



Dear CPJ Supporter,

CPJ recognized early the challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak would present to journalists all over the world. The ability to pick up a camera, pen, or phone was replaced with the need for a mask, gloves, and disinfectant. Journalists also had to grapple with the reluctance of local governments to publicize health data—and the reprisal that could follow their reporting on it.

CPJ quickly reoriented toward four global priorities: supporting journalists covering the pandemic, documenting violations against journalists reporting on it, pushing back on governments using the outbreak as a pretext to suppress rights, and advocating for the release of jailed journalists who could die if exposed to the virus. But while we're focused on the present, we're always mindful of the long term. We have identified at least 10 trends in the repression of media freedom worldwide, including laws against "fake news," which could endure even as the pandemic fades.

We had to confront these and other issues under the strain of our entire staff working remotely, but we were confident in their ingenuity. You will read more in these pages about their remarkable reporting, advocacy, and safety work.

In late May, while the world was reeling from the COVID-19 outbreak, George Floyd, a 46-yearold Black man, died in police custody, leading to murder charges for four Minneapolis officers. Thousands of people marched in the streets, first locally and then across the nation and the world, calling for an end to police abuse and systemic racism.

Journalists emerged from their homes to cover the demonstrations, and soon found themselves to be targets. CPJ and its partner, the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, documented hundreds of press freedom violations in American cities, including arrests of, and assaults on, journalists. Police were responsible for the vast majority of them. CPJ stepped up. We published safety advice and set up workshops and webinars to reach as many journalists as possible. We formed coalitions with media groups, calling on police, mayors, and governors to help ensure the rights of journalists were respected. And, in a rare move, our board of directors issued a public letter demanding the end to the assaults on journalists. "This is not a singular cry of protest," the letter said. "As we continue the investigation of the anti-press complaints, we intend to pursue justice for journalists who were attacked or unjustly detained."

The attacks on journalists covering protests in the United States was shocking to many. But for nearly four decades, CPJ has reported on press freedom violations amid protests in places like Egypt, Turkey, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and India. Our documentation serves as a foundation for our advocacy, and we continue to support journalists under threat in American cities and around the world.

Thank you for standing with us in our defense of journalists. We couldn't do it without you.

Joel Simon **Executive Director**

2020: Defending the Press

Committee to Protect Journalists Annual Report 2020 | 3

CPJ is headquartered in New York with offices in Washington and Brussels and a safety team based in Europe. We also have a network of reporters based in Abuja, Bangkok, Berlin, Bogotá, Brussels, Istanbul, London, Managua, Mexico City, Nairobi, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Taipei, and Vilnius.

United States

Amid protests against racism and police brutality, CPJ issued safety advisories and conducted consultations with journalists.

Guatemala

CPJ in March published a report with recommendations for the country's new president, Alejandro Giammattei, to improve press freedom.

Nicaragua

CPJ helped 100% Noticias, a news outlet led by our 2019 press freedom award winners, regain access to its YouTube accounts and archives.

Slovakia

CPJ advocacy helped win convictions in the 2018 murders of Ján Kuciak, an investigative reporter, and his fiancée.

Cameroon

Authorities disclosed that Samuel Wazizi died in military custody in 2019. CPJ is fighting for justice in his case and to free journalists still jailed in Cameroon.

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Albania

Following criticism from CPJ and other watchdogs, President Ilir Meta cited the right to free expression and vetoed bills that would censor online news outlets.

Iraqi Kurdistan

Authorities publicly stated they would not shut down the broadcaster NRT following CPJ's reporting on their intention to do so.

Bahrain

Advocacy by CPJ and other groups led to a jailed journalist being moved out of solitary confinement, where he was placed after reporting on COVID-19 in the prison.

Ethiopia

CPJ's public and private advocacy with regional officials contributed to the release of two journalists and a media worker detained for months.

Kyrgyzstan

CPJ condemned the death in prison of Azimjon Askarov, who was serving a life term in prison on fabricated charges.

Philippines

CPJ continues to support Maria Ressa, founder of *Rappler*, who faces prison for a wrongful conviction. Separately, our advocacy helped win convictions of perpetrators of the 2009 Maguindanao massacre.

Sri Lanka

In a mission to the country in early 2020, we learned of journalists' concerns about impunity and self-censorship under President Rajapaksa.





In the early hours of May 29, Americans watched CNN reporter Omar Jimenez reporting live from protests in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Police approached. "We can move back to where you'd like," the journalist said calmly, holding up his press badge. "Just tell us where you want us to go. We will get out of your way."

US Protests: Press as targets

Then, on live TV, police arrested Jimenez and his crew.

Amid an outcry, the CNN journalists were quickly released. But hundreds more press freedom violations followed during nationwide demonstrations against the death in Minneapolis police custody of George Floyd. In fact, more than 600 press freedom incidents—in more than 70

by early August to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, which CPJ co-launched with the Freedom of the Press Foundation in 2017. CPJ chairs the Tracker's advisory board.

Most of the attacks involved law enforcement. Journalists said police singled them out for assault or hit them with rubber bullets or pepper spray even after they identified themselves as press. Dozens were arrested.

CPJ worked closely with the Tracker to find and report each violation—documentation that would help inform our advocacy and others'. Meanwhile, our Emergencies team answered journalists' questions about equipment, tear gas, and

advisory and a checklist for commissioning editors, and conducted workshops to get our tips to reporters across the country. Amid COVID-19, we also advised journalists on working while social distancing.

'Just tell us where you want us to go. We will get out of your way.'

CPJ pushed for improved practices and accountability—from police, mayors, and governors. We joined more than 100 organizations in a letter to authorities in Minnesota, urging them to ensure journalists' rights were upheld. And, in

an unusual step, CPJ's board of directors published an open letter to local and state officials, asking them to take immediate action.

We focused on local authorities because we knew it was unlikely that press freedom would have support at the federal level, as President Trump continued to harass and attack the press. In a report published in April, authored by former Washington Post Executive Editor Leonard Downie, Jr., CPJ found that Trump's tactics to undermine journalists' credibility have been grievously effective—especially dangerous in an election year and during a deadly pandemic. Globally, such rhetoric emboldens repressive leaders to abuse their own media.



Confronting COVID: Digital security

Digital security took on fresh importance with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and journalists' shift to working from home. CPJ's Emergencies team quickly adapted to ensure we were helping as many journalists as possible.

"We set up 'Ask An Expert' consultations with a focus on helping journalists cover the pandemic safely," said Ela Stapley, CPJ's safety technologist. "The sessions can be individual, customized consultations as well as group webinars."

In the first half of the year, the Emergencies team helped more than 170 journalists, from Bangladesh to Burundi and beyond, address concerns that ranged from the lack of personal protective equipment to digital security while working remotely.

Stapley said questions depend a lot on the region. "In countries where people are more used to working from home or have greater access to the internet, the questions revolve around how to ensure a secure conference call and how to contact people securely," she said. "In countries where people don't frequently work from home, the questions are about how to work more securely—usually from internet cafes—and how to store files safely and organize information when they no longer have access to a work computer and do not have devices of their own."

Stapley also helped journalists spot misinformation and phishing attempts related to COVID-19: "Criminals began creating emails and messages, pretending to be from hospitals, health bodies, and the WHO with the aim of gathering access to people's personal data or devices."

Of course, physical health has also been a huge concern for journalists reporting on the pandemic. CPJ's safety advisory on reporting in hospitals and talking to

'This is exactly why CPJ Emergencies was formed.'

sources was published in 42 languages and viewed by tens of thousands of people around the world. And we continue to provide customized advice.

"You answered all of my questions and I feel much more informed and as a result empowered," U.S. journalist Sarah Jones wrote to CPJ in June. "You have no idea how much your guidance means to me. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

We know the COVID-19 crisis is far from over. So we continue to do what we do best—support journalists. After all, "this is exactly why CPJ Emergencies was formed," said Maria Salazar Ferro, the team's director.

Voices from the **Ground**

Early in the year, CPJ began interviewing journalists who risked their health to report on the COVID-19 outbreak.

Here are some of their stories.



Stefania Battistini, Italy

Battistini, a reporter for Italian public broadcaster RAI, spoke to CPJ in March about covering the outbreak in a hospital in Italy.

One of our first assignments was to cover how hospitals are overwhelmed with the great number of patients. When we arrived ... I did not even have time to ask questions. ... It was dramatic to see the terror and the fear in the eyes of doctors and nurses, listening to them telling us how they themselves were scared, but at the same time how much they did not want to give up because otherwise they knew more people will die. It was like visiting hell

Photo: Stefania Battistini

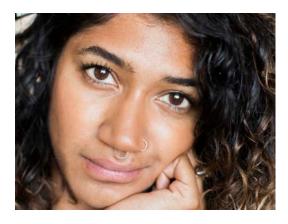


Zmnako Ismael, Iraq

Ismael, a freelance journalist who reported from Iraqi Kurdistan, told CPJ in May about covering the pandemic.

As a photographer, I had no choice but to continue to go out and cover what was happening. ... When I am working on the field, I follow [World Health Organization] advice and wear a mask and gloves and carry disinfectant and hand sanitizer to wash my hands often. The only problem that I faced is the malfunction of one of my cameras because I used disinfectant to clean it.

Photo: Zmnako Ismael



Gabriela Bhaskar, United States

Bhaskar, a freelance photographer in New York City, spoke to CPJ in April about how she felt it was her duty to report the news.

My husband and I keep having this conversation about whether or not to stay here. ... But as a journalist, the reason we do this work is to be able to provide information to the public. Every time I go out, his quarantine and self-isolation starts from day one. In addition to me, my husband also bears this burden. It's a great sacrifice.

Photo: Gabriela Bhaskar



Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, Somalia

Mumin, a freelance journalist, spoke to CPJ in April about reporting on the health crisis in Somalia.

We have seen cases where journalists who reported on the spread of the virus or wrote stories about the impact of the virus—such as a shortage of masks and sanitizers in the local markets—were either blocked or threatened. At least two others were pressured to retract their reporting because authorities were not happy with the way the journalists reported.

Photo: Abdalle Ahmed Mumin



Álvaro Navarro, Nicaragua

Navarro and his website Artículo 66 have been critical for Nicaraguans seeking information. He spoke to CPJ in late April.

Everything is centralized in the Ministry of Health. ... Private hospitals are prohibited from treating COVID-19 patients, and this makes it difficult for another voice to speak about this topic. ... This government does not explain anything, they limit the information, and what they publish seems to be very sketchy. It makes it extremely complicated to report on.

Photo: Álvaro Navarro



Raihana Maqbool, India

Magbool, a Kashmir-based reporter, described to CPJ in April the difficulties in covering the pandemic.

After August 5 [2019], we entered one lockdown [imposed by the Indian government]. ... This time, it is [a] different kind of lockdown. There is fear not just for one's life, but for the family as well. ... And this lockdown has made it more difficult. One fear that I have is getting caught in such a situation. [Security forces] don't care whether a person is a journalist or not. Sometimes even showing the identity is a risk.

Photo: Aliya Bashir



Laws against "fake news"

The pandemic has provided governments with a cover to wield laws criminalizing the spread of "fake news," "misinformation," or "false information"—and offered a reason to implement new ones. Over the past seven years, the number of journalists imprisoned on charges of "false news" has climbed.

Examples: South Africa, Puerto Rico

Free speech suspended

Some governments have revoked or suspended the right to free speech as an emergency measure. In April, Liberia's solicitor-general told reporters, "You cannot have 100 percent rights that you may exercise during normal times. Liberia is technically at war."

Examples: Liberia, Honduras

On- and offline threats, harassment

Government officials and private citizens have responded to journalists' critical reporting on the pandemic response with online and physical violence and threats. In places where the reporting environment was already hazardous, the situation has grown more fraught.

Examples: Chechnya, Haiti, Ghana

Restricted access to information

Authorities have suspended laws on freedom of information that allow journalists to request government data and records. Government proceedings usually attended by journalists have moved online, with varying degrees of access for the press. Now, access to information takes longer.

Examples: Brazil, United States

Surveillance and contact tracing

Governments around the world are monitoring mobile phone location data and rolling out new tracking apps, with limited oversight, to follow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The surveillance could imperil source confidentiality and could endure long after the crisis fades.

Examples: Italy, Germany, Austria, South Korea, South Africa, Israel

Journalists jailed

Arresting journalists has long been a tactic of authoritarian governments seeking to silence critical reporting. In December 2019, CPJ found at least 248 journalists behind bars. For journalists who contract COVID-19, imprisonment could be a death sentence. Still, the arrests continue.

Examples: India, Jordan, Somalia

Blunt censorship, online and off

Authorities in several countries have suspended the printing and distribution of newspapers in what they said was an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19. In other places, media regulators have blocked access to websites and removed articles with critical coverage.

Examples: Jordan, Oman, Morocco, Yemen, Iran, Tajikistan, Russia

Restricted freedom of movement

Authorities have restricted journalists' ability to move about freely, whether to report from a hospital or during a curfew. Some have required the press to have government-issued press credentials, which allows leaders to decide who gets counted as a journalist, potentially excluding some.

Examples: India, Nigeria

Expulsions and visa restrictions

In order to control the narrative of how governments are responding to COVID-19, some states are being inhospitable to foreign journalists, who in some places have traditionally enjoyed greater latitude than locals to report critically. Other governments are forcing the journalists out entirely.

Examples: China, United States, Egypt

Emergency measures

CPJ has documented how authoritarian rulers take an opportunistic approach to emergency measures that criminalize or restrict newsgathering. With many countries still under states of emergency that grant authorities power to rule by decree, even more restrictions could be on the way.

Examples: Hungary, Thailand

The COVID Crackdown: What **we see**

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, CPJ mobilized our resources to report on the challenges that journalists faced while keeping their communities and the public informed. We soon noticed an insidious trend.

The COVID Crackdown: What

Global leaders were cracking down on journalists and restricting press freedom by implementing measures that experts said could continue well into the future. CPJ recognized that some of these responses to the

pandemic could shift the long-term paradigm for journalism, similar to how the September 11, 2001, attacks fueled the global expansion of anti-terrorism laws that are still today used to imprison or silence journalists.

CPJ examined the prognosis for press freedom and outlined 10 symptoms to monitor. To read more, go to CPJ's website.

'What should I do?'

On January 19, in the fourth month of anti-government demonstrations in Lebanon, security officials noticed that live footage of the protests was being broadcast on the Facebook page of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. The officials traced the location of the feed and found a journalist at the scene. They immediately took him into custody.

American freelance reporter Nicholas Frakes wasn't the only journalist detained during the tension in the country. That month, CPJ reported on the detention of at least two other journalists and the assaults of several others, all of whom were reporting on the protests.

Security officials accused Frakes of covering the protests for *Haaretz*, a crime under Lebanese law. Haaretz denied any connection to the journalist. Frakes' name and address, as well as the allegations against him, were posted on social media.

On January 21, after nearly two days in solitary confinement, Frakes was released. The next day, he was told there was a credible threat of being kidnapped and killed if he remained in Beirut. He noted his house was under surveillance.

"I had a million thoughts going through my head," he told CPJ. "Should I stay or should I go? How serious should I take the threats? What should I do? In the end, I decided to temporarily leave the country for a couple of weeks to let things cool down."

That's when CPJ stepped in. We provided Frakes with an individual, customized session with our safety specialist and gave him a grant so that he could temporarily relocate.

Such work is at the heart of CPJ's mission.

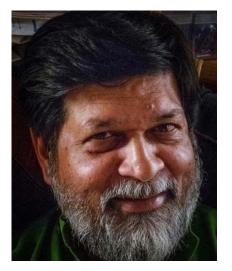
Such work is at the heart of CPJ's mission. For nearly two decades, we have provided non-financial and financial assistance, including for evacuation, exile, trauma therapy, prison support, and legal fees, to journalists who are under threat anywhere in the world. In 2019, CPJ provided support to 212 journalists, and distributed thousands in grants to 84 journalists.

While his relocation "would not have been possible without the help of CPJ," Frakes said, "honestly, what helped me the most was knowing that there were people out there who were willing to help me and to walk through everything with me and make sense of it all."



International Press Freedom Awards

CPJ is extremely proud to honor these courageous journalists with its 2020 International Press Freedom Awards. They have faced jail, legal action, threats, and harassment to bring us the news. Through their outstanding work, they continue to push the frontiers of press freedom.



Shahidul Alam, Bangladesh

Renowned Bangladeshi photojournalist Shahidul Alam was detained by police in August 2018, hours after he was interviewed on Al-Jazeera and posted a video on Facebook about student protests in the country. The next day, a Dhaka court ordered him to be held on allegations of spreading false information and propaganda against the government. When the journalist appeared in court, he said he had been tortured in custody.

CPJ and other groups advocated widely for his release. In November 2018, he was freed on bail after 102 days in detention. "Journalists speak truth to power," Alam said in a video CPJ published in April. "That is why, generally, they end up in jail."

Courtesy Shahidul Alam



Mohammed Mosaed, Iran

Mosaed is a freelance economic journalist who has investigated corruption and labor issues for several reformist magazines and newspapers, and now publishes his work on social media. In 2019, he was forced to resign from Shargh Daily, allegedly under pressure from allies of a government minister whom he had accused of corruption. Later that year, he was arrested after he posted to Twitter during an internet shutdown. He was released in early 2020, but detained again in February and interrogated after he criticized the government's lack of preparedness in responding to COVID-19. His Twitter account was then suspended.

Iranian officials have tried to cover up crucial information, threatened journalists, and suspended all newspaper printing and distribution, citing the need to reduce the spread of the pandemic as an excuse.

Farid Kamran Nia



Dapo Olorunyomi, Nigeria

Olorunyomi is the co-founder, CEO, and publisher of the Nigerian newspaper Premium Times, one of the most trusted newspapers in Nigeria. Both have been subjected to official harassment over the years. In 2017, police raided the newspaper's offices and arrested Olorunyomi and a reporter on allegations of defaming the chief of army staff. *Premium Times* stood its ground, and both journalists were released. In the 1990s, Olorunyomi was twice arrested for his reporting before he went into hiding. CPJ and other groups helped organize his escape into exile. "Without [CPJ]," he has said, "I believe I would be dead or in prison."

Olorunyomi has dedicated his life to holding the powerful to account and is a fierce advocate for press freedom.

Dapo Olorunyomi



Svetlana Prokopyeva, Russia

Prokopyeva is a regional correspondent for the U.S.-funded broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Russia, known as Radio Svoboda. In early 2019, armed officers raided her apartment, seized her equipment, passport, and personal belongings, and interrogated her at a police station. She was later charged with "justifying terrorism" in relation to a radio show she hosted in which she discussed a suicide bombing attack by a teenager. In October 2019, Prokopyeva wrote an open letter in which she said the charges against her were "a fist in the face of every journalist of our country."

In July, a court convicted Prokopyeva and ordered her to pay 500,000 rubles (US\$6,980) in fines. It also ordered the confiscation of her mobile phone and laptop but ruled that Prokopyeva could continue her journalistic work. The prosecutor had asked the court to sentence her to six years in prison.

2019 Supporters

The Committee to Protect Journalists is extremely grateful to the individuals, corporations, and foundations whose generosity makes our work possible. We also extend our gratitude to the many contributors who supported CPJ with gifts under \$1,000, not listed here due to space limitations. This list includes donors who made gifts from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019.

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Statement of financial position as of December 31, 2019

(with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2018)

Assets	12/31/2019	12/31/2018
Cash and cash equivalents	\$6,867,698	\$4,652,630
Pledges receivable, net	3,029,815	3,881,109
Prepaid expenses and other receivable	146,688	112,123
Investments held for term endowment (Note 4 and 6)	436,030	377,027
Investments held for long term endowment (Note 4 and 9)	13,788,119	12,433,227
Fixed assets, net (Note 5)	3,051,117	214,031
Security deposit	757,528	82,245
Total assets	\$28,076,995	\$21,752,392
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	1,353,238	564,797
Due to landlord	789,339	0
Deferred rent	0	34,856
Loans payable	1,443,848	0
Conditional contribution	400,000	400,000
Total liabilities	\$3,986,425	\$999,653
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions	8,015,942	4,405,203
With donor restrictions		
Restricted for specific purpose and time	2,663,487	4,291,287
Donor restricted endowment	13,411,141	12,056,249
Total net assets with donor restrictions	16,074,628	16,347,536
Total net assets	\$24,090,570	\$20,752,739
Total liabilities and net assets	\$28,076,995	\$21,752,392

Statement of functional expenses for the year ended December 31, 2019

(with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2018)

	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total Expenses 12/31/19	Total Expenses 12/31/18
Salaries	\$2,832,706	\$280,440	\$689,550	\$3,802,696	\$3,225,794
Payroll taxes and benefits	913,115	81,488	204,506	1,199,109	987,293
Professional fees (including in-kind)	2,361,361	322,613	537,839	3,221,813	1,943,208
Occupancy	423,295	74,513	91,728	589,536	512,890
Travel	433,281	2,216	123,545	559,042	553,970
Grants	213,833	0	0	213,833	312,130
Office supplies and maintenance	39,348	5,384	20,208	64,940	60,692
Telecommunications	53,949	7,256	7,004	68,209	46,516
Publications, printing, and postage	16,487	1,804	72,874	91,165	76,336
Food, facility, and entertainment	0	0	394,478	394,478	395,445
Insurance	36,685	3,427	8,599	48,711	49,272
Fees	19,268	13,258	33,275	65,801	86,302
Depreciation	98,081	7,390	18,540	124,011	128,175
Other	109,897	25,680	51,346	186,923	174,798
Total Expenses	\$7,551,306	\$825,469	\$2,253,492	\$10,630,267	\$8,552,821
Less: Cost of direct benefits to donors			(394,478)	(394,478)	(395,445)
Total Expenses	\$7,551,306	\$825,469	\$1,859,014	\$10,235,789	\$8,157,376

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AFF

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