

The second quarter of 2024 recorded 53 violations in eleven countries across West Africa. Below is the summary narrative of the incidents, some of which involve more than one violation:

Benin

On June 10, 2024, police officers arrested and detained Barnabas Orou Kouman, journalist and owner of the Daabaaru press group, Ismaël Balogou, editor-in-chief of *Daabaaru TV* and Romaric Fadjebe, another journalist from the same media. The journalists were arrested on instructions of a High Court's prosecutor in Parakou. Their arrest follows an April 4, 2024 broadcast on *Daabaaru TV*, in which a citizen made an unverified accusation of abusive behaviour by the Police. The three journalists were released on the same day of their arrest and summoned for the following day.

On June 11, 2024, that is, on the following day, the three journalists were sentenced to six month's suspended imprisonment and fined five hundred thousand (500,000) CFA francs each. The free expression show, "Jeudi Libre", on which the allegations were made live, was also suspended for a month.

Burkina Faso

On April 25, 2024, the Conseil supérieur de la communication (CSC), Burkina Faso's media regulator, **suspended** *BBC Afrique* and *Voice of America* (VOA) radio programmes and blocked their websites for two weeks. These outlets were accused of publishing content that is derogatory of the Burkinabe army without substantial evidence.

On April 27, 2024, the CSC **suspended** *TV5 Monde's* international programmes in Burkina Faso for two weeks, along with blocking access to several foreign news websites including *Deutsche Welle*, *Ouest-France*, *Le Monde.fr*, *ApaNews*, *The Guardian*, and *AgenceEcofin*. The media outlets were accused of violating fundamental principles of information processing and spreading disinformation in connection with their coverage of a report by Human Rights Watch. The report alleged that the Burkinabe army executed several civilians suspected of collaborating with militants.

On June 18, 2024, the CSC **suspended** *TV5 Monde-Afrique* for six months, accusing the channel of broadcasting "tendentious statements bordering on disinformation". This decision was made following a broadcast concerning the country's security

situation and claims of a “mutiny” in military barracks. The Burkinabe army has vehemently denied these allegations.

On June 19, 2024, the CSC [suspended](#) the bi-monthly investigative newspaper *L'Évènement* following an article published on June 10, 2024. The article accused a certain Captain Prospère Boena, whom the paper claimed to be a close associate of Burkina Faso's military leader Captain Ibrahim Traoré, of embezzling 400 million FCFA (about \$651,436). According to the CSC, the article contained unfounded allegations and defamatory insinuations without clear evidence, violating article 122 of Law 057-2015/CNT, which regulates the print media in Burkina Faso.

On the same day, the CSC [suspended](#) the “7 Infos” show on the private television channel *BF1* for two weeks. The suspension followed the station's programme in which a columnist, Kalifara Séré, questioned the authenticity (date) of images showing the Head of State donating blood. The CSC deemed Séré's comments defamatory, and a breach of ethics. It also ordered the removal of the “offending” parts of the show from *BF1's* platforms.

The CSC also ordered the online newspaper *Lefaso.net* to [remove](#) an article and indicted two other articles which it said contain unverified information and misinformation. The regulator equally accused the newspaper of failing to moderate user comments, inciting hatred, and publishing unverifiable information.

On June 19, 2024, unknown individuals [abducted](#) Kalifara Séré, a columnist who questioned the recency of images showing the Head of State donating blood. The columnist made the comments on “7 Infos”, a show by the private television channel *BF1*.

On June 24, 2024, individuals claiming affiliation with the National Intelligence Agency [abducted](#) journalist Atiana Serge Oulon in Ouagadougou. Oulon, the editor-in-chief of *L'Évènement*, was taken from his home at dawn and his wife was compelled to produce his mobile phones and computer. The journalist's whereabouts remain unknown.

On June 25, 2024, the television outlet, *BF1*, [decided](#) to stop all opinion, debate and some live broadcasts so as not to provoke the wrath of the supporters of the government. The decision to self-censor stemmed from a sit-in by demonstrators, supporters of President Ibrahim Traoré, in front of the media's courtyard. The demonstrators called on the station's management to change some of their editorial content, which the demonstrators accused of being “imperialist”, “far-fetched”, “demoralising and outrageous.”

On June 28, 2024, unknown individuals allegedly [abducted](#) Adama Bayala, columnist with some media, including *BF1*. Neither his family nor those close to him have any news of him. As a critical journalist, Bayala regularly took part in debates on television and publicly commented on some actions of the transitional government. Some supporters of the military regime did not hesitate to attack him on social networks.

Cote d'Ivoire

On June 6, 2024, the Parliament amended the Penal Code, adding two new provisions to Article 185. One of the new provisions criminalises public comments that discredit the Authority and support persons convicted of certain financial offences. The law also criminalises fundraising help to pay fines imposed for the said offences. Opposition MPs and political scientists have condemned this as an attempt to silence the opposition ahead of the 2025 presidential elections, particularly by penalising calls for solidarity with convicted individuals and organising fundraising to pay their fines.

Ghana

On April 24, 2024, four individuals on motorbikes [invaded](#) the precincts of the *Class Media Group*, in Accra, and threw bottles of Molotov cocktail (petrol bombs) and stones at the property. The perpetrators sped away on their bikes after they volleyed the petrol bombs and stones into the building over the building's fence wall. In the process, the perpetrators left glass doors at the reception area shattered.

In May 2024, the website of The Fourth Estate, a non-profit, public interest, and accountability journalism project of the MFWA, was attacked and became inaccessible to the public. The website went down shortly after they released a three-part investigative [story](#) revealing how key politically-exposed and influential persons secured Government of Ghana scholarships meant for brilliant but needy students. The website was restored but not for long. Moments after the media organisation advertised the publication of another story on suspected irregularities and inefficiency in the implementation of Government of Ghana's Free Wi-Fi policy, the website came under another attack. It took about three weeks to restore it.

On June 13, 2024, a group of supporters from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) stormed the premises of *Eagle FM 94.1MHz* in Walewale and [assaulted](#) a fellow party member who was in the studio. The attackers belong to a rival faction of supporters of

Ghana's ruling party in the Walewale Constituency. The party supporters have been split following a contentious Parliamentary primary, which is being disputed in the courts.

Guinea

On April 17, 2024, the Haute Autorité de la Communication (HAC), the media regulatory body, **suspended** the private news website *L'inquisiteur.net* and banned its Managing Director, Mamoudou Babila Keita, from practicing journalism for six months. This suspension followed a complaint by former Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Alphonse Charles Wright, over a March 27 investigation into corruption allegations. The HAC claimed that Keita could not provide sufficient evidence to support his accusations.

On May 18, 2024, Aly Manden Mansa Keita, the mayor of a municipality in Conakry, **assaulted** Kerfala Soumah, a journalist with *Gnouma FM*. Soumah was filming a sanitation session when the incident occurred. Mayor Keita, infuriated by being recorded, forcibly took Soumah's phone, damaged his headphones, and threw his muffler to the ground.

On May 21, 2024, Guinea's junta **shut down** five prominent private media outlets, including *Espace FM*, *Espace TV*, *Sweet FM*, *Djoma FM*, and *Djoma TV*, citing "failure to comply with content specifications". The Autorité de Régulation des Postes et Télécommunications (ARPT) enforced the closure, ordering the dismantling of broadcast installations. This action came after six months of broadcast jamming, further crippling the media landscape in Guinea.

On May 22, 2024, Sékou Jamal Pendessa, a journalist and Secretary General of the Syndicat des professionnels de la presse de Guinée (SSPG), faced escalating **threats** after publicly he rejected a proposal to establish a self-regulatory media body in Guinea. As Secretary General of the Syndicat des professionnels de la presse de Guinée (SSPG), a media professionals' trade union group, Pendessa has led a number of push-backs against media repression in Guinea, especially under the current military regime. His resolute posture in defence of the media has incurred him a lot of harassment from the junta and its lackeys.

Guinea Bissau

On May 18, 2024, security forces violently repressed a demonstration aimed at protesting against hunger, violence and the undermining of democracy in the country. The leader of the Association of Youth for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (AJPDH), Mansata Mónica Silá, was picked up and taken to an unknown location. Other personalities and activists were also arrested during the demonstration, including Gibiril Bodjam, Henrique Demba Candé and Queba Cassama, Caetano Nbana and Malam Camará. The police equally arrested Armando Lona, the leader of the political pressure group Frente Popular, which organised the protest.

The police repression resulted in the arrest of more than 90 people, including 14 women and two journalists, Zinaida Pereira and Julinha Sambú, both from Televisão da Guiné-Bissau (TGB).

On May 20, 2024, 84 people who were arrested during the demonstration were released. Among those released were journalists Zinaida Pereira and Julinha Joaquim Sana Sambú. On May 28, 2024, the remaining nine detainees, including Armando Lona, were released. Armando Lona denounced torture and inhumane conditions in an interview, reaffirming the Popular Front's commitment to continuing the fight for the "affirmation of the Republic" and against what he describes as the dysfunctionality of government institutions.

Liberia

The news website run by an environmental nonprofit, *Daylight*, experienced a series of cyber-attacks from a group which is involved in investigative stories published by the outlet. The attacks began in October 2023 and were finally resolved by May 2024 with the help with the help of the Sustainable Development Institute, an organisation based in Margibi county in Liberia.

Mali

On April 11, 2024, The Haute Autorité de la Communication (HAC), the media regulator, [urged](#) all media outlets to cease broadcasting or publishing content related to political parties or political associations. The HAC's demand followed the Malian government's [suspension](#) of all political party activities on April 10, 2024. The

government argued the suspension was to maintain public order ahead of the Inter-Malian Dialogue for Peace and National Reconciliation.

On May 20, 2024, a court in Bamako [sentenced](#) an economist and lecturer at the University of Bamako, Dr Etienne Fakaba Sissoko, to two years in prison and a fine of 3 million CFA Francs (approximately \$4,800). His conviction stemmed from charges of defamation and disseminating false news, based on his book criticising the military government's use of propaganda. Sissoko had previously called for democratic elections via Facebook, leading to his arrest on March 25, 2024.

On June 8, 2024, several men in plain clothes believed to be state security forces [arrested](#) Yeri Bocoum, a journalist, cyber-activist, and the director of the independent online media outlet, Yeri Bocoum Communication. The journalist was arrested just a day after covering an opposition demonstration. About two months earlier, Mali's government had [suspended](#) all political party activities and instructed the media to halt coverage of political events.

[Nigeria](#)

On April 20, 2024, Ondo State Commissioner for Youths and Sports Development, Saka Yusuf-Ogunleye, [assaulted](#) Tayo Ikujuni, a senior journalist with the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN). The incident occurred during the All Progressives Congress' (APC) governorship primary elections at Ward 9, Eji-Oba High School, Oba-Ile, Akure North Local Council. Ikujuni was questioning the arrival time of election materials when Yusuf-Ogunleye responded aggressively, seizing and damaging Ikujuni's phone.

On May 1, 2024, the police in Nasarawa arrested Ibraheem Hamza Mohammed, a journalist, also with *FirstNews*, accusing the journalist of falsely publishing that N40 million was stolen from Governor Abdullahi Sule's bedroom. It took the intervention of the Nigerian media fraternity, including media defence organisations to secure his release after on bail on May 10, 2024. The management of *FirstNews* has issued an apology to Governor Sule over the story.

On May 1, 2024, the Intelligence Response Team of Nigeria's Inspector General of Police [arrested](#) Daniel Ojukwu, an investigative journalist with the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ). His whereabouts remained unknown for 24 hours, prompting FIJ to file a missing person report. Ojukwu was eventually located on May 3, 2024, coinciding with International Press Day. He was accused of violating the 2015 Cybercrime Act following a publication he made.

On May 8, 2024, Yawale Adamu of *WikiTimes* reported receiving [threats](#) from Mustapha Abdurrahman, an aide to a Bauchi State lawmaker. Adamu had published a report on the politicisation of aid distribution by the North East Development Commission (NEDC). Abdurrahman threatened Adamu with severe consequences if he did not retract the story, warning that they had detailed information on *WikiTimes*' reporters and would act against them.

On May 8, 2024, Victoria Ojeme, a reporter with *Vanguard* newspaper, reported that an anonymous person contacted her, stating that they knew her residence in Abuja and [threatened](#) to harm her. Ojeme has since sought police protection, expressing fear for her safety. The journalist reported to have been experiencing threats to her life since February 2024 after reporting on a violent communal crisis in her hometown of Benue State.

On May 14, 2024, officers Hisbah offices in Katsina invited and [detained](#) Mubarak Mabai, a reporter for *Trust TV*. Mabai had sought to follow up on reports that a wedding guest was shot dead by Hisbah officials enforcing a DJ ban. However, he was detained when he honoured the invitation to the Hisbah office for the interview with Nafiu Muazu Akilu, a spokesperson for the religious police unit. His mobile phone was confiscated, Mabai was released after about two hours of detention.

On May 22, 2024, officers of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) [arrested](#) Madu Onuorah, the publisher and editor-in-chief of *Globalupfront* Newspaper, at his residence in Abuja. The officers equally seized Onuorah's phones and denied him access to his lawyer and relatives, much to the distress of his wife and children who witnessed the incident. The Enugu police spokesperson, Daniel Ndukwe, defended the arrest claiming that Onuorah had failed to respond to previous formal invitations.

On May 27, 2024, the Nigeria Police Force [arrested](#) Precious Eze, publisher of the online newspaper *News Platform*, at his home in Gbagada, Lagos in connection with his publications. Eze's arrest followed a complaint by a prominent businessman and politician. He was detained for more than a week, during which his colleagues struggled to secure his release. Despite a court ruling on May 30, dismissing the charges against him, Eze was re-arraigned on May 31.

On May 28, 2024, the Nigerian Police Force National Cybercrime Centre (NPF-NCC) [detained](#) Nurudeen Akewushola, a reporter with the nonprofit ICIR news agency, and Dayo Aiyetan, ICIR's Executive Director, for over nine hours. The police summoned Akewushola and Aiyetan for questioning in connection with allegations of "cyberstalking and defamation of character," following a report by Akewushola in February 2024. The report alleged illegal land sales involving former

Nigerian Inspectors General of Police, Solomon Ehigiator Arase and Ibrahim Kpotum Idris.

On May 29, 2024, security guards of a branch of First City Monument Bank (FCMB) **assaulted** Emmanuel Nwazue, a journalist with *Afia TV* by in Umuahia, Abia State. Nwazue was covering the ongoing strike by labour unions when the guards attacked him and damaged his equipment.

On June 11, 2024, Gabriel Idibia, a Kaduna State Correspondent for the *Daily Times*, was **arrested** and allegedly tortured by Nigerian police for photographing their activities in Kaduna. Idibia had taken photos of police officers herding cattle along a public road with the intent to later interview them for a public interest story. One officer became hostile upon discovering the photographs and arrested Idibia. He was taken to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) office in Kaduna, where he was severely physically abused, resulting in a significant injury to his right eye. Despite his injuries, he was forced to write a statement without legal counsel.

Niger

On April 13, 2024, police officers **arrested** a journalist with *Radio Anfani*, Ousmane Mamane Toudou for calling for the defence of democracy. The reason for his arrest is not clear, however, it is believed to be in connection with his critical posture. For instance, in the aftermath of the coup d'état of July 26, 2023, he published an article in which he gave his assessment of the breakdown of the democratic order.

On April 25, 2024, the police **arrested** the editor of the *L'Enquêteur* newspaper, Soumana Idrissa Maïga, over an article in his newspaper alleging that bugging devices have been installed on public buildings by Russian agents. Four days after his arrest by police officers, Maïga was transferred to Niamey's main prison pending investigation on charges of undermining state security. According to judicial authorities, Maïga's detention is on the ground that the facts are serious enough and require him to remain in prison for further investigations.

On June 7, 2024, Niger's Head of State, General Abdourahamane Tiani, **enacted** a new ordinance amending the cybercrime law. The revised law reintroduced prison sentences for defamation and the dissemination of data likely to disturb public order. The changes reversed efforts by the previous civilian government to reduce penalties for such offences to fines.

Senegal

On May 20, 2024, the Criminal Investigation Division arrested Activist Bah Diakhaté after he criticised Prime Minister Sonko's comments on homosexuality. Diakhaté was arrested for using a video to attack Sonko after his statement on homosexuality. Sonko had criticised Western countries for attempting to impose their way of life on African nations and for pushing the legalisation of homosexuality. Diakhaté was under investigation for "spreading false news" and "insulting" the head of government.

On May 21, 2024, preacher Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Ndao Preacher Ndao was detained following a video in which he criticised the Prime Minister for what he described as complacency towards homosexuality. Ndao was equally under investigation for "spreading false news" and "insulting" the head of government.

On May 30, 2024, the Senegalese gendarmerie in Dakar summoned and subsequently [placed](#) in custody Pape Moussa Traoré managing editor of *La Tribune*. Traoré's detention followed a story on the redeployment of General Kandé, which suggested a fallout with Prime Minister Sonko.

On May 31, 2024, the Senegalese gendarmerie also summoned and [detained](#) Mohamed Guèye, managing editor of *Le Quotidien*. Guèye's newspaper, reported that his troubles likely stemmed from some publications equally questioning the circumstances of General Kandé's redeployment to India. The contentious articles revealed underlying tensions within Senegal's government.

Sierra Leone

In May 2024, Investigative journalist, Alie Badara, was subjected to a series of [threats](#) from unknown individuals following a publication indicting the police. For instance, on May 24, Badara received threatening calls from an individual, who used multiple unregistered SIM cards, to verbally abuse the journalist's mother and threaten to burn down his house that night.

On June 6, 2024, Thomas Dixon, editor of *Salone Times Newspaper*, and an outspoken social commentator, received death [threats](#) and several attacks online and SMS. Dixon reported that the recent online attacks and threats emanated from his Facebook post in which he described the First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Madam Fatima Maada Bio, as arrogant.

On June 7, 2024, police officers in the Eastern regional headquarters town of Kenema assaulted and detained journalist Munya Bawoh of *All Out Radio 90.1 FM*. Together with his colleague, Jacob Ibrahim Sheriff, Bawoh had gone to the Kenema Police Station on appointment to follow-up on a story the two were investigating.

On June 18, 2024, the criminal investigations department (CID) of the police arrested and [detained](#) a female lawyer, Precious Bayoh, accusing her of incitement and other cyber-related matters in connection with her comment on President Julius Maada Bio's official X account. Bayoh commented about the Head of State's meeting with the executives of the Sierra Leone Bar Association questioning the legitimacy of Bio's election and that of Bar Association.

Togo

On April 3, 2024, police officers [arrested and detained](#) nine opposition activists for participating in protests against Togo's new constitution.

On the same April 3, Togo government declared illegal and prevented a three-day demonstration planned to start on April 18, 2024. The authorities claimed that the protests would disrupt public order.

On April 15, 2024, police officers [arrested](#) French journalist Thomas Pierre Dietrich, working for *Afrique XXL TV* channel, for allegedly entering the country illegally to conduct subversive activities. Dietrich was denied accreditation by the Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la communication (HAAC), the country's media regulator. He received a six-month suspended prison sentence and was expelled from Togo.