UNESCO

World Trends in
Freedom of Expression and Media Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF **ASIA AND THE PACIFIC** 2017/2018

Title: *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Regional Overview Asia Pacific 2017/2018*

This complete *World Trends Report* (and executive summary in six languages) can be found at
en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017

The complete study should be cited as follows: UNESCO. 2018. *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development:
2017/2018 Global Report*, Paris

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of
any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its
authorities, or concerning the delimiation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and
do not commit the Organization. The same disclaimer applies to commissioned UNESCO publications cited in this study.

Sweden
Sverige

World Trends in
Freedom
of Expression
and Media Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2017/2018

ASIA PACIFIC

Contents

List of figures

Introduction

Introduction

This regional report discusses media trends regarding freedom, pluralism, independence and the safety of journalists in member-states of Asia and the Pacific. It covers the years from the start of 2012 to the start of 2017, with the fice year period referred to in these pages as 2012-2017. As a regional study, this is one of six subsections of the wider report, with the global analysis published separately as "World Trends on Freedom of Expression and Media Development 2017/2018", and which can be found at https://en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017.

All the reports follow the template of four trends: Media Freedom, Media pluralism, Media Independence and the Safety of Journalism. The background to these reports, as well as the elaboration of these categories as essential components of press freedom, can be found in the global study cited above.

For more about UNESCO's mandate and role in promoting freedom of expression and media development, readers are encouraged to visit https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression and sign up to our weekly newsletter at: https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression/news.

In several countries in this region, ongoing violence, civil war and conflict has resulted in economic, political and social shifts. Across most countries of the region, technological convergence coupled with increased access to online and social media has strengthened media pluralism. Social networks have become a defining feature of the daily lives of many citizens, and while such technologies are creating new avenues for expression they are also restricted by states as means of censorship and control.

An emerging trend in many countries is the privatisation of censorship traditionally carried out by governments. The disruptive implications of new technologies, such as the spread of fake news and online hate speech, has created the impetus for states to seek new ways of asserting sovereign power over transnational intermediaries. Self-regulation or co-regulation mechanisms are prevalent in the region, but these are now coupled with content regulation driven by automated decision-making mechanisms or by terms of service agreements that are not always aligned to international human rights standards. Countries across all sub-regions of Asia Pacific have created sectoral regulators that can order the removal of content. Telecom and internet service providers in several countries are either owned or controlled directly by the government or by businesses close to the government. Media and development has increasingly become concentrated in the hands of large corporations.

Satellite television, the digital switchover and rapidly rising mobile internet connectivity have multiplied the media platforms to which citizens have access. While expanding internet access has received much focus, other issues such as improving language accessibility and developing user capability, need more attention at the national, regional and global levels. The suspension of access to internet services by governments is also a growing trend in the region. The rise of circumvention tools like virtual private networks (VPNs) highlights the role technology plays in upholding media freedom and independence in a rapidly changing economy of communications. And yet, the limiting of access to such services during times of crisis but also as part of broader efforts control access to communications, is an emerging trend in some countries in Asia Pacific. Countering speech that incites or contributes to protracted violence, or that recruits for extremist causes is a serious concern in the region, particularly in countries with ongoing conflict or which are in transition from conflict.

As highlighted in the global report, there is growing awareness that platforms that support speech and expression can also be instrumentalized as a weapon for polarization by deliberately malicious actors. Private companies are increasingly investing in automated capacity to monitor and take down content that is deemed sensitive in order to avoid liability. Governments in several sub-regions of Asia are citing national security concerns to expand the use of biometrics and facial recognition technology in addition to surveillance abilities, particularly visible in south and Southeast Asia. Access to a plurality of media platforms has not dented pre-existing inequalities and in some cases has further exacerbated these differences. There are vulnerable segments of the population who are not being included, or who are left behind in the integration process. One such group is the forced migrant population, broadly referred to as refugees and asylum seekers. In many countries, governments target vulnerable sections of the population restricting their access to popular apps and services.

The safety of journalists has declined, and while the number of journalists killed has stagnated, it is high in comparison with other regions. Internet journalists are increasingly targeted and killed, and the region reflect high rates of impunity.

Trends in
Media Freedom

Overview

Since 2014, Asia Pacific has experienced a rising trend in censorship and strict measures for information control. Overall, the status of media freedom in the region is deteriorating, where journalists are commonly subjected to harassment, assault or imprisonment, and/or are often charged for defamation or libel.

A key trend of the declining status of media freedom in the region appears in the digital online sphere. The gains in technology utilised by journalists to publish critical content is paralleled by government actions to control, monitor and censor the internet. The region hosts countries, the governments of which have performed among the highest number of internet shutdowns in the world. "Fake news" has been politicised, and misinformation is often distributed via social media platforms during periods of unrest in order to discredit oppositional groups or disrupt protests.

Regional key trends in media freedom include the following:

- Continuing cases of violence, harassment, imprisonment and killing of journalists and bloggers;

- Criminal liability for defamation, along with use of libel and slander, present on-going threats to media freedom;

- Cases of online defamation are also on the rise;

- Judicial practices regarding civil law violations have created new limitations on press freedom;

- Intermediaries face increased demands for data localization, and sharing data with law enforcement agencies;

- Increases in hate speech during periods or events of socio-political, religious or ethnic unrest or conflict;

- Increases in the shutting down of access to mobile, internet applications and services by states;

- Data sovereignty and efforts by governments to restrict the transfer, or exert more control over, cross-border data transfers;

- Incomplete implementation of right to information and of freedom of information laws.

Limitations on media freedom

Although freedom of the press is legally protected in most South Asian countries, repression and attacks on freedom of speech are regularly reported.[1] Confronted by increasing criticism from the media, states throughout the region have intensified their efforts to stifle such criticism in the print and broadcast media.[2] The gains in technology utilised by journalists to publish critical content are paralleled by government efforts to clamp down on the internet.[3] Governments have either revamped existing anti-press laws or reinterpreted them to undermine the work of journalists.

Several countries in the region use vague colonial-era laws or have invoked new laws to jail bloggers, citizen journalists, media assistants, journalists, and democracy activists.[4] Journalists and bloggers face threats including persecution, life imprisonment or death for reporting on a range of issues in the region which includes criticism of the state, political parties, religion, corruption, criticism of the military and/or political campaigns. Since 2014, violent extremism targeting bloggers in the region is on the rise and has created a climate of self-censorship and fear.[5] Governments also pressurise media institutions to control media coverage through indirect measures such as taxation,[6] revocation of licensing, and ownership mandates.[7]

DEFAMATION AND OTHER LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON JOURNALISTS

In most countries in South, Southeast and East Asia, defamation can either become a civil and/or criminal dispute.[8] A lack of clear parameters that define when an incident can be considered as a criminal issue, often lead to a misuse of the law. Various cases in the East, South and Southeast Asia indicate that defamation laws are adopted by political interests as part of their agenda and to settle scores.[9]

Powerful elites, both individuals and corporations, use defamation legislation to file excessive and often unfounded complaints which threaten journalists with imprisonment. Such actions are sometimes called Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs) and have created a new system of censorship and are used as a means to take media houses to courts, and to threaten, harass, and intimidate journalists and critics.[10] Use of defamation for online expression is also on the rise in the region.

One recently enacted defamation law has received widespread condemnation, including from the United Nations.[11] The law allows journalists to be jailed if they are found questioning Sharia law or the affairs of the state. Since 2014 criminal defamation laws are being challenged both in South[12] and East Asian countries.[13]

Several countries in Asia Pacific have a history of communal violence and have enacted national policies prohibiting hatred against foreigners, immigrants or various religious, ethnic and sexual minorities. The dynamic of hate speech varies a great deal within national and regional contexts though in South and East Asian countries where hate speech continues to pose a social problem.[14]

---

[1] Neyazi 2017.
[2] Deustche Welle 2017a.
[3] Baumgartner 2017.
[4] Reporters Without Borders 2017a.
[5] Moosa and Sclutz 2017.
[6] Vanderklippe 2017.
[7] York and Lacambra 2018.

[8] Sharma 2016.
[9] Southeast Asian Press Alliance 2015.
[10] Rujivanarom 2016; Chakrabarti 2013; Sen 2016.
[11] Aneez and Srilal 2016.
[12] Parthasarthy 2017.
[13] Sang-Hun 2016.
[14] Osaki 2017.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA FREEDOM**

Despite stringent rules governing the combating of hate speech, implementation is often lacking as it often depends on the state of anti-discrimination and equality-protecting frameworks. In many countries the dominant majority and religious authorities define boundaries of offensive and permissible expression.[15] Another emerging dynamic for South and Southeast Asian countries, is that the groups demanding censorship of offensive speech are the same ones actively attacking minority beliefs and practices.[16] Governments have been arguing for stricter regulation for hate speech in response to use of new technologies to incite violence and hatred. There has been growing activism and civil society action to tackle hate speech in the region.[17]

 Prohibiting racial and religious insult as a national policy was inherited from the British colonial period, and is common within the region. The use of blasphemy laws has increased in severity between 2014-2017 and while blasphemy laws apply to all religions, they are being disproportionately used against religious minorities in the states where blasphemy laws still exist.[18] Apostasy laws are less common worldwide: they are found in 25 countries in only three regions of the world, and Asia Pacific is home to seven of those countries.[19]

A Pew Research Center analysis found that, as of 2014, about a quarter of the world's countries and territories (26 per cent) had anti-blasphemy laws or policies, and that more than one-in-ten (13 per cent) nations had laws or policies penalizing apostasy.[20] Twelve countries in Asia Pacific have blasphemy laws where punishments for transgressions vary from fines and/or imprisonment to the death penalty.[21] More people are awaiting the death penalty or serving life sentences for blasphemy in one country in South Asia than any other country in the world.[22]

'Fake news' is on the rise in the region.[23] Violence has been especially common in one country, where racist, anti-Islamic rumors and "fake news" played a key role in initiating a humanitarian crisis due to the persecution of an ethic minority group.[24] Much misinformation spreads through social media, and in response the region's governments are increasingly using existing laws to control online content.[25]

Another emerging trend in the region relates to the use of social media platforms' and messaging apps to spread misinformation, propaganda and to justify prevalent narratives. In Asia, fake news is spread mainly for political rather than economic or anti-scientific reasons.[26] Misinformation tactics are particularly deployed to disrupt protests, silence critics and make it difficult to share reliable information in a timely manner.[27] The spread of the fake information poses the threat of inciting hatred in Asia's multiracial and multi-religious society.[28]

The distribution and creation of misinformation, and its impact, is affording governments the opportunity to restrict media content and make "fake news" an offence.[29] Several Southeast countries are promoting new legislation or expanding existing regulation to ensure that social media and messaging platforms be held liable to legal action if their platforms facilitate the spread of false information.[30] Fact checking websites led by citizens and media activists have sprung up in many countries in the region but their effectiveness has not yet been studied.[31]

---

[15] Cherian 2015.
[16] Cherian 2015.
[17] Ethical Journalism Network 2016.
[18] Ochab 2017.
[19] Theodorou 2016.
[20] Theodorou 2016.

[21] Bashir 2016.
[22] Liben 2017.
[23] Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016.
[24] Washington Post 2017.
[25] The Diplomat 2018.
[26] Parth and Bengali 2017.

[27] Hutt 2017.
[28] Combalcier 2016.
[29] Japan Times 2018.
[30] Tech Wire Asia 2017.
[31] Kumar 2017.

INTERNET CURBS, CUT-OFFS AND CONTENT REMOVAL

The number of reported incidents of governments rendering internet and mobile access unusable for a specific duration, targeted at a specific population or location is on the rise across Asia-Pacific. Governments preventively block communication as a now standard approach to defining prohibitions and then enforcing them.[32] In some countries, governments target specific platforms such as virtual private networks,[33] instant messaging service providers[34] and voice over internet protocol calling applications.[35]

In 2016, South Asia led the world in internet shutdowns[36] incurring economic losses reportedly amounting to USD($) 1.1 billion due to cutting off access.[37] The increasing trend among authorities suspend access to technology platforms often occurs for extended periods, and is evident across both democratic and authoritarian countries in the region.[38] One country in the region has shut down the internet 124 times since 2012, and over half of these shutdowns occurred in 2017 alone.[39]

The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression has issued a statement against such shutdowns in Asia Pacific remarking, "… the internet and telecommunications bans have the character of collective punishment and fail to meet the standards required under international human rights law to limit freedom of expression." [40] The number of civil society organizations, [41] journalists,[42] and academics[43] that track and monitor shutdowns to create awareness of their impact on media freedoms has increased since 2012.[44]

In some countries, state agencies issue detailed instructions to news outlets, websites, and social media administrators on whether and how to cover breaking news stories and manage related commentary.[45]

Government directives on media coverage stipulate 'negative' actions, such as deleting an article, not sending reporters to cover a particular event, or closing a website's comment sections. Governments regularly target reporting on official wrongdoing and foreign affairs, the reputation of the ruling political party or individual officials, public policy on health and safety, sports regulation, the economy, social unrest and civil society perceptions. Governments also issue directives or make unofficial demands for 'affirmative' actions such as promoting the party line, or republishing copy from official or selected news sources.[46]

[32] Rahman 2016.
[33] Brokin 2017.
[34] NG, Yiu Shu 2017.
[35] Russell 2016.
[36] SAMSN Digital Hub 2017a.
[37] Brookings Institute 2016.
[38] Human Rights Watch 2017.
[39] Bhattacharya 2018.

[40] Cook 2018.
[41] Barron 2017.
[42] C Kaye 2017.
[43] Software Freedom Law Centre 2017.
[44] SAMSN Digital Hub 2017a.
[45] Internet Monitor 2018
[46] International Federation of Journalists 2017.

Across the region, a consistent and growing trend has been the differentiation in the authorities' reaction to content, depending on whether it is being delivered online or through a traditional medium.[47] In the past, measures applied by governments to censor traditional media have included litigation, intimidation and cronyism. Technology has challenged these censorship measures but it has also created new modes of censorship.[48] Emerging evidence also suggests that restrictions on mainstream media are shifting away from direct censorship in favour of vague and broad content regulation.[49] In particular, South-east and East Asian countries have tightened control over video and audio to eliminate a range of content, including the depiction of homosexuality.[50]

Censorship measures for online broadcasting media are a relatively new phenomenon in the region.[51] Across East, South and South East Asian countries, transnational companies are subject to censorship demands as government restrict online content. Many governments have taken advantage of existing mechanisms in social media to help block 'illegal' content by citing existing laws against what they deem to be unacceptable content.[52]

In Southeast Asia this has resulted in the broadening of the scope of content being targeted.[53] Laws are vaguely formulated so that they can be used by governments to suppress and censor a wide range of expression, including emojis, memes and satire.[54] Enforcing national content standards on transnational platforms has created fragmented frameworks as global platforms have taken on the role of gatekeepers.[55] Private corporations actively cooperate with government requests for information about citizens, delete journalistic content, and participate in shutting down internet access.[56]

The compliance of such companies is incentivised through strict licensing terms, or through the application of intermediary liability regimes. Internet giants not only accomodate demands to censor certain content but there is growing evidence of self-censorship over the interpretation of cultural norms[57] and sensitivities.[58] Transnational corporations have improved transparency reporting on government requests, but local and national platforms are lagging behind in publishing such reports.

A recent development that has gained traction in the region, and which may become a trend in future, is the efforts by countries to establish their own appropriate balance to the application of the so-called Right to be Forgotten (RTBF). This potential trend is particularly visible in Southeast[59] and South Asia[60], where legal challenges on RTBF have arisen across several jurisdictions in the region.[61] The right is being used to remove and alter court records, expand the category of 'state secrets' and restrict dissent.[62] The application of RTBF in conjunction with other existing laws has implications for not only search engines but also broader concerns about free expression and censorship of information online.

---

[47] Wu, D 2017a.
[48] BBC News 2017.
[49] Palatino 2014.
[50] Channel News Asia 2017.
[51] Pak and Danubrata 2016.
[52] Russell 2016.
[53] Peel and Kuchler 2017.
[54] Agarwal 2018.
[55] Reporters Without Borders 2017b.
[56] Reporters Without Borders 2017.
[57] Matthew 2016.
[58] Cox 2017.
[59] Mundy 2015.
[60] Varagur 2016.
[61] Freischlad 2016.
[62] Russell 2017.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Violent extremism has been a threat in Asia for decades.[63] Since 2012, transnational terrorist groups have continued to seek to exploit regional instability and conflict such as separatist movements, local grievances and/or religiously inspired terrorism, and have increased their use of online and social media in the region.[64] Several countries[65] in Southeast[66], South[67] and East Asia[68] are using the fight against violent extremism to undermine journalistic practices, such as source protection and on-the-ground reporting and to impose greater controls over independent media organizations and expression on the internet.

Between 2014 and 2017 several countries in the region have increased efforts both at the regional and national level to curtail rising violent extremism and the growing number of terrorist bases in the region.[69] The leaders of six countries from Asia Pacific who met with the G20 Group in Hamburg in 2017 issued a Statement on Countering Terrorism calling for industry cooperation to provide lawful and non-arbitrary access for national security and filtering, and the detection and removal of content that incites terrorist acts.[70]

Between 2012 and 2014, several television channels in South Asia have been taken off-air after reporting on national security threats and terrorism.[71] Governments in some countries are also approaching courts to seek bans on media coverage of ongoing trials which relate to acts of terrorism.[72] Independent print and online news outlets which publish criticism of governments, or undertake investigative reporting to expose state corruption, stories related to terrorism and other human rights violations, are regularly banned throughout the region.

In 2015, Malaysia hosted a Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism. The United Nations Secretary-General has also unveiled a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) and called upon all states to develop national plans on PVE, which some countries have begun working on.[73]

Mindful that an exclusive use of security-focused and hard line approach could backfire to create a new generation of extremists, countries are also adopting a softer approach with Islamic militants using spiritual guidance, counselling and vocational training.[74] Following the Sydney Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit held in June 2015, several stakeholders including governments, security forces, intelligence agencies and civil society organizations have collaborated to create a compendium of counter-narratives for the region.[75] The initiative is expected to create a living document that captures diverse good practices approaches to counter-messaging informed by key bodies of research.[76]

---

[63] Owen 2017.
[64] Westerman 2017.
[65] Radsch 2016.
[66] PTI 2017a.
[67] Rana 2016.
[68] Agence France-Presse 2014.
[69] Sputnik News 2017.

[70] G20 Leaders Summit 2017.
[71] Singh 2016.
[72] Times Of India 2018.
[73] UNSG 2016.
[74] Eileen NG 2016.
[75] Sydney CVE Summit 2015.
[76] Zeiger 2016.

Access to information and privacy protections

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Figure 1-1 below shows open data trends from 2013 to 2015: scores beyond this period are not yet available. The open data index is an indicator which assesses and evaluates the general openness of a government in allowing the general public to access its data portal. The higher the score the more open the government. Evidence from Figure 1-1 shows limited access to information access in the Asia Pacific region, as the regional average measure is lower than the global average for the period 2013 to 2015.

Figure 1-1: Open data score on the openness of governments from 2013 to 2015

Open data score
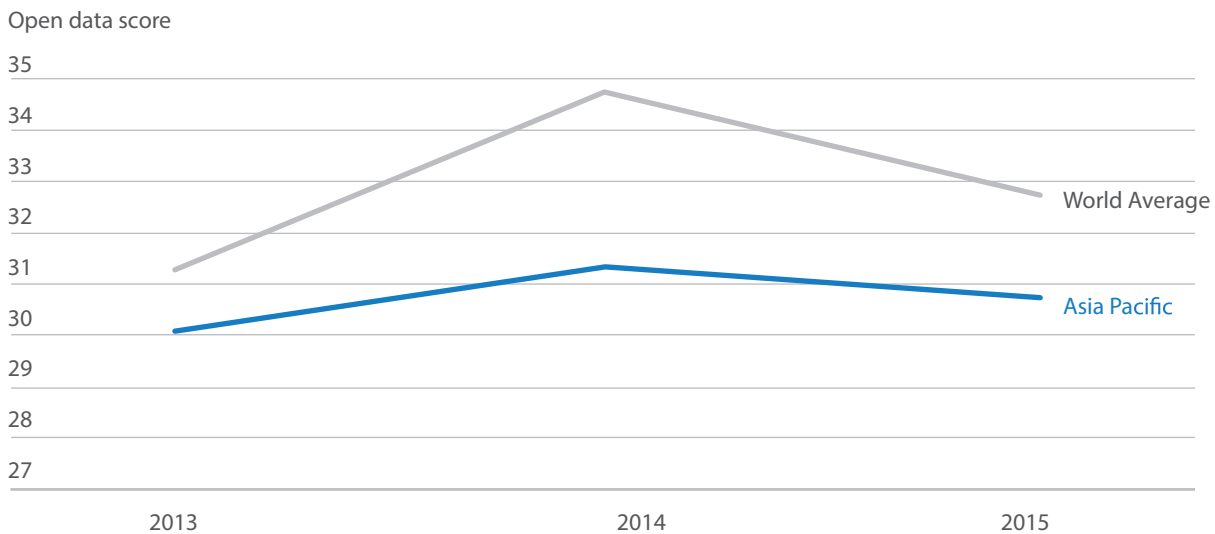
Source: Open data

Largely due to efforts of grassroots organizations that have pushed for the adoption of access to information, the positive trend of an awareness of the access to information rights of citizens has increased in Asia. Countries without information laws significantly outnumber those with such laws in the region, and yet, initiatives advocating for FOI have grown stronger. 22 countries provide constitutional or legislative rights for freedom of information (FOI) and the region includes a diverse cross sample with regard to the quality of implementation of such laws and rights, from the best in the world to the worst.

Some Asian countries lead the world in right to information legislation having created progressive mechanisms for access and enforcement. Some were early adopters and leaders in the establishment right to information (RTI) laws, but now have outdated legislation that requires updating. Others have been discussing and drafting right to information laws for many years, but have yet to pass them into laws. Finally, a few countries retain government-held information in a closed fashion, regarding it as government property and disallow its public release. In countries where RTI laws exist, governments have incorporated certain exemptions. Such provisions have led to the trend of information requests not being honored across several countries particularly in South Asia.[77]

Amongst some countries with strong legislation, access to information has only marginally improved as it is undermined by tightening policies and cultures of resistance to transparency. Only 2 countries feature in the top 10 countries ranked in the assessment of FOI implementation by the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD).[78] Most other countries did not score well on parameters such as simplifying requesting procedures, exceptions and refusals, process for appeals to rejection of requests, sanctions and proposals, and promotional measures to educate the citizens on accessing the right.

FOI implementation is hampered by a variety of factors in the region, including bureaucratic resistance, shortcomings in the ability of public officials to process requests, insufficient public awareness, and the need to strengthen compliance with proactive disclosure obligations and ensure coherence with other legislation.[79] In few countries, access to information is treated as a privilege not a right, and requests have been denied without justification or recourse to appeal. In other cases, information is withheld from those not deemed to have a valid interest in the situation in question. Transparency during disasters is poor, and across South and Southeast Asia, information on development issues and the aid being allocated to alleviate them, has also been generally lacking.

In many countries, public awareness of FOI law is low, and governments do little to publicize the right to information. In many cases officials often resist all attempts to share information.[80] Violence towards those who request information has increased, with several information requesters being killed for their efforts to access information.[81] Despite the lack of awareness of the law, demand for information has increased more generally, spurred on by civil society's use of digital technologies. Some governments have responded with investment in ICT-based solutions to make information more easily accessible to the citizenry.[82] Open Data initiatives relating to budgets, environmental hazards and other important information have been established to assist civil society in accessing information. Regional efforts are also growing, such as the E-ASEAN Framework Agreement, which contemplates the need to use ICTs to enhance transparency.[83]

---

[77] Freedominfo.org
[78] Centre for Law and Democracy 2016.
[79] Article 19 2015
[80] Article 19 2015
[81] Dhawani 2016
[82] Article 19 2015
[83] ASEAN 2015b.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA FREEDOM**

PRIVACY, SURVEILLANCE AND ENCRYPTION

Several Asian countries have created or are in the process of creating pervasive surveillance systems. Surveillance programmes in Asia have provided new ways for governments to access metadata, track citizens and have unfettered access to private internet communications.[84]

Several countries are going beyond institutionalizing mass surveillance mechanisms[85] and are integrating new points for data collection for tracking of citizens through increased use of CCTV cameras, facial recognition and biometrics. Countries in South and Southeast Asia are integrating the use of biometrics in financial systems,[86] for travel and entry into the country,[87] for exercising the right to vote, and the delivery of essential services[88] including internet access and mobile services[89]. Several largescale biometric projects are being established in developing countries, while conversely, projects linking services to biometrics face more opposition in larger developed nations.[90]

There is an emerging debate on encryption in Asia. Several conservative and non-liberal governments in the region formally disallow different forms of client-side encryption and the access to and use of encryption tools and services by citizens on security grounds.[91] Several countries have laws mandating decryption on-demand, or stipulating the strength of lawful encryption, or require individuals to seek regulatory authorization for using encrypted platforms.[92] In a few countries Virtual Private Network (VPN) services are being shut down by governments that seek to restrict their use for circumventing censorship or surveillance.[93]

PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES AND WHISTLE-BLOWING

In East Asia, despite UN requests[94], some countries have enacted laws under which whistleblowers, journalists, and bloggers face up to ten years in prison if convicted of publishing information obtained 'illegally'. There has been a rise in the number of civil society organisations that have been harassed, had their finances restricted, or have been forced to shut down.[95] Governments have also introduced new foreign funding regulations to limit international influence.[96]

In 2017, UNESCO and OHCHR brought together key stakeholders, including Human Right Commissions to identify and develop action-oriented recommendations to improve the protection of journalists and reinforce the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity were identified.[97]

---

[84] TCN News 2016.
[85] Mitra 2017.
[86] Ahmed 2017.
[87] Payton 2016.
[88] Population and Development Review 2017.
[89] Spencer 2017.
[90] Lee 2016.
[91] Malcolm 2017.

[92] Amnesty 2017.
[93] Wu 2017.
[94] Violaine Martin 2013. https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/11/456052-independent-un-experts-seriously-concerned-about-japans-special-secrets-bill
[95] Amnesty 2017.
[96] Sherwood 2015.
[97] UNESCO 2017.

Internet governance and media freedom

Since 2012, some countries have resurrected expansive framings of information and data sovereignty in internet governance forums and policy spaces, proposing a variety of plans and technological modalities aimed at data localization.[98] East Asian countries have demanded that foreign firms ensure third party access to systems by creating back doors or by providing the source code. Other countries have enacted legislation mandating explicit regulatory permissions for data transfers.

South Asian countries have implemented data localization as a piecemeal solution to specific issues such as prohibiting the export of personally identifiable health records, local storage of data collected using public funds, and the regulation of cloud services. A number of markets in the region have not joined this trend.[99] The arguments for such regulations include enhancing national security, protecting personal privacy, aiding law enforcement, and preventing foreign surveillance, in addition to appeals to the principle of sovereignty.[100] Governments also restrict the transfer of data across borders and implement data localization policies as a short-term means of promoting economic development via the construction of in-country data centres and the creation of highly-skilled technical jobs.[101]

Five countries from Asia Pacific have been organizing national Internet Governance Forum (IGF).[102] China, Japan and Pakistan have approval to organize national IGF but were yet to organize these at the time of writing. Since 2010, countries from the region have been participating at regional IGF.

Gender equality and media freedom

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action stressed the need for women to have greater access to media, both with regard to creating content and in decision-making, and also called for an end to gender stereotyping. The 20-year regional review of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action noted efforts the Beijing+20 countries at achieving gender equality in the region.[103] Normative frameworks and institutional structures for promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls exist across Asia and the Pacific. While there is near universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, many countries have recorded reservations and many have not ratified the Optional Protocol.

At the national level, constitutions and legislation uphold the equal rights of women and men, girls and boys, but are not universally comprehensive or in place in all countries. National institutions and measures for promoting and protecting, and addressing violations of, human rights are also in place in some countries in Asia and the Pacific.[104] However, women and girls continue to experience violations of their human rights, and as reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, which include more than 20 countries from the region.

---

[98] FTI Consulting 2016.
[99] Manyika et al 2016.
[100] Chander and Lê 2015.
[101] Srivas 2016.

[102] Internet Governance Forum.
[103] UNESCAP 2015.
[104] UNESCAP 2015.

The review of the Beijing platform for the region highlighted that further measures are required, such as pertaining to the enforcement of legislation, legal literacy campaigns, women and girls' unfettered access to justice and accountability within the law enforcement and judicial sectors. These trends impact on how media freedom plays out for women.

In relation to the media, the UNESCAP review identified that two areas of concern are the engagement of women and girls with the media, and the portrayal of women and girls in the media. A UNESCO and IFJ study released in 2015 finds that in many countries across Asia Pacific, women media professionals have increased their number in the newsrooms, but they still represent only 3 out of 10 news staff and often earn less than their male counterparts, while struggling to reach decision-making positions.[105]

Legislative or policy measures to promote the balanced and diverse portrayal of women and girls exist in very few countries. Where laws governing the portrayal of women are in place, these usually apply restrictions to pornography, video voyeurism and the portrayal of violence against women and girls.

Women's contribution in the fields of media and journalism has largely remained unrecognised and as a response a number of organizations have launched awards and prizes at both national and regional level. The Women's Empowerment (WE) Journalism Awards, Trust Women Awards, the Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) Awards, South Asian Journalists' Association, and the Osborn Elliott Prize For Excellence in Journalism on Asia are some of the more recognized awards in the region.[106]

While the use of mobile internet is increasing across the region,[107] there are still many barriers to accessing the internet for women. Smartphone penetration is higher than desktop penetration in many countries, and in several countries, women spend more time on app usage than on the web.[108] Across the region there is a strong relationship between per capita income and internet access, and smartphone ownership.[109] Across low-income countries in the region, the gender gap in mobile phone ownership is due to a combination of low household income and traditional gender roles; men and women who leave the house for work or studies get priority for mobile ownership. In advanced economies of the region, both age and gender have an effect on the social media activities of internet users, with women and younger adults most likely to engage daily access social media. The lack of infrastructure, a predominant familiarity with cellular phones rather than the internet, affordability, religious barriers, and use of the internet being taboo for social, structural and political reasons, as well as a lack of support from the government, are some barriers that exclude women, especially marginalized women, from access.

In countries where the media industry experiences instability and where journalists are regularly threatened, intimidated and often killed, gender issues and inequities are often side-lined.

---

[105] Gonzalez and Ito 2015.
[106] Asia Society 2017.
[107] Statista Distribution of internet users in Asia Pacific 2015.
[108] Mobile Apps in APAC 2016.
[109] Pew Research Center 2016.

Trends in
Media Pluralism

Overview

While the uptake of digital online media is on the increase in the Asia Pacific region, affordability remains one of the biggest barriers to broadband access in developing economies. Television remains the dominantly consumed media type in the region, but state-owned service broadcasters experience difficulties in adjusting to the new realities of digital media, and due to political and regulatory constraints and/or a lack of audience demand, have been unable to adequately respond to the advancement of digital media, and as a result, are seeing a drop in audience numbers. Regional and local newspapers are in a similar position, as they compete with digital platforms and social networks for news consumption and content, and as the regularity of newspaper readers has stagnated as readers migrate to accessing news from digital media. A slowdown in the rate of advertising revenue has put traditional media under financial strain.

The polarisation of the media sphere is largely driven by linguistic, ethnic, and regional diversities, as well as the existence of subnational identities within a particular nation, and "fake news" or misinformation increasingly appears within the region, distributed via online platforms and which is often politically or commercially motivated.

Trends in media pluralism in the Asia Pacific region include the following:

- An increased availability of digital platforms for expression and user-generated content, while the digital switchover has expanded plurality of television and radio channels;

- Growing diversity is shaping consumption habits, economic models and media systems;

- A rise of polarized pluralism, diversity of information and programming, and a fragmentation of audiences. Countries that report increased polarization and sectarianism also report media capture and polarization in both traditional and new media platforms;

- Content filtering takes places due through algorithms used for decision-making in private platforms;

- Cross-media ownership issues have grown due to increased vertical and horizontal consolidation in markets across Asia Pacific;

- Decreasing revenues and lack of diversity in sources of funding has led media outlets to experiment with new business models;

- Despite increased regional and national efforts to counter marginalization, women continue to be underrepresented in media workforce, particularly in decision-making roles.

Access

INTERNET AND MOBILE

The countries of Asia Pacific account for 55 per cent of total global population. Of the 4.4 billion people in the region more than half remain offline.[110] The countries where offline populations are concentrated are few, with just three countries accounting for 45 per cent of the total global offline population in 2013,[111] and a total of six countries accounting for 55 per cent of the total offline population (including two countries from Asia Pacific and one from Africa).[112] The region also accounts for 50 per cent of global internet users and 49 per cent of global mobile connections. The proportion of population using internet is on an increase as shown in Figure 2-1 below., In social media usage, Asia Pacific accounts for 56 per cent of total users worldwide.[113] Mobile growth fuelled by access to low-cost smartphones, 3G and LTE rollouts and an increase in content and applications from Over The Top (OTT) providers is driving internet adoption across the region.

Figure 2-1: **Percentage of individuals using the internet in the Asia and Pacific region**
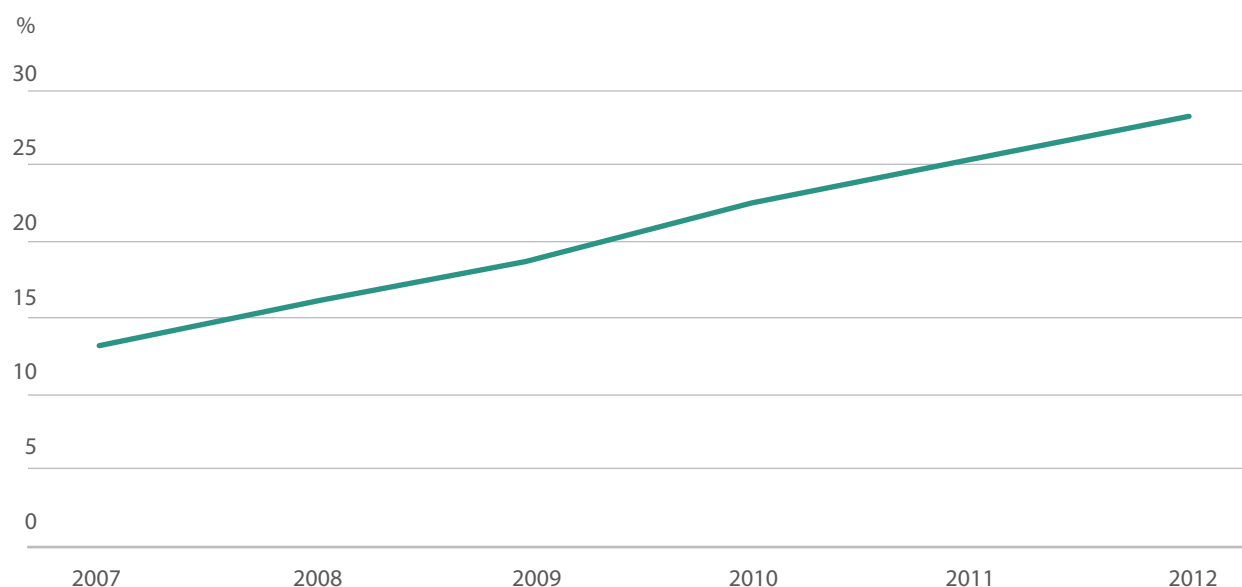
Source: ICT

Mobile internet, in particular, holds potential for access and media pluralism. Overall, 47 per cent of those surveyed by the Internet Society use a mobile device as their primary means of going online. This figure is higher among users below 25 years old (61 per cent), and those who live in Southeast Asia (52 per cent), and much lower among those who live in developed economies in the region (38 per cent). A total of 97 per cent of those surveyed access the internet through their mobile device regularly, with 90 per cent doing so everyday, and 7 per cent several times a week.

---

[110] Internet Society 2016.
[111] ITU, UNESCO 2016.
[112] McKinsey 2014.
[113] Internet Society 2016

However, beneath the region's 42 per cent mobile broadband penetration are large discrepancies. In advanced economies, mobile penetration is at more than 100 per cent, but drops down to less than 10 per cent in less developed economies. Asia Pacific's average cellular speed, at 10.9Mbps, belies an uneven spread of 13Mbps or more for developed countries, and 3Mbps for developing countries.[114] An average smartphone connection in Asia Pacific would consume 1.5 to 2Gb of mobile data per month, but large differences prevail as mobile users some countries use more than a fifth less, at 200- 300Mb.[115]

Smartphones continue to be the mobile device of choice for internet users in the region. Across all age groups surveyed, smartphone ownership does not go below 94 per cent (45-59 year olds), peaking at 96 per cent among 15-24 year olds. The trend is reversed for other mobile devices. Averaging at 43 per cent and 8 per cent respectively, both tablet and wearable device ownership are lowest among younger respondents. Only 2.5 per cent of respondents use the internet on their mobile device less than twice a week. A total of 88 per cent of users who go online less than twice a week on their mobile devices also did not have mobile as their primary internet access device, suggesting that respondents who use mobile internet infrequently may be going online through other means. Internet of Things (IoT) is expected to be a key driver of expanding access and deployment of dedicated networks as billions of devices get connected in Asia Pacific. It is estimated that there will be 8.6 billion 'things' connected in the Asia Pacific by 2020, accounting for 29 per cent of the world's connected devices, 1 out of 5 of which will be in China.[116]

Affordability remains one of the biggest barriers to broadband access in developing economies. In landlocked countries in Asia and small island states in the Pacific, the cost of access can be up to 18 per cent of monthly average gross national income[117], which is far higher than the ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission target of five per cent. The challenges in Asia Pacific require the use of technology that can be deployed quickly and at low cost to create a prompt impact. Recent developments in satellite technology have reduced the costs of operating and maintaining networks while at the same time increasing performance and overall service reliability/availability.

Despite hard won gains, connectivity remains an obstacle for many, particularly for Small Islands and Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific, where major gaps persist in access to reliable fibre-optic and satellite broadband services. Recently, satellite-enabled broadband projects have accelerated in countries with limited broadband access in the region.[118] Use of satellite for high speed internet to areas where terrestrial alternatives either did not exist or were cost-prohibitive for the network service providers has been popular with small and large countries in the region.[119]

---

[114] Internet Society 2016.
[115] Internet Society 2016.
[116] Internet Society 2017.
[117] Internet Society 2016.
[118] Cosseboom 2015.
[119] Jameson 2017.

BROADCAST MEDIA

Figure 2-2 below shows radio, television and newspaper consumption in the Asia and pacific region. Radio and television remained highly consumed media types in the region over the period 2012 to 2016.

Figure 2-2: Media consumption

Time spent in minutes
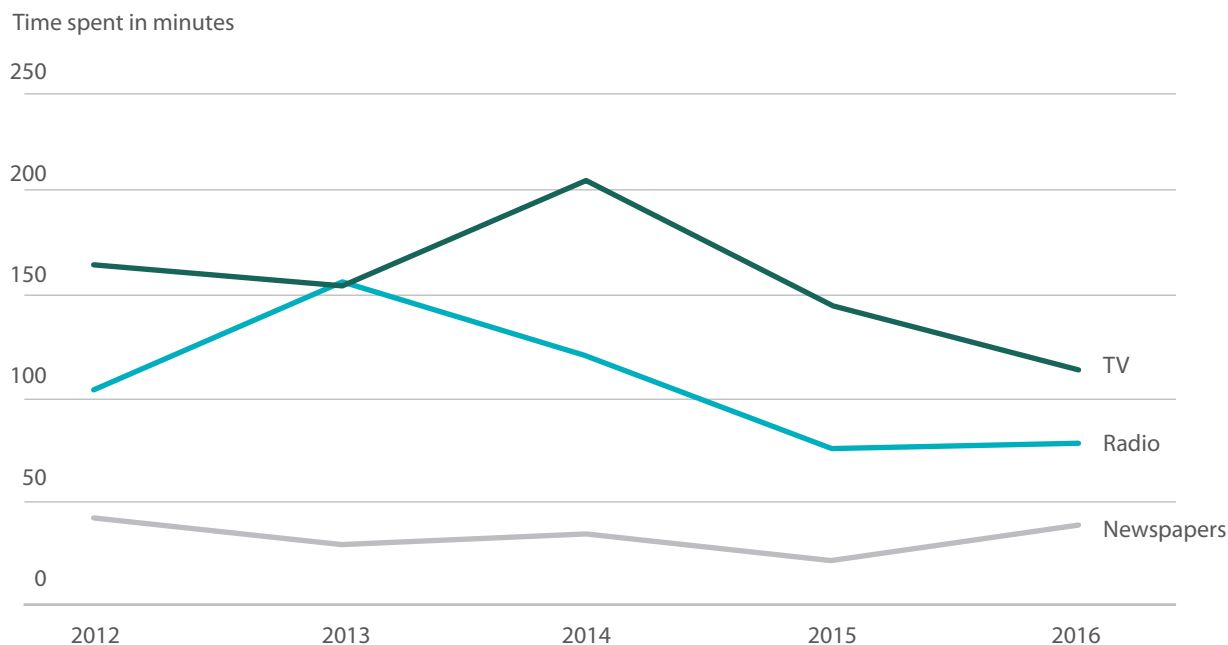
Source: World Press Trends

Technological and structural changes across the broadcasting sector have paved the way for multiple platforms for delivery of content from analogue or digital terrestrial broadcast, satellite, cable or Internet Protocol (IP) and OTT. Regional content service providers seeking seamless transmission capabilities to expand and diversify their offerings have explored opportunities emerging for direct-to-home (DTH) platforms, HD broadcasting, special-event programming, IPTV and Mobile TV services, and broadband applications. Convergence technologies have blurred the definitions between television and digital broadcasting. Nevertheless, traditional broadcasting of television continues to thrive even across the most mature markets in the region.

The distribution of the funds, and implementation of programs associated with such funds, is lacking across most countries. The ITU provides national roadmap reports for countries in Asia Pacific that have implemented or are in the process of the digital switchover. National Roadmaps on Transition to Digital Broadcasting for 24 countries in the Asia Pacific[120] has issued Guidelines on Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting including Cable, Satellite, and IPTV.[121]

---

[120] Bunnag 2015.
[121] ITU 2015.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA PLURALISM**

An emerging trend affecting the traditional broadcasting industry is the increase of new and bundled services. The migration of cable networks to transmission over the internet coupled with significant broadband penetration, increases in bandwidth and the proliferation of digital devices are driving this trend particularly in South and Southeast Asia.

Satellite television is also growing in the region resulting from the digital television boom, increased broadband demand and a need to provide access in the remotest areas. The markets are highly competitive, particularly due to the presence of national and regional satellite operators. Satellite technology alone, or coupled with existing terrestrial or wireless networks, is enabling broadcast transmission platforms to expand their programme distribution into new markets.

High-Definition (HD) content[122] is increasing among DTH programmers in the region and feeds of breaking news and entertainment to hand-held equipment are becoming commonplace[123]. However, this growth is hampered by highly fragmented regulatory structures and markets at different stages of development. Varied geographies, both within countries and the region, along with a hugely dispersed population, continues to serve as a challenge to access.

State-administered and owned broadcasters are also facing difficulties as they come to terms with the new realities of digital media. The process of adjustment plays out differently in each national context. Some have been able to keep up with the structural challenges and new competitors, and explore the opportunities afforded by new services and delivery platforms. Others, due to political and regulatory constraints or a lack of audience demand, have been less able to respond and have seen their audiences dwindle.

Increased political choice may potentially lead audiences away from state-controlled media. However, according to the Mapping Digital Media (MDM) project, the largest international study of media policy ever conducted, suggests that this may not be the case. In 43 of the countries studied where reliable data could be found, 32 of the public media providers appeared in the top five most used sources of news.[124]

The growth in smartphone users and increased political, commercial spending on advertising, are some of the factors driving the growth of the FM radio broadcasting market in Asia-Pacific.[125] Across most countries a mix of state and privately- owned radio broadcasters serve huge radio audiences. While public service broadcasters have invested in setting up extensive radio networks for coverage of the whole population, commercial broadcasters are addressing more concentrated and affluent population groups.

---

[122] Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union 2017.
[123] Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 2017-2018.
[124] Tambini 2015.
[125] Asia-Pacific Industry Insight 2017.

Overall a significant percentage of listeners makes use of the mobile phone embedded FM radios and the trend is spreading across the region.[126] In 2017, the International Telecommunication Union adopted an 'Opinion' on activating radio receivers in smartphones which noted that, "terrestrial broadcasting plays a critically important role in disseminating information to the public in times of emergencies."[127] In some countries digital radio has been successfully implemented on a large scale, becoming an important component co-existing with FM and AM radio. An ITU report indicates that some countries are implementing digital sound broadcasting, and while the demand for analogue FM radio remains strong some countries have extended the FM band.[128]

Satellite radio, which allows a person to listen to stations anywhere in the country unlike the terrestrial radio such as AM and FM, is making an impact in a small, but influential way in advanced markets in the region.[129] Only three countries in the world offer regular services and only eight countries in the region are contemplating regulation or undergoing trials for the technology and standards of satellite radio.[130]

NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

Asia Pacific is home to some of the healthiest newspaper industries in the world. Print circulation increased +6.4 per cent globally in 2014 from 2013 driven by an increase in circulation figures in Asia Pacific.[131] Nonetheless, regional and local newspapers are at an inflection point, as they struggle with digital platforms and social networks for news consumption and content.

Emerging evidence from South Asia suggests print business is showing signs of slowing down.[132] Regularity of newspaper readers has stagnated as readers migrate to accessing news from digital media. In some markets, the regularity of reading newspapers has also declined. Not surprisingly, newspapers in the region are investing efforts in a variety of measures to expand their digital reach. There are varying differences in how digital news is consumed across markets.

A study conducted by Reuters Institute shows that several countries in the region have highly developed digital media markets with a high reliance on mobile devices, a large role played by intermediaries, and strong news media online. [133] In these markets, social media is widely used for accessing news and for commenting/sharing. Online news users in some countries report some of the same habits and preferences as reported by users in Central Europe and North America. However, as internet use is lower in most countries in the region as compared to more developed economies, audience behaviour is less representative of the wider population.

In contrast to reliance on mobile, as outlined above, digital news market in other countries, combine highly developed digital media markets with a greater reliance on desktop computers. In such markets, aggregators and portals have a prominent role but news media brands have limited presence online. In these markets, social media is widely used, but not for accessing news and commenting/sharing. Other countries of the region, digital news is important but for most users still accessed via desktop more than smartphones. Social media are a widely used source of news, but television even more so, and levels of engagement with and participation in online news is also low.

120 Digital Broadcasting Asia-Pacific Region 2016.
121 ITU 2017b.
122 ITU 2015.
123 ITU 2017b.
124 World DAB 2016.

125 WAN-INFRA 2015.
126 Bansal 2018.
127 Klein and Karogeropoulos 2017.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA PLURALISM**

Economic models

PLURALISM AND MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Across Asia Pacific, consolidation through mergers and acquisitions in radio and television, investment in and expansion of over-the-top (OTT) video streaming services, a rise in rural viewership and disruption via new technologies in the broadcasting space, have impacted the traditional structures of all media sub-sectors, thus redefining business and ownership models.

Political interference is compounding pressure on Asia Pacific radio broadcasters that are already contending with cutbacks in advertising and editorial budgets. There have been increasing instances of political censorship and even killings of radio journalists in a number of countries of the region.[134]

Faster broadband growth in developing countries has increased the slowdown in pay television. In some countries, pay television distributors provide Over-the-Top content as part of the subscription package, allowing consumers to re-bundle as they wish. Simultaneously, digital subscriptions, such as those offered by premium video services, have cannibalized individual digital transactions.

As the number of direct-to-consumer services and the number of smart devices have increased, so too has the ability of consumers to self-serve the content. Across many countries there is movement away from 'bundled' media, such as that offered by traditional cable television, to what might be termed 'self-service re-bundling': consumers can select from a variety of online streaming services to create their own, more streamlined personal programming bundles.

The television broadcasting developments prevalent in Asia Pacific suggest an environment in which television funding is mostly market or advertisement oriented. Digitisation and privatisation generally reduce barriers to entry, and expand the range and quality of services. However, competition-related issues such as the ability of customers to switch suppliers and pricing mechanisms remain prevalent in the region.

Global newspaper market figures show that more than 92 percent of all newspaper revenue still come from print. Three countries are amongst the seven biggest newspaper markets that command more than half of global newspaper revenues and about 80 per cent of global daily unit circulation.[135] However, across the region, many countries have seen a decline in newspapers and print magazine circulation, and number of newspapers have shut down over the past few years.[136]

---

[134] Vicheika 2017.
[135] World Press Trends 2017.
[136] Kikuchi 2016.

ADVERTISING, BETWEEN OLD AND NEW MODELS

In 2015, the net advertising revenue in Asia Pacific grew by 5.3 per cent, the slowest rate of growth since 2009. In South Asia, advertising expenditure continued to slow down across all media sectors with multinational and domestic brands reducing their spending.[137] Although television remains a critical advertising medium, its share of total advertising is in decline in a trend which is expected to continue. Television advertising is most impacted by the decline in its regional advertising share, as ad spending has shifted to digital. Nevertheless, for now television continues to be the biggest advertising medium in key markets.

In Asia Pacific digital advertising represents a small part of overall newspaper revenue. Between 2012 and 2017 digital advertising has grown, increasing 8 percent in 2014 and 59 percent over five years.[138] But the main benefactors of digital ad spending continue to be social media and technology companies. Digital marketing revenues have also demonstrated strong growth, with revenues up by USD 1.23 billion in 2017, however, majority of that sum USD 1.13 billion in total went to Google and Facebook with only USD 100 million to share across the remainder of publishers in Asia Pacific.[139]

The economics of supply and demand has driven down prices of advertising across the region. The digital marketing and advertising industry in the region constantly experiences issues of corrupt behaviour commonly referred to as advertisement fraud. Advertisement fraud is common both on the buyer-side and seller-side of programmatic online advertising and ad-blocking is widespread in the region. Big tech platforms are earning most of the new digital advertising money because of their ability to target any audience efficiently and at scale.[140]

NEW PLATFORMS AND BUSINESS MODELS

Another important trend is the rise of global content intermediation and integration, as leading social-networking platforms provide videos, music, and news from outside sources directly to their users. Platforms are aggregating and integrating additional content to boost their consumer interactions and change consumption patterns. The rise of online platforms has marked a major shift for the media sector that inherently struggles with monetization and has significant impact on the business models of players in the sector.

Newsrooms across South and Southeast Asia are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) and computer-driven recommendations on websites, via apps and through push notifications. AI is also helping publishers fact-check, conducting live radio or television interviews, and also bringing costs of production down. Speech to text fact checkers are allowing journalists get instant information.

---

[137] LiveMint 2017.
[138] Kilman 2015.
[139] The Straits Times, 2017
[140] Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 2017-2018.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA PLURALISM**

Content

Consumption of media content in Asia Pacific has shifted in recent years. Growth of mobile phone users and increased broadband connectivity has led to a proliferation with a large number of regional users getting connected.

National radio broadcasters are diversifying their service offerings to expand globally, and international radio broadcasters are entering emerging markets of the region.[141] Digital radio, enhanced quality sound, visual imagery on radio, apps, web-streaming and content time-shifting is growing in Asia Pacific.[142] Connected radio, harmonization of broadcasting and internet which provides specific information has enriched content but only across developed economies on the region as the growth of radio services and consumption patterns are not the same across the region.

Some countries are typically more inclined towards radio as their main source of media consumption than others. However, radio is mentioned far less frequently as a main source of news across the Asia-Pacific markets than in countries in Europe or North America.[143] Radio channels around the region, especially commercial channels in emerging markets which broadcast listeners' letters, phone chats with presenters, grievances with service providers, legal service matters, and coverage of public spaces, are likely to be questioned in legal forums.

Print media has also seen a rise in specialised content on topics and commentary rather than reporting. This is manifested across national dailies, magazines and on digital platforms of legacy print media where corporate mediated citizen journalism is on a rise. This trend is significant for a region where across many countries the role of an independent media regulator is questionable and media, business, and politics influence each other.

It is difficult to make any general statement about how the news and current affairs media in South Asia, whether print, broadcast or online, tend to represent conflicts or the gaps in the news coverage, given the diversity of channels, newspapers, and new media sources. It is a major challenge for media and civil society groups that would like to provide alternative narratives, to counter dominant narratives. Across South Asia, providing a different perspective, especially one that questions dominant frameworks, runs the risk of being declared seditious, anti-national and subversive.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Convergence and digitisation have resulted in changes in content production and distribution as audiences curate content from a range of sources rather than from linear media services. The internet has become the media platform that consumers across Asia Pacific spend the second most time with, after television.[144] In a survey conducted by Internet Society in the region, users in developed economies tend to use mobile internet predominantly to search for information (91 per cent), read the news (79 per cent) and access videos and music online (69 per cent).[145] Desire for more content, increased options and content-on-demand is driving consumers to produce and publish content which in the past has been the domain of traditional media sources.

---

[141] Punchihewa 2017.
[142] Punchihewa 2017.
[143] Klein and Karogeropoulos 2017.
[144] Internet Society 2016.
[145] Ibid.

Social media engagement is on the rise with consumers discovering, contributing and distributing information via social networks that have stimulated demand for online news content. In some countries, social media reach has overtaken television amongst consumers. A recent global study surveying the online behaviours of approximately 70,000 internet users across 57 countries revealed that the use of visual social media platforms, Instagram and Snapchat, has risen sharply across Asia Pacific.[146] A number of respondents also used their mobile device to create content, including apps and blogs; collaborate on projects online; develop websites; access databases and cloud based productivity tools; operate systems remotely, and access transportation services.[147] Another significant transition is the move from browser-based interactions on desktops to an information-sharing system driven by app experiences on mobile devices.

Where the consumption of content housed inside these proprietary walled gardens becomes the norm, the preservation of an open web may potentially be undermined. The usage trends above are matched by users' app preferences. More than three out of four respondents have downloaded apps on voice calls and messaging (88 per cent); social media (85 per cent); and information, which includes weather information, GPS navigation and traffic monitoring apps (81 per cent). More than half of users have apps on media and entertainment on their mobile device.

Social media platforms are no longer just platforms for communication. Instead, they are becoming integrated tools allowing users to manage social, financial and legal transactions, whether for banking, shopping or arranging transportation. The Internet Society study for the region also noted that social networking drops in priority in correlation with the respondent's age. Nevertheless, there has been a sharp rise in the effects of networks in shaping and consuming media online.

Moreover, the role of journalists is being redefined as they are expected to process user-generated content and to be able to navigate social media platforms which audiences inhabit.[148]

ALGORITHMS, ECHO CHAMBERS AND POLARIZATION

In the South Asian context, it is important to recognize the role of polarization in media that informs the relationship of media and politics at various levels. Linguistic, ethnic, and regional diversities are the most prominent drivers of polarisation, as well as the existence of subnational identities within a particular nation. These diversities/multitudes make it difficult for the media to have an impact beyond the specific audience and hence, it is not easy to study the agenda-setting power of the media when audiences are fragmented along linguistic lines and exposed to diverse sources of information.

Studies based on content analysis have shown that news about political parties and election campaigns featured the major political parties in power more than other parties, or featured certain candidates aligned with media's ideologies.[149] Greater competition is also compelling media houses to cater to the prejudices of their readers, and consumers prefer news and opinions that align most closely to their own already established views. Therefore, the digital news market has created an incentive to present news reinforcing partisan beliefs.[150]

---

[146] TNS-Kantar 2017.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Klein and Karogeropoulos 2017.
[149] Neyazi 2017.
[150] Reuters Digital News Report 2017.

Campaigns to manipulate public opinion through false or misleading social media postings have become standard political practice across much of the world, with information ministries, specialized military units and political operatives shaping the flow of information in dozens of countries. The Computational Propaganda Research Project undertaken by the Oxford University found that the government of a country in East Asia is using social media to enhance their legitimacy and "post large amounts of positive propaganda online to social media, state websites and newspaper websites, particularly around sensitive times".[151]

Platforms rely on algorithms to sort and target content to avoid costs, and to avoid editorial responsibility as algorithms are claimed to be less biased than humans. However, in several countries of South and Southeast Asia, social platforms influence news content by offering incentives to news organizations for particular types of content, such as live video, or by dictating publisher activity through design standards.

Online systems favour scale and shareability which may incentivize the spread of low-quality content over high-quality material. Journalism with high civic value which investigates power, or reaches underserved and local communities, can be discriminated against by the structure and the economics of social platforms.

'FAKE NEWS'

Editorially, journalism practices have also seen a shift given the growing trend of "fake news" and need for fact checking.

A new set of studies on computational propaganda, conducted in nine countries including one country in East Asia from Oxford University found that "the lies, the junk, the misinformation" of traditional propaganda is widespread online and "supported by Facebook or Twitter's algorithms". Fake accounts are active in disseminating certain information, both political and commercial, in South, Southeast and East Asia.[152]

Governments employ online platforms and tools to propagate their policy messages, manipulate public opinion, promote foreign relations and advance geopolitical strategy. Governments in Asia Pacific blend automation and human interaction for strengthening online propaganda, and gaming the algorithms that determine trending.[153] Another study on computational propaganda found evidence that governments of at least four countries in the region were using human and automated techniques to deploy and push messages on social media feeds and interact with other users' content.

---

[151] Oxford Internet Institute, 2017
[152] HeadSouth, J. "Outlaw or ignore? How Asia is fighting 'fake news', BBC, April 2018
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-43637744
[153] Bradshaw, S. and Howard, P., "Troops, Trolls and Troublemakers: A Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation",
Computational Propaganda Research, University of Oxford, Working paper no. 2017.12 http://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/
uploads/sites/89/2017/07/Troops-Trolls-and-Troublemakers.pdf

REPORTING ON MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Some countries in the region have made funds available for certain kinds of programming, for community media or for the inclusion of diverse and marginalised voices including elderly people or lower-income families. Alternatively public broadcasters also follow obligations to ensure plurality of content through requirements to purchase a certain proportion of programming from independent producers. Broadband internet and digitisation are empowering a large audience to become content providers, which has very significant regulatory impact for plurality of content. Television and radio content broadcast free to air is subject to differing regulation from the same content distributed on an internet based catch-up service or a smartphone application.

Community radio stations perform an important public service for poor constituencies, eliciting their views and concerns, enabling them to raise issues and problems that might otherwise be taboo, and encouraging them to speak out, both among themselves and to local government. Community media, although hamstrung by policy provisions that limit its scope by curtailing news and restricting eligibility, continue to play a critical role. Across all countries there have been efforts in ensuring diversity through strengthening community and public service radio but the line between the two is thin in many countries across the region. Community media is making the media landscape of South Asia more pluralistic despite huge gaps in adoption and promotion in the region.[154]

NEW NEWS PLAYERS: THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF NEWS PRODUCTION?

New media platforms, especially on the internet, have expanded sources of news. The rise of networks and mobile phone penetration has created opportunities for new voices to be heard particularly seen in the rise of community media. There have been a growing number of initiatives that facilitate create greater awareness regarding community media related initiatives and activities in different national contexts in the region. Currently, eight countries from the region have come together to form the South Asia Network for Community Media (SANCOM), an initiative for building and sharing of capacities for community media production and management across national boundaries.[155] The initiative has been facilitated by UNESCO and aims to document and disseminate best practices, encourage comparative research.

Of the estimated 370 million indigenous people in the world, around two thirds live in Asia Pacific.[156] The growth of new media technologies should have facilitated the coverage of their concerns, by acting as 'a bridge' between these communities and professional news outlets. The capacity of indigenous communities in Asia Pacific to produce their own media is very low. Editorial control and ownership remain major hindrances to balanced reporting on indigenous issues.[157]

Recent advances in media production technology have made equipment more easily available, but barriers persist, especially for low-literacy groups from marginalised communities. Limited access to production software is mainly due to language differences. Community capacities to manage media are constrained, and marginalized groups do not own and operate media. Lack of trust in such community-led initiatives and limited funding for improving standards means that such voices continue to be marginalised in mainstream media.

---

[154] UNESCO 2016.
[155] South Asia Network for Community Media (SANCOM), 2015
[156] UNDP, 2012 "Identifying the Information and Communication Needs of Indigenous Peoples",
[157] Ibid

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

The importance of media and digital literacy is increasingly being recognized across Asia.[158] The Media Literacy Network (MEDLITnet) is a platform for universities and stakeholders relevant to the media industries in Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam to collaborate on media literacy in education, training and research.[159] Currently, the consortium consists of 6 universities in the Southeast Asia and 3 universities in Europe. In Bangladesh, the South Asia Center for Media in Development (SACMID) has developed a media literacy program to help people develop skills and critical reasoning to judge the reliability and credibility of news and information from all media: print, television, radio or online.[160]

Gender equality and media pluralism

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKFORCE

Inherent stereotyping also means women journalists are increasingly pushed to cover 'soft beats' such as gender issues, arts and culture. Cases of sexual harassment at the workplace are often buried, and those that do come to light are usually of a more serious nature. In many countries there is no law against sexual harassment in the workplace.[161]

Unions mostly represent interests of male journalists and number of women do not see utility in the unions for raising issues with respect to their working conditions. Conflict in many parts of the region has meant reporters' access to these areas is difficult, and particularly in the case of women journalists.

WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING

The "Research Study on Media and Gender in Asia-Pacific", a project undertaken by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and supported by UNESCO and UN Women in seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region, shows that media companies are largely led and governed by men: most editors have been male, as have been owners of news media, with women more likely to be in mid-level rather than top management.[162]

GENDER AND REPRESENTATION

The trends are similar in regional language media across countries, both print and electronic where sexist images of women and derogatory language are more prevalent compared to English media. Few countries have engaged efforts to prevent non-consensual publication of women's sexual experiences.

The struggle over gendered forms of expression and control is visible in the use of online platforms in the region. New media helped nurture diverse gender networks and allowed for sharing of information and organizing, as women and other minorities have moved online in search of safer spaces, which are not readily available offline.

[158] Microsoft, 2017 https://news.microsoft.com/apac/features/bridging-gap-digital-literacy/
[159] Media Literacy Network, https://medlitnetwork.wordpress.com
[160] South Asia Center for Media in Development (SACMID), 2017 http://sacmid.asia/index.php/about-us/

[161] Gurumurthy 2015
[162] Gurumurthy 2015.

CHANGING THE PICTURE FOR WOMEN IN MEDIA

Some media outlets and women journalists in ethnic-minorities are making positive changes for gender equity with programmes such as active mentoring. Radio in general and community radio in particular, continues to be an important space for local media in many Asian countries. However, only 24 out of 207 community radio stations in the region are run by women.[163] Nevertheless, there have been initiatives to develop gender policies for the broadcasting entities. These policies, with their contextual differences, have been adopted in other regions or countries.[164]

In response to the recognized challenges, 18 of the 39 (46.2 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported having integrated measures in place—combining policy, legislation, action plans and/or programmes — for increasing women's and girls' participation in the media. Of a restricted list of options, the most common measure is the production and dissemination of media programmes that address the needs, concerns and interests of women and girls (28 of 39 countries; 79.8 per cent), followed by the production and dissemination of programmes by women (25 of 39 countries; 64.1 per cent) and the education and training of women who wish to engage with the mass media (24 of 39 countries; 61.5 per cent).

Beyond legislation, various entities in Asia and the Pacific, from media bodies to national women's networks, have conducted education and training sessions for members of the media, for the purpose of promoting positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls. In the Kazakhstan, seminars were held for journalists in 2012 and 2013 on 'Principles and Standards of Gender Sensitivity in the Media: Strategy, Approach and Prospects'.

[163] Chavez 2014.
[164] Gurumurthy 2015.

Trends in Media Independence

Overview

The positive developments in the increases in media choices, the use of multiple platforms for the creation and consumption of new content and media experiences across Asia Pacific, have been offset by a lack of independence of regulatory authorities from governments in the region. Regulatory bodies are increasingly politicized through state control, restricting the autonomy of the regulatory authorities, and through government-endorsed appointments. Self-regulatory bodies and press councils experience a lack of credibility as widespread perceptions regard these institutions as weak in terms of enforceability and effectiveness.

The region reflects high levels of ownership concentration, low transparency levels, and a problematic dependency of media outlets on the government for financial sustainability. Media capture is commonplace, and the degree of perceived influence exerted by governments on media outlets in the Asia Pacific region exceeds the world average. Despite the high number of media outlets, many continue to be owned and controlled by the economic and political elite, or by business people with close relationships to government. Also, between 2012 and 2017, there has been a rise in organized and systemic state sanctioned de-legitimization of critical media reporting. While the media sector has been deregulated to allow for privatization, the adequate independence of broadcast and print media has not been protected due to the weak financial position of many outlets, where an over-reliance on government advertising persists.

Regional key trends regarding media independence in the Asia Pacific region include the following:

- Growing diversity is shaping consumption habits, economic models and media systems;

- The independence of media regulatory bodies is weakened by their location under authority of ministries or through key appointments and funding;

- Political control of media institutions is exercised in a direct manner through ownership, and indirectly through licensing and content regulation obligations;

- The financing and business models of traditional media experience challenges due to the growth of digital news and media consumption;

- Investments in expanding professional bodies to enforce codes of ethics have increased but their efficiency is difficult to assess;

- Women in the media workplace continue to receive low and unequal wages relative to men, unfair treatment and a lack of work recognition, and harassment.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA INDEPENDENCE**

Trends and transitions in regulation

INDEPENDENCE AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION

Competition and choice, digitization and convergence facilitate the use of multiple platforms for the creation and consumption of new content and media experiences across Asia Pacific. However, these changes pose regulatory and policy challenges for governments.

Across Asia Pacific independent regulatory authorities are supposed to be a natural institutional form and play crucial role in the governance of the media.[165] In South, Southeast and East Asia, the procedures for assuring the autonomy of regulators from governmental control are increasingly under pressure.[166] Since 2012, South Asian countries have introduced or enforced mechanisms to strengthen the chain of delegation between elected officials and the regulatory bureaucracy or have weakened their autonomy from political interference.[167]

State control is also evident in increasing politicization of regulatory bodies, operationalized through restricting both the autonomy of the regulatory authorities, and through government endorsed appointments.[168] In countries in East Asia and Southeast Asia, state control over regulatory authorities is exercised openly by transfers and appointments of co-partisans and civil servants as members and heads of media regulatory and human rights bodies.[169]

Few countries in Asia-Pacific have a converged regulatory authority for all media sectors, and consequently the powers and duties of regulation are fragmented across various institutions and departments. One country offers an exception as it recently eliminated its broadcasting regulator to merge with the telecom regulator and is moving towards a convergent regulator for telecoms, broadcasting, digital and commerce.[170] The type of agency in charge of media regulation also varies greatly across countries in the region. Online media usually fall under the purview of the telecommunications regulatory bodies or institutions managing electronic communication.

In many countries regulatory frameworks do not sufficiently empower the regulator, or enforcement mechanisms are outdated having not kept pace with the shifts in technology and market structure. This results in a regulatory vacuum where agencies from other sectors step in to create regulation. The development of regulations for Internet of Things is one such example, where multiple agencies are involved and legislation is being drafted involving multiple government bodies.[171] The reform of regulatory bodies and their operational processes is limited by bureaucratic procedures and in some countries states have contemplated setting up new regulatory bodies for online content and media. In general, the presence of multiple regulatory authorities leads to a lack of coordination between existing regulators and creates tensions in their overlapping jurisdiction and responsibility.

---

[165] ACMA 2017.
[166] Galhotra 2015.
[167] Abuza 2015.
[168] The Express Tribune 2014.
[169] Mander and Bhattacharya 2016.
[170] Sambandararksa 2017.
[171] GSMA 2017.

The powers assigned to regulatory authorities varies greatly in the region. Across South and Southeast Asian countries, regulatory authorities drive regulation by setting agendas on industry standards and have participated in providing clarity on emerging issues such as net neutrality. Some countries' regulatory authorities have the authority to revoke licenses or apply sanctions, while in others their role is limited to providing recommendations that may not necessarily be taken into account by the government.

Interestingly, while there may be limited public debate on the adoption of country or regional standards, there is increased interest in standards from regulators in the region. Asia-Pacific is a huge market for the adoption of standards and therefore regulatory authorities have increased their support for research and development including trials to promote the country's own technical standards.[172] Industry regulators in key countries prefer to use their own standards: an approach that often misaligns or clashes with existing monopolies. Industry operators (both state-owned telecoms and international equipment producers) have no choice but to slow their development to keep in step with regulations and enter markets.

The right to appeal against the regulator is available only in a few countries in the region. In South Asia, there is a growing trend amongst many regulated entities, both private and public, of launching appeals in the courts, even on technical issues.[173] Secondly, there are many regulatory agencies which are also following an adversarial mode of rulemaking, and these are often responded to with number of court cases, including on technical issues.[174]

For example, in South Asia and Southwest Asia countries with independent converged regulatory bodies, states nonetheless retain control over aspects such as spectrum management, licensing and registration authority, and utilise these powers to enforce a licensing regime for broadcasters and telecom operators.

SELF-REGULATION

Between 2012 and 2017, several countries in Asia Pacific undertook efforts to liberalize markets and to create structural basis for media independence. Efforts for media law reforms are visible through investments in institution building, such as the establishment of press councils to enforce codes for content.[175] Press councils exist across almost all countries in the region and many countries have functioning broadcasting authorities for television and radio. Despite this positive trend, the perception of self-regulatory institutions is weak on account of challenges of enforceability and effectiveness.[176] Further, self-regulation by transnational platforms has created new forms of censorship as international companies make trade-offs to enter lucrative markets. Transnational platforms are hesitant about offending sensibilities or having their licenses revoked, so they proactively censor with no legal basis.[177]

---

[172] Baller and Datta 2016.
[173] PTI 2017.
[174] The Hindu Business Line 2017.
[175] Accountable Journalism 2017.
[176] ORF 2014.
[177] Dixit 2017.

Political and economic influences in media systems

TRENDS OF DE-LEGITIMIZING MEDIA

Between 2012 and 2017, there has been a rise in organized and systemic state sanctioned de-legitimization of media. In Southeast Asia, politicians have increasingly used terms such as 'alternative facts' and the label 'fake news when responding to human rights related allegations. The rise in disinformation, and the growing use of the internet to, for example, spread hoaxes, contributes to the political de-legitimization of the news media, but it also has more direct consequences. In various countries in the region, press offices, media institutions, public figures and citizens have been violently attacked based on rumours spread through social media networks.

MEDIA CAPTURE

Political and economic interests play an important role in media regulation in the region. In almost all countries in Asia Pacific, there are definite ties between business interests and political power plays and media institutions.[178] The Media Ownership Monitor, which covers 13 media industries across a 10- to 25-year period in 30 countries, revealed high levels of ownership concentration, a low transparency level, and a problematic dependency of media outlets on the government in several countries of the Asia Pacific.[179]

With regards to general media freedom, the Worlds of Journalism Study (2016) provides some statistics which can be used to comment on media freedom. Figure 3-1 below shows statistics on the extent to which government officials are perceived to influence the media in Asia and Pacific region. Asian and Pacific governments have influenced media houses more in this region, compared to the world average for the period 2012 to 2016, as shown in the figure below. Given the total number of Asia Pacific countries covered, 50 percent of the countries recorded a government influence of at least 30 percent. The Asia Pacific countries studied have 30.1% influence on media compare to the world average share of 25.6%. Governments which have a lesser influence on the media are regarded as giving media houses more independence in running their business.

Figure 3-1: Perceived influences on the media by government officials

%
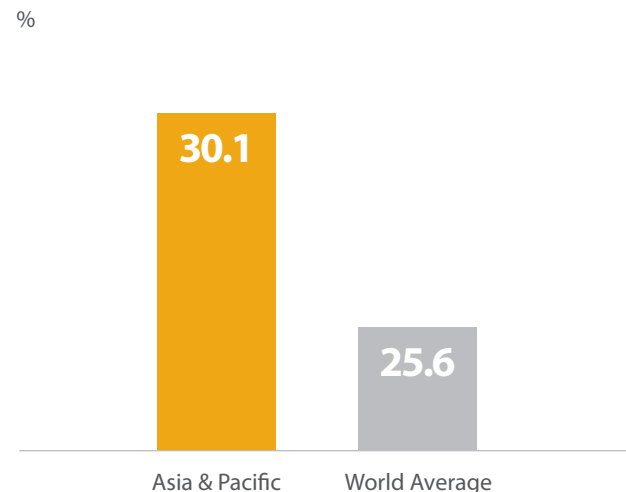
Source: Worlds of Journalism Study 2016

---

[178] Henisz and Zelner 2010.
[179] Noam 2016.

The intertwining of political and commercial pressures has restrained the diversity in mainstream print media in the region, especially with regard to news sources. In many countries, news organizations are either allied with political parties or own non-media enterprises that has led to a pronounced shift away from public-service news. Commodification, the quest for ratings, and financial pressures on newspaper staff, have led to focus on entertainment, and breaches of ethics and professional ideals in journalistic practices.

Owners and proprietors of media organizations have been rewarded in various ways in countries where the government's point of view is predominant.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND BUSINESS MODELS

Across all sub-regions of Asia, the media sector has been deregulated to allow for privatization, but the adequate independence of broadcast and print media has not been realized due to weak implementation of safeguards. Newspapers, especially regional dailies and local weeklies, receive indirect public subsidies such as government advertising which can compromise their independence.

Overall, there is an absence of specific rules regulating ownership and cross-ownership. There is no prohibition on monopolies or cross-ownership in the media market, although the regulators have the legal power to act against anti-competitive behaviour in the broadcasting and telecoms markets. To some degree, the transparency of media ownership has improved, mostly due to the need of media companies to increase their capital, which forces them to enter the stock exchange market, where it is mandatory to disclose ownership structures.

For public service broadcasters in almost all countries in Asia Pacific, the principal source of revenue is a public grant. In several countries public sector broadcasters are prohibited from broadcasting commercial advertising. This results in a financial burden that impacts on the quality of programming and limits the independence of the broadcaster or results in content which is favourable to the state.

The challenges of the digital switchover in broadcasting differs throughout the region depending on market conditions. While economically affluent countries do not provide subsidies for the set top boxes required for digitisation, most developing nations in the region have dedicated public funds to support access for particular types of viewers (for example, elderly people or lower-income families).

Some countries in the region also exhibit evidence of manipulated distribution of state aid and advertisement revenues. The practice not only endangers media market competition, but is used to silence critical media while supporting those who are ideologically or politically aligned. Government spending on advertising has increased across television, mobile, newspapers and online media. Generally there is very little transparency in the region on how government ad rates are fixed, payment or quotas for government advertising spending. Regulatory authorities have either no authority to restrict such spending or have not enforced penalties.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA INDEPENDENCE**

In some countries there has been backsliding in terms of independence, both for the public broadcasters and regulators as robust media structures are being progressively weakened by the local governments. There is indirect or surrogate control of media houses since, despite a high number of media outlets, various media outlets continue to be owned by, and to depend on, the economic and political elite.[180]

A 2010 study conducted by the Open Society Foundation, examining constitutional and legal frameworks for 10 countries in Southeast Asia, found a vast array of differences regarding the regulation of broadcast media. This includes diversity in ownership structures, whether regarding restrictions on private print media, to countries where all broadcasters are public in nature, and others where a commercially vibrant private broadcasting sector is characterized by oligopolies of ownership.[181] States often own and control channels of media distribution, technical equipment and access to sources.

Between 2010-2017, little has changed in the region with regard to ownership structures in broadcasting sector and in almost all countries, television and radio stations are owned and controlled by the state. In such scenarios, the independence of the editorial staff is not guaranteed. Maintaining an 'arm's length' relationship between the editorial staff and the owner is often difficult, if not impossible. Some countries in East Asia have broadcasting laws that stipulate what constitutes politically fair coverage, further impacting on editorial independence.[182]

JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA INDEPENDENCE, AND TRUST IN THE MEDIA

The annual Edelman Annual Trust Barometer, based on data collected through online surveys across 28 countries, reports that globally, trust in the government, business, media and NGO sector is decreasing. While societal expectations of trust vary in the region, Southeast and East Asia report a loss of trust in institutions due to growing inequality over the years.[183] Between 2014 and 2017 trust gaps have widened, with trust in media and government showing the greatest declines.

A few countries have reported more positive trends regarding trust than the global trends. For example, India has managed to buck this trend and sustained trust in all four institutions, with trust in government and business being the highest, and trust in online media catching up with traditional media.[184]

As the survey notes, despite sustained trust, echo chambers are in action with two out of three people surveyed agreeing that facts do not matter, with 52% of respondents routinely ignoring views or information that support a position they do not believe in.

---

[180] Reporters without borders 2016.
[181] Mendel 2010.
[182] The Strait Times 2016.
[183] Edelman APACMEA 2017.
[184] Edelman APACMEA 2017.

PROFESSIONALISM AND EFFORTS TO MITIGATE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERFERENCE

In Southeast Asia, discussions on journalistic ethics have been held for at least the past 20 years, at national and regional levels. At regional level, these have primarily been held during the general assemblies of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists (CAJ). In terms of content, the discussions have focused on the need for journalists to write accurate, fair and balanced reports, and also produce news content that highlights national needs and priorities.[185]

At national levels, journalistic ethics are raised and debated not only through the national press (newspapers and magazines) but also at various fora organised by schools/colleges of mass communications. Journalism ethics in the Muslim countries of Asia are determined by taboos and it is hard for the media to cover issues in the 'triangle of religion, sex, and politics'.[186] In smaller democracies and lesser developed economies, where the rate of development of media is slower, there is hardly any training for journalists and or discussion about journalistic ethics. News councils are funded by newspaper proprietors and often lack sufficient funding to perform complaints-handling functions, and do not have sufficient funding for independent monitoring and evaluation.

In larger democracies with vibrant and healthy mass media systems and even in countries with indirect government ownership of media, there are frequent discussions about mass media ethics, involving associations such as the Philippines Press Institute (PPI), Indonesian Press Institute (IPI), Malaysian Press Institute (MPI) and the Press Institute of Thailand (PIT). In addition, there are organisations in the Philippines which try to promote higher professional standards in the media. These include the Institute of Mass Communications and the Centre for Media Freedom and Responsibility.

A persistent challenge in South Asia has been the phenomenon of paid news which doubly jeopardizes freedom of speech and expression on one hand, and free and independent media on the other. The Press Council of India's draft report of enquiry titled 'Paid News: How corruption in the Indian Media Undermines Indian Democracy' points out that the practice of paid news has become widespread across both the print and digital news media, publishing in English and non-English languages, in different parts of the country.

The Committee identified several factors including the corporatisation of media, the desegregation of ownership and editorial roles, declines in autonomy of editors/journalists due to the emergence of contract systems and poor wage levels of journalists, as some of the key reasons for the rising incidence of paid news.[187] This phenomenon appears to be less pervasive in states where the media is clearly divided along political lines.[188]

Non-media corporates use the media to influence public opinion and public relations, and lobbying influence on journalism is high in several countries across all sub-regions of Asia Pacific. Mandatory lobbying registries are not common in the region and there is very limited transparency and accountability. Even in countries with registration requirements the implementation thereof is lacking. [189] [190]

[185] Ramanathan 2012.
[186] Hafex 2012.
[187] PRS Legislative 2010.
[188] Sainath 2010.
[189] Chari and Murphy 2010.
[190] Transparency International 2015.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA INDEPENDENCE**

Gender equality and media independence

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKPLACE

Women continue to encounter obstacles to their engagement in the media in Asia Pacific. Low and unequal wages for women, unfair treatment and lack of recognition of work, annoyance and harassment of women at work, and balancing professional and personal responsibilities, are some of the structural challenges they face across the region.[191]

Cases of sexual harassment at the workplace are often buried, and in many countries there is no law against sexual harassment in the workplace. In other countries violence against women in the private sphere is normalized. One key trend in the region has been the increasing tendency to hire women journalists on a freelance basis, without access to paid leave and other entitlements.[192]

The region hosts many examples of professional codes of practice relevant to issues of gender equality, like those associated with the Broadcasting Standards Authority's Free-to-Air Television Code of Broadcasting Practice and the Advertising Standards Authority's Code for People in Advertising in New Zealand; the Code of Ethics for Media in the Philippines, or the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice Advisory Note on the Portrayal of Women and Men in Australia.

MEDIA MONITORING AND ADVOCACY

UNESCO has partnered with regional media groups on the 'Women for Change: Building a Gendered Media' initiative to lead several efforts such as online training, workshops and most recently the Gender Sensitive Guidelines for Women in Media in South Asia.[193]

FORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Women's media networks are being nurtured across many countries to share information and resources, exchange ideas, uphold media standards and ethics, and promote gender equality within the media, as well within society more broadly. Unions mostly represent the interests of male journalists, and women do not see utility in raising issues with respect to the working conditions of women within the unions.[194]

---

[191] Gurumurthy 2015.
[192] UNESCO 2015.
[193] UNESCO 2016.
[194] UNESCAP 2015.

Trends in
Safety of Journalists

Overview

The Asia and Pacific region reflects a number of trends indicating a substantial decline in the safety of journalists since 2012. The number of killings of journalists has remained stagnant relative to the previous 5-year period, but is still high. Other common threats include non-fatal assaults, digital insecurity, imprisonment, and an expansion of defamation and other laws to include online content, all of which have curtailed the freedom of the media.

Journalists in formerly press-friendly countries have experienced intimidation and pressure. Aggressors against the media include the police, security services, politicians as well as non-state actors from extremist or partisan groups, among others. The most dangerous sub-regions for journalists are South and South-East Asia, where numbers of arrests and killings of journalists remain at high levels. Impunity for the killing of journalists persists in over 90 per cent for the region. One positive development since 2012 is that several governments have taken steps to establish mechanisms to improve the safety of journalists and combat impunity.

Trends in the safety of journalists in the Asia and Pacific region include the following:

- While the numbers of journalists killed have remained mostly consistent, these killings are now concentrated in fewer countries within the region. From 2012 to 2017 journalists were killed in 11 countries, relative to 14 countries in the previous 5-year period. All of the killings except one took place in South and Southeast Asia;

- The expansion of internet journalism in the region has brought with it new risks for digital journalists. The number of internet journalists and bloggers killed between 2012 and 2017 forms a substantially increasing trend;

- Many countries introduced cyber security legislation that regulates online content through criminal and civil penalties or enabled surveillance, including 8 countries Southeast Asia. Internet journalists are imprisoned under these laws in numbers which now exceed journalists working in traditional mediums;

- Impunity for the killers of journalists is prevalent throughout South and Southeast Asia, with no prosecutions in the clear majority of attacks against journalists;

- South and Southeast Asian countries recorded an increase in beatings, forced disappearances, intimidation of journalists and verbal threats;

- Fatal attacks against women journalists remained consistent. Offline and online harassment, and other gender specific threats are widespread. Sexual harassment is commonplace and the perpetrators of sexual harassment against women journalists are most often colleagues and co-workers;

- The imprisonment of journalists took place in more countries throughout the region than in the previous 5-year period. While the overall number of imprisoned journalists dropped by a small margin, the number of countries in which journalists are imprisoned grew.

TRENDS IN **SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS**

Physical safety and impunity

Legal guarantees for the safety of journalistic sources are generally lacking in Asia Pacific. The most likely cause of death for a media worker is shooting; followed by explosions, vehicle accidents, stabbings and beatings.[195] Journalists working for local media outlets are often the targets of violence, both online and offline, by nationalists, citizens and soldiers. The challenges for safety of journalists in South Asia are complicated by ongoing armed and political regional conflicts. Afghanistan is the only country in the region that has created committees for the safety of journalists, made up of representatives of the state and journalists' associations.[196]

UNESCO's Director-General condemned the killings of 107 journalists and media workers in the Asia and the Pacific region between 2012 and 2017.[197] This reflected a slight decrease in the number of killings during the previous 5-year period between 2007 and 2011, when the number of condemned killings was 109. The rate of killings varied per year, ranging from 12 in 2014, to 27 in 2016, when the highest number of killings took place in a single year, due in part to a suicide attack that killed 7 staff members working for a private Afghan television station.[198]

Figure 4-1: **Journalists killed in the Asia Pacific region each year between 2012 and 2016**

Total:
107

| 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |

---
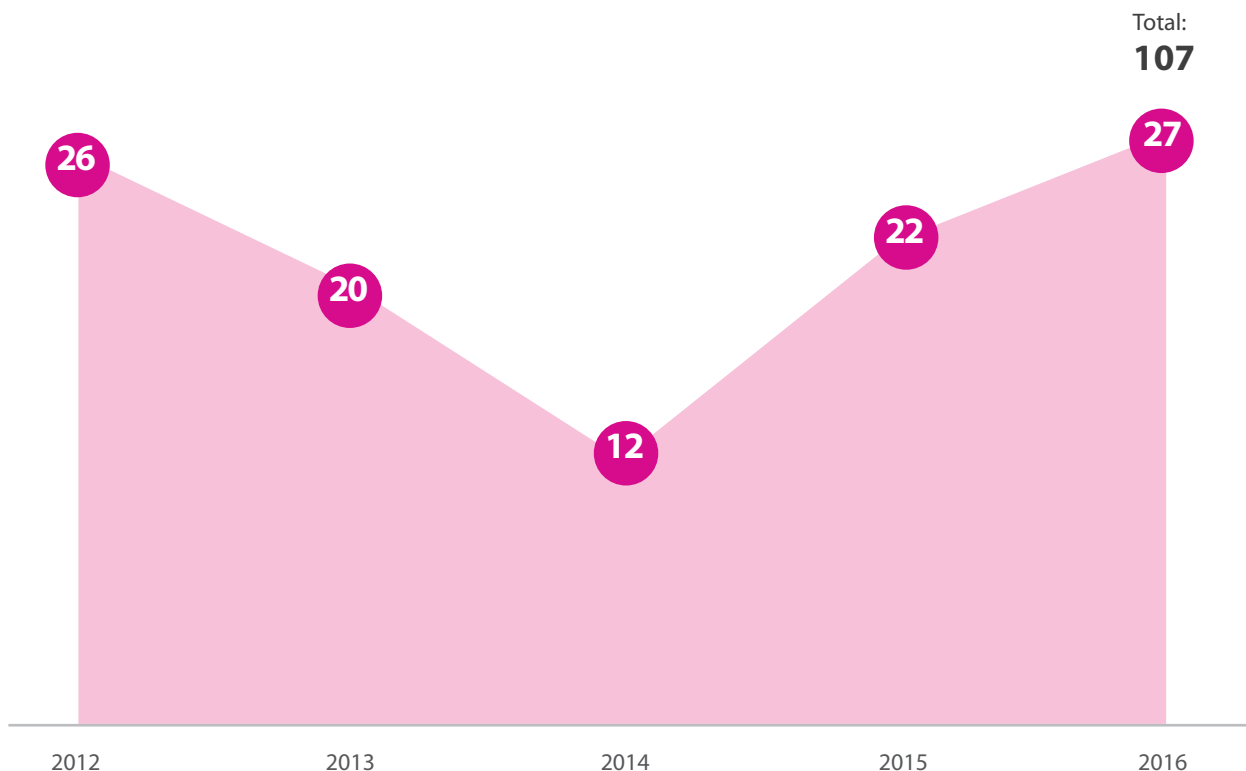
[195] International Federation of Journalists 2016.
[196] Reporters Without Borders 2017.
[197] UNESCO's internal database of Journalist Killings and Status of Judicial Inquiry, January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016.;
Unless stated otherwise, the figures on killings of journalists that follow are taken from this database.
[198] Harooni and MacAskill 2016.

While levels of violence have been mostly consistent over the last decade, this is now concentrated in fewer states. From 2012 up to 2017 journalists were killed in 11 countries (25 per cent) out of the 44 countries in the region, relative to the 14 countries where journalists were killed in the previous 5-year period. All of the killings except one took place in South and Southeast Asia. 5 countries accounted for more than 90 per cent of the journalist killings condemned by UNESCO's Director-General. No killings were recorded in the Pacific region. In 2 countries, journalist killings have been recorded each year since 2012.

Consistent with global trends, nearly all (97 per cent) of the journalists and media workers killed in the region since 2012 were locally based, while 3 foreign correspondents were among the fatalities.[199] Journalists and media workers affiliated with the print media were targeted more frequently, followed by television and then radio journalists.[200] The expansion of internet journalism in the region has brought with it new risks for digital journalists. 10 internet journalists, including 7 bloggers, were killed since 2012, compared with only 1 internet journalist killed during the previous 5-year period. Freelance journalists, including bloggers, are being targeted in greater numbers. Though most killings recorded by UNESCO since 2012 are of permanently employed media staff members, 18 per cent (20) of the victims were freelance journalists, double the percentage of freelancers killed in the period from 2007 to 2011. At least 8 freelance journalists were killed in 2015, half of which were bloggers working in one country.

Impunity for the killers of journalists is prevalent throughout South and Southeast Asia, with no prosecutions in the clear majority of attacks against journalists. In mid-2017, 7 (64%) of the 11 Member States in the region where journalists had been killed provided information in response to requests by UNESCO's Director-General for an update on the status of judicial inquiry, which reflected nearly double the response rate of 35 per cent tallied for the period of 2007 to 2012. In 43 cases (91 per cent) states noted that investigations were ongoing. In 4 cases, or 9 per cent, states reported some resolution to the case. No information was provided for a further 60[201] cases related to journalist killings condemned by UNESCO's Director-General.

Figure 4-2: Journalists killed in the Asia Pacific region by country

Country		Count
Pakistan		30
Philippines		21
Afghanistan		20
India		18
Bangladesh		10
Cambodia		3
Indonesia		1
Iran		1
Myanmar		1
Nepal		1
Thailand		1

Total: **107**

---

[199] Between 2014 and 2016, 3 correspondents were killed in Afghanistan.

[200] Among the journalist killings condemned by the UNESCO DG, 42 (39 per cent) victims worked for print, 31 for television (29 per cent) and 21 (20 per cent) radio.

[201] This number includes 42 cases for which states acknowledged receipt of the Director General's inquiry but no information as well as 18 cases, all from India, for which there was no response or acknowledgement.

Figure 4-3: Judicial status of cases of enquiry into journalist killings in the Asia Pacific region

■ Ongoing/Unresolved (43)   ■ No information provided (60)   ■ Resolved (4)

43	60	4
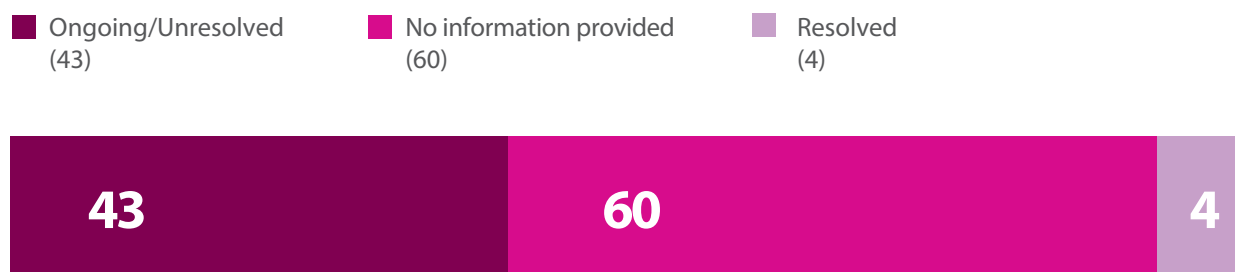
Causes of impunity were discussed by stakeholders at a regional seminar held in Colombo in December 2017, in commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.[202] Participants observed that a culture of impunity persists throughout the region, due to political interference, weaknesses in institutions overseeing law and order, slow moving courts, corruption, and use of unofficial channels such as settlements between families to resolve cases. It was also suggested that a polarized media landscape contributes to perpetuating impunity and violence.[203]

Non-fatal violence and threats additionally heighten insecurity for journalists throughout the region. South and Southeast Asian countries reflected an increase in beatings, forced disappearances, intimidation of journalists and verbal threats. According to the Southeast Asian Press Alliance, the sub-region experienced a substantial decline in press freedom in 2016.[204] In South Asia, attacks by partisan supporters, threats and attacks from armed groups and police, have impeded journalists' ability to practice independent reporting.[205] While fewer physical attacks against journalists in East Asia and Pacific countries have taken place, several incidents of violence against journalists have been reported, including beatings by police and security guards. Over the last 5 years, journalists and press freedom defenders in Western Asia faced physical attacks including stabbings and torture while in detention for reporting on corruption, politics and nationalism, among other topics.[206]

Bombings, killings, and kidnappings of journalists by members of armed groups increased alongside broader spikes in sectarian and insurgent violence in several countries between 2012 and 2017. However, journalists and freedom of expression groups found attacks from state officials, including the police, security agents and politicians, to be the most pervasive in most countries.[207]

The rate of incidents of violence against journalists, particularly killings, eased and slowed between 2012 and 2017 in countries where there was a cessation of long-running conflict. However, even in these countries, attacks still take place regularly and impunity is still the dominant trend.[208] Since 2012, several countries throughout the region restricted access to local and foreign journalists or expelled foreign journalists.[209]

_____

[202] UNESCO 2017.
[203] UNESCO 2017; IMS 2017.
[204] Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) 2017b.
[205] Butler 2018.
[206] Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 2017b.
[207] IMS 2017.
[208] IMS 2017; Patnaik 2017. .
[209] CPJ 2015; SEAPA 2016; Kine 2017.

Gender equality and the safety of journalists

Fatal attacks against women journalists remained consistent and occurred less frequently than male journalists. 8 victims (7 per cent) of the journalist killings condemned by UNESCO's Director-General from 2012 to 2016 in the Asia Pacific region were women, the same number documented in the previous five-year period. Offline and online harassment, and other gender specific threats and challenges, however, are widespread.

Figure 4-4: **Number of journalist killings condemned by UNESCO DG 2012-2016 according to gender in the Asia Pacific Region**

Female Male

8

99

Total:
107
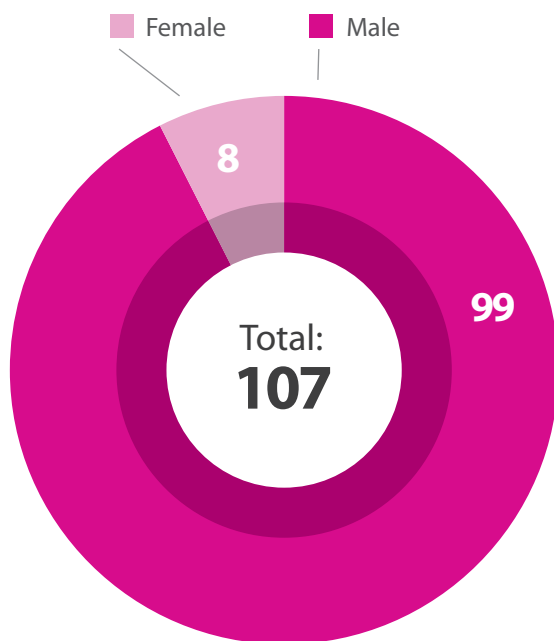
In a series of country reports for the Asia-Pacific region, the International Federation of Journalists found that while the numbers of women practicing journalism whether in newsrooms as freelancers or as bloggers has grown, women are professionally marginalized.[210] These reports and other subsequent studies by freedom of expression groups in other countries in the region, found that sexual and non-sexual harassment of women journalists occurs frequently but there is little recourse for women.[211] A 2016 study by the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee found that 69 per cent of women practicing journalism in Afghanistan have experienced sexual harassment. Perpetrators of sexual harassment against women journalists are most often colleagues and co-workers.[212] Similar findings emerged from surveys in Nepal[213] and Australia.[214]

Despite an increase of women working in the media[215], gender inequality in the workplace and social pressures often motivate women to leave the journalistic profession. Pay gaps, security concerns, travel difficulties, disapproval from families, and cultural restrictions, were cited in several countries as major obstacles for women journalists, particularly outside of main urban areas.

Hostility against women journalists online has increased substantially. Cyber abuse, including threats of rape, violence, character attacks and doxing, has become common immediate reactions to many women journalists in response to their reporting and social media activities.[216]

In May 2016, UNESCO organized a regional consultation in New Delhi on developing gender-sensitive guidelines for women in the media in South Asia in partnership with the South Asia Women's Network.

---

[210] International Federation of Journalists 2015.
[211] IMS 2017.
[212] Afghan Journalists Safety Committee 2016.
[213] IMS 2017.

[214] Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance 2016.
[215] Wang 2016.
[216] Suri 2017; IMS 2017; Posetti 2017.

TRENDS IN **SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS**

Other dimensions in the safety of journalists

The imprisonment of journalists took place in more countries throughout the region than in the previous 5-year period. While the overall number of imprisoned journalists dropped modestly, the number of countries in which journalists are imprisoned grew. According to the annual census of the Committee to Protect Journalists, at the end of 2012 a total of 97 journalists were in prison in 7 countries.[217] By the end of 2016, 67 journalists were imprisoned in 11 states, the majority on anti-state charges. Journalists have also been charged under criminal defamation laws which are in place in several countries, while others are held for extended periods without any charge at all. Since 2012, the number of arrests and detentions of internet journalists surpassed those of journalists working in traditional mediums.[218] Many countries introduced cyber security legislation that regulates online content[219] through criminal and civil penalties or enabled surveillance during the 2012 to 2017 period, including 8 countries in Southeast Asia.[220]

Criminal complaints against journalists, threats of violence and impunity, and official pressures from the state, collectively contributed to the practice of self-censorship since 2012. Journalists in South and East Asia were subject to pressures from politicians or party supporters to propagate positive narratives aligned to the interests of such actors and amidst increasingly nationalist environments.[221] Polarized journalism motivated by partisan or ethnic affiliations of particular media outlets, also contributed to a culture of self-censorship.[222] Increasing online insecurity, including death threats, forced journalists to curtail their news coverage and commentary.[223]

Fear of violent reprisals and imprisonment, as well as general insecurity following raids or closures of media outlets, sent many journalists from Asia Pacific countries into exile since 2012, the majority of whom are from Western Asia.[224] In Southeast Asia, an increasing number of bloggers entered exile, while 1 blogger was expelled as a condition of his release from prison.[225] While consistent data is not available on the numbers of journalists entering exile between 2012 and 2017, the numbers available reflect a downward trend during this period when compared to the previous 5-year period, during which at least 140 journalists fled hostile environments.

Journalists from several countries reported that their families were the targets of threats and harassment after their departures into exile.[226] One country saw the return of exiled media workers following a political transition. Large numbers of journalists were also internally displaced. For example, when the Taliban took over Kunduz province in Afghanistan, 150 journalists fled to safer parts of the country.[227]

---

[217] CPJ imprisoned archives.
[218] IBID 21; RSF 2018.
[219] CPJ 2017a; IMS 2017.
[220] SEAPA 2017a.
[221] UNHRC 2016; Gowen 2018 .
[222] Galhotra 2015; IMS 2017.

[223] Digital Rights Foundation 2018; Possetti 2017.
[224] Unless otherwise noted, the figures for imprisoned and exiled journalists have been compiled from reports by the Committee to Protect Journalists.
[225] Crispin 2014 and 2017.
[226] RSF 2017.
[227] IMS 2017.

Hate speech directed at ethnic groups, foreigners and religious minorities was increasingly promulgated though social media, causing several volatile situations for journalists in the Asia Pacific region. Some journalists were attacked while covering related unrest, while coverage or criticism of hate speech and extremism led directly to responsive threats and attacks against journalists.[228] Some countries have established restrictions for reporting on terror and other sensitive topics. Journalists resultantly practice self-censorship when reporting on these topics, while freedom of expression activists attest that the cost to freedom of expression imposed by such regulations is too high.[229]

Actions taken to enhance the safety of journalists

Twelve states[230] from the Asia and Pacific region sponsored any of the 11 resolutions addressing the safety of journalists which were adopted by UN bodies between 2012 and 2017. Japan sponsored 8, more than any other state in the region, while Australia sponsored 7. Japan is also a member of the informal 'Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists.' The Group, which has UNESCO Paris-based counterparts at UN bodies in New York and Geneva, is comprised of states committed to the strengthening the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and its implementation at the national level. Three other countries from Asia-Pacific region are part of the 'Group of Friends'. The Republic of Korea participates in New York and Paris, and Pakistan and Australia are members in Paris.

The majority of states in the Asia-Pacific region do not have monitoring, protection and prosecution mechanisms in place to secure the safety of journalists. Since 2012, at least 5 states have begun putting measures in place.

In 2016, Afghanistan established the Joint Committee for the Safety and Security of Journalists (JCSSJ); a multi-stakeholder body tasked with implementing a security plan for journalists. Since its formation, the JCSSJ has ordered the reinvestigation of attacks against journalists dating back to 2002, and set up dialogue and information–sharing channels between journalists and security forces. Nepal's National Human Rights Commission has been developing a mechanism to support freedom of expression since 2012. The planned mechanism aims to prevent attacks against those exercising their right to free expression, including journalists, and follow up on prosecutions. The project received financial support from the UN Peace Fund for Nepal.

Under the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, stakeholders in Pakistan, including the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, created the Pakistani Coalition for Media Safety (PCOMS) in 2013. The Coalition has consulted in the development of legislation, currently under review by lawmakers, to address the safety of journalists.

In the Philippines, the Presidential Task Force on Violations of the Right to Life, Liberty and Security of the Members of the Media was established in 2016 to investigate unsolved attacks against journalists. In 2014, India set up a bureau to document crimes against journalists. Both programs have been criticized, however, for failing to include representatives from the media and civil society.

---

[228] Chan 2015; IFEX 2016; CPJ 2016.
[229] Center for Independent Journalism 2015.
[230] In addition to Japan and Australia, Republic of Korea, Kiribati, Maldives, Mongolia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Palau, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu, sponsored one or more resolutions addressing safety of journalists since 2012.

Figure 4-5: Asia Pacific member states sponsoring UN resolutions on the safety of journalists since 2012

	2012	2013	2014	2014	2015	2015	2015	2016	2017	2017	2017	GROUP OF FRIENDS
	HRC	UNGA	HRC	UNGA	UNESCO	UNSC	UNGA	UNHRC	UNESCO	UNESCO	UNGA	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Afghanistan												
Australia	●	●	●	●		●	●				●	
Bangladesh												
Bhutan												
Brunei Darussalam												
Cambodia												
China												
Cook Islands												
Democratic People's Republic of Korea												
Fiji												
India												
Indonesia												
Iran (Islamic Republic of)												
Japan		●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Kazakhstan												
Kiribati												
Kyrgyzstan												
Lao People's Democratic Republic												
Malaysia						●						
Maldives		●	●	●			●	●			●	
Marshall Islands												
Micronesia (Federated States of)												
Mongolia		●		●			●	●			●	
Myanmar												
Nauru												
Nepal												
New Zealand		●	●	●		●	●					
Niue												
Pakistan												●
Palau						●						
Papua New Guinea												
Philippines												
Republic of Korea		●		●	●		●		●	●		●
Samoa												
Singapore												
Solomon Islands												
Sri Lanka							●				●	
Thailand												
Timor-Leste								●				
Tonga												
Turkmenistan												
Tuvalu												
Vanuatu											●	
Viet Nam												

Appendices

References

Abuza, Zachary. 2015. Stifling the Public Sphere: Media and Civil Society in Vietnam. National Endowment for Democracy and International Forum for Democratic Studies. Available at <http://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Stifling-the-Public-Sphere-Media-Civil-Society-Vietnam-Forum-NED.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Accountable Journalism. 2017. Monitoring Media Ethics Across the Globe. Available at <https://accountablejournalism.org>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Afghan Journalists Safety Committee. 2016. The reporting heroes, a study on the condition of afghan female journalists. International Media Support. Available at <https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/women-in-media-21.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Aggarwal, Mayank. 2017. Four Land and Environmental Defenders Killed Every Week in 2016: Report. LiveMint. Available at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/85dyIqCtrLguxQnjYyauhO/Four-land-and-environmental-defenders-killed-every-week-in-2.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Ahmed, Shazeda. 2017. Cashless Society, Cached Data: Security Considerations for a Chinese Social Credit System. CitizenLab. Available at <https://citizenlab.ca/2017/01/cashless-society-cached-data-security-considerations-chinese-social-credit-system/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Al Jazeera. 2016. Mass Protests against South Korean President Park. Mass Protests against South Korean President Park (blog). October 29, 2016. Available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/mass-protests-south-korean-president-park-161029123150734.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Almuttaqi, Ibrahim. 2015. The 'Islamic State' and the Rise of Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia. 2015. Available at <https://thcasean.org/read/articles/171/The-Islamic-State-and-the-rise-of-violent-extremism-in-Southeast-Asia.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Amnesty. 2017. Human Rights Defenders Under Threat - a Shrinking Space for Civil Society. ACT 30/6011/2017. Amnesty International.

Aneez, Shihar, and Ranga Sirilal. 2016. Maldives Approves Defamation Law Criticized by U.N. Reuters. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-maldives-rights-defamation-idUSKCN10K21N>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Article 19. 2015a. Asia Disclosed: A Review of the Right to Information across Asia. Available at <https://www.article19.org/data/files/medialibrary/38121/FINAL-Asia-Disclosed-full.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Article 19. 2015b. Asia Disclosed - The Right to Know across Asia. Available at <https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/38121/en/asia-disclosed---the-right-to-know-across-asia>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Article 19. 2015c. Country Report: The Right to Information in Japan. Available at <https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/38132/en/country-report:-the-right-to-information-in-japan>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

ASEAN. 2015. ASEAN eFramework Agreement One Vision, One Identity and One Community. Available at <http://asean.org/?static_post=e-asean-framework-agreement>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Asia Society. n.d. Osborn Elliott Prize. Available at <http://asiasociety.org/about/osborn-elliott-prize>. Accessed 15 July 2017.

Australian Attorney-General's Department. 2015. Regional CVE Summit. Available at <https://www.ag.gov.au/cvesummit>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority. 2014a. Opening Remarks Asia Pacific Regulators Roundtable. Web pages. Available at <http://www.acma.gov.au/Industry/Spectrum/Spectrum-planning/International-planning-ITU-and-other-international-planning-bodies/opening-remarks-asia-pacific-regulators-roundtable>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority. 2014b. ACMA Investigation of Sunday Night Federal Court Decision and Further Appeal. Web pages. Available at <http://www.acma.gov.au/Industry/Broadcast/Television/TV-content-regulation/acma-investigation-of-sunday-night-federal-court-decision-and-further-appeal>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Baker & McKenzie. 2012. Guide to Media and Content Regulation in Asia Pacific. Available at <http://www.commsalliance.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/42136/Guide-to-Media-and-Content-Regulation-in-Asia-Pacific.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Baller, Silja, Bruno Lanvin, and Soumitra Dutta. 2016. The Global Information Technology Report 2016. Available at <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-information-technology-report-2016>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Bansal, Shuchi. 2018. IRS Survey Delivers Mixed News. Livemint. Available at <https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/p9FKKImZvWSUicODLuQoyN/IRS-survey-delivers-mixed-news.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Barron, Laignee. 2017. As Myanmar's Rakhine Crisis Deepens, so Does State Bid for Media Control. Christian Science Monitor, September 12, 2017. Available at <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2017/0912/As-Myanmar-s-Rakhine-crisis-deepens-so-does-state-bid-for-media-control>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Bashir, Martin. 2016. Asia Bibi: Christmas in a Prison Cell. BBC News, sec. Asia. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38222680>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Baumgartner, Pete. 2017. CPJ: This Is Most Dangerous Time For Journalists Ever. RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. Available at <https://www.rferl.org/a/cpj-journalists-repression-deadly-dangerous/28451268.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Berkman Klein Centre for Internet and Society. 2018. Internet Monitor. Available at <https://thenetmonitor.org/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Bhattacharya, Ananya. 2018. Embed: India Is Cutting off Internet Access More Often. Quartz, sec. Handstied. Available at <https://www.theatlas.com/embed/rJXOmO_7f>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Bolsever, Gillian, Samuel Woolley, and Philip N. Howard. 2017. Computational Propaganda in China: An Alternative Model of a Widespread Practice. The Computational Propaganda Project. Oxford Internet Institute. Accessed July 18, 2017. Available at <http://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/2017/06/19/computational-propaganda-in-china-an-alternative-model-of-a-widespread-practice/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

BorneoPost. 2017. China Bans Online Videos Showing Homosexuality, Affairs. BorneoPost Online. Available at <http://www.theborneopost.com/2017/07/01/china-bans-online-videos-showing-homosexuality-affairs/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Bradshaw, Samnatha, and Philip Howard. 2017. Troops, Trolls and Troublemakers: A Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation. Working paper no. 2017.12. Computational Propaganda Research. University of Oxford. Available at <http://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2017/07/Troops-Trolls-and-Troublemakers.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development. 2016. The State of Broadband 2016: Broadband Catalyzing Sustainable Development. The Broadband Commission's Annual The State of Broadband. Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development. Available at <http://www.broadbandcommission.org/publications/Pages/SOB-2016.aspx>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Brodkin, Jon. 2017. China Announces Mass Shutdown of VPNs That Bypass Great Firewall. Ars Technica. Available at <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2017/01/china-announces-mass-shutdown-of-vpns-that-bypass-great-firewall/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Bunnag, Sireerat. 2015. Digital Broadcasting Asia-Pacific Region. ITU. Available at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/AsiaPacific/Documents/Events/2015/August-RDF2015/Session-1/S1_Sireerat_Bunnag.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Butler, Stephen. 2018. Bangladesh's press say they are losing the courage to report amid threats from all sides. Committee to Protect Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2018/02/bangladeshs-press-say-they-are-losing-the-courage-.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Center for Independent Journalism. 2015. Regulating social media not the answer to recent violence in Malaysia. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/CIJ.MY/posts/10153182326689652>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD). 2016. Country Data - Global Right to Information Rating. Available at <http://www.rti-rating.org/country-data/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Chan, Mikha. 2015. NUJ condemns assault on journalists at Low Yat Plaza. Free Malaysia Today. Available at <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2015/07/13/nuj-condemns-assault-on-journalists-at-low-yat-plaza/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Chakravarti, Sudeep. 2013. How about a SLAPP for Your Trouble? Http://Www.Livemint.Com/, sec. Opinion, Root Cause. Available at <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/NZ8POx9XCRxNmcwHXvTNeI/How-about-a-SLAPP-for-your-trouble.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Chander, Anupam, and Uyên P. Lê. 2015. Data Nationalism. Emory Law Journal 64: 677. Available at <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2577947>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Chari, Raj, Gary Murphy, and John Hogan. 2009. Regulating Lobbying: A Global Comparison. Manchester University Press. Available at <http://www.regulatelobbying.com/images/regulatelobbyingch1(2).pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Chavez, Maria Eugenia. 2014. Scheherezades: A Thousand and One Stories of Women in Community Radio. Media and Gender: A Scholarly Agenda for the Global Alliance on Media and Gender. UNESCO. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/publications/media_and_gender_scholarly_agend a_for_gamag.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Cherian, George. 2015. Managing the Dangers of Online Hate Speech in South Asia. Media Asia 42 (3–4): 144–56. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2016.1150585>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Coca, Nithin. 2018. The Rapid Rise of Censorship in Southeast Asia. The Diplomat. Available at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/the-rapid-rise-of-censorship-in-southeast-asia/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Combalicer, Shiena. 2016. How Some Countries in Asia Fight the Pandemic of Fake News. Isentia (blog). 2016. Available at <http://www.isentia.com.vn/blog/how-some-countries-in-asia-fight-the-pandemic-of-fake-news>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Committee to Protect Journalists database of imprisoned journalists & imprisoned archives (2012-2016). New York. Available at <https://cpj.org/data/imprisoned/2017/ & Available at <https://cpj.org/imprisoned/2016.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2015. In Kyrgyzstan, U.S. journalist deported, his sources harassed. Available at <https://cpj.org/2015/03/in-kyrgyzstan-us-journalist-deported-his-sources-h.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2016. Kyrgyz journalist received death threats. Available at <https://cpj.org/2017/06/kyrgyz-journalist-receives-death-threats.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2017a. Bangladesh defamation law is avenue to misuse. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2017/12/bangladeshs-defamation-law-is-avenue-to-misuse-pow.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2017b. Journalist and press freedom defender stabbed in Kyrgyzstan. Available at < https://cpj.org/2017/05/journalist-and-press-freedom-defender-stabbed-in-k.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Cook, Sarah. 2018. The News China Didn't Want Reported in 2017. The Diplomat. Available at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/the-news-china-didnt-want-reported-in-2017/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Cosseboom, Leighton. 2015. Indonesia Turns to Satellite Internet to Fix Broadband Holes. Tech in Asia. Available at <https://www.techinasia.com/indonesia-satellite-broadband-bignet-kacific>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Cox, Jamieson. 2016. Netflix Won't Commit to Leaving Its Content Uncensored around the World. The Verge. Available at <https://www.theverge.com/2016/1/6/10724616/netflix-ces-2016-uncensored-original-global-content>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

CPJ. 2015. 10 Most Censored Countries - Committee to Protect Journalists. Attacks on the Press. Committee Protect Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/2015/04/10-most-censored-countries.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Crispin, Andrew. 2017. Vietnamese Blogger Gets 7 Years Jail for Reporting on Toxic Spill, SE Asia News & Top
    Stories - The Straits Times. The Straits Times, 2017. Available at <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-
    asia/vietnamese-blogger-gets-7-years-jail-for-reporting-on-toxic-spill>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Crispin, Shawn. 2014. Undercover in Vietnam: Room for Debate Frees up but Bloggers Remain Imprisoned.
    Committee to Protect Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2014/09/undercover-in-vietnam-
    room-for-debate-frees-up-but.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Crispin, Shawn. 2014. Exile is High Price for Reporter. In Under Cover in Vietnam. Committee to Protect
    Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2014/09/undercover-in-vietnam-exile-is-high-price-
    reporter.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Crispin, Shawn. 2017. 'I wanted to stay and fight for my beliefs' says jailed Vietnamese blogger forced into exile.
    Committee to Protect Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2017/02/i-wanted-to-stay-and-fight-
    for-my-beliefs-says-jai.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Deutsche Welle. 2017a. Southeast Asia: An Action Plan to Improve the Media Environment. #mediadev. Accessed
    July 18, 2017. Available at <http://www.dw.com/en/southeast-asia-an-action-plan-to-improve-the-media-
    environment/a-36032113>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Dhawani, Himnshi. 2016. Death Toll of RTI Activists Goes up to 56 - Times of India. The Times of India.
    Available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Death-toll-of-RTI-activists-goes-up-to-56/
    articleshow/54947268.cms>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Digital Rights Foundation. 2018. Statement: Civil Society Strongly Condemns Behaviour of LEAs in Blasphemy
    Case. Digital Rights Foundation (blog). February 2018. Available at <https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/
    islamabad-high-court-ruled-mobile-network-shutdowns-illegal/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Digital Rights Foundation. 2018. Digital Insecurity of Journalists. Available at <https://digitalrightsfoundation.
    pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Report-Digi-Insecurity-of-Journos.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Dixit, Pranav. 2017. American Tech Companies Are So Afraid Of Offending Indians That They're Censoring All
    Their Products. BuzzFeed. Available at <https://www.buzzfeed.com/pranavdixit/why-silicon-valley-is-
    censoring-itself-as-it-expands-in>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Edelman. 2017. 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer Executive Summary. Available at <http://www.edelman.com/
    executive-summary/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Eileen NG. 2016. Malaysia's Softer Approach to Radicals Reaping Rewards. Today Weekend. Available at <http://
    www.todayonline.com/world/asia/malaysias-softer-approach-radicals-reaping-rewards>. Accessed 16
    May 2018.

Ethical Journalism Network, and Hong Kong Baptist University. 2016. A Hong Kong Glossary of Hate Speech. In
    Ethical Journalism Network. Available at <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/
    ethics-in-the-news/hate-speech/hong-kong>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Frieschlad, Nadine. 2016. Controversial 'Right to Be Forgotten' Finds Its Way into Indonesian Law. Tech in Asia.
    Available at <https://www.techinasia.com/indonesia-recognizes-right-to-be-forgotten>. Accessed 16 May
    2018.

FTI Consulting. 2016. Localization to Fragment Data Flows in Asia. FTI Consulting. Available at <http://www.fticonsulting-asia.com/~/media/Files/apac-files/insights/articles/localization-to-fragment-data-flows-asia.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

G20 Leaders. n.d. Hamburg G20 Leaders' Statement on Countering Terrorism. Accessed July 9, 2017. Available at <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2017/170707-counterterrorism.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Galhotra, Sumit. 2015. One Year on, Challenges Remain for Press in Indonesia - Committee to Protect Journalists. Centre to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (blog). Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2015/12/one-year-on-challenges-remain-for-press-in-indones.php#more>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Galhotra, Sumit. 2015. Mission journal: Bangladeshi press reined in. Committee to Protect Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2015/03/mission-journal-bangladeshi-press-reined-in-as-pri.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Gonzalez, Rosa Maria, and Misako Ito. 2015. Inside the News: Challenges and Aspirations of Women Journalists in Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok: UNESCO. Available at <http://www.ifj.org/uploads/media/Inside_the_News_FINAL_040615_UNESDOC.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Gowen, Ann. 2018. In Modi's India, journalists face bullying, criminal cases and worse. Washington Post. Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-modis-india-journalists-face-bullyingcriminal-cases-and-worse/2018/02/13/e8176b72-8695-42ab-abd5-d26aab830d3e_story.html?utm_term=.0059fc1f5951>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Gowen, Annie, and Max Bearak. 2017. Fake News on Facebook Fans the Flames of Hate against the Rohingya in Burma. Washington Post, sec. Asia Pacific. Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/fake-news-on-facebook-fans-the-flames-of-hate-against-the-rohingya-in-burma/2017/12/07/2c1fe830-ca1f-11e7-b506-8a10ed11ecf5_story.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

GSMA. 2017. IoT Knowledgebase for Policy and Regulation. Internet of Things (blog). 2017. Available at <https://www.gsma.com/iot/iot-knowledgebase/regions/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Gurumurthy, Anita. n.d. Gender and Media- A Situation Analysis of the Asia Region - Key Highlights. UNESCO, IFJ. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/3_regional_reports_asia_anita_gurumurthy.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Hafez, Kai. 2010. Journalism Ethics Revisited: A Comparison of Ethics Codes in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Muslim Asia. Political Communication 19 (2): 225–50. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600252907461>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Harooni, Mirwais and Andrew MacAskill. 2016. Suicide bomb in Afghan capital targets journalists, kills seven people. Reuters. Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-blast-kabul/suicide-bomb-in-afghan-capital-targets-journalists-kills-seven-people-idUSKCN0UY1HU>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Head, Jonathan. 2018. Is Prison Time for 'fake News' Fair? BBC News, sec. Asia. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-43637744>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Henisz, Witold J., and Bennet A. Zelner. 2010. The Hidden Risks in Emerging Markets. Harvard Business Review. Available at <https://hbr.org/2010/04/the-hidden-risks-in-emerging-markets>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Human Rights Watch. 2017. India: 20 Internet Shutdowns in 2017. Human Rights Watch (blog). Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/15/india-20-internet-shutdowns-2017>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Hutt, David. 2017. Fake News, Real Danger in Southeast Asia. Asia Times. Available at <http://www.atimes.com/article/fake-news-real-danger-southeast-asia/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

IFEX. 2016. Global Impunity Index Reveals Impact of Militant Extremist Attacks against Journalists. IFEX (blog). Available at <http://www.ifex.org/international/2016/10/27/cpj2016_impunity/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

IMS. 2017. A Changing Asian Media. 2017. Available at <https://www.mediasupport.org/publication/a-changing-asian-media/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

International Federation of Journalists. 2015. The Asia-Pacific media through a gender lens. Available at <http://www.ifj.org/nc/news-single-view/browse/3/backpid/33/article/the-asia-pacific-media-through-a-gender-lens>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

International Federation of Journalists. 2015. Inside the News Challenges and Aspirations of Women Journalists in Asia and the Pacific. Paris: UNESCO. Available at <http://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/documents/Inside_the_News_FINAL_040615_UNESDOC.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

International Federation of Journalists. 2016. 25th Killed List Report - Journalists and Media Staff Killed 1990-2015: 25 Years of Contribution towards Safer Journalism. Belgium: International Federation of Journalists. Available at <http://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/documents/25_Report_Final_sreads_web.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

International Federation of Journalists. 2017. Call for End to Internet Shutdowns. Available at <http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ifj.org%2Fnc%2Fnews-single-view%2Fbackpid%2F1%2Farticle%2Fifj-samsn-call-for-end-to-internet-shutdowns%2F>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

International Media Support. 2017. Defending Journalism: How National Mechanisms can protect Journalists and Address the Issue of Impunity, a Comparative Analysis of Practices in Seven Countries. Available at <https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1_Journalist-Protection-Book-Digital-1.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Internet Governance Forum. 2016. Regional IGF Initiatives. Available at <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/regional-igf-initiatives>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Internet Society. 2016. Mobile Internet Usage Trends in Asia-Pacific. Available at <https://www.internetsociety.org/sites/default/files/Mobile%20Internet%20Usage%20Trends%20in%20Asia-Pacific.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Internet Society. 2017. Issue Paper: Asia Pacific Bureau Internet of Things. Available at <https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/APAC-Issue-Paper-IoT.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

ITU. 2015. ITU Asia-Pacific Regional Development Forum. Available at <http://www.itu.int:80/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/AsiaPacific/Pages/Events/2015/August-RDF2015/home.aspx>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

ITU. 2016. The State of Broadband 2016: Broadband Catalyzing Sustainable. Available at <http://broadbandcommission.org/Documents/reports/bb-annualreport2016.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

ITU. 2017. The Activation of Radio Broadcasting Receivers in Smart/Mobile Telephones and Tablets. Available at <http://www.itu.int/pub/R-OP-R.103-2017>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Jameson, Helen. 2017. Myanmar: The New Hotbed for Satellite. Available at <http://interactive.satellitetoday.com/via/asia-edition-2017/myanmar-the-new-hotbed-for-satellite/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Kaye, David. 2017. OHCHR | India Must Restore Internet and Social Media Networks in Jammu and Kashmir, Say UN Rights Experts. Geneva: United Nation Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21604>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Kikuchi, Tomomi. 2016. Asia's Print Media Are on the Ropes. Financial Times. Available at <https://www.ft.com/content/068095bc-9d24-11e6-8324-be63473ce146>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Kilman, Larry. 2015. World Press Trends: Newspaper Revenues Shift To New Sources. Available at <http://www.wan-ifra.org/press-releases/2015/06/01/world-press-trends-newspaper-revenues-shift-to-new-sources>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Kine, Phelim. 2017. Indonesia Steamrolls Media Freedom in Papua, Again. Human Rights Watch. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/20/indonesia-steamrolls-media-freedom-papua-again>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Kuchler, Hannah, Michael Peel, and Ben Bland. 2017. Southeast Asian Censors Test Mettle of Social Media Groups. Financial Times. Available at <https://www.ft.com/content/c87c4364-3c43-11e7-821a-6027b8a20f23>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Kumar, Raksha. 2017. The Truth-Vigilantes Fighting India's Fake News. South China Morning Post, sec. This Week In Asia. Available at <http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/society/article/2092361/truth-vigilantes-fighting-indias-fake-news>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Lee, Francis, Michael Chan, Hsuan-Ting Chen, Dennis K. K. Leung, Antonis Kalogeropoulos, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2017. Digital News Report Asia-Pacific Supplementary Report. Reuters Institute. Available at <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/RDNR2017_APAC_012_Web1.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Lee, Terence. 2013. Singapore an Advanced Surveillance State, but Citizens Don't Mind. Tech in Asia. Available at <https://www.techinasia.com/singapore-advanced-surveillance-state-citizens-mind>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Liben, Paul. 2013. Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Available at http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2013%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report%20(2).pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Malcolm, Jeremy. 2017. Australian PM Calls for End-to-End Encryption Ban, Says the Laws of Mathematics Don't Apply Down Under | Electronic Frontier Foundation. Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) (blog). July 14, 2017. Available at <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2017/07/australian-pm-calls-end-end-encryption-ban-says-laws-mathematics-dont-apply-down>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Mander, Harsh, and Anirban Bhattacharya. 2016. Modi Government Is Pulling Out All the Stops to Take Independence and Accountability Away From the NHRC. Available at <https://thewire.in/80258/nhrc-modi-political-appointment/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Manyika, James, Susan Lund, Jacques Bughin, Jonathan Woetzel, Kalin Stamenov, and Dhruv Dhingra. 2016. Digital Globalization: The New Era of Global Flows. McKinsey & Company. February 2016. Available at <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/digital-mckinsey/our-insights/digital-globalization-the-new-era-of-global-flows>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Martin, Violaine. 2013. Independent UN Experts Seriously Concerned about Japan's Special Secrets Bill. UN News. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/11/456052-independent-un-experts-seriously-concerned-about-japans-special-secrets-bill>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Mathew, Suresh. 2016. Amazon Prime Video Tells Us Why It's Censoring Content in India. The Quint. Available at <https://www.thequint.com/entertainment/2016/12/16/amazon-prime-video-india-self-censorship-no-frontal-nudity-compared-to-netflix-hotstar>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance. 2016. Mates over Merit: The Women in Media Report. MEAA (blog). Available at <https://www.meaa.org/mediaroom/mates-over-merit-the-women-in-media-report/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Media Literacy Network. 2017. Media Literacy Network. Available at <https://medlitnetwork.wordpress.com/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Mendel, Toby. 2010. Audiovisual Media Policy, Regulation and Independence in Southeast Asia. Open Society Foundation. Available at <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/audiovisual-media-policy-regulation-and-independence-southeast-asia>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Microsoft. n.d. Bridging the Gap through Digital Literacy. Asia News Center (blog). Accessed May 2, 2018. Available at <https://news.microsoft.com/apac/features/bridging-gap-digital-literacy/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Mitra, Devirupa. 2017. India Will Soon Fully Operationalise Its Mass Surveillance Project. The Wire. Available at <https://thewire.in/107292/india-mass-surveillance-project-cms/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Moosa, Hassan, and Kai Schultz. 2017. Outspoken Maldives Blogger Who Challenged Radical Islamists Is Killed. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/23/world/asia/yameen-rasheed-dead-maldives-blogger-dead.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Mundy, Simon. 2015. Asia Considers 'Right to Be Forgotten' Ruling Prompted by Google. Financial Times. Available at <https://www.ft.com/content/ade889d4-bc0e-11e4-a6d7-00144feab7de>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Newman, Nic. 2017. Digital News Report: Journalism, Media and Technology Trends Predictions 2017. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available at <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Journalism%2C%20Media%20and%20Technology%20Trends%20and%20Predictions%202017.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Newman, Nic, David A. L. Levy, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2015. SSRN Electronic Journal. Available at <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2619576>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Newman, Nic, David Levy, Rasmus Nielsen, and Richard Fletcher. Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016. Reuters Institute for Study of Journalism. Available at <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/Digital%2520News%2520Report%25202016.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Neyazi, Taberez Ahmed. 2017. Media Politics in South Asia - Political Science. Available at <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0213.xml>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Ng, Yi Shu. n.d. Indonesia Blocks Telegram, Fearing Terror Groups Using It to Pass Encrypted Messages. Mashable. Available at <https://mashable.com/2017/07/17/telegram-blocked-indonesia/>. Accessed 1 May 2018.

Ninan, Sevanti, author, with research by Geeta Seshu & Shilpi Goyal. The India Freedom Report – Media and Freedom of Expression 2016. New Delhi: The Hoot. Available at <http://www.thehoot.org/free-speech/media-freedom/the-india-freedom-report-january-2016-april-2017-10080>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Ninan, Sevanti, author, with research by Geeta Seshu, Sudipto Mondal, Rahul Bhatnagar, Urvashi Sarkar, Anuradha Sharma, Simran Agarwal, Anisha Sheth and Shilpi Goyal researchers. The India Freedom Report – Media and Freedom of Expression 2017. New Delhi: The Hoot. Available at <http://thehoot.org/public/uploads/filemanager/media/THE-INDIA-FREEDOM-REPORT-.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Noam, Eli M. 2016. Who Owns the World's Media? Media Concentration and Ownership around the World - Oxford Scholarship. Oxford. Available at <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199987238.001.0001/acprof-9780199987238>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Observer Research Foundation. 2014. Media Self Regulation Alone Won't Work in India. Observer Research Foundation (blog). 2014. Available at <http://www.orfonline.org/research/media-self-regulation-alone-wont-work-in-india/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Ochab, Ewelina U. 2017. How Stephen Fry Became An Advocate Against Blasphemy Laws. Forbes. Available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2017/06/05/how-stephen-fry-became-an-advocate-against-blasphemy-laws/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

OHCHR. 2016. UN Rights Expert Warns of Serious Threats to the Independence of the Press. Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19843>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Osaki, Tomohiro. 2016. Japan's First-Ever Hate Speech Probe Finds Rallies Are Fewer but Still a Problem. The Japan Times Online. Available at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/30/national/japans-first-ever-hate-speech-probe-finds-rallies-are-fewer-but-still-a-problem/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Owen, Elani. 2017. The Next Frontline of the Battle Against the Islamic State? Southeast Asia. Cornell International Affairs Review 10 (2). Available at <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1648/the-next-frontline-of-the-battle-against-the-islamic-state-southeast-asia>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Pacific Freedom Forum. 2014. Regional media condemn police attack on Papua New Guinea camera crew. Available at <https://www.ifex.org/papua_new_guinea/2014/06/19/attack_camera_crew>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Pak, Nataly, and Eveline Danubrata. 2016. In Asia, Netflix Trips on Regulation, Content, and Competition. Reuters, sec. Business News. Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-netflix-asia/in-asia-netflix-trips-on-regulation-content-and-competition-idUSKCN0XJ0BZ>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Palatino, Mong, The. n.d. Free Speech Under Attack in Southeast Asia. The Diplomat. Accessed July 4, 2017. Available at <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/free-speech-under-attack-in-southeast-asia/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Parth, M.N., and Shashank Bengali. 2017. Fake News Fuels Nationalism and Islamophobia — Sound Familiar? In This Case, It's in India - LA Times. Los Angeles Times, sec. World, Asoa. Available at <http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-india-fake-news-20170711-story.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Parthasarathy, Suhrith. 2017. Dismissing Priya Pillai's Petition Against Criminal Defamation Law Is a Loss For Free Speech. The Wire. Available at <https://thewire.in/100836/priya-pillai-criminal-defamation-supreme-court/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Patnaik, Biraj. 2017. Sri Lanka: The conflict's legacy of impunity endures. Amnesty International. Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/05/sri-lanka-the-conflicts-legacy-of-impunity-endures>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Payton, Matt. 2016. Japan Has Green-Lit Blanket Surveillance of Muslims. The Independent. Available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/muslims-japan-government-surveillance-top-court-green-lit-islamaphobia-a7109761.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Pew Research Center. 2016. The Strong Relationship between per Capita Income and Internet Access. Global Attitudes and Trends. Pew Research Center. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/02/22/internet-access-growing-worldwide-but-remains-higher-in-advanced-economies/technology-report-02-06c/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Population and Development Review. 2017. Identity Systems and Civil Registration in Asia. Population and Development Review 43 (1): 183–87. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.12040>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Posetti, Julie. 2017. Fighting back against prolific online harassment: Maria Ressa. Article in Kilman, L. An Attack on One is an Attack on All: Successful Initiatives To Protect Journalists and Combat Impunity. International Programme for the Development of Communication, Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco. org/images/0025/002593/259399e.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

PRS. 2017. Issues Related To Paid News. Report Summaries. Parliament Track (blog). 2017. Available at <http://www.prsindia.org/parliamenttrack/report-summaries/issues-related-to-paid-news-2780/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

PTI. 2017. Need to Have Counter-Narrative to Online Extremism: Experts. The Financial Express. Available at <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/need-to-have-counter-narrative-to-online-extremism-experts/514756/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Punchihewa, Amal. 2017. Digital Radio Services: Asia Pacific Regional Update, Trends and Technologies. ITU/NBTC Workshop on Digital Radio Broadcasting Trial, 24.

Radsch, Courtney C. 2016. Media Development and Countering Violent Extremism: An Uneasy Relationship, a Need for Dialogue. Center for Media Assistance and National Endowment for Democracy. Available at <http://www.cima.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CIMA-CVE-Paper_web-150ppi.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Rahman, Zara. 2016. Bangladesh Shuts Down the Internet, Then Orders Blocking of 35 News Websites. Global Voices Advocacy (blog). August 5, 2016. Available at <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2016/08/05/bangladesh-shuts-down-the-internet-then-orders-blocking-of-35-news-websites/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Rana, Muhammad Amir. 2016. Countering Violent Extremism. Dawn, November 6, 2016. Available at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1294504>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters without Borders. World Press Freedom Index. 2015, 2016 editions. Paris. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/ranking/2015>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters Without Borders. 2017. Apple TV Censors 'China Uncensored' Show | Reporters without Borders. RSF (blog). April 18, 2017. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/news/apple-tv-censors-china-uncensored-show>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters Without Borders. 2018a. 2018 World Press Freedom Index. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters Without Borders. 2018b. Detained Journalists. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/detained-journalists>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters without Borders. 2018c. Chinese regime's true face – one of the worst free speech predators. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/news/chinese-regimes-true-face-one-worst-free-speech-predators>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters Without Borders. 2017a. Afghanistan : Victims of the Civil War. Reporters Without Borders (blog). 2017. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/afghanistan>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters Without Borders. 2017b. Internet Giants That Tolerate or Actively Cooperate with Censorship | Reporters without Borders. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/reports/internet-giants-tolerate-or-actively-cooperate-censorship>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Reporters Without Borders. 2017c. 2017 World Press Freedom Index – Tipping Point. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/2017-world-press-freedom-index-tipping-point>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Rujivanarom, Pratch. 2016. Thailand: Civil-Society Groups Brace for Slapp Prosecutions under New Computer Crime Act. Asia News Network, sec. The Nation/ANN. Available at <http://annx.asianews.network/content/thailand-civil-society-groups-brace-slapp-prosecutions-under-new-computer-crime-act-35446>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Russell, Jon. 2016. Online Censorship Rears Its Ugly Head In Southeast Asia. TechCrunch. Available at <http://social.techcrunch.com/2016/01/31/southeast-asia-censorsh1t/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Russell, Jon. 2017. Google Wins 'Right to Be Forgotten' Battle in Japan. TechCrunch (blog). 2017. Available at <http://social.techcrunch.com/2017/02/01/google-japan-negative-comments/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sainath, P. 2010. Paid News Undermining Democracy: Press Council Report. The Hindu, sec. Sainath. Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/sainath/Paid-news-undermining-democracy-Press-Council-report/article16371596.ece>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Salleh, Nur Asyiqin Mohamad, Tham Yuen-C, and Rachel Au-Yong. 2017. Battle against Fake News: Rise of the Truth-Seekers. The Straits Times. Available at <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/battle-against-fake-news-rise-of-the-truth-seekers>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sambandaraksa, Don. 2017. Thailand's Broadcsating and Telecoms Regulator Gets Regulated. Disruptive.Asia (blog). April 5, 2017. Available at <https://disruptive.asia/thailands-regulator-gets-regulated/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

SAMSN Digital Hub. 2016. Facts and Quotes About Internet Shutdowns. 2016. Available at <https://samsn.ifj.org/journos-against-internet-shutdowns/facts-quotes-internet-shutdowns/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

SAMSN Digital Hub. 2017. #JournosAgainstShutdowns: A South Asian Conversation. Available at <https://samsn.ifj.org/journosagainstshutdowns_a_south_asian_conversation/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

SANCOM. 2015. South Asia Network for Community Media Launched. Available at <http://www.amarceurope.eu/south-asia-network-for-community-media-launched/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sang-Hun, Choe. 2016. South Korea Government Accused of Using Defamation Laws to Silence Critics. The New York Times, sec. Asia Pacific. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/06/world/asia/defamation-laws-south-korea-critics-press-freedom.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sen, Shreeja. 2016. Defamation Is a Criminal Offence, Confirms Supreme Court. Http://Www.Livemint.Com/. Available at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/cFDpysfoouEMLlJbmm9BeJ/SC-to-rule-on-criminal-defamation-cases-today-politicians.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sharma, Betwa. 2016. Criminal Defamation Laws Are Prevalent Across The World With Very Few Exceptions. Huffington Post India. Available at <http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/05/13/criminal-defamation-laws_n_9948456.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sherwood, Harriet. 2015. Human Rights Groups Face Global Crackdown 'Not Seen in a Generation.' The Guardian, sec. Law. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2015/aug/26/ngos-face-restrictions-laws-human-rights-generation>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Singh, Manish. 2016. Indian Government Issues 24-Hour Ban on News Channel NDTV India. Mashable. Available at <http://mashable.com/2016/11/04/ndtv-india-banned-terrorist-attack-coverage/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Software Freedom Law Centre. 2017. Internet Shutdowns in India. http://internetshutdowns.in.

South Asia Center for Media in Development. 2017. Promoting Information and Gender Literacy in Media. Available at <http://sacmid.asia/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Southeast Asia Globe editorial. 2016. State of Press Freedom Remains Dire across Much of Region. Southeast Asia Globe Magazine. Available at <http://sea-globe.com/southeast-asia-press-freedom-2016/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Southeast Asian Press Alliance. 2016. Burma's military hinders independent reporting on Rakhine conflict. Available at <https://www.seapa.org/military-hinders-independent-reporting-on-rakhine-conflict>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Southeast Asian Press Alliance. 2017a. Cyberlaws in Southeast Asia, infographic. Available at <https://www.seapa.org/infographic-cyberlaws-in-southeast-asia>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Southeast Asian Press Alliance. 2017b. #WPFD2017 The Devastating Decline of Free Expression and Press Freedom in Southeast Asia. Available at <https://www.seapa.org/wpfd2017-the-devastating-decline-of-free-expression-and-press-freedom-in-southeast-asia>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Spencer, David. 2017. Public Wi-Fi in China Now Subject to Surveillance. VPNCompare.Co.Uk (blog). Available at <https://www.vpncompare.co.uk/public-wi-fi-in-china-now-subject-to-surveillance/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Sputnik International. 2017. Time Bomb Ticking: Threat of Daesh Hangs Over Southeast Asia. Accessed July 9, 2017. Available at <https://sputniknews.com/asia/201706181054740513-threat-of-daesh-southeast-asia/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Srivas, Anuj. 2016. Cross-Border Data Flows Debate Hits India as TRAI Issues Paper on Cloud Services. The Wire. Available at <https://thewire.in/42300/cross-border-data-flows-debate-hits-india-as-trai-issues-paper-on-cloud-services/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Srivas, Anuj. 2017. Absolved Thrice, Reliance Jio Now Faces Final Regulatory Challenge. The Wire. Available at <https://thewire.in/106628/absolved-thrice-reliance-jio-now-faces-final-regulatory-challenge/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Statista. 2015. Internet Users: Regional Distribution Worldwide. Regional Distribution of Internet Users. Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271401/regional-distribution-of-internet-users-worldwide/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Statista. 2016. APAC Daily Mobile App Usage. Statista. Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/293661/daily-mobile-app-usage-in-apac-countries/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Suri, Manveena.2017. Murder of Indian journalists sparks concern over press freedom. CNN. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/09/25/asia/indian-journalist-murder-press-freedom/index.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Tambini, Damian. 2015. Five Theses on Public Media and Digitization: From a 56-Country Study. International Journal of Communication, 26.

TCN News. 2016. People of South Asian Countries Are Subjected to Slavery by Mass Biometric Surveillance like Aadhaar. TwoCircles.Net (blog). 2016. Available at <http://twocircles.net/2016mar31/1459402015.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Asia Foundation. 2014. Citizens' Access to Information in South Asia. Regional Synthesis Report. The Asia Foundation. Available at <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/CitizensAccesstoInformationinSouthAsia.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Express Tribune. 2014. Tight Leash: PEMRA Chairman Stripped of His Powers. The Express Tribune. Available at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/666143/tight-leash-pemra-chairman-stripped-of-his-powers/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Financial Express. 2017. Reliance Jio Case: Vodafone in HC against TRAI's Network Testing Consultation. The Financial Express, May 8, 2017. Available at <http://www.financialexpress.com/industry/reliance-jio-case-vodafone-in-hc-against-trais-network-testing-consultation/659568/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Hindu Business Line. 2017. Telecom Tribunal Asks TRAI to Review RJio's Free Offer-But Does Not Put Stay on the Offer. Available at <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/no-stay-on-rjio-free-offer-tdsat-asks-trai-to-reexamine-issue/article9587036.ece>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Straits Times. 2016. UN Envoy Says Japanese Media Independence under Threat. Available at <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/un-envoy-says-japanese-media-independence-under-threat>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

The Times of India. 2018. Govt Asks Court to Ban Media Coverage. The Times of India. Available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/govt-asks-court-to-ban-media-coverage/articleshow/62372371.cms>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Theodorou, Angelina E. 2016. Which Countries Still Outlaw Apostasy and Blasphemy? Pew Research Center (blog). Available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/29/which-countries-still-outlaw-apostasy-and-blasphemy/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

TNS-Kantar. 2017. Connected Life. http://connectedlife.tnsglobal.com.

Tunsarawuth, Sinfah, Helen Rea, and Mustafa Kamal Anuar. 2015. Freedom of Information Progressing Slowly in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA). Cambodian Centre for Human Rights, Institut Studi Arus Informasi. Available at <https://www.seapa.org/freedom-of-information-progressing-slowly-in-southeast-asia/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Tzabiras, Marianna. 2016. Threats, attacks, jail: what's coming between us and the Rohingya story. IFEX. Available at <https://ifex.org/burma/2015/06/19/blocks_rohingya_story>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

UNDP. 2012. Indigenous Voices in Asia-Pacific. UNDP in Asia and the Pacific. Available at <http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/library/democratic_governance/indigenous-voices-asia-pacific.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

UNESCAP. 2015. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific Perspectives of Governments on 20 Years of Implementation of the Beijing Declaration. Bangkok. Available at <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/B20%20Gender%20Equality%20Report%20v10-3-E.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

UNESCO. 2016. Community Media Is Making the Media Landscape of South Asia More Pluralistic. Available at <http://uccommedia.in/news/community-media-making-media-landscape-south-asia-pluralistic/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

UNESCO, 2017. Report on the seminar Reinforcing regional cooperation to promote freedom of expression and the rule of law in Asia through ending impunity for crimes against journalists Colombo.

UNESCO. 2017. Global Call to Improve the Safety of Journalists on the Ground. Available at <http://en.unesco.org/news/global-call-improve-safety-journalists-ground>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

UNESCO-SWAN. 2016. Developing Gender-Sensitive Guidelines for Women in Media in South Asia. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/newdelhi/about-this-office/single-view/news/developing_gender_sensitive_guidelines_for_women_in_media_in/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

United Nations Human Rights Council. 2016. Preliminary observations by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Mr. David Kaye at the end of his visit to Japan (12-19 April 2016). Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19842&LangID=E>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

United Nations Secretary-General. 2016. Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/291>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Vanderklippe, Nathan. 2017. In Cambodia, Independent Media Close as Chinese Content Moves In. The Globe and Mail. Available at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/in-cambodia-independent-media-have-closed-as-chinese-content-moves-in/article37464168/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Varagur, Krithika. 2016. Indonesia Poised to Pass Asia's First 'Right to Be Forgotten' Law. Voice of America (blog). Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/indonesia-poised-to-pass-asia-first-right-to-be-forgotten-law/3584318.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Vicheika, Kann. 2017. Cambodia Threatens Radio Free Asia Journalists With Arrest. VOA Khmer. Available at <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodia-threatens-radio-free-asia-journalists-with-arrest/4035393.html>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

WAN-IFRA. 2015. World Press Trends Report. 2015. Available at <http://www.wan-ifra.org/reports/2015/10/01/world-press-trends-report-2015>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

WAN-INFRA. 2017. World Press Trends Database. Available at <http://www.wptdatabase.org/world-press-trends-2017-facts-and-figures>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Wang, Yaqiu.2016. Males Preferred. Attacks on the Press, Gender and Media Freedom Worldwide. Committee to Protect Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/2016/04/attacks-on-the-press-males-preferred.php>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

West, Darrell M. 2016. Internet Shutdowns Cost Countries $2.4 Billion Last Year. Centre for Technology Innovation. Brookings Institute. Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/intenet-shutdowns-v-3.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Westerman, Ashley. 2017. How Big A Threat Is Extremism In Southeast Asia? NPR.Org (blog). Available at <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/06/11/530949383/how-big-a-threat-is-extremism-in-southeast-asia>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

WorldDAB. 2016. Country Information. https://www.worlddab.org/country-information.

World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Global Report 2017/2018 189

Reporters without Borders. 2017. How Iran tries to control news coverage. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/news/how-iran-tries-control-news-coverage-foreign-based-journalists>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Wu, DD. 2017. Farewell VPNs & Independent Multimedia Content: China Vows to Clear Network Space. The
     Diplomat. Available at <http://thediplomat.com/2017/06/farewell-vpns-independent-multimedia-
     content-china-vows-to-clear-network-space/>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

York, Jillian, and Stephanie Lacambra. 2018. Duterte Administration Moves to Kill Free Speech in the
     Philippines. Electronic Frontier Foundation (blog). January 26, 2018. Available at <https://www.eff.
     org/deeplinks/2018/01/proposed-constitutional-amendment-poses-grave-threat-free-expression-
     philippines>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

Zeiger, Sarah. 2016. Counter-Narratives for Countering Violent Extermism (CVE) in South East Asia. Indonesia:
     Hedayah and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC).

Regional Groupings

WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (27)

Andorra	Greece	Norway
Austria	Iceland	Portugal
Belgium	Ireland	San Marino
Canada	Israel	Spain
Cyprus	Italy	Sweden
Denmark	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Finland	Malta	Turkey
France	Monaco	United Kingdom of Great
Germany	Netherlands	Britain and Northern Ireland
		United States of America

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (25)

Albania	Estonia	Republic of Moldova
Armenia	The Former Yugoslav	Romania
Azerbaijan	Republic of Macedonia	Ukraine
Belarus	Georgia	Uzbekistan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hungary	Russian Federation
Bulgaria	Latvia	Serbia
Croatia	Lithuania	Slovakia
Czech Republic	Montenegro	Slovenia
	Poland	Tajikistan

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (33)

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominican Republic	Paraguay
Argentina	Ecuador	Peru
Bahamas	El Salvador	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Barbados	Grenada	Saint Lucia
Belize	Guatemala	Saint Vincent and the
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Guyana	Grenadines
Brazil	Haiti	Suriname
Chile	Honduras	Trinidad and Tobago
Colombia	Jamaica	Uruguay
Costa Rica	Mexico	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Cuba	Nicaragua	
Dominica	Panama	

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (44)

Afghanistan	Kazakhstan	Timor-Leste
Australia	Kiribati	Malaysia
Bangladesh	Kyrgyzstan	Maldives
Bhutan	Lao People's Democratic	Marshall Islands
Brunei Darussalam	Republic	Micronesia (Federated States of)
Cambodia	Niue	Mongolia
China	Pakistan	Myanmar
Cook Islands	Palau	Nauru
Democratic People's	Papua New Guinea	Nepal
Republic of Korea	Philippines	New Zealand
Fiji	Republic of Korea	Tonga
India	Samoa	Turkmenistan
Indonesia	Singapore	Tuvalu
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu
Japan	Sri Lanka	Viet Nam
	Thailand	

AFRICA (47)

Angola	Ethiopia	Nigeria
Benin	Gabon	Rwanda
Botswana	Gambia	Sao Tome and Principe
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Senegal
Burundi	Guinea	Seychelles
Cameroon	Guinea-Bissau	Sierra Leone
Cape Verde	Kenya	Somalia
Central African Republic	Lesotho	South Africa
Chad	Liberia	South Sudan
Comoros	Madagascar	Swaziland
Congo	Malawi	Togo
Côte d'Ivoire	Mali	Uganda
Democratic Republic of	Mauritius	United Republic of Tanzania
the Congo	Mozambique	Zambia
Djibouti	Namibia	Zimbabwe
Equatorial Guinea	Niger	
Eritrea		

ARAB REGION (19)

Algeria	Libya	Saudi Arabia
Bahrain	Mauritania	Sudan
Egypt	Morocco	Syrian Arab Republic
Iraq	Oman	Tunisia
Jordan	Palestine	United Arab Emirates
Kuwait	Qatar	Yemen
Lebanon		

Editorial Team

Lead researchers

Nicole Stremlau, *University of Oxford, UK, and University of Johannesburg, South Africa*
Iginio Gagliardone, *University of Witwatersrand, South Africa*
Monroe Price, *University of Pennsylvania, USA*

Regional and thematic researchers

Carolina Aguerre Inés, *University of San Andres, Argentina*
Omar Al-Ghazzi, *London School of Economics, UK*
Admire Mare, *University of Johannesburg, South Africa*
Jennifer Henrichsen, *University of Pennsylvania, USA*
Jyoti Panday, *Idea Telecom Centre of Excellence, Indian Institute of Management, India*
Krisztina Rozgonyi, *University of Vienna, Austria*
Karen Ross, *Newcastle University, UK*
Erin Callihan, *New York University, USA*
Eleanor Marchant, *Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, USA*
Everisto Mugocha, *University of Witwatersrand, South Africa*
Olivier Aiken, *University of Chicago, USA*

UNESCO team

Guy Berger, *Director, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development*
Sylvie Coudray, *Chief, Section for Freedom of Expression*
Marius Lukosiunas, *Programme Specialist*
Rachel Pollack, *Associate Programme Specialist*
Amie Churchill, *Editorial assistance*
Oscar Castellanos, *Communications Specialist*

Advisory Group

Ravina Aggarwal, *Columbia Global Centers, Mumbai, India*

Catalina Botero Marino, *Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia*

Elda Brogi, *Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, European University Institute, Italy*

Aleida Calleja Gutierrez, *Latin American Observatory for Regulation, Media and Convergence (OBSERVACOM), Mexico*

Ulla Carlsson, *University of Gothenburg, Sweden*

Silvia Chocarro Marcesse, *Consultant on Freedom of Expression, France*

Marius Dragomir, *Central European University, Hungary*

Gerard Goggin, *University of Sydney, Australia*

William Horsley, *Centre for Freedom of the Media, University of Sheffield, UK*

Ahmed Khalifa, *Ain Shams University, Egypt*

Robin Mansell, *London School of Economics, UK*

Toby Mendel, *Centre for Law and Democracy, Canada*

Paul Nwulu, *Ford Foundation, Nigeria*

Golam Rahman, *Chief Information Officer, Bangladesh*

Julie Reid, *University of South Africa*

Mousa Rimawi, *Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA), Palestine*

Elena Sherstoboeva, *National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation*

Ramon Tuazon, *Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, the Philippines*

Aimée Vega Montiel, *National Autonomous University of Mexico*

Silvio Waisbord, *George Washington University, USA*

World Trends in
Freedom
of Expression
and Media
Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2017/2018

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Across the world, journalism is under fire. While more individuals have access to content than ever before, the combination of political polarization and technological change have facilitated the rapid spread of hate speech, misogyny and unverified 'fake news', often leading to disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression. In an ever-growing number of countries, journalists face physical and verbal attacks that threaten their ability to report news and information to the public.

In the face of such challenges, this new volume in the World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development series offers a critical analysis of new trends in media freedom, pluralism, independence and the safety of journalists. With a special focus on gender equality in the media, the report provides a global perspective that serves as an essential resource for UNESCO Member States, international organizations, civil society groups, academia and individuals seeking to understand the changing global media landscape.

en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization
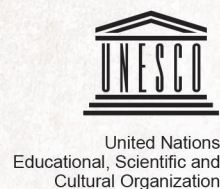
**Communication and
Information Sector**