



Human Rights Day 2025: CPJ calls on Asian governments to free imprisoned journalists

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December 8, 2025—The Committee to Protect Journalists has written to heads of government across Asia ahead of International Human Rights Day on December 10, urging them to immediately free reporters imprisoned for their work.

As of December 1, Asia holds at least 106 journalists behind bars, with China (50), Myanmar (27), and Vietnam (16) the worst offenders, CPJ data shows. Journalists are also being held in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Afghanistan, and the Philippines.

Asia accounts for more than 30% of imprisoned journalists worldwide, and has consistently ranked as the region with the highest number of journalists behind bars since CPJ began keeping records in 1992.

In seven separate letters, CPJ urged authorities to take immediate steps that would allow all imprisoned journalists to return to their families and continue their work without fear of reprisal. In addition, CPJ issued an open statement to the Taliban, as the de facto authorities in Afghanistan, with the same recommendations.

The letters also called on leaders to uphold their human rights commitments, while highlighting the plight of prominent jailed journalists, ranging from Hong Kong-based British publisher Jimmy Lai

and veteran Chinese journalist Dong Yuyu, to Vietnamese journalist Pham Doan Trang and Myanmar reporter Sai Zaw Thaike.

The letters follow a solidarity action at this year's Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Malaysia, where more than 1,500 journalists representing over 100 countries joined CPJ to call for the immediate release of journalists who are jailed or arbitrarily detained, and to end impunity for attacks on the press.

Read the letters and statement in full below.

Cambodia, China, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.
