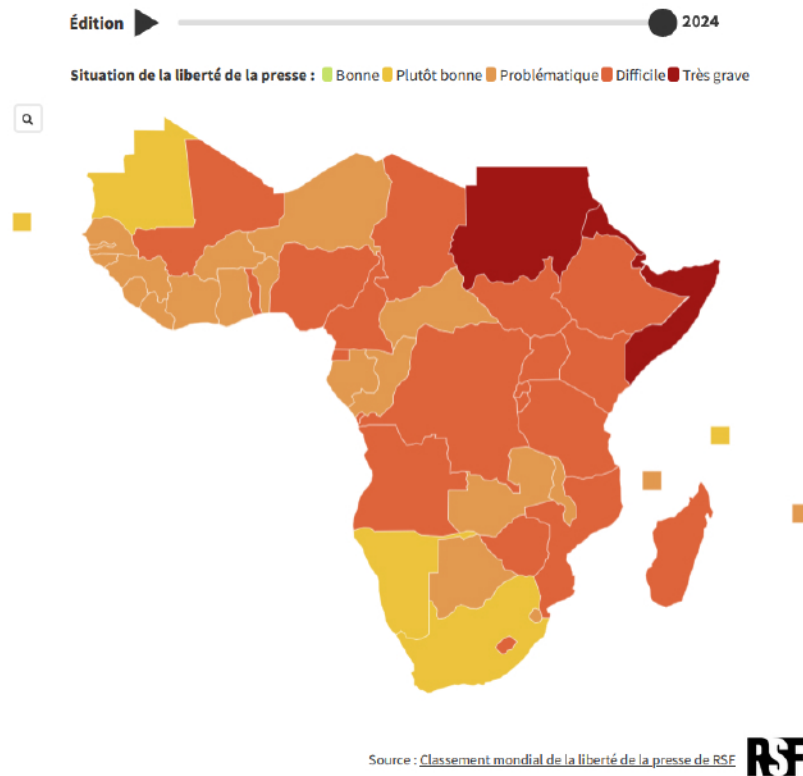


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Africa: journalism harassed and persecuted during elections



Elections in sub-Saharan Africa resulted in a great deal of violence against journalists and media by political actors and their supporters. This is what happened in [Nigeria](#) (ranked 112th in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index), where nearly 20 reporters were attacked in early 2023. In [Madagascar](#) (100th), ten were attacked by political activities during pre-election protests. In the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) (123rd), where politicians often try to intimidate media personnel, the journalist Stanis Bujakera's detention pending trial on a trumped-up charge prevented him from covering the run-up to the elections.

During elections, politicians also tried to use the media as instruments for exercising influence and imposing authority. This was seen in [Senegal](#) (94th), the DRC and Nigeria, where politicians have sometimes created their own media outlets.

Political control of media

Other countries in the region have continued to use the method of manipulating media regulators – whose members often support the political authorities or follow their orders – to

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suspend media without reference to any judge. Against the backdrop of parliamentary elections in [Togo](#) (113th), the High Authority for Broadcasting and Communication (HAAC) often took arbitrary or disproportionate measures against media and journalists. Although [Zimbabwe](#) (116th) and [Gabon](#) (56th) rose in the Index, the political authorities in both countries tightened their grip on news and information in the run-up to elections, arbitrarily disconnecting the Internet, expelling foreign journalists or interrupting foreign media coverage.

Such practices were also seen in [Guinea](#). Despite a deceptive rise (up 7 at 78th) vis-à-vis other countries around it in the Index, its global score stagnated and its political and security indicators fell, chiefly as a result of arbitrary Internet blocking and the suspension and jamming of several radio stations and TV channels.

Restrictions on access to information increased even more in the Sahel, where several countries suspended local retransmission of foreign, mainly French, broadcast media such as *France 24*, *RFI* and *TV5 Monde*. [Niger](#) (80th) fell 19 places as a result of the draconian measures adopted by the military junta that took power in a coup in July 2023. The situation is far from brilliant in [Burkina Faso](#) (86th), which fell 28 places, and in [Mali](#) (114th). And it's an African country, [Eritrea](#) (180th), that is last in the 2024 Index, having become an information desert over the years.

Control loosened in a few countries

In a sub-Saharan Africa where the right to news and information and the freedom to report are increasingly put to the test, improvements were seen in [Tanzania](#) (97th), which surged 46 places and gave press freedom some grounds for hope as its president slowly loosened her grip on the media, and in [Mauritania](#) (33rd), where abuses against journalists were less frequent in an ecosystem nonetheless still marked by state media domination and the extremely precarious economic situation of independent media outlets.