

Please cite as: EUAA, '2.3. Journalists' in *CGS for TCDS*, November 2023.

2.3. Journalists

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: August 2023

This profile refers to journalists and their situation in relation to potential targeting by different actors throughout Belgravia.

COI summary

Freedom of the press has been increasingly restricted in recent years. State authorities as well as Blestil militants are potential perpetrators of verbal or physical violence. Incidents of violence Female journalists are exposed to additional risks such as gender-based violence and face social and cultural restrictions.

The types of violence reportedly carried out against journalists range from harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention to physical attacks, abductions and killings.

Journalists were frequently charged by the authorities with fabricated criminal cases and other forms of administrative harassment. Journalists targeted are particularly those who engage in critical reporting on controversial political or other sensitive issues (e.g. corruption, abuse of authority, weak government capacity, protests) or are seen as criticising government officials. The government of Belgravia used arbitrary detention in order to suppress certain reporting by journalists, especially concerning topics related to corruption. The chance of a journalist, who has expressed criticism towards the authorities, of being proven not-guilty by a court has been characterised practically non-existent.

Blestil has also threatened with death, abducted or even killed journalists reporting critically on the group and its activities. Assaults against journalists are challenging to report to the police, as it is often the security forces themselves that exert violence against and pressure on journalists.

Conclusions and guidance

Do the acts qualify as persecution under Article 9 QD?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. killing, abduction, physical violence).

What is the level of risk of persecution (well-founded fear)?

In the case of journalists seen as critical of an actor particularly active in a specific area or in control of a specific area, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in that specific area.

In the case of other journalists, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: gender (higher risk for women), the topic they report on, visibility of activities and public profile, reach of the actors they report on, etc.

Are the reasons for persecution falling within Article 10 QD (nexus)?

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion.

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