

# Press under attack

Journalists continue to be the target of murder and imprisonment worldwide, which does not augur well for the health of democratic values. By **RAMESH CHAKRAPANI**

Despite being the world's largest democracy, India continues to figure among the top 10 deadliest countries for journalists, according to statistics from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an "independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to the global defence of press freedom". Its latest data show that there have been 30 murders of journalists with motive confirmed in 2016 (until August), with two of them having occurred in India (Syria was top with eight).

Data from 1992 to 2016 show that a total of 1,209 journalists were killed worldwide, with deaths occurring owing to murder (796), crossfire/combats (257) and dangerous assignments (152).

It is telling that 47 per cent of the victims were covering politics while 20 per cent were tracking corruption.

The CPJ has also created a global impunity index which delineates the number of journalists who have been killed with complete impunity globally in the past 25 years. Distressingly, India figures in the top 10 in this index too.

Murder is not the only form of attack that journalists have to contend with: imprisonment is another tool of oppression that governments routinely use to muzzle mediapersons. In the past five years there has been a steady rise in the number of journalists thrown into prison compared with the previous

10 years; it hit a peak in 2012 (232).

CPJ data show that in India, since 1992, as many as 40 journalists were killed with motive confirmed and 26 journalists killed with motive unconfirmed, while three media workers were killed. Similar to the global pattern, 50 per cent of the victims were covering politics, while 40 per cent were tracking corruption, 25 per cent were covering crime and 23 per cent business (the total exceeds 100 as more than one category applies in some cases).

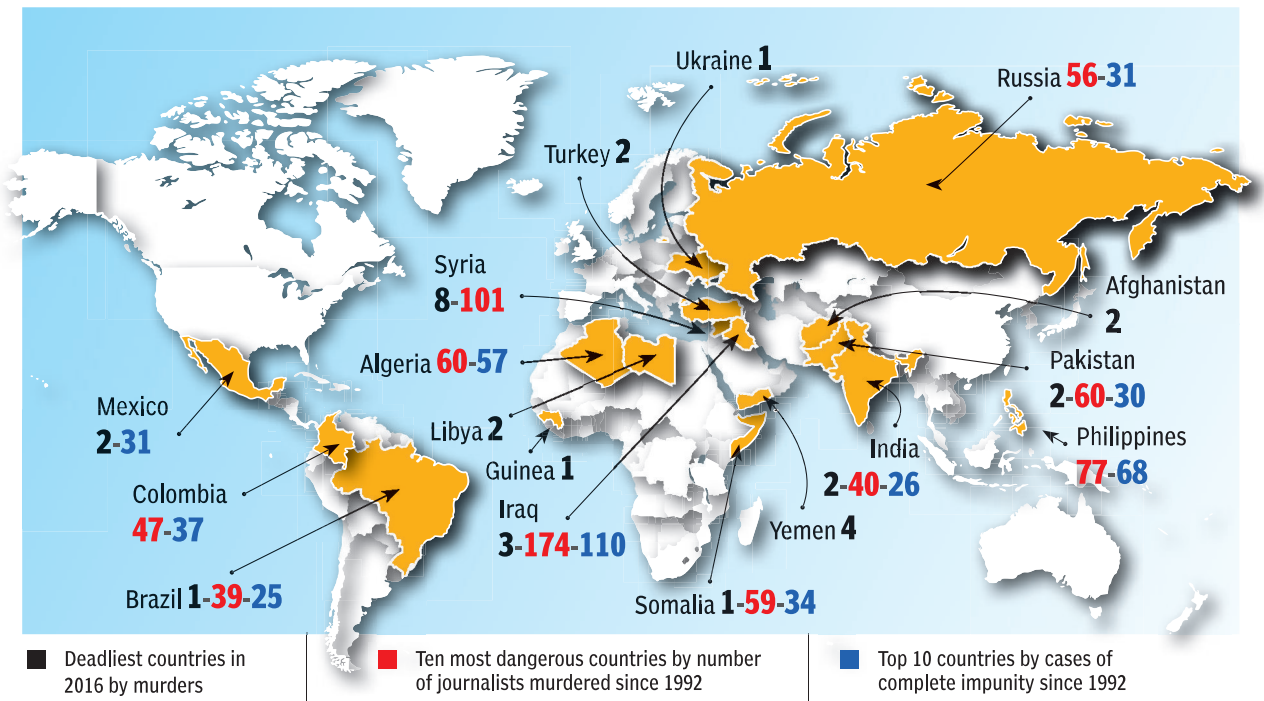
The top five dangerous States for journalists were Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Punjab.



PICTURES: AP, AFP

### Worst offenders among countries jailing journalists

Year	Country	Count
2015	China	49
	Egypt	23
	Iran	19
	Eritrea	17
	Turkey	14
2014	China	44
	Iran	30
	Eritrea	23
	Ethiopia	17
	Vietnam	16
2013	Turkey	40
	Iran	35
	China	32
	Eritrea	22
	Vietnam	18
2012	Turkey	49
	Iran	45
	China	32
	Eritrea	28
	Syria	15
2011	Iran	42
	Eritrea	28
	China	27
	Myanmar	12
	Vietnam	9



Year	Count
2015	199
2014	221
2013	211
2012	232
2011	179
2010	145
2009	136
2008	125
2007	127
2006	134
2005	125
2004	122
2003	138
2002	139

