

KEY GLOBAL FIGURES — 2026

<p><b>52.2%</b></p> <p>COUNTRIES RATED "DIFFICULT" OR "VERY SERIOUS"</p>	<p><b>110/180</b></p> <p>COUNTRIES WHERE LEGAL INDICATOR WORSENERD</p>	<p><b>220+</b></p> <p>JOURNALISTS KILLED IN GAZA SINCE OCT 2023</p>	<p><b>121</b></p> <p>MEDIA PROFESSIONALS JAILED IN CHINA ALONE</p>
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Source: RSF 2026 World Press Freedom Index.

SOUTH ASIA — FULL REGIONAL RANKINGS 2026

RANK	COUNTRY	STATUS	RSF ASSESSMENT
87	Nepal	Problematic	Regional best performer; some press protections remain
134	Sri Lanka	Difficult	Difficult environment; sustained legal and political pressures on media
150	Bhutan	Very Serious	Very serious; state media dominates, limited independent press
152	Bangladesh	Very Serious	Very serious; consecutive placement near bottom of global index
153	Pakistan	Very Serious	Relentless restrictions; authorities suppress journalistic content
157	India	Very Serious	Legal indicator: severe decline; explicitly named by RSF 2026
175	Afghanistan	Very Serious	Taliban controls all media; independent journalism effectively banned

All seven South Asian nations listed. Source: RSF 2026 World Press Freedom Index.

COUNTRIES WITH SHARPEST LEGAL INDICATOR DECLINES — 2026

COUNTRY	LEGAL INDICATOR	PRIMARY MECHANISM
India (South Asia)	Severe decline ▼▼▼	National security laws, defamation statutes
Egypt	Severe decline ▼▼▼	National security, emergency law
Israel	Severe decline ▼▼▼	Wartime press restrictions
Pakistan (South Asia)	High decline ▼▼	Political suppression of media content
Sri Lanka (South Asia)	Difficult environment	Legal and political pressure on press
Georgia	High decline ▼▼	Foreign agents legislation
Philippines	Moderate decline ▼	Terrorism charges, red-tagging
United States	Moderate decline ▼	Political pressure on press, -7 places

South Asian countries highlighted in red. Source: RSF 2026 World Press Freedom Index.

NOTABLE RANKING CHANGES — 2026 vs 2025

COUNTRY	2026 RANK	CHANGE	NOTE
Syria	141	+36 ▲	Biggest rise — fall of Assad government Dec 2025
Niger	120	-37 ▼	Biggest fall — Sahel collapse under juntas and armed groups
Saudi Arabia	176	-14 ▼	Repeated acts of violence against journalists incl. execution of Turki al-Jasser

United States	64	-7 ▼	Trump's systematic attacks on press become entrenched policy
El Salvador	143	-8 ▼	Political and social indicator deterioration under Bukele
Argentina	98	-11 ▼	Decline linked to Milei government hostility to press
New Zealand	22	-6 ▼	Region's best performer despite slipping six places
Israel	116	-4 ▼	Waging war in Gaza; 220+ journalists killed since Oct 2023

Source: RSF 2026 World Press Freedom Index.

## 2026 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX — SELECTED COUNTRIES





Norway holds first place for the tenth consecutive year. Eritrea comes last for the third year in a row. South Asian nations are highlighted in red.

RANK	COUNTRY	STATUS	REGION / NOTE
1	Norway	Good	—
2	Netherlands	Good	—
18	United Kingdom	Good	—
22	New Zealand	Good	Best in Asia-Pacific (-6)
28	Taiwan	Satisfactory	Asia-Pacific
30	Timor-Leste	Satisfactory	Asia-Pacific
33	Australia	Satisfactory	Asia-Pacific
47	South Korea	Satisfactory	Asia-Pacific
62	Japan	Problematic	State secrecy law concerns
64	United States	Problematic	-7 under Trump
87	<b>Nepal</b>	<b>Problematic</b>	South Asia — regional best
92	Thailand	Problematic	Asia-Pacific
114	Philippines	Difficult	Terrorism charges vs press
123	Singapore	Difficult	Asia-Pacific
129	Indonesia	Difficult	Asia-Pacific
134	<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>Difficult</b>	South Asia
150	<b>Bhutan</b>	<b>Very Serious</b>	South Asia
152	<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>Very Serious</b>	South Asia
153	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>Very Serious</b>	South Asia — relentless restrictions
157	<b>India</b>	<b>Very Serious</b>	South Asia — legal indicator severe ▼
163	Turkiye	Very Serious	—
RANK	COUNTRY	STATUS	REGION / NOTE
166	Myanmar	Very Serious	Cybersecurity laws vs press
172	Russia	Very Serious	48 journalists jailed (Apr 2026)
174	Vietnam	Very Serious	China-model censorship

<b>175</b>	<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Very Serious</b>	South Asia — Taliban controls all media
<b>176</b>	Saudi Arabia	Very Serious	-14; execution of Turki al-Jasser
<b>177</b>	Iran	Very Serious	—
<b>178</b>	China	Very Serious	121 journalists jailed
<b>179</b>	North Korea	Very Serious	Press freedom entirely fictitious
<b>180</b>	Eritrea	Very Serious	Last place — 3rd consecutive year

Highlighted rows = South Asian countries. Source: RSF 2026 World Press Freedom Index. Full data and methodology at [rsf.org](https://rsf.org).

#### PRESS FREEDOM STATUS CATEGORIES — RSF SCORING KEY

	CATEGORY	SCORE RANGE	DESCRIPTION
	<b>Good</b>	85–100	Strong press freedom environment; robust legal and institutional protections
	<b>Satisfactory</b>	70–84	Broadly protective but some challenges to independence or safety
	<b>Problematic</b>	55–69	Significant constraints on press freedom; self-censorship common
	<b>Difficult</b>	40–54	Severe restrictions; journalists face harassment, legal risk or violence
	<b>Very Serious</b>	0–39	Extreme repression; jailing, killing or total information blackout

Source: Reporters Without Borders (RSF) | 2026 World Press Freedom Index | [rsf.org](https://rsf.org) | Under embargo until April 30, 2026, 06:00 CET. This document is a data supplement and should not be published before the stated embargo time.