REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS
FOR PRESS FREEDOM

Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2010
How the index was compiled

Paris, 20 October 2010

The Reporters Without Borders index measures the violations of press freedom in the world. It reflects the degree of freedom that journalists and news organisations enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the authorities to respect and ensure respect for this freedom.

A score and a position is assigned to each country in the final ranking. They are complementary indicators that together assess the state of press freedom. A country can change position from year to year even if its score stays the same, and viceversa.

This ranking reflects the situation during a specific period. It is based solely on évents between 1 September 2009 and 1 September 2010. It does not look at human rights violations in general, just press freedom violations.

To compile this index, Reporters Without Borders prepared a questionnaire with 43 criteria that assess 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 newspaper issues, searches and harassment). And it includes the degree of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for these press freedom violations.

It also measures the level of self-censorship in each country and the ability of the media to investigate and criticise. Financial pressure, which is increasingly common, is also assessed and incorporated into the final score.

The questionnaire takes account of the legal framework for the media (including penalties for press offences, the existence of a state monopoly for certain kinds of media and how the media are regulated) and the level of independence of the public media. It also reflects violations of 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 militias, clandestine organisations and pressure groups.

The questionnaire was sent to Reporters Without Borders' partner organisations (15 freedom of expression groups in all five continents), to its network of 140 correspondents around the world, and to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists. A scale devised by the organisation was then used to give a countryscore to each questionnaire.

The 178 countries ranked are those for which Reporters Without Borders received completed questionnaires from a number of independent sources. Some countries were not included because of a lack of reliable, confirmed data. Where countries tied, they are listed in alphabetical order.

The index should in no way be taken as an indication of the quality of the press in the countries concerned.

Reporters Without Borders
47 rue Vivienne - 75002 Paris - Tel : 33 1 44 83 84 84 - Fax : 33 1 45 23 11 51