The Fourth quarter of 2024 recorded 35 violations in 12 countries across West Africa. Below is the summary narrative of the incidents, some of which involve more than one violation:

Burkina Faso

On October 7, 2024, Burkina Faso's media regulator, the Conseil Supérieur de la Communication (CSC), suspended the Voice of America (VOA). The suspension followed a critical September 19, 2024 broadcast on VOA's *Washington Forum*, which the CSC said amounted to "demoralising" military troops and "condoning terrorism." The three-month suspension also included a ban on local media from relaying news from international.

Ghana

On October 16, 2024, followers of a pastor, Bishop Elisha Salifu Amoako, assaulted Murtala Inusah, a court correspondent for the Accra-based Excellence in Broadcasting (EIB) Network. The attack occurred while Inusah was covering the pastor's court appearance related to a fatal accident allegedly caused by his under-aged son. Inusah was assaulted, and his mobile phone was taken. A police officer attempting to intervene was also attacked.

On October 20, 2024, armed private guards of a mining company, Edelmetallum Resources Limited, assaulted a three-member crew from the Multimedia Group Limited. The guards, armed with pump-action guns, attacked the journalists, confiscated their equipment, including a drone, before evicting them from the site. The crew, consisting of reporter Erastus Asare Donkor, drone pilot Majid Alidu, camera technician Edward Suantah, was documenting environmental destruction linked to mining activities near Manso Nkran in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

On December 20, 2024, Ohemeng Tawiah of the Multimedia Group was subjected to horrific assault by illegal miners in the Offin Shelter Belt Forest Reserve in the Ashanti region. Following an established pattern, the assailants seized the journalist's digital devices and deleted footage. He was following up on an earlier story he published on illegal mining in the area about Clean Jobs Resources Limited.

Award-winning environmental journalist Erastus Asare Donkor has revealed that he was forced to flee the country in December 2024, following intense threats. He told myjoyonline.com, a platform of the Multimedia Group, that the threats followed his reporting on the activities of the Edelmetallum Resources Limited.

On December 8, 2024, a mob attacked Yahaya Masahudu, a journalist in Tamale, Northern Region of Ghana. The attack took place when the journalist was covering the looting at the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly warehouse. Masahudu was reporting for the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition's Media Situation Room, established by the MFWA's Fact-Check Ghana, Dubawa Ghana and Ghana Fact to provide timely and accurate reports on Ghana's December 7, 2024 elections.

Guinea

On October 20, 2024, Francis Kova Zoumanigui, a judge and president of Guinea's Court for the Repression of Economic and Financial Crimes (CRIEF), ordered the physical assault of Bakary Gamalo Bamba, the director of the bimonthly newspaper *Le Baobab*. The incident occurred at the judge's residence in Conakry, the Guinean capital, after Zoumanigui realised that Bamba was recording their conversation. Bamba was subsequently arrested and placed in detention. Later that same day, Bamba was arrested and charged with invasion of privacy.

On December 3, 2024, the Kaloum High Court sentenced the investigative journalist [Bamba] to a six-month suspended prison term, after he had spent more than six weeks in detention. In addition, he was fined one million Guinean francs (about USD115). The verdict followed Judge Zoumanigui's complaint accusing Bamba of violating his privacy by recording him without his consent. As part of the ruling, the court also ordered the confiscation of the TECNO POP 8 mobile phone used to make the recording. During his trial, Bamba, 68, explained that he had recorded the discussion to aid his notetaking for an investigative report he was working on. He clarified that he had no intention of naming the judge in his publication. He further alleged that a security officer acting on Zoumanigui's orders had beaten him.

On December 3, 2024, gendarmes arrested journalist Habib Marouane Camara while he was driving in the Lambanyi suburb of Conakry. Camara, who runs the website Lerevelateur224, was pulled out and taken away after the para-military group's pick-up rammed into his vehicle, according to the Guinean press union, Syndicat des professionnels de la presse de Guinée (SPPG). The incident has been strongly condemned by the and a collective of lawyers, both of which are demanding his immediate release and an urgent investigation into the matter.

Guinea Bissau

On November 20, 2024, police violently cracked down on a peaceful vigil organised by students from the Escola Superior da Educação (ESE) in front of the Ministry of Education. The students were protesting delayed publications of school results, higher tuition fees and poor teaching conditions. Six students were arrested.

During the same operation, the police assaulted two journalists, namely Carabulai Cassamá, a reporter for Rádio Capital FM, and Turé da Silva, a journalist from Rádio Sol Mansi. The security officers seized the journalists' phones, cameras and other digital devices.

Mali

On November 13, 2024, in Bamako, Mali, political activist and media figure, Issa Kaou N'Djim was arrested and detained shortly after a programme on the private channel, Joliba TV in which he criticised Burkina Faso's military regime. Specifically, N'Djim had rejected the official account about a foiled coup in Burkina Faso.

On November 26, 2024, the private television channel, Joliba TV, on which N'Djim made the comments, was forced to shut down following the revocation of its operating licence. Mali's media regulator, the High Authority for Communication (HAC) imposed the sanction after it was petitioned by its Burkinabe counterpart, the Conseil Superieur de la Communication (CSC) over N'Djim's remarks on the Joliba's platform.

On December 30, 2024, the national anti-cybercrime office sentenced N'Djim, who was already in detention, to two years in prison, with one year suspended. He was found guilty of "publicly offending a foreign head of state" and "insulting through information systems." He was also ordered to pay a fine of 1 million CFA francs ($1,600).

The broadcast sector of Mali's media has been hit by a steep increase in licence fees, raising concerns about the survival of the industry that is already beset by myriad problems.

On December 31, 2024, the HAC signed two decrees No 4473 and 4474, that increased broadcast license fees from 500,000 CFA francs to 5,000,000 CFA francs, representing a 900% rise. The measure is considered a threat to a sector already

burdened with heavy debts, persistent shortage of electricity and a shrinking market due to security-related economic issues in Mali.

Mauritania

On October 2, 2024, the cybercrime unit of the gendarme in Nouakchott arrested a prominent the anti-slavery activist, Ahmed Ould Samba, alongside two others, Mohamed Yelem and Sidati Ali over a critical social media post. In the post Ould Samba harshly criticised Mauritania's President, Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani. He accused the President of corruption and trafficking. Mohamed and Sidati were also detained for distributing the content. The three were detained in Nouakchott prison without being presented to an investigating judge.

Senegal

On October 1, 2024, the Cybercrime Unit of the police detained Cheikh Yerim Seck, journalist and founder of *Yerim Post TV*. He was summoned for questioning on charges of 'disseminating false news and defamation' following statements he made on September 27, during a programme on the private television channel, *7 TV*. Seck allegedly disputed the figures presented by the Senegalese government regarding the economic situation inherited from the previous administration. He was released on October 3, 2024, and the case was dropped.

On October 2, 2024, supporters of opposition leader, Bougane Guèye Dani, verbally abused journalist Ngone Saliou Diop and physically assaulted her colleague, Maty Sarr Niang, both of whom work for the news site, *Sans Limites*. The supporters obstructed the journalists from covering the questioning of Dani, leader of Geum Sa Bopp, who had been summoned by the Cybercrime Unit with no official explanation.

Sierra Leone

On December 22, 2024 the police **arrested** a social media influencer, Hawa Hunt over critical social media posts. Arrested on air while participating in a reality TV programme, Miss Hunt was charged under the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 for allegedly inciting public disorder, and denied bail multiple times. The charges relate to a series of critical posts she made about President Bio and First Lady Fatima Bio back in April during Sierra Leone's elections. Her arrest came a day after the

First Lady paid a visit to the show, raising speculation that the visit was a reconnaissance mission.

On December 28, 2024, journalist Thomas Dixon was forced into hiding after receiving threats from Inspector General of Police (IGP) William Fayia Sellu. It all began when, in a Facebook post, Dixon criticised the police for detaining individuals on orders from higher authorities. Upon seeing the post, the IGP sent a cryptic text message to the journalist saying "Thomas, you have crossed the red line." Prior to his Facebook post and the subsequent threat from the IGP, Dixon had a heated phone conversation with the Police chief during which he sought to verify allegations against the latter.

Niger

On December 13, 2024, the Nigerien authorities suspended the operations of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for three months. The suspension followed growing tensions between the Nigerien government and international media outlets over their reporting on the political climate, including coverage of the military junta and civil unrest.

On November 11, 2024, Ivorian-Nigerien journalist Serge Mathurin Adouwas transferred to a prison approximately 100 kilometres from Niamey after being formally charged with "threatening state security" in Niger. Adou's critical reporting on the military junta and its regional allies, particularly the regime in Burkina Faso, had often highlighted human rights abuses and authoritarian practices. On September 23, 2024, Burkinabe Minister of Security, Mahamoudou Sana, had publicly accused Serge Mathurin Adou of being involved in alleged destabilisation attempts against Burkina Faso

Nigeria

On October 14, 2024, operatives from Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) raided Urban Radio 94.5 FM in Enugu and **arrested** presenter Favour Ekoh amid an investigation into an alleged N700 million Ponzi scheme. Urban Radio's management claims that EFCC operatives forcibly interrupted the station's live "Prime-Time" programme by entering the studio and even seizing broadcast equipment. However, EFCC denied that the live broadcast was disrupted

or that any equipment was taken, arguing that Ekoh's arrest was justified and that the radio station officials obstructed their operation.

On October 20, 2024, Nigerian police arrested at least 20 demonstrators at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos during a commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the #EndSARS protests. The original protests began in October 2020 as a response to police brutality and were marked by tragic events at the toll gate that resulted in loss of life. Despite the solemn nature of the commemoration, demonstrators were met with a forceful police response, including tear gas and mass arrests.

Eyewitness reports and video footage shared on social media captured protesters chanting solidarity songs even as they were taken into custody.

On October 1, 2024, Nigerian security forces, including the army and police, cracked down on protesters in Rivers State, Kano, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, during demonstrations against bad governance. These protests, operating under banners such as FearlessInOctober and #NationalDayOfSurvival, were a continuation of the #EndBadGovernance movement that began in August 2024 in response to widespread economic hardship. Authorities had previously issued warnings against such gatherings, citing intentions to maintain law and order.

On December 9, 2025, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, expelled 37 students, including four females, for one academic session over a planned protest against the introduction of a third semester. The university accused them of "criminal conspiracy, inciting public disturbance, and cyber-stalking," citing a WhatsApp group they created to mobilise support for the demonstration. The disciplinary action was taken despite no protest actually occurring.

Cote d'Ivoire

On December 14, 2024, Vincent Djiropo, a member of the Winnin community, was arrested by the gendarme in San Pedro and remanded on December 18 on charges of disrupting public order and false publication. The charges followed his social media post condemning the encroachment of the Monogaga forest reserve by a private investor.

On December 16, 2024, another leading voice against the controversial "reafforestation project" Dominique Mensah was arrested and transferred to San Pedro on the same charges.

During Djiropo's first appearance in court, 18 community members who had come to protest in solidarity, were also arrested and detained.

Togo

On November 4, 2024, the Togolese media regulator, the Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et la Communication (HAAC), suspended the bi-monthly newspaper *Tampa Express* for three months following publication by the media of alleged false information about minister Sanda Ablamba Johnson.