

**INDIA:**

**PHYSICAL  
ATTACKS, LEGAL  
HARASSMENT,  
CENSORSHIP**

Journalists face  
continued pressure  
in India

**PRESS FREEDOM  
VIOLATIONS IN INDIA**

(APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2022)



Journalists in India during this monitoring period faced physical attacks, legal harassment, and arrests, and censorship as the alarming deterioration of press freedom since the nationalist-conservative Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in 2014 continues. Over the past eight years, the Modi government and BJP supporters have attempted to silence independent media through attacks and repressive laws, often targeting the Muslim minority.

# 83

IPI identified **83 press freedom violations** in India between April and September of 2022, the majority of which were related to online censorship and internet and communications shutdowns.

In April, the government **banned 22 YouTube channels**, citing breaches of national security under the 2021 IT law that gives the government sweeping powers to take down online content. In June, Twitter complied with a government demand to **remove a tweet that journalist Rana Ayyub** had posted months earlier, also based on an alleged violation of the IT Act. In her tweet, Ayyub reacted to the decision by a lower court allowing a survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi. In May, Free Press Kashmir, an independent online weekly that has been the target of intense government harassment, was suspended from Instagram for "being under the age of 13".





**Communications blackouts:** The Indian government is responsible for ordering the highest number of network shutdowns in the world. During this monitoring period, **authorities ordered the suspension of internet and mobile services more than a dozen times in Kashmir**, a region that previously experienced one of the longest documented communication shutdowns on record, lasting 552 days. Outside Kashmir, the government suspended mobile and internet services multiple times, including in Manipur, where the government ordered a shutdown for five days in August in order to quell online “rumour-mongering,” citing section 144 of India’s Criminal Procedure Code.

**20** **journalists were arrested between April and September 2022**, according to IPI monitoring data. Kashmiri journalist Fahad Shah faced multiple arrests under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), which is part of a broader pattern of harassment and intimidation of independent journalists in Kashmir.



**The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)** gives authorities sweeping powers to arrest and conduct a search and seizure operation without a warrant if they suspect a person is associated with an unlawful or terrorist group. Authorities may also **detain individuals for up to six months** without a trial or bail if they are deemed capable of committing a crime in the future.

In May, journalist Mohammed Zubair was detained by the Uttar Pradesh police for a series of tweets calling three Hindutva supremacists “hatemongers.” In June, Zubair was arrested again for a tweet from 2018 on charges of hurting religious sentiments under sections 153 A and 295 A of the Indian Penal Code.

18

At least **18 journalists faced physical attacks and violence** during this monitoring period, with cases involving both state and non-state actors. There were multiple cases of journalists being violently beaten while in police custody. We also note an alarming trend of journalists being victims of mob violence. In April, four journalists were reportedly assaulted by a mob at a ‘Hindu Mahapanchayat’ event in Delhi. Also that month, five journalists were beaten and tortured by members of a local mafia after attempting to expose the illegal operations of liquor mafias.

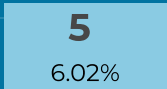


**One journalist was killed.** In May 2022, journalist **Subhash Kumar Mahto was shot dead** while walking near his home in the village of Sakho in the Begusarai district of India on May 20.





# 83 press freedom violations



Censorship\*

Arrests/charges

Physical, verbal, online attacks

Restriction on access

\* A majority of press freedom violations in India related to censorship due to network shutdowns.



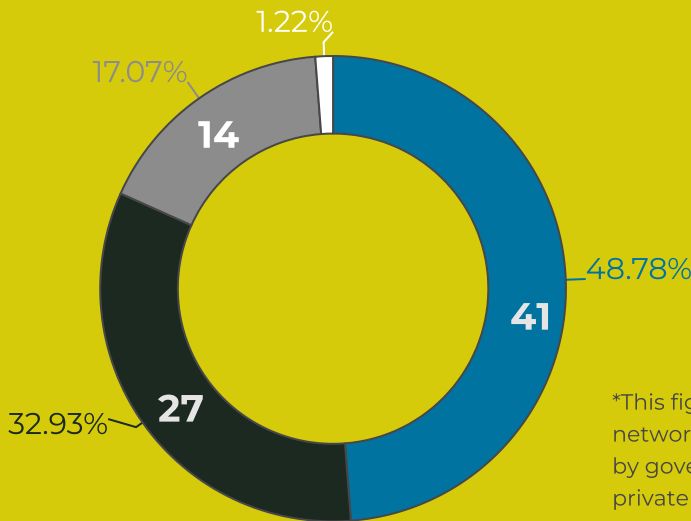
VIOLATIONS INVOLVING

**43** ● MALE ● FEMALE **1**

JOURNALISTS



Assets And Liabilities  
Reached Between India & Pakistan



- State actor and private actor\*
- State actor
- Non-state actor
- Unknown

Source of incidents

\*This figure relates to the number of network shutdowns, which are ordered by governments and implemented by private telecommunications companies. Private companies should push back on overly broad government demands to shutdown networks or communications service.

IPI monitors and collects data on press freedom violations in India as part of an ongoing cross-border project that brings together partner media outlets in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal to create public awareness about attacks on journalists and highlight the erosion of press freedom across South Asia.

✉  
To report a violation:  
[info@ipi.media](mailto:info@ipi.media)

