

Turkey Leads The World In Jailing Journalists

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More than 250 journalists have been jailed worldwide in 2018, a number that has been reached for three consecutive years, an advocacy group said Thursday, calling it a sign that an authoritarian response to critical news coverage is “more than a temporary spike.”

The group, the Committee to Protect Journalists, said in its annual survey that the number of journalists jailed in relation to their work over the past three years is the most since it began compiling that statistic in 1990.

“Hundreds of journalists jailed globally becomes the new normal,” the committee said in a summary of its annual findings, which are based on the number of journalists imprisoned each year on Dec. 1.

For the third year in a row, Turkey, China and Egypt were responsible for more than half of those jailed, the group found.

In all, the committee identified 251 journalists in prison this year.

The group found that 70 percent of those imprisoned are facing anti-state charges, such as providing assistance to groups deemed by the authorities to be terrorist organizations.

It also found that the number of journalists imprisoned on charges of disseminating false news rose to 28, compared with nine just a few years ago. While the group did not attribute that increase to a particular cause, its summary noted the “heightened global rhetoric about ‘fake news,’ of which U.S. President Donald Trump is the leading voice.”

Egypt imprisoned the most journalists, 19, on false-news charges. Cameroon had four, Rwanda three, and China and Morocco one each, the group said.

A jump in the number of journalists imprisoned in China, to 47 compared with 38 reported a year ago, reflected what the group described as China’s crackdown on the Uighur ethnic minority in the Xinjiang region. United Nations human rights officials have accused the

Chinese authorities of detaining up to a million people in Xinjiang, an accusation China has rejected.

The committee also singled out Saudi Arabia, which is under intense scrutiny for the killing of [Jamal Khashoggi](#), a Washington Post columnist, in October at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. At least 16 Saudi journalists were imprisoned as of Dec. 1, including four female journalists who had written about women's rights, the group said.

The report also criticized President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey over his treatment of journalists whom his government considers subversive. Although Mr. Erdogan has been among the fiercest critics of Saudi Arabia over Mr. Khashoggi's killing, the group said "his government continued to jail more journalists than any other on the planet" — at least 68. All are facing anti-state charges.

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