

There have never been as many imprisoned journalists as now, 62

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Paris, March 8 (EFE).- The number of women journalists imprisoned for their work in the world today, 62, has never been so high and that "in extremely harsh conditions," reported Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on Tuesday.

This figure represents a growth of 38% compared to the data registered a year ago, indicated RSF, which explained that this increase is due "mainly to three authoritarian regimes", China, Belarus and Burma.

All three have toughened their crackdown on a profession in which women are increasingly numerous.

In China, "the world's largest prison for journalists", there are currently 19 women imprisoned, 3 of them in Hong Kong. One is the 2021 RSF Bravery Award winner Zhang Zhan.

Zhang is in a "worrisome" state after a hunger strike to protest his four-year sentence, the media professionals' advocacy organization said.

In Belarus there are 17 imprisoned women journalists. Belsat TV reporter Alena Doubovik was beaten, stripped naked, and deprived of food for 24 hours, she said.

TUT.BY editor Maryna Zolatava described how inmates sometimes slept on the floor, unable to shower or change their clothes for 15 days, even during menstruation.

In Burma there are 9 journalists detained. There is the independent reporter Ma Thuzar, incommunicado in the Insein prison, in Rangoon, since her arrest last September. Thuzar had been at the forefront of coverage of the popular demonstrations that followed the February 1, 2021 coup.

In addition to these three regimes, in Vietnam there are 3 women detained like Pham Doan Trang, winner of an RSF award and sentenced to nine years in prison for "propaganda against the state".

Also in Iran there are three journalists behind bars. For example, the vice president of the Association for the Defense of Press Freedom in that country, Alieh Motalebzadeh, in "deplorable" conditions in her prison, with bad water, unbreathable air or ammonia gas emanations.

To what extent is Switzerland neutral?

Being neutral is not easy. Swiss politics struggles to interpret its neutrality in the face of an increasingly one-sided world policy.

China, Belarus, and Burma rank 177th, 158th, and 140th in Reporters Without Borders' latest global press freedom ranking of 180 countries published in April 2021.

There is at least one journalist behind bars in countries such as Russia (ranked 150), Saudi Arabia (170), Yemen (169), Turkey (153), the Philippines (138), Colombia (134) or Guatemala (116).

The countries with the most freedom of the press, according to RSF, are Norway, Finland and Sweden. Spain is in position 29. The last three places are occupied by Turkmenistan, North Korea and Eritrea. EFE

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