

The New York Times

China Is Leading Jailer of Journalists, Group Says

By **RICK GLADSTONE** DEC. 15, 2015

[China](#) was the biggest jailer of journalists in 2015 for the second consecutive year, and the number imprisoned in [Egypt](#) and Turkey also rose sharply compared with 2014, a free-press advocacy group that monitors journalist incarcerations said in an annual report released on Tuesday.

“A handful of countries continue to use systematic imprisonment to silence criticism,” said the group, the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#), which is based in New York.

[The report](#), a snapshot of those imprisoned as of Dec. 1, found 199 journalists languishing in jails around the world, a modest decline from the 221 in 2014. One-quarter of them were in China.

The most significant change from a year earlier, the group said, was the increase in Egypt, now the second-worst jailer behind China. The group said the Egyptian authorities were holding 23 journalists, nearly double the 12 of a year ago, and it attributed the increase to the policies of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who “continues to use the pretext of national security to clamp down on dissent.”

In Turkey, which led the list in 2012 and 2013 but released dozens of journalists in 2014, oppressive conditions for the news media worsened this year. The number of journalists in Turkey’s jails doubled to 14, which the organization attributed to a crackdown on reporting deemed critical of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan amid two general elections, further entanglements in the Syrian civil war and the end of a cease-fire with Kurdish militants.

Other significant jailers of journalists in 2015 included [Iran](#), with 19; Eritrea, with 17; Ethiopia, 10; Azerbaijan, 8; Syria and Saudi Arabia, with 7 each; Vietnam, 6; and Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bahrain, with 5 each.

Although anti-state accusations are the most commonly invoked charges, used in 55 percent of cases, the report said the highest proportion of charges in five years — 25 percent — were retaliatory, which it defined as “arbitrary, trumped-up accusations like drugs or weapons possession, embezzlement or assault.”

The group defines journalists as people who cover news or comment on public affairs in media spanning print, photography, radio, television and the Internet.

A version of this article appears in print on December 15, 2015, on page A10 of the New York edition with the headline: China Is Leading Jailer of Journalists, Group Says.

From: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/15/world/asia/china-is-leading-jailer-of-journalists-group-says.html?_r=0