiwand and Khorshid TV, are beaten by the locals of Mir Bacha Kot district of Kabul after they were accused of insulting and humiliating a number of elders in a program.

**July 4, 2019: Nangarhar (C)**

Mikael Farooqi, a reporter for the Farhat news agency, is assaulted and threatened by police soldiers while trying to film. While trying to film a protest at the Pakistan embassy, a police soldier grab the journalist and deletes his images and footage. He is also prevented from interviewing visa clients.

**July 11, 2019: Takha (C)**

Journalists are prevented from entering a prison in Takhar province during a prison strike. Prison authorities say this is to prevent injuries.

**July 23, 2019: Herat (C)**

A publisher for Baran radio, Asadullah Samim, is arrested by the National Directorate of Security (NDS).

**July 23, 2019: Balkh (C) (F)**

Rahima Yazdani, a reporter for the Afghan Women Awareness Association (AWAA), is insulted by the head of Salam Telecommunications and a company guard. She directs her complaint to the crime management office.

**August 4, 2019: Kabul**

Reporter Omid Nabizada and videographer Nawid

Muhammadi, of 8AM News Press, are insulted by the president's protection service on the first day of election campaigning in Loya Jarga.

#### **August 20, 2019: Zabul (C)**

Abdul Qayom Ajez, a reporter in Zabul, is insulted and humiliated by the director of women's affairs.

#### **August 31, 2019: Kabul**

Members of the media are insulted by Roohullah Ahmadzai, a spokesperson of the ministry of defence.

#### **September 3, 2019: Samangan (C)**

Journalists are verbally abused by guards of the vice governor office, who is also head of the Afghanistan Journalists' Protection Committee.

#### **September 14, 2019: Kandahar (C)**

Faiz Muhammad and Qudratullah Rezwan, of Warangi local radio, are insulted by unknown people.

#### **September 25, 2019: Farah (A) (C)**

Six employees of Taleem-ul-Salam radio station are arrested by National Directorate of Security (NDS) forces on charges of alleged links to the Taliban. Twelve computers, nine telephones and three recorders are searched. They are released after 12 hours with no charges laid or evidence found.

#### **September 28, 2019: Parwan (C)**

Maqbool Noori, a reporter from Salam Watandar radio, is insulted and humiliated by the brother of the head of the provincial assembly.

#### **September 29, 2019: Helmand (C)**

Journalists Abdul Aziz Safdari (Sheen Hawa news agency), Sefatullah Zahidi (Salam Times), Abdullah Hamim (Tolo News), Rafiullah Pashton (Zhwandon TV), and Abdul Wali Tawhidi (Melma local radio) are insulted by the chief of police of Helmand Province.

#### **October 2, 2019: Khost (A) (C)**

Abdul Rahim Sekandari, a reporter for Salam Watandar, and Habib Kamran, a reporter for Sahar news, are arrested by National Directorate of Security (NDS) forces on charges of weakening the system and insulting the president.

#### **November 7, 2019: Takhar (C)**

Najeebullah Nazari, manager of Maahe Naw TV, is insulted during an address by the governor.

#### **December 6, 2019: Balkh (C)**

Yaqoob Azorda, a reporter from Tamadon TV, is insulted by the director of Balkh University.

#### **March 12, 2020: Kabul**

Zahra Rahimi, a reporter for Tolo News, is insulted by local police in the second police district.

#### **March 12, 2020: Samangar (C)**

Local radio reporters Shamsudin Merzai, Slahudin Bawar and Mahboob Al Rahmani Sahi, are insulted by local government officials.

#### **April 8, 2020: Kunar (A) (C)**

Gawhar Safi, the editor-in-chief of Zula Radio, is arrested by National Directorate of Security (NDS) forces under the orders of the Kunar governor for criticizing his performance on the use of the anti-Corona budget.

## **NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS**

#### **May 13, 2019: Faaryab (C)**

Muhammad Ayub Amini, a photographer at Ayena TV, is beaten by members of National Directorate of Security (NDS) forces.

#### **May 25, 2019: Jalalabad (C)**

Imran lemar, a journalist of Mazal local radio station, is injured by unknown assailants and is admitted to hospital intensive care with serious injuries.

#### **June 2, 2019: Kabul**

Journalists Jawed Kargar and Muhammad Faseh Motawakkel of Peshgo news agency and Killid radio station, are wounded while reporting on an attack for which ISIS claimed responsibility. The perpetrators were killed in an operation by security forces.

#### **July 4, 2019: Nangarhar (A) (C)**

Michael Farooqi, a reporter of Farhat news agency, is beaten and insulted by the police. Farooqi is arrested but the case is dismissed.

#### **August 28, 2019: Uruzgan (C)**

Reporter Muhammad Nasim Watandost is beaten by a soldier for the national army in Uruzgan.

#### **August 30, 2019: Kabul**

Farid Toghri, of Uzbek News at Noor TV, is beaten in Kabul. The attackers are arrested.

#### **September 27-29, 2019: National – Afghanistan (C)**

At least three journalists are attacked during the fourth round of Afghanistan's presidential elections held on September 28. Rahmatullah Nikzad, a reporter for Al Jazeera TV, is injured when a bullet hit him in his leg in Ghazni province on September 27, a day before the election. Abdul Rahman Hamad, of Kawoon Ghag Radio, is wounded in an attack on September 28 in Baghlan province. On September 29, journalist Maqbol Noori, of Salam Watanda is threatened verbally attacked and his phone confiscated.

#### **November 7, 2019: Kabul**

Jamshed Yama Amin, the manager of Keshwar news agency, is beaten by a police officer while preparing a report on an election rally.

#### **November 30, 2019: Lashkar Gah, Helmand (C)**

A roadside bomb seriously injures Sardar Mohammad Sarwari, a reporter with Shamshad TV, who is travelling in a military convoy from Lashkargah to Marjah. Sarwari sustains severe injuries to his head and leg from a Taliban attack on the convoy. Sardar is one of three civilians injured in the attack. Two security officials are also killed.

#### **December 11, 2019: Faryab (C)**

Qutbudin Kohi, a reporter from the Pajhwak news agency, is kidnapped by the Taliban near Faryab-Andkhoy highway.

#### **January 1, 2020: Takhar (C) (F)**

Musamat Arezo, a reporter for Berlik Radio, is allegedly raped by Mohammad Ehsan. Authorities are investigating the case.

#### **January 1, 2020: Nangarhar (C)**

A police officer beats and insults five journalists in Nangarhar province.

#### **January 7, 2020: Herat (C)**

Sunam Nikzad, the host of local TV entertainment program, is injured and police open an inquiry into the case. Sonam Nikzad, was stabbed by two motorcyclists when he left the university at 8 am and tried to cross the public road. The perpetrators fled. The case was pursued by the police.

#### **January 18, 2020: Paktia (C)**

A group of journalists from Shamshad TV, headed by Delsouz Safi, are abducted by anti-government militants. Local police and intelligence agency officers intervene to rescue the journalists.

#### **January 18, 2020: Herat (C) (F)**

Female journalists lodge a complaint about lack of security and gender discrimination in a letter to the Afghanistan Federation of Journalists. An inquiry is instigated.

#### **January 27, 2020: Kabul**

Fazal Haq Haydari, a program officer at Maaref TV, is threatened over the phone.

#### **February 12, 2020: Kabul**

Zabihullah Jahanmal and Bahis Mujadadi, reporters for Tolo TV, are insulted and their recorded videos are forcibly deleted by a guard commander from Afghanistan's finance ministry.

#### **March 5, 2020: Parwan (C)**

A group of journalists for various media outlets are forced to leave the office of Shah Wali Shahed, a deputy for Parwan governor. Shaye Qasimi. A freelance journalist is directly insulted by the Parwan governor.

#### **March 5, 2020: Ghor (C)**

Reporters in the province are insulted by members of the health department of the province.

#### **March 6, 2020: Uruzgan (C)**

Sharifullah Sharaft, a reporter for Radio Azadi, receives a death threat from local mullahs.

#### **March 6, 2020: Kabul**

Kabul News TV's reporter Mansour Nikmal and cameraperson Najim Sultani are wounded when members of the Islamic State attack a commemorative event in Kabul when the ceiling at the program venue collapses after IS gunman open fire in the hall. At least 32 people were killed and another 58 civilians wounded in the attack.

#### **March 8, 2020: Kunduz (C)**

Noor Rahim Atif, editor-in-chief of Kaihan Radio in Kunduz province, is kidnapped nearly 10 km from the city by the Taliban.

#### **March 8, 2020: Zabul (C)**

Mohammad Esa Qalamyar, reporter for National TV, is abducted by the Taliban. He is released the following night.

#### **March 12, 2020: Kunduz (C)**

Noor Rahim Ateef, editor-in-chief of Kayhan Radio, is abducted by the Taliban and later released.

## **KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS**

#### **May 11, 2019: Kabul (F)**

Mina Mangal, parliamentary adviser and former journalist is shot dead on May 11 in Kabul on her way to work. Mangal, who served as television presenter for more than 10 years, was working as an adviser to the Cultural Commission of Wolesi Jirga when the incident happened. She had received death threats in the months preceding her murder.



**June 9, 2019: Zabul (C)**

Sakhi Baloch, a technical assistant of the National Radio Television in Zabul province, is abducted by unknown people on his way home. He is found dead the next day in Qalat city

**July 1, 2019: Kabul (F)**

Abdul Rauf Eymal Zay, a security guard of Shamshad TV, is shot dead while another seven Shamshad TV workers are injured in a car bomb explosion. The guard was shot dead as he walked onto the street where Afghan security forces and foreign troops were deployed. Five men and two women media workers from Shamshad TV were injured in car bomb attack which is reported to have been targeting defence and government offices in the area. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the blast.

**July 12, 2019: Gardiz (C)**

Editor-in-chief for Radio Gardez Ghar, Nader Shah Sahebzadeh, disappears after leaving his home in Gardiz city to visit a friend. His body is found the next day. The case was investigated and the person accused of the murder is prosecuted.

**September 24, 2019: Kandahar (C)**

Abdul Hamid Hotaki, a political talk show host at the Hewad independent public media group, is critically injured in an explosion near the campaign office of President Ashraf Ghani, in the southern city of Kandahar. He dies from his injuries the next day. Afghanistan's Interior Ministry blamed Taliban militants for the attack. Hotaki was on his way to pick up medicine from a clinic when he was caught in the bombing. The explosion also killed three other people, including a child. Seven others were wounded in the blast.

**January 1, 2020: Lashkar Gah, Helmand (C)**

Safar Mohammed Atal, a technical worker at Samoun Radio, goes missing. His body is found the next day in Safiyan area of Lashkar Gah. The motive of the murder remains unknown.

## THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

**July 7, 2019: National – Afghanistan**

The Taliban threatens media outlets To TV, Aryana TV, Khama agency press, Khorshid TV, Negaah TV, Farda TV, Zhwandon TV, Killid Radio and Shamshad TV after the broadcast of footage that could lead to the targeting or arrest of its members.

**July 15, 2019: Ghazni (C)**

Samaa radio is suspended due to security threats by the Taliban in Ghazni province. After the crime management department intervenes, the radio recommences operation.

**April 8, 2020: Daikundi (C)**

Mirza Hassani Subhani Allah, a member of the provincial council, threatens to close down Aftab Radio and Radio Rasana following a news report on the mismanagement of the budget for fighting Covid-19.

**January 18, 2020: Baghlan Province (C)**

Arman Shahr Radio faces security threats. The local police develop a plan to protect the radio station.

**February 9, 2020: Kabul**

After a series of threats directed at Afghanistan's independent media, the Taliban issues a

statement against the media portal *khabarial.com*, signed by the spokesperson Zabihullah Jujahed. After the Taliban's statement, 80 per cent of *khabarial.com* staff quit their jobs because of the ongoing punitive Taliban threats.

## BANGLADESH

**1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 0****2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 6****3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 7****4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 1****5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA****INSTITUTIONS – 5****6. ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 1****TOTAL: 20 VIOLATIONS RECORDED****\*\* IFJ INDICATORS:****A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 5****C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 5****E. DISAPPEARANCES: 2****F. LEGAL CASES: 1****G. LEGISLATION/GOVERNMENT CONTROLS: 2****H. ONLINE ATTACKS/INTERNET SHUTDOWNS: 3**

## OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

**May 26, 2019: Jamalpur (C)**

Mustafa Monju, *Kaler Kantho's* Jamalpur correspondent is attacked and seriously injured in an attack by a group of people while was investigating the use of forged documents for land registration at the Sadar sub-registrar office. The attack is allegedly led by the ward councillor of Jamalpur 2 and stamp vendor Hasanuzzaman Khan Runu.

**December 13, 2019: Dhaka (A) (H)**

**Police in Dhaka arrest Abul Asad, editor of *Daily Sangram*, after the newspaper referred to Abdul Quader Molla hanged over crimes committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence, as a "martyr". A case is filed under the Digital Security Act.**

**January 5, 2020: Khulna**

Staffers of a Chinese company working on water supply and sewerage (WASA) project harass Ekattor TV's Khulna Bureau Chief Rakib Uddin Pannu for reporting on the project. His camera equipment is also damaged.

**February 11, 2020: Dhaka**

Reporter Fakhrul Islam and cameraman Sheikh Jalal of News24 are attacked when covering a raid by the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) at Noyabazar area. The attackers snatch their camera and backpack.

**March 12, 2020 : Dhaka (A)**

A case against television journalist Mahbub Alam Lavlu is filed by Shiqur Rahman, a resident of Hosni Dalan Road, on the allegation of spreading false and defamatory news through his YouTube channel. He is arrested under the Digital Security Act.

**April 13, 2020: Bogra (A) (C)**

Shahjahan Ali Babu and Mazed Rahman, district correspondents for Ekattor Television and Somoy Television are harassed and detained by a police officer.

## NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

**May 12, 2019: Mymensingh (A)**

Mohammad Abdul Kaium, the editor of news portal *Mymensinghlive* is arrested and allegedly tortured in custody. He is released on bail on July 3.

**August 3, 2019: Dhaka (E)**

Mushfiquir Rahman, a senior reporter of Mohona TV is allegedly abducted after boarding a Mirpur-bound bus from Gulshan. The abductors were said to spray a liquid substance on his face and beat him severely. He had earlier received threats for his news coverage.

**December 18, 2019: Jamalpur**

Shelu Akondo, a correspondent for *Bangla Bazar Patrika* and *Polly Kontho Protidin*, is severely beaten and his legs broken by a local leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student wing of ruling party. He is attacked with metal bars while on his regular evening walk near the Brahmaputra river.

**February 1, 2020: Dhaka**

At least nine cases of attacks on journalists and obstruction to reporting are documented during the Dhaka North and South city elections. Media workers across Dhaka from *Agami News*, *Bangla Daily*, *The Daily Star*, *Banglavisian TV*, *Press Bangla Agency*, *Bangladesh Partidin*, *Business Standard*, *Poribortan.com*, *Jugantor Daily*, *Daily Nayadiganta* and *Daily Inqilab* are assaulted at polling booths. Some journalists are denied entry into polling stations. Dipon Dewan, of Banglavisian Television, is barred from entering polling booths at Uttara High School.

**March 10, 2020: Dhaka (E)**

Shafiqul Islam Kajol, a photographer and editor of *Pakkhakal Shafiqul*, goes missing after being accused by the ruling Awami League of disseminating false information. A day before his disappearance, Kajol is accused of publishing false information under the Digital Security Act, along with 31 others including Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, the editor-in-chief of the Bangla daily *Manab Zamin*.

**March 13, 2020: Kurigram (A) (C)**

Ariful Islam, Kurigram-based journalist at *Bangla Tribune*, is arrested for alleged possession of 450ml of liquor and 100g of marijuana and sentenced within a few hours by a "mobile court". He is taken to the Kurigram deputy commissioner's office and reportedly tortured. He is convicted and sentenced by the mobile court to one year in prison and fined BDT 50,000 (USD 560). His family and members of the media accuse police of convicting him in retaliation to an article on the misuse of power by Kurigram deputy commissioner Sultana Pervin.

**April 23, 2020: Narsingdi (C)**

Sajal Bhuiyan, Narsingdi district correspondent for SA Television is beaten by men wielding batons while collection information at the office of Amirganj Union Parishad chairman Nasir Uddin Khan's. Sajal was investigating the chairman in connection to the alleged embezzlement of relief rice marked for public distribution to assist Bangladeshi households during the Covid-19 lockdown.



Journalist leaders join a protest rally in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka about ongoing violations against the journalists community in Bangladesh. CREDIT: BMSF.

## KILLING OF JOURNALISTS

**May 22, 2019: Jamalpur**

The body of Ishan Ibn Reza Fagun, the sub-editor of the online news portal *Priyo.com* is found near the railway track in Jamalpur. It is reported that unknown persons beat the journalist to death and dumped his body. The motive for the killing is unknown.

## THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

**May 19, 2019: Dhaka (H) (I)**

Access to *Poriborton.com* is blocked by Bangladesh authorities. The website had earlier received a threat from an incumbent minister to remove a news story or face a shutdown.

**December 28, 2019: Bangladesh / Sweden (I)**

Access to the Sweden-based investigative journalism website *Netra News* is blocked for 72 hours after publishing a report alleging corruption by Obaidul Quader, an influential party leader and a minister in the Awami League government. The report alleged the minister had "received a luxury brand watch in exchange for awarding a lucrative contract".

**March 9, 2020: Dhaka (G)**

Saifuzzaman Shikhor, ruling party lawmaker for Magura 1, files a case against Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor-in-chief of *Manab Zamin* daily, its staff reporter Al Amin and 30 others under the Digital Security Act on charge of publishing and sharing of false news.

**April 2, 2020: Dhaka (I)**

The Bangladesh government blocks domestic connections to *BenarNews.org*, an online affiliate of Radio Free Asia, for alleged spread of misinformation amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

**April 18, 2020: Thakurgaon (C)**

Mominul Islam Bhashani, president of Baliadangi upazila Swachchha Sebak League, an associate body of the Awami League political party, files a case against Toufique Imrose Khalidi, the editor-in-chief of *bdnews24.com*; and Mohiuddin Sarker, acting editor of *agonews24.com*, for publishing

news defaming him and the Awami League. Two local correspondents, Shawon Amin and Rahim Shuvo are also sued by Mominul for sharing the story on Facebook.

## ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

**December 13, 2019: Dhaka**

Members of Muktijoddho Mancho (Freedom Fighters Platform) and Bangladesh Chhatra League burn copies *Daily Sangram* and vandalise its Dhaka office for a report referring to Abdul Quader Molla, who was hanged over crimes committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence, as a "martyr".

## BHUTAN

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 0
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 0
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 0
  6. ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 0
- TOTAL: 0 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**

## INDIA

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 19
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 8
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 4
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 6
- TOTAL: 37 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**
- \*\* IFJ INDICATORS:**
- A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 14
  - B. ATTACKS/THREATS AGAINST FREELANCERS: 1
  - C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 3
  - D. DEFAMATION CASES/THREATS: 4
  - G. LEGAL CASES: 1
  - H. LEGISLATION/GOVERNMENT CONTROLS: 2
  - I. ONLINE ATTACKS/INTERNET SHUTDOWNS: 6

## OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

**May 2, 2019: Leh (D)**

Two BJP leaders attempt to bribe journalists for favourable poll coverage and then threaten them with a defamation suit for "fake propaganda". The incident is recorded on social media.

**June 8, 2019: Uttar Pradesh (A) (B) (D)**

Three journalists - freelance journalist Prashant Kanojia and Nation Live journalists Anuj Shukla and Ishita Singh - are arrested for sharing a video deemed as 'defaming' Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

**June 24, 2019: Jammu & Kashmir (A)**

Ghulam Jeelani Qadri, editor of *Daily Afaaq*, is arrested in late night raid over a 27-year-old terrorism case. He is later released on bail by the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Gowhar Majeed, when police are unable to provide any clear details and specific justification for his arrest.

**July 25, 2019: Jammu & Kashmir (A)**

Qazi Shibli, news editor of *The Kashmiriyat*, is arrested after tweeting an official order regarding the deployment of paramilitary troops that allegedly leaked crucial details about imminent troop movements in Jammu and Kashmir. He is charged under the Public Safety Act.

**August 14, 2019: Jammu & Kashmir**

Irfan Malik, of *Greater Kashmir*, is picked from his residence from Tral in south Kashmir at midnight. He is released after spending one night in custody. No reason is given for his arrest.

**September 6, 2019: Uttar Pradesh (A) (C)**

Journalist Santosh Jaiswal working with *Jansandesh Times* is arrested for taking photos and videos of children mopping floors at a local primary school in Azamgarh district.

**September 8, 2019: Uttar Pradesh**

A complaint against STV Haryana journalist Anoop Khundu is registered by the State Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department official. The complaint states a report aired in July featured an alleged fake video of the warehouse aimed at "spoiling the image of the department and the official."



**September 20, 2019: Jharkhand**

Evidence is revealed of the Jharkhand government efforts to influence media reportage by inviting journalists to write about its welfare schemes and offering them money in return. The Jharkhand Working Journalists Union, says the BJP Government of Raghuvar Das issued advertisement in various online and print newspapers by inviting articles on its public welfare schemes, wherein 30 journalists were selected to be paid Rs 15,000 (USD 197) each.

**November 1, 2019: Delhi (I)**

Revelations emerge that several journalists, activists, lawyers and senior government officials have been targeted by Israeli spyware in a hacking spree in May 2019. Those targeted were subject to surveillance for a two-week period until May, when the general election was held.

**December 19, 2019: Uttar Pradesh (A)**

Journalist Omar Rashid, of *The Hindu*, is taken to Hazratgani police station with activist Robin Verma and accused and threatened as being part of a group of arsonists who vandalised police property and engaged in violence during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. He and Verma are released without charge.

**February 8, 2020: Jammu & Kashmir**

Police summon media workers, Naseer Ahmad Ganie, from *Outlook Magazine*, and Haroon Nabi, from the news agency CNS, for questioning for allegedly publishing a statement from the banned Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and sharing a post on WhatsApp.

**February 16, 2020: Jammu & Kashmir (A) (D)**

Kamran Yousuf, a multimedia journalist with *NewsClick*, is detained by Pulwama police and interrogated for several hours. Yousuf is taken by police van to the office of the Deputy Superintendent of Police where he is accused of running a Twitter account under the name Kamran Manzoor to post a video of Syed Ali Geelani, a pro-Pakistan freedom leader in Kashmir. It is later established to be a case of mistaken identity.

**March 23, 2020: Delhi and Hyderabad (H)**

Police assault at least four journalists as India begins a nationwide lockdown in efforts to contain the Covid-19. In New Delhi, police stop Naveen Kumar, a reporter with Hindi news channel Aaj Tak. In Hyderabad, three police officers attack Ravi Reddy, the Hyderabad bureau chief for *The Hindu*, when he asks police to allow him through a barricade on his way home from work. Police in Hyderabad also beat and insult Mendu Srinivas, political bureau chief of *Andhra Jyothy*, and hit Mohammed Hussain, a reporter for news site *Siasat*, for alleged lockdown violations while they were returning from work.

**April 2, 2020: Delhi and Uttar Pradesh**

Police in Uttar Pradesh file a First Information Report (FIR) against *The Wire* editor, Siddharth Varadarajan, for alleged 'defamatory' comments against the Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Yogi Adityanath. The police notice requests he appear at the Ayodhya police station, 700 km from his home in Delhi despite a nationwide Covid-19 lockdown.

**April 14, 2020: Osmanabad (A)**

Journalist Rahul Kulkarni is arrested over a report on the recommencement of trains in Bandra after it allegedly prompted mass gatherings of migrants during the Covid-19 lockdown.

**April 18, 2020: Jammu & Kashmir**

Police in Srinagar charge photojournalist Masrat Zahra under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) Zahra for social media posts allegedly promoting "anti-national posts with criminal intention to induce the youth and promote offences against tranquillity". She is summoned to the police station for questioning.

**April 19, 2020: Jammu & Kashmir**

A First Information Reports (FIR) is filed against special correspondent for *The Hindu* Peerzada Ashiq over a report. He is summoned for questioning within six hours in police stations located in two different districts.

**April 21, 2020: Jammu & Kashmir**

Journalist and author Gowhar Geelani is booked under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act by the Cyber Police Station Kashmir Zone for allegedly "indulging in unlawful activities" through social media that was "prejudicial to the national integrity, sovereignty and security of India". Geelani moved the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to quash the FIR against him.

**April 27, 2020: Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A)**

Freelance journalist Zubair Ahmed is arrested and taken to Aberdeen police station for his tweet asking why a family has been put under quarantine for a phone call with Covid-19 quarantine patients. Police charged Zubair under the Disaster Management Act for obstruction, disobedience and the publishing of information that may cause alarm to the public.

**NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS****May 6, 2019: West Bengal (C)**

Journalists from NewsX, ABP Ananda and Zee News are attacked, allegedly by Trinamool Congress (TMC) workers, during voting in the fifth phase of India's national elections in seven constituencies in West Bengal. Journalists are physically assaulted and media vehicles vandalised.

**September 1, 2019: West Bengal (C)**

Police assault several journalists covering violent clashes between supporters of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal. The deputy commissioner of police in Barrackpore, Ajay Thakur, is caught on camera as he hits a journalist. Several other journalists also say they were assaulted during the incident.

**February 25, 2020: Delhi**

Akash Napa, a journalist with JK 24x7 is shot and at least four other journalists injured during communal unrest in Delhi over the country's controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Journalists came under attack while covering the communal violence in northeast Delhi over several days from February 23. Attacks are made on journalists Arvind Gunasekar, Saurabh Shukla, Mariyam Alavi and Sushil Rathii. There are also reports of mob members checking the religious identities of journalists covering the protests.

**March 4, 2020: Jammu & Kashmir**

Police bar two journalists from reporting on an operation in Hakripora village in Pulwama district and confiscate their equipment.

**March 3, 2020: Tamil Nadu**

M Karthi, a reporter with *Kumudam*, sustains serious head injuries following an attack in Sivakasi. Karthi loses eight teeth after being set upon by two men brandishing iron rods. He had earlier received harassing calls from a minister and others regarding a story. Two men are arrested in connection with the assault.

**April 23, 2020: Arunachal Pradesh (I)**

Tongam Rina, associate editor of *The Arunachal Times*, files a FIR with the crime branch after continued online trolling for an article on the alleged rise in cases of wildlife hunting in the state during the Covid-19 lockdown

**April 23, 2020: Mumbai**

Senior journalist Arnab Goswami and his wife are attacked by two thugs as they returned home from the Mumbai office of *Republic TV*. The attackers threw objects at the car and were later caught by his security. The day before, the Congress party and its supporters launched an extensive social media campaign demanding his arrest over his comments criticising party president Sonia Gandhi.

**April 24, 2020: Tamil Nadu (A)**

Andrew Sam Raja Pandian, founder and chief executive of *Simplicity* news portal, is arrested on grounds of violating the Epidemic Diseases Act and two sections of the Indian Penal Code. Police allege corruption in food distribution during the Covid-19 pandemic and attempting "to bring a bad name to the state government" and creating unrest among government officials.

**KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS****June 19, 2019: Madhya Pradesh (G)**

Chakresh Jain, journalist with a Hindi daily, dies after sustaining burns under mysterious circumstances in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district. His family accuses agricultural officer Aman Chowdhary and his supporters of setting him ablaze. Jain and Chowdhary had been involved in a legal dispute and the case was in its final stages of hearing when the incident took place.

**October 14, 2019: Andhra Pradesh**

Journalist K Satyanarayana is stabbed and killed by unidentified assailants, just a month after he was attacked in a separate incident. The 45-year-old worked as a reporter for *Andhra Jyothi*. He had previously filed a report to police concerning an attack in September. Six persons were arrested.

**February 18, 2020: Coimbatore**

B Chandrasekar, 36, who worked as a reporter for Captain TV, is killed in a car accident with university student, R Kishore, 19. Both died after the car rammed into a road barrier.

**April 21, 2020: Karnataka**

Hanumanthu, 21, of Kannada news channel Public TV, is killed in a road accident in Ramanagara district on his way back to Bangalore from Ramanagara jail after covering a story related to Covid-19.

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS****July 18, 2019: Delhi (H)**

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman imposes restrictions on journalists from accessing the ministry's office. Journalists are also barred from entering the offices in an attempt to control reporting.





Cartoonists in Nepal protest the country's Media Council Bill. CREDIT: FNJ

#### July 23, 2019: Delhi (H)

The Government of India introduces two controversial labour codes, namely Code on Wages and the Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH). The codes repeal the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and the Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1955, and the Working Journalist (Fixation of rates of wages) Act, 1958 along with 11 other labour laws. The code on wages is passed by both houses of parliament with the president's assent to become the Code on Wages Act, 2019. The Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) is sent to the Standing Committee on Labour and is submitted its recommendations to both Houses of Parliament in February 2020.

#### August 16, 2019: Meghalaya

Meghalaya police pressures news portal *Northeast Now* to remove a news item and disclose its sources. The item dealt with a BJP membership drive.

#### October 1, 2019: Tripura (H)

The registration of the *Daily Desher Katha* is cancelled by the Registrar of Newspapers India (RNI) within hours of issuing fresh registration due to a "change of management".

#### October 16, 2019: Andhra Pradesh (D) (H)

The Andhra Pradesh government submits a proposal to allow department secretaries to sue media organisations for alleged "fake news". The cabinet of Jagan Mohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh aims to empower secretaries of various departments to file defamation cases against print, electronic, digital and social media.

#### March 6, 2020: Delhi (H)

Malayalam-language news channels Asianet News and Media One are banned for 48-hours for alleged "bias" while covering the Delhi protests amidst the climbing death toll. The ministry claims the coverage has potential to "incite violence and pose danger to maintenance of law and order". The ban is lifted within six hours.

## MALDIVES

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 0
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 0
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 3
- TOTAL: 3 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**

### THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

#### July 11, 2019: Male

Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) representatives are denied entry as observers at the eighth hearing of Yameen Rasheed's murder case. The MDN was urging the Criminal Court of Maldives to uphold its obligation to conduct a fair and transparent hearing in line with the Maldivian Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

#### November 5, 2019: Male

The Maldivian Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment – which regulates the activities of NGOs – announced the decision to shut down the operations of the Maldives Democracy Network. The decision was linked to a 2015 report on radicalisation in the Maldives. The closure came against the backdrop of threats to the MDN's staff, including its director, Shahinda Ismail, from religious hardliners.

#### January 2020: Male

*Maldives Independent* formerly *Minivan News* suspends operations. The online platform was an influential voice promoting democracy and human rights in the country since 2004. In its wake, *Minivan Radio*, once anchored from Colombo by exiled journalists, also closed operations ostensibly because the premises had to be vacated. Local associates said that political pressure had been exerted to shut the station down.

## NEPAL

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 3
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 21
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 12
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 3
  6. ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 3
- TOTAL: 41 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**
- \*\* IFJ INDICATORS:**
- A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 24
  - C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 8
  - F. GENDER-BASED ATTACKS: 1

### THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS

#### September 11, 2019: Kathmandu

Journalist Prahlad Rijal, editor of *Arthik Dainik*, receives a death threat from Royal Casino operator Bed Prasad Kapri after it published news about conflicts associated with the casino.

#### April 5, 2020: Khotang

Nepali Congress (NC) Khotang district president, Naresh Kumar Shrestha, issues a death threat to Uttam Chaulagain over a news report on *prabhavnews.com* about Shrestha's obstruction of a quarantine facility in Durrhim Village.

#### April 15, 2020: Kathmandu

Dilip Poudel, a reporter for *Nagarik*, is threatened via Facebook and mobile for a story on violence by a houseowner to a female tenant for her frequent hospital visits amid the Covid-19 lockdown.

### OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

#### April 30, 2019: Kathmandu (A)

Jitendra Maharjan, editor of *Nhugu Jwojoloppa*, is released after being charged under crimes

connected to state and organised crime. He is alleged to have close relations with Netra Bikram Chand-led Communist Party of Nepal.

#### **May 22, 2019: Sunsari (C)**

Mayor of Itahari in Sunsari district, Dwarika Lal Chaudhary, verbally abuses journalists after being questioned on his involvement in the physical assault of a district employee.

#### **June 4, 2019: Sunsari (C)**

Mayor of Itahari in Sunsari district, Dwarika Lal Chaudhary, threatens journalist Birat Anupam after being questioned on why the mayor posted derogatory statements about a journalist on his Facebook page.

#### **June 12, 2019: Dhanusha (A)**

Police arrested nine journalists padlocked to the District Post Office, Dhanusha, who were demanding the refund of funds by Dhanusha after it deducted 40 per cent to 100 per cent of the distribution of funds in public service advertisement. Journalists arrested were R N Biswas (Kantipur TV), Shyam Sundar Yadav (Nepal TV), Baidhyanath Yadav (Avenues TV), Nabin Kumar Gupta (ABC TV), Bhusan Kumar Singh (Radio CPM) and Bindu Yadav (Local Purwa Prabhat Daily), Dharmapal Raut (Rajbiraj Today), Gopal Gupta (Biruwa weekly) and Paris Karna (Green Madhesh daily). Later, they were released after an hour of detention.

#### **July 26, 2019: Tanahu**

Deputy mayor of the Sukhla Gandaki Municipality in Tanahu verbally abuses journalists Samundra Poudel and Damber Adhikari, editors of *Khabarpati Saptayik*, for a news report on her involvement in the construction of a playground.

#### **August 10, 2019: Kathmandu (A)**

Police arrest poet and journalist Khem Thapaliya for his alleged involvement in the outlawed Chand-led Nepal Communist Party.

#### **August 23, 2019: Kaski (A)**

Journalist and anti-corruption activist Om Hamal is arrested in the Kaski district. Journalist Hamal, the editor of *janasanchar.com*, is arrested by security personnel for his alleged association with the Biplab-led Maoist group. Hamal is also known for his anti-corruption investigative reports in the Kaski district.

#### **August 15, 2019: Chitwan (A)**

Police arrest two journalists, Rabi Lamichhane and Yuvaraj Kandel, in connection with the suspicious death of journalist Shalikram Pudasaini. The arrest came nine days after journalist Shalikram Pudasaini found dead after posting a suicide video message blaming the journalists for driving him to take his own life.

#### **September 16, 2019: Kathmandu (A)**

Nine NPU union leaders are detained for protesting against the arbitrary sacking of three journalists from Radio Nepal. Those arrested were including Ajaya Babu Shiwakoti, Ram Prasad Dahal, Janmadedv Jaisi, Yam Birahi, Min Bam, Dilip Paudel, Chakra Kuwar, Yogendra Balayar and Prakash Bam.

#### **October 4, 2019: Kathmandu (F)**

Nepali journalist and union leader Ajaya Babu Shiwakoti receives threats and is put under

surveillance after publishing his exclusive report on the alleged rape of a female employee of Nepal's Federal Parliament by speaker, Krishna Bahadur Mahara.

#### **October 20, 2019: Achham (C) (I)**

Kantipur Daily journalist Menaka Dhungana is subjected to online harassment on social media sites after publishing a story on the tender process for the construction of two schools.

#### **November 2, 2019: Kathmandu (I)**

Shiva Lamsal, news chief at YoHo Television, is threatened after broadcasting a story on a scandal regarding a patient who died at Blue Cross Hospital in Kathmandu. Lamsal is threatened on social media by the hospital's administrative representative, Rajat Shrestha.

#### **November 27, 2019: Chitwan**

Cadres of ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) abuse journalists, Raju Sapkota, Mahendra Shrestha and Krishna Sunuwar, and delete footage recorded while covering the by-election in Bharatpur.

#### **December 4, 2019: Saptari**

Police raid the house of journalist Abadesh Kumar Jha from the Kantipur Daily in Tilathi Koiladi village, Saptari.

#### **December 4, 2019: Siraha**

A customs office official in Jatahi threatens journalists Santosh Baraili Shuvender Das, confiscates their cameras and verbally abuses them after they filmed the officer taking bribes.

#### **February 26, 2020: Kathmandu**

Journalist Ajaya Babu Shiwakoti is threatened for exposing various corruption cases involving cabinet ministers. Shiwakoti, the editor of *hamrakura.com*, is threatened by unknown men following a story about Rs 700 million in commission sought by the sitting minister for communication and information technology, Gokul Banskota, for the procurement of printing.

#### **March 26, 2020: Itahari**

Journalist Rajan Katwal, of Arena Television, is verbally abused by Dwarik Lal Chaudhary, the mayor of Itahari sub-metropolitan city, after inquiring about the city's preparedness to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.

#### **April 22, 2020: Kathmandu**

Nepal Republic Media, Avenues Television, *Rajdhani* daily and Annapurna Media Group fail to pay outstanding journalist salaries dating back several months. Kantipur Media Group (KMG) requests journalists to take unpaid leave but later revokes the decision.

#### **April, 27 2020: Chitwan**

Police detained Binodbabu Rijal, the editor of *Kayakairan Daily*, and Arjun Adhikari, of Radio Triveni, for breach of Nepal's lockdown. They are taken to the quarantine and their photos and videos deleted.

#### **May 9, 2019: Kathmandu**

A Bill to Amend and Integrate the Media Council Act is registered by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology with a provision of fine up to NPR 1 million (USD 8,850) for publishing content in violation of the media code of ethics. Section 18 of the bill provides that publishers, editors and/or

journalists can be fined for publishing content found to be tarnishing the dignity or reputation of any individual.

## **NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS**

#### **May 5, 2019: Kailali (C)**

Janak Bista, from Dinesh FM 98.3 in Dhangadhi, far-western Nepal, is physically and verbally assaulted by local businessman Tejendra Thapa while covering a story on school rental space. Bista received treatment at the local hospital for his injuries.

#### **June 20, 2019: Bhaktapur (C)**

Editor of *Salleri News*, Dinesh Basnet, is attacked by a group of locals in Lokhanthali, Bhaktapur. Basnet sustained serious injuries to the head and other parts of his body and was admitted to Annapurna Neuro Hospital, Kathmandu.

#### **July 3, 2019: Surkhet (C)**

Officials and employees of Surkhet Valley Drinking Water Consumers' Organisation are physically and verbally attack journalists Buddhi Singh Thakuri and Nawaraj Rolkaya and cameraperson, Bhim Pariyar, of Deuti HD TV, as they reported on a water dispute.

#### **July 6, 2019: Sindhuli (C)**

Journalists Hom Kumar Karki and Min Kumar Dahal are beaten by constable Salam Singh Lama for not deleting a video.

#### **August 2, 2019: Kathmandu**

Journalist Prakash Chandra Dahal is attacked by an unknown group in Bagbazar, Kathmandu. Dahal, who is an editor of the online portal *sancharkhabar.com*, is attacked by a group of four people wearing helmets.

#### **September 27, 2019: Banke**

Journalist Liyakat Ali is attacked by an unidentified group of people on his way home. The unidentified assailants physically assaulted and seized his mobile phone before fleeing.

#### **December 7, 2019: Kaski**

News 24 journalist Prasad Adhikari is physically and verbally assaulted by plain clothes police officers under orders from the Kaski District Police Chief Dan Bahadur Karki after Adhikari reported on police collusion in a gambling operation in Pokhara.

#### **December 10, 2019: Kathmandu**

Suman Chapagain, a journalist with the *Nagarik Daily*, is beaten by police during the reporting of the 13th South Asian Games (SAG) in Kathmandu. Chapagain was taking photos of angry football fans when he was caught in the clashes with police.

#### **December 12, 2019: Sunsari**

News 24 journalist Santosh Kafle is attacked on the pretext of arriving late at a press conference by the press conference organizers. After sustaining injuries to his face, he is admitted to hospital.

#### **December 22, 2019: Banke**

Journalist Sangeen is seriously injured in a physical assaulted by two unidentified assailants.



### December 27, 2019: Humla

Journalist Narajung Tamang is manhandled by an employee of Prabhu Bank Ram, Jung Shahi, and another person Jagadish Hamal when returning home from work after a report in *Nayapatrika Daily* on the distribution of subsidized rice by the Nepal Food Corporation.

### January 7, 2020: Dhanusha

Three journalists - Amarkanta Thakur, Subhas Karna and Raja Jha - are attacked by supporters of the mayor of Janakpurdham Sub-Metropolitan City, Lal Koshore Shah after they asked the mayor questions about the encroachment of land belonging to the Janaki Temple.

## THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

### December 29, 2019: Kathmandu (H)

Nepal's parliamentary committee passes the Information Technology Bill that includes provisions to impose fines of up to Rs 1.5 million (over USD1,200) or jail terms up to five years for posting content on social media that the government deems a threat to the 'country's sovereignty, security, unity or harmony'. The bill also includes mandatory provisions for social media companies to be registered in Nepal.

### February 18, 2020: Kathmandu (H)

The Embassy of China in Nepal threatens action against *Kathmandu Post* editor-in-chief, Anup Kaphle, over an article and accompanying illustration on China's response to Covid-19. The accompanying illustration shows Mao Zedong wearing a mask.

### April 12, 2020: Kailali (C)

A group of seven people including Santosh Mudbhari, the ward chairperson of Dhangadi Sub-Metropolitan city in Kailali district, picket Radio Dhandagi offices and attempt to attack journalist Nabaraj Dhanuk after an interview with the chairperson about alleged embezzlement on distribution of relief materials.

## ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

### May 13, 2019: Parsa

Avenues Television's office in Birgunj is vandalised by unidentified masked youths. Windows, doors and a camera are damaged in the attack. Activists from Samajwadi Party-Nepal (SPN) are reported to be behind the vandalism.

### March 31, 2020: Kathmandu

The prime minister's IT consultant, Asgar Ali, allegedly hacks into online portal *kathmandupress.com* and deletes a news item about collusion of the prime minister's aides and relatives in the controversial procurement of medical supplies from China to fight against Covid-19.

### April 27, 2020: Kathmandu

State-owned Radio Nepal takes down an interview with former prime minister, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, from its online archive after pressure from the government. The interview was critical of the current government and prime minister, KP Sharma Oli. Radio Nepal also issues a press release apologizing for language used by the former leader and the views expressed.



Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf leader Masroor Siyal assaults Imtiaz Khan Faran, president of Karachi Press Club during a live TV broadcast on K21 News on June 24, 2019. CREDIT: TWITTER

## PAKISTAN

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 2
2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 5
3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 5
4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 4
5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 8

TOTAL: 20 VIOLATIONS RECORDED

\*\* IFJ INDICATORS:

- A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 3
- C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 3
- F. GENDER-BASED ATTACKS: 1
- G. LEGAL CASES: 1
- H. LEGISLATION/GOVERNMENT CONTROLS: 1

## THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS

### December 2, 2019: Islamabad

A group of people protest against *Dawn* newspaper outside the newspaper's Islamabad office. The three-hour protest turned violent with demonstrators threatening *Dawn* staff. The demonstration was in response to a *Dawn* report on Usman Khan, a UK national of Pakistani origin, who was convicted in the UK for engaging in acts of terrorism. Protestors called for the hanging of *Dawn* editor Zafar Abbas.

### March 3, 2020: Stockholm (E)

Pakistani journalist Sajid Hussain is reported missing in Sweden. Hussain, who fled the country in 2012 to escape death threats, was granted political asylum in Sweden. There are fears that he was abducted at the behest of a Pakistani intelligence agency over his reports on organised crime in Pakistan.

## OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

### May 24, 2019: Rawalpindi

*Jang* reporter Shahid Sultan's home in Rawalpindi is stormed by police at 2.30 am. Shahid's two sons' bedroom door is broken and they are brought out of the room by gunpoint by police officers. Shahid is also held at gunpoint.

### July 5, 2019: Pakistan (I)

Pakistani journalists critical of the government and military are targeted by hate-speech campaigners on social media platform Twitter. The social media hashtag #ArrestAntiPakJournalists begins spreading on July 4, following a tweet by an account claiming to be the leader of a group called Imran Khan Warriors (derived from the name of Pakistan's Prime Minister).

### December 21, 2019: Karachi (A)

The Anti-Terrorism Court of Pakistan convicts journalist Nasrullah Chaudhry for allegedly possessing banned literature and spreading religious hatred. He is handed down a five-year sentence and Rs 10,000 fine (USD 64).

### January 16, 2020: Lahore (A)

Azhar-ul Haq Wahid, a reporter for *Channel Five* TV and the newspaper *Khabrain*, is arrested for posting "anti-state" content on Facebook under article 11 and 20 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act.

### March 12, 2020: Islamabad (A)

Mir Shakil ur Rehman, editor-in-chief of the *Jang* and Geo Media Group is arrested following an investigation by the NAB into allegations that property purchased 34 years earlier. He is arrested despite a ruling by the Islamabad High Court that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had acted in violation of the law and even their own set of rules.

## NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

### June 24, 2019: Karachi

Imtiaz Khan Faran, president of Karachi Press Club, is punched and pushed off a chair by a ruling party politician during a live TV broadcast. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf leader Masroor Siyal launched the assault during their appearance as panellists on the live talk news program News Line with Aftab Mugheri on K21 News.

### July 8, 2019: Sargodha (C)

Shaikh Rizwan, a journalist working for *Sargodha Khabrain* in Sargodha city, 185 km from Islamabad is beaten up by local land grabbing mafia.

**July 8, 2019: Khushab (C)**

Bashir Malik, a local journalist with 24 News in Khushab, is beaten and threatened with death by local thugs.

**July 23, 2019: Faisalabad**

Mohammad Tayyab and Ali Raza, two reporters of Channel 24 News, are brutally beaten by a group of lawyers and their accomplices in Faisalabad. The journalists are picked up by a group of lawyers and taken to an undisclosed location before being beaten after a broadcast about a police attack on journalists on July 20.

**October 22, 2019: Pakistan Administered Kashmir**

Several journalists are injured after police attack the Muzaffarabad Press Club. Local police raid the press club during a media briefing by the Jammu Kashmir People's National Alliance (JKPNA). Police fire tear gas shells, use batons and destroy journalists' recording equipment in the raid.

**KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS****September 12, 2019: Punjab**

Journalist Zafar Abbas, who had been missing since September 7, is found dead. Abbas, who worked for 7-News, was on his way home from work late at night when he was kidnapped. He is found in a dry well at Mauza Kali Shah in Punjab.

**November 25, 2019: Lahore (F)**

Urooj Iqbal, a female journalist, is shot dead by her husband. The crime reporter was allegedly killed by her husband for not agreeing to quit her job. According to the police report, the 27-year-old journalist who worked for an Urdu daily, was entering her office located in central Lahore, when her husband, Dilawar Ali, fatally shot her in the head.

**February 16, 2020: Sindh**

Aziz Memon, a journalist with Kawish Television Network (KTN) TV and Sindhi-language daily *Kawish* is found dead in an irrigation channel in Mehrabpur in Southern Sindh. The body of 56-year-old Memon was recovered with wire wound around his neck.

**February 25, 2020: Swat Valley (C)**

Javedullah Khan, the 36-year-old bureau chief for Urdu newspaper *Ausaf*, is gunned down in Matta, 40 km northwest of the Swat Valley. He died on the spot when two gunmen opened fire on his vehicle. According to reports, Khan's relatives were targeted for their involvement in anti-Taliban peace committees formed to help defend villages from militant atrocities.

**April 29, 2019: Kasur**

Local journalist Saeed Qaisar Inphool Nagar is found hanging in the Kasur district, 40 km from Lahore. It's alleged that the murderers tried to prove it was suicide. The journalist had been missing since April 27.

**THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS****July 1, 2019: Islamabad (H)**

An interview with Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistan's lawmaker from Sindh Province and former president, is taken off air within minutes of commencing broadcast on Geo News. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) orders a halt to the broadcast due to an ongoing investigation by the National Accountability Bureau.

**July 6, 2019: Karachi**

Television stations, Abb Takk, 24 News HD and Capital TV are taken off air after broadcasting an "unedited live telecast" of an opposition politician. The channels are suspended from cable networks following the broadcast of the speech by the vice president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Maryam Nawaz, recorded at a press conference.

**July 21, 2019: Pakistan (H)**

Private broadcaster Geo News is forced off air and its channel frequency abruptly changed in many parts of the country during Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the US from July 21-23. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issues the block order without notice or explanation.

**September 17, 2019: Pakistan (G) (H)**

The Pakistan government announces a plan to introduce media courts to regulate the press. The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Information, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan, announces the plans for special tribunals and media regulatory bodies without consultation with the media.

**October 27, 2019: Pakistan (H)**

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) bars television anchors from giving opinions during the talk shows. The also directive instructs media houses to select the guests in talk shows with utmost care.

**February 8, 2020: Pakistan (H) (I)**

The Pakistan government passes strict controls over digital content creators. The Consultation on Regulating the Web TV & Over the Top TV (OTT) Content Services seeks to regulate online content creators and imposes license fees up to PKR 10,000,000 (USD 65,000).

**January 28, 2020: Pakistan**

Pakistan's federal cabinet approved Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules 2020 which requires social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok to establish offices in Pakistan. The bill empowers the national coordinator of the ministry of communications to fine social media companies up to PKR 500,000,000 (USD 3,240,000) if a company refuses to comply.

**March 13, 2020: Pakistan (H)**

PEMRA orders cable operators to block GEO TV broadcasts or move the channel to last on the list of channels in retaliation for the network's coverage of the arrest on March 12 of its editor-in-chief Mir Shakilur Rahman.

**SRI LANKA**

1. THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS – 3
  2. OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS – 10
  3. NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS – 8
  4. KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS – 0
  5. THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 5
  6. ATTACKS ON MEDIA INSTITUTIONS – 0
- TOTAL: 26 VIOLATIONS RECORDED**

**\*\* IFJ INDICATORS:**

- A. ARRESTS/JAILING: 2**  
**B. ATTACKS/THREATS AGAINST FREELANCERS: 2**  
**C. ATTACKS/THREATS ON RURAL, REGIONAL OR MINORITY JOURNALISTS: 14**  
**F. GENDER-BASED ATTACKS: 1**  
**H. LEGISLATION/GOVERNMENT CONTROLS: 3**

**THREATS AGAINST THE LIVES OF JOURNALISTS****August 12, 2019: Gampaha (C)**

Sisira Kuruppu, a correspondent with Sinhala language daily *Divayina* is threatened with death by three local politicians after reporting a clash between politicians over their business dealings.

**December 10, 2019: Colombo**

Maduka Thaksala Fernando, former editor of the *Digital and New Media* (Lake House) and founder of popular social media page 'Madyawediya' is attacked and threatened with death by the president of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) trade union. Maduka Thaksala Fernando made a police complaint about the incident.

**January 10, 2020: Colombo**

Mulleriyawa Police in the Central Province refuses to record a death threat complaint of Nimanthi Ranasinghe, a court correspondent for *Lankadeepa*. The police officer turned the journalist away when Ranasinghe refused to reveal her source of threat.

**OTHER THREATS TO JOURNALISTS****May 9, 2019: Colombo (A)**

A journalist from *Thinakaran* newspaper is detained for carrying newspaper cuttings that feature the leader of the National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), the terrorist group accused of having carried out the Easter Sunday attacks in which 258 people were killed.

**May 13, 2019: Colombo (A)**

Journalist Mohammed Rizvi Maharoo is arrested for possessing speech notes, promotional videos and a CD featuring the NTJ.

**June 16, 2019: Colombo (C)**

Journalist Kusal Perera is charged for commenting on the development of religious rivalries after the April 21 Easter Sunday attack in 2019. Sri Lanka's Organised Crime Division requests the Colombo Magistrate Courts take action against Perera under the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Act.





## මාධ්‍ය සංවිධාන එකතුව

Journalists call on Sri Lanka's government to take meaningful action to investigate journalist killings and disappearances in the 'Black January' commemoration on January 28, 2020 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. CREDIT: SLWJA



JOURNALIST



### July 21, 2019: Kandy

Journalist M N Aminullah from *Lake House* is blocked by security personnel from covering a Sri Lankan Air Force Commander's visit to a Buddhist monastery.

### August 4, 2019: Sri Lanka (H)

Palani Digambaram, the minister of Hill Country New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development threatens journalist K Prasanna for an article in Tamil *Thinakkural* on alleged irregularities under the ministry.

### January 19, 2020: Jaffna (C)

The house of journalist I Rajeskar, of Tamil newspaper *Valampuri*, is ambushed and vandalised by a group of unidentified men in Mannipay.

### January 2, 2020: Batticaloa (C)

Sri Lankan police threaten the family members of the Tamil correspondent of the *Guardian* S Nilanthan after forcibly entering his home. Nilanthan is summoned to the police station the next morning. Police refuse to provide reasons for seeking Nilanthan's arrest. On January 8, he appeared in court and was released on bail.

### January 23, 2020: Batticaloa (C)

Leaflets threatening to kill seven Tamil journalists are left at the Batticaloa Press Club and a nearby bus stop in Batticaloa, eastern Sri Lanka. The leaflets said: "Beware! Beware! These are the reporters who received money from the Tigers abroad and acting against the state. We will soon execute them." The pamphlet contains pictures of all seven journalists attending the memorial of murdered journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge.

### February 4, 2020: Trincomalee (C)

Journalist W G Roshan Kumara is threatened by Ariwathi Galappathi, a local politician and bus company owner while covering a bus accident.

### March 2, 2020: Vavuniya (C)

The director of Tamil language *Thinappuyal* newspaper, Sakthivelpillai Prakash, and his wife are summoned by Sri Lanka's Terrorism Investigation Department (TID) following the paper's coverage of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where Sri Lanka withdrew co-sponsorship of a resolution on accountability.

## NON-FATAL ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

### May 28, 2019: Mullaitivu (C)

Police officer in charge of the Kokkilai police station in Mullaitivu verbally and physically abuses K Kumanan, a *Tamil Guardian* journalist after he took photographs of the repainting and removal of CCTV footage in a temple. The officer snatched his camera, deleted photographs and physically assaulted the journalist who was covering a dispute at the temple.

### August 13, 2019: Bopitiya (B) (F)

Anne Ranaweera, a freelance journalist for the Catholic newspaper *Gnanartha Pradeepaya*, is assaulted by police at the Pamunugama Police Station. The police dragged Ranaweera out of her home and took her to a police station. No reason was given for the detention and assault.

### September 3, 2019: Jaffna (C)

Thillainathan Shobithan, a Tamil journalist with *Virakesari*, is summoned in relation to an article quoting a disappeared activist who had commented on the oppression of Tamils.

### September 5, 2019: Kilinochchi (C) (H)

Jinasena Rathugmage, a senior Sinhala journalist in Vavuniya is interrogated by Terrorism Investigation Division (TID) for six hours for allegedly threatening national security after reporting on the arrest of Kilinochchi's Judicial Medical Officer (JMO) for alleged links to terrorist activities.

### November 1, 2019: Kathankudy (C)

Batticaloa based journalist Mohamed Saji, of *Vasantham TV*, is assaulted by an unidentified group. The group also threatened Irfan Mohamed, the manager of *Vasantham TV*. Following the attack, he was hospitalised.

### November 14, 2019: Galle (B)

Three unidentified assailants with firearms attack Lasantha Wijeratna, a freelance journalist and anti-corruption activist in his home. Wijeratna sustains injuries including severe lacerations to his hand and is admitted to the intensive care unit in Karapitiya Hospital. It is reported as a retaliatory attack for his reporting on alleged acts of corruption committed by Gotabaya Rajapaksa during his tenure as Sri Lanka's former secretary of defense.

### December 6, 2019: Kulutara

Thusitha Kumara de Silva, a correspondent for Sri

Lanka's *Daily Mirror* and his wife are attacked by club-wielding assailants. Around 10 to 15 men armed with clubs are alleged to have attacked the journalist and his wife in their home the Kulutara District. Both victims sustained head injuries in the attack believed to be associated with Thusitha's investigative report on the manufacture of illegal alcohol. At least five suspects are arrested for the attack.

### December 20, 2019: Puttalam (C)

Video and print journalist Prasad Jayamanne is attacked while photographing a protest by villagers against illegal sand mining in Mukku Thoduwawa area in Madurankuliya. A person in a truck transporting sand attacked the journalist and damaged his camera.

## THREATS AGAINST MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

### May 29, 2019: Colombo

Sri Lankan media are barred from reporting the live proceedings of the Parliament Select Committee (PSC) investigating the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka in April 2019. The PSC's proceedings were initially open to the public, but the telecast was later suspended due to political interference.

### November 22, 2019: Vavuniya (C)

Sri Lankan police visit and interrogate Sakthivelpillai Prakash, the editor of the Vavuniya-based Tamil newspaper *Thinnapuyya*. The police demand details of all reporters and correspondents at the publication.

### November 26, 2019: Colombo

Police search the premises of *Newshub.lk* after receiving a complaint that the company possessed defamatory material targeting a presidential candidate. A team of around 10 police from the Mirihana police station arrived at its premises with a search warrant and checked computer servers, laptops and PCs.

### November 28, 2019: Colombo (C) (H)

Sri Lanka's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) summons digital journalists Dhanushka Sanjaya, from *The Leader*, and Thushara Vitharana, from *VoiceTube*, for interrogation. Neither is informed of the reason for the summoned, which is required by Sri Lankan law. It is believed to be related to a complaint made by a pro-Sinhalese organisation.

# INTERNET SHUTDOWNS RECORDED IN SOUTH ASIA

MAY 1, 2019 – APRIL 30, 2020





## THE THREE BIGGEST SHUTDOWNS IN SOUTH ASIA

SINCE	COUNTRY	STATE	AREA	DAYS			
1-Jul	PAKISTAN	FATA	All	Ongoing	All	National Security	Communal violence, armed clashes, militants
3-Aug	INDIA	Jammu & Kashmir	Kashmir Valley	Ongoing	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Revocation of Kashmir's semi-autonomous status
10-Sep	BANGLADESH	Cox Bazaar	Refugee Camps	Ongoing	Mobile	National Security	Refugee protests

## TOTAL INTERNET SHUTDOWNS OR ONLINE CONTROLS RECORDED


2017-18	97
2018-19	106
2019-20	82

## INTERNET SHUTDOWNS BY COUNTRY

	INDIA	72
	PAKISTAN	5
	BANGLADESH	3
	SRI LANKA	2

SN	DATE	STATE	AREA	DAYS	SERVICE IMPACTED	JUSTIFICATION	DETAILS
 INDIA							
2019							
1	3-May	Jammu & Kashmir	South Kashmir	4	Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Killing of a militant in an encounter between government forces and militants
2	3-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Killing of militant
4	10-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Killing of militant
5	11-May	Assam	Barak Vally	3	Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Curfew imposed because of community clashes
6	12-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile	Unknown	Killing of militant
7	12-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Bandipora		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Clashes with militants
9	16-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile	Unknown	Encounter between security forces and militants
10	16-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Doda	8	Mobile	Unknown	Search operation for militants and clashes
11	17-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Sopore		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Security concerns
12	18-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Killing of a militant
13	22-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Kulgam		Mobile	Fake News	Killing of a militant
14	24-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Tral	1	Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Search operation for militants launched
15	29-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Kulgam		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Gunfight between militants and security forces
16	30-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Sopore		Mobile	Unknown	Clash between militants and government forces
17	31-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Militants killed
18	31-May	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile	Unknown	Precautionary measure for search operation
19	3-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Kulgam		Mobile	Fake News	Precautionary measure following encounter between security forces and militants
20	5-Jun	Odisha	Kendrapara		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Threats of communal violence
21	7-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Gunfight between militants and security forces
22	8-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Anantnag		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Gunfight between militants and security forces
23	9-Jun	West Bengal	Basirhat		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	To prevent rumous on social media following communal clashes
24	10-Jun	Uttar Pradesh	Aligarh		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Prevent communal violence
25	11-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile	Unknown	
26	11-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Baramulla		Mobile	Fake News	
27	12-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Anantnag		Mobile	Fake News	Clashes between youth and government forces
28	14-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Militants killed
29	17-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Anantnag		Mobile	Fake News	Precautionary measure to prevent spread of rumours on death anniversary of founder of Ummat-e-Islami (Uel), Mirwaiz Qazi Nissar Ahmad.
30	19-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Anantnag		Mobile	Fake News	Precautionary measure to prevent spread of rumours on death anniversary of founder of Ummat-e-Islami (Uel), Mirwaiz Qazi Nissar Ahmad.
31	20-Jun	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Clashes broke out between rival political parties
32	23-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile	Unknown	Search operation for militants launched
33	28-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Badgam		Mobile	Fake News	Gunfight between militants and security forces
34	30-Jun	Jammu & Kashmir	Budgam		Mobile	Unknown	Gunfight between militants and security forces



SN	DATE	STATE	AREA	DAYS	SERVICE IMPACTED	JUSTIFICATION	DETAILS
35	1-Jul	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	1	Mobile	Fake News	Communal violence
36	2-Jul	Rajasthan	Jaipur city, Rajasthan state		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Prevent violence due to spread of rumours after a seven year old girl was raped
37	5-Jul	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Communal violence
38	5-Jul	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile	Unknown	Encounter between security forces and militants
39	8-Jul	Jammu & Kashmir	South Kashmir		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Preventative in view of third death anniversary of militant Burhan Wani, from terrorist group Hizbul Mujahideen
40	16-Jul	Rajasthan	Udaipur	1	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Clashes over a murder
41	17-Jul	Jammu & Kashmir	Baramulla		Mobile and broadband	None	Gunfight between militants and security forces
42	18-Jul	Rajasthan	Udaipur		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Clashes over a murder
43	19-Jul	Jammu & Kashmir	Anantnag		Mobile and broadband	None	Search operation for militants launched
44	25-Jul	West Bengal	Asansol	3	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Communal violence
45	27-Jul	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Precautionary measure in the wake of massive search operation
46	30-Jul	Jammu & Kashmir	Pulwama		Mobile and broadband	None	Encounter between security forces and militants
47	2-Aug	Jammu & Kashmir	Shopian		Mobile	Fake News	Precautionary measure to prevent spread of rumours
48	3-Aug	Jammu & Kashmir	Sopore town		Mobile	Fake News	Precautionary measure to prevent spread of rumours
49	3-Aug	Jammu & Kashmir	Kashmir Valley	Ongoing	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Revocation of Kashmir's semi-autonomous status
50	8-Aug	Jammu & Kashmir	Kargi		Mobile and broadband	None	Block protests against revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which gave special status to J&K
51	13-Aug	Rajasthan	Jaipur	1	Mobile	Unknown	Preventative measure after communal violence
53	25-Aug	Rajasthan	Sawai Madhopur	1	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Preventative measure after communal violence
58	11-Oct	Bihar	Jehanabad		Mobile	Fake News	Communal violence
60	9-Nov	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Preventive measure ahead of Ayodhya Verdict.
61	10-Nov	Madhya Pradesh	Damoh, Panna, Chhatarpur and Tikamgarh		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Permission for religious procession denied
62	10-Dec	Arunachal Pradesh	All		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Block protests over CAA
63	10-Dec	Tripura	All		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Block protests over CAA
64	11-Dec	Assam	10 districts		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Block protests over CAA
65	12-Dec	Meghalaya	10 districts		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Preventative measure after passage of CAA
66	13-Dec	Uttar Pradesh	Aligarh		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Preventative measure after Citizenship Amendment Act protests
67	15-Dec	West Bengal	Also Uttar Pradesh		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Preventative measure after Citizenship Amendment Act protests
68	18-Dec	Uttar Pradesh	Several cities		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Preventative measure after Citizenship Amendment Act protests
69	19-Dec	Karnataka	Dakshina Kannada		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Communal violence
70	20-Dec	Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh		Mobile	Public Safety	To prevent protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act
71	22-Dec	Uttar Pradesh	Several cities		Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Prevent the spread of misinformation
72	22-Dec	Rajasthan	Capital		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Protests against Citizenship Amendment Act
73	27-Dec	Uttar Pradesh	Several cities		Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Clashes between police and anti-citizenship law protesters
2020							
75	1-Jan	Maharashtra	Shikrapur & Lonikarbhori	1	Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Communal violence
76	2-Jan	West Bengal	Suttapukur, Amdanga and Deganga	1	Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Protests against Citizenship Amendment Act
77	4-Jan	Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	1	Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	Protests against Citizenship Amendment Act
78	31-Jan	Madhya Pradesh	Jabalpur	1	Mobile and broadband	Public Safety	To prevent protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act
79	23-Feb	Uttar Pradesh	Aligarh	1	Mobile	Public Safety	Clashes between police and anti-citizenship law protesters
80	28-Feb	Meghalaya	6 districts	2	Mobile	Public Safety	Communal violence
81	16-Mar	Manipur	All	3	Mobile	Public Safety	Communal violence
 <b>BANGLADESH</b>							
54	2-Sep	Cox Bazaar	Refugee Camps	3	Mobile	National Security	Refugee protests
57	10-Sep	Cox Bazaar	Refugee Camps	Ongoing	Mobile	National Security	Refugee protests
74	31-Dec	Selected	Districts bordering India	2	Mobile	National Security	Security concerns regarding India's citizenship law
 <b>PAKISTAN</b>							
82	Since June, 2016	FATA	All	Ongoing	All	National Security	Communal violence, armed clashes, militants
52	15-Aug	Kashmir	All		Mobile and broadband	Unknown	Protests against India's revocation of Kashmir's special status
55	7-Sep	Kashmir	All		Mobile	National Security	Protests against India's revocation of Kashmir's special status
56	8-Sep	Selected	Faisalabad, Multan, Lahore, Karachi & Islamabad	2	Mobile	National Security	Protests against India's revocation of Kashmir's special status
 <b>SRI LANKA</b>							
3	5-May	All	National	1	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Controls imposed because of terrorist bombings of hotels and churches
8	13-May	All	National	4	Mobile and broadband	Fake News	Terrorist bombings of churches

