

India emerges as most dangerous country after Mexico



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Geneva/ Guwahati, 10 December 2020: India emerges as the most dangerous country for working journalists after Mexico in the world as the Covid-19 devastated year witnessed the murder of 83 media workers globally, said Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) in its annual report in Geneva. The number of journalists killed this year increases by 10% compared to 2019, added the international media rights body with demands to bring those responsible for these crimes to justice.

India leads with 13 killings ahead of Mexico where 11 journalists were assassinated. Among other dangerous countries include Pakistan (8 dead), Afghanistan & Iraq (5 each), the Philippines & Honduras (4 each), Nigeria, Syria & Venezuela (3 each), Brazil, Guatemala, Liberia & Somalia (2 each), Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Russia, Sweden, Cameroon, Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey & Yemen (one each).

“Of the 83 journalists murdered this year, only 16 were in conflict zones (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen). The rest were targeted for their works in peaceful countries,” said Blaise Lempen, general secretary of PEC (www.presseemble.ch) adding that the Covid-19 pandemic might have helped to freeze some conflicts and also limit the movement of journalists to dangerous areas.

More than 520 journalists have also died from Covid-19 since March. Over the year, nearly 600 journalists died as a result of the violence and the pandemic, a very heavy price, the worst since the Second World War, asserted the PEC report. It also advocated for creating an independent investigative mechanism within the framework of the United Nations to fill any gap that may exist at the national level in terms of prevention, protection and prosecution.

“India reported more casualties compared to all larger nations. However it is still difficult to claim each victim among Shubham Mani Tripathi, Vikram Joshi, Sunil Tiwari, Ratan Singh, Isravel Moses, Suraj Pandey, Uday Paswan, G Nagaraj, Rakesh Singh, Ganta Naveen, Syed Adil Wahab, Bijendeep Tanti and Parag Bhuyan (killed in a mysterious road accident) was targeted because of their works as a journalist,” said Nava Thakuria, the PEC’s country representative.

The populous country lost 52 journalists to Covid-19 complications till date and became the second most affected nation after Peru, stated Thakuria adding that the pandemic has also left severe negative impacts on the mainstream Indian media industry as many print-owners stopped publishing physical newspapers and sighted to digital space, some closed down their editions, cut salaries and even laid off employees citing the reason of shrinking advertisement revenues during the pandemic.

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