

## How the ranking was compiled

This ranking measures the state of press freedom in the world. It reflects the degree of freedom that journalists and news organisations enjoy in each country, and the efforts undertaken by the state to respect and ensure respect for this freedom.

It is a snapshot of the situation in a precise period. It only takes account of events between 1 September 2002 and 1 September 2003. It does not look at human rights violations in general, just press freedom violations.

To compile this ranking, Reporters Without Borders designed a questionnaire with 53 criteria for assessing the state of press freedom in each country. It includes every kind of violation directly affecting journalists (such as murders, imprisonment, physical attacks and threats) and news media (censorship, confiscation of issues, searches and harassment). It registers the degree of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for these press freedom violations. It takes account of the legal and judicial situation affecting the news media (such as the penalties for press offences, the existence of a state monopoly in certain areas and the existence of a regulatory body) and the behaviour of the authorities towards the state-owned news media and international press. It also takes account of the main obstacles to the free flow of information on the Internet.

Reporters Without Borders has taken account not only of abuses attributable to the state, but also those by armed militia, clandestine organisations or pressure groups that can pose a real threat to press freedom.

The questionnaire was sent to people who have a deep knowledge of the state of press freedom in a country or a number of countries: local journalists or foreign reporters based in a country, researchers, jurists, regional specialists and the researchers working for Reporters Without Borders' International Secretariat.

The countries that were ranked are those for which Reporters Without Borders received completed questionnaires from a number of independent sources. Others were not included because of a lack of reliable, well-supported input. In cases of ties, countries were ranked by alphabetical order.

Finally, in no case should this ranking be viewed as an indication of the quality of the press in the countries concerned. Reporters Without Borders defends press freedom, without taking a position on the quality of the editorial content of the news media. No account was taken of any breaches of professional ethics or codes of conduct.