

# The Erased 2024: Together against censorship

On World Press Freedom Day we turn all eyes on the danger of censorship and the hundreds of imprisoned journalists worldwide by launching the 'The Erased' campaign. Most of the time, the stories of imprisoned journalists remain untold - because what is not published cannot be read. Now, we make them visible. Media outlets and organisations worldwide have joined Free Press Unlimited in making a stand against censorship.

In 2023, CPJ registered 320 imprisoned journalists worldwide. The Erased uses a unique font that links every single one of these 320 journalists to a censored word, and erases these words from participating (news) websites around the world. This symbolises the importance of free and independent journalism, and the danger of censorship: it takes away our right to know.

## **Journalists as targets**

All over the world journalists face censorship while they attempt to publish about violations, to bring abuse of power to light, or to simply document what is happening in front of them. We see journalists becoming targets in conflicts. When we look at Gaza and the West Bank, all documented 17 arrests took place after 7 October 2023. For many of them the charges remain unknown. These journalists spoke about a cease fire, suppression and bombing before being detained.

## **Top jailors**

In Myanmar, where after the coup by the military democracy has crumbled, a staggering 43 journalists have been arrested in 2023. They wrote about human rights, violence, and disinformation. The top jailor is China, with 44 imprisoned journalists in 2023. A topic that is strictly censored is the pressing situation of the Uyghur people. Anything that relates to this is censored, from the name of the Xinjiang province that is home to this minority group, to the word concentration, following the accusations of the internment of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in concentration camps.

## **Making stories visible**

Besides making censorship visible, we also shine a light on the heroic journalists that face arrest, assaults or imprisonment. Each erased word symbolises a currently imprisoned journalist. As part of the campaign, people can click through to 'The Erased' website on which the erased words become visible, and where stories of journalists who faced imprisonment or legal threats are shared through in-depth interviews.

*"Me and 12 of my colleagues were detained by the Belarusian government. I was released after 10 months and was able to leave the country. However, I am still on the terrorist list in Belarus. Staying in journalism and continuing to talk about what is happening in Belarus is the only way out for me. As journalists we risk ourselves*

*for the future of our countries, for the sake of democratic values.” - Olga Loiko,  
Belarus, one of the featured journalists*

### **The unknown**

Even though we do our best to make visible what is happening to journalists all over the world while they report the truth, there are always cases without faces, the unknown journalists who disappear without a trace. Therefore, these 320 erased words, those stories of imprisoned journalists that we share, stand for all journalists who experience censorship by assault, arrest, or even death. They are risking their lives to bring abuse of power to light, and truth to the people.

We stand in solidarity and support. Now is the time to come together and fight against censorship. When journalists are silenced, we will raise our voice. Join us! Go to the ['The Erased' website](#).