



A Summary Annual Statistical Report

Violations of Press and Media Freedoms in Egypt

Year
2020

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Monitoring and Documentation
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Countless violations, coverage banning, inappropriate behaviors, verbal and physical abuses, incidents of arrest, loose accusations and preventive detention without trials, the journalist/ media professional is still released and recycled in another case to be detained for many years without clear charges. The journalistic websites and civil society organizations, Material and moral control over press and media institutions until these institutions became the mouthpiece of the regime, they only displayed what they were told to do. And on top of all that, press and media institutions violate the rights of their employees from preventing their material rights and arbitrary dismissing them, that was the harvest of 2020 in the field of journalism and media.

Freedom of the press and the media in Egypt in 2020 has become more alarming and panicked than ever before. At the global level; Egypt ranked (166) in the Media Freedom Index issued by “Reporters Without Borders”, down three levels than the last year in which it ranked (163). On the local level, the Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media recorded (240) violations by the end of 2020. It was expected that the number of the violations during the current year (2020) would be much less than in previous years, due to the expectation of the Egyptian government’s preoccupation with confronting the spread of COVID-19, the journalists’ work was disrupted for long periods, and the press institutions didn’t work to their full capacity during periods of the virus spread, but contrary to this preliminary vision, the number of violations increased during the current year by a large percentage than the previous 3 years, and these violations varied between the prevention of coverage, verbal and physical abuses, arbitrary dismissal, etc. At the end of the year, 28 journalists and media figures were behind bars on charges of spreading false news and joining a terrorist group established in contravention of the constitution and the law, which made Egypt, with this enormous number, one of the largest prisons in the world for journalists.

The statistical annual report of 2020 handle the state of press and media freedom in Egypt during the year. The report provides an analysis of each of the violations that journalists and media professionals have been exposed to during this year, then analyzes the most prominent violations, provides an analysis of the most prominent decisions and statements issued by the bodies responsible for regulating media in Egypt and finally, it presents the most prominent developments that have taken place in press and media affairs during 2020. The report is divided into 4 main sections.

First Section:

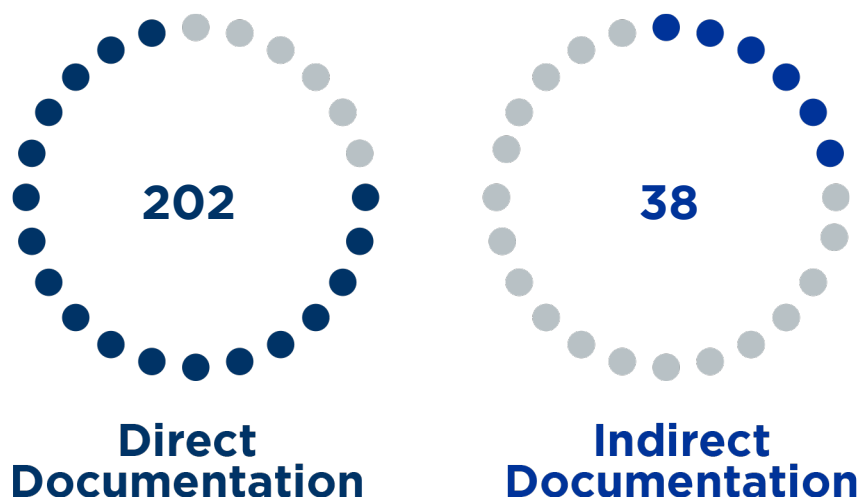
Provides Statistical monitoring of violations against journalists



Provides Statistical monitoring of violations against journalists and media professionals during 2020 (January 1st – December 31st, 2020). The Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media documented 240 violation cases against journalists or the institutions where they work, which were distributed as follows:

1- Distribute of violations according to The Type Of Documentation:

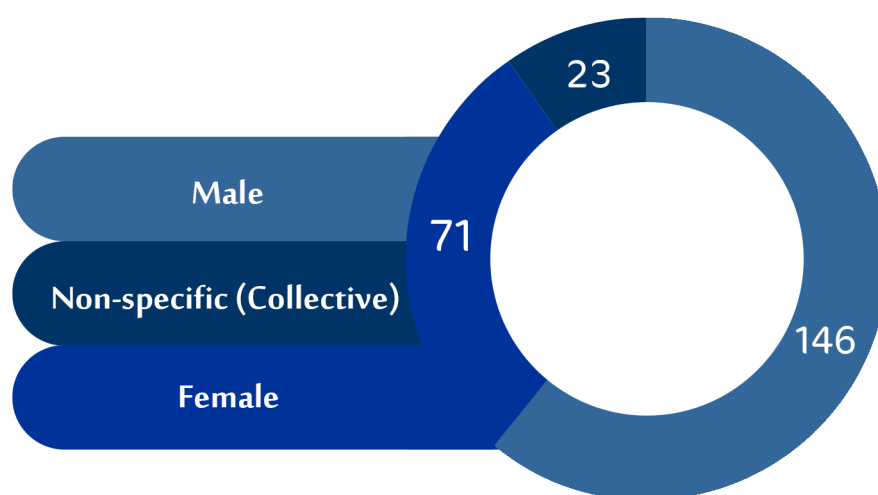
The monitoring and documentation unit recorded 240 violation cases, 202 cases directly documented, with about 84.2% of the total number of violations, 38 cases indirect documented (by journalistic sources) with about 15.8% of the total number of violations.



Shape (1) Distribute of Violations according to The Type of Documentation

Distribute of violations according to The Gender of the Journalist/ Media professional:

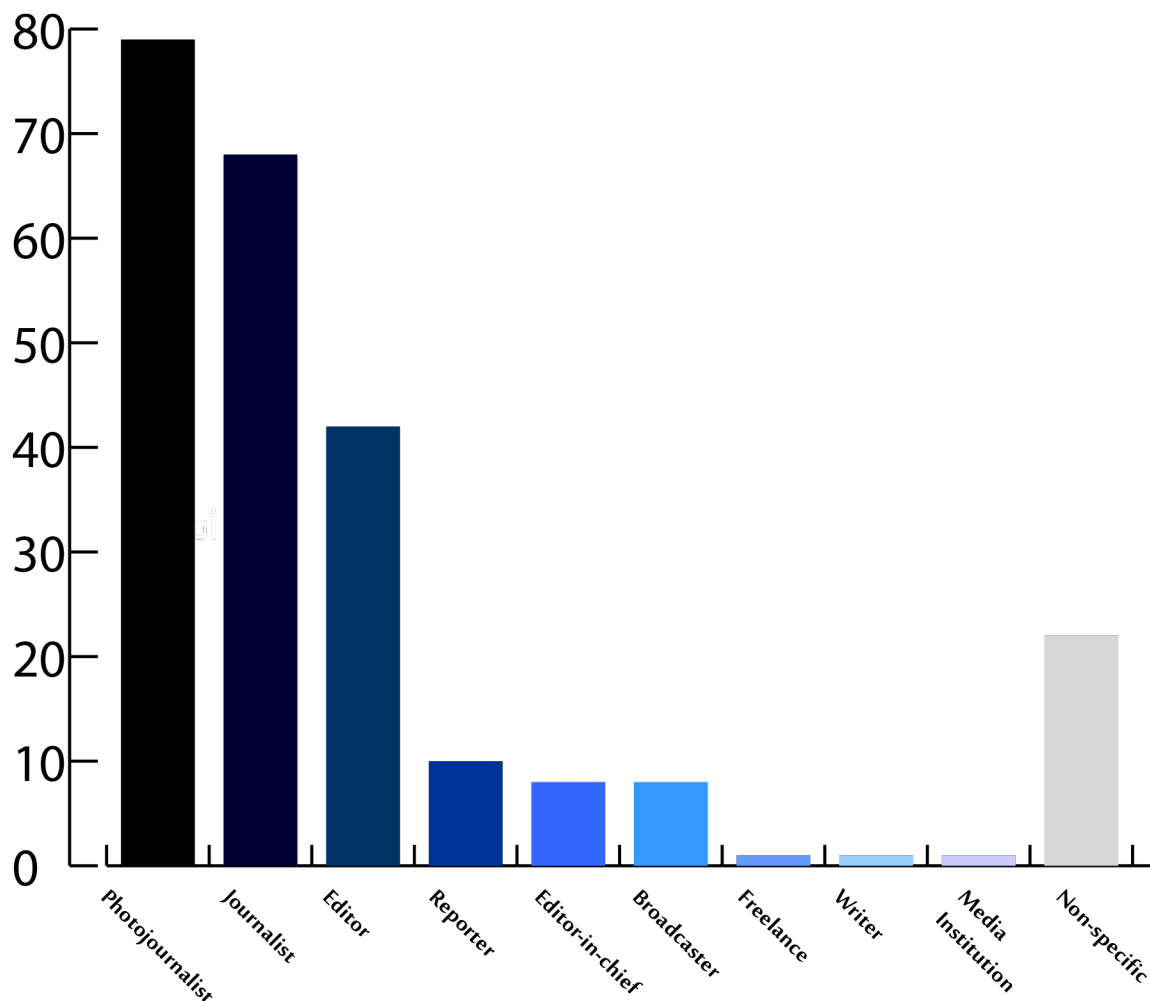
Males were the most vulnerable to violations during 2020 as they exposed to 146 violations (with 60.8%) of the total violations. Females were subjected to 71 cases of violations (with 29.6%) of the total violations, meanwhile 23 violation cases were documented under non-specific gender because they were collective (with 9.6%) of the total violations number. These cases in which single or group of journalists or media professionals have been violated, or the harm directed to entire press or media institution.



Shape (2) Distribute of Violations according to The Gender of the Journalist/ Media professional

3- Distribute of violations according to The Journalist/ Media professional Specialty:

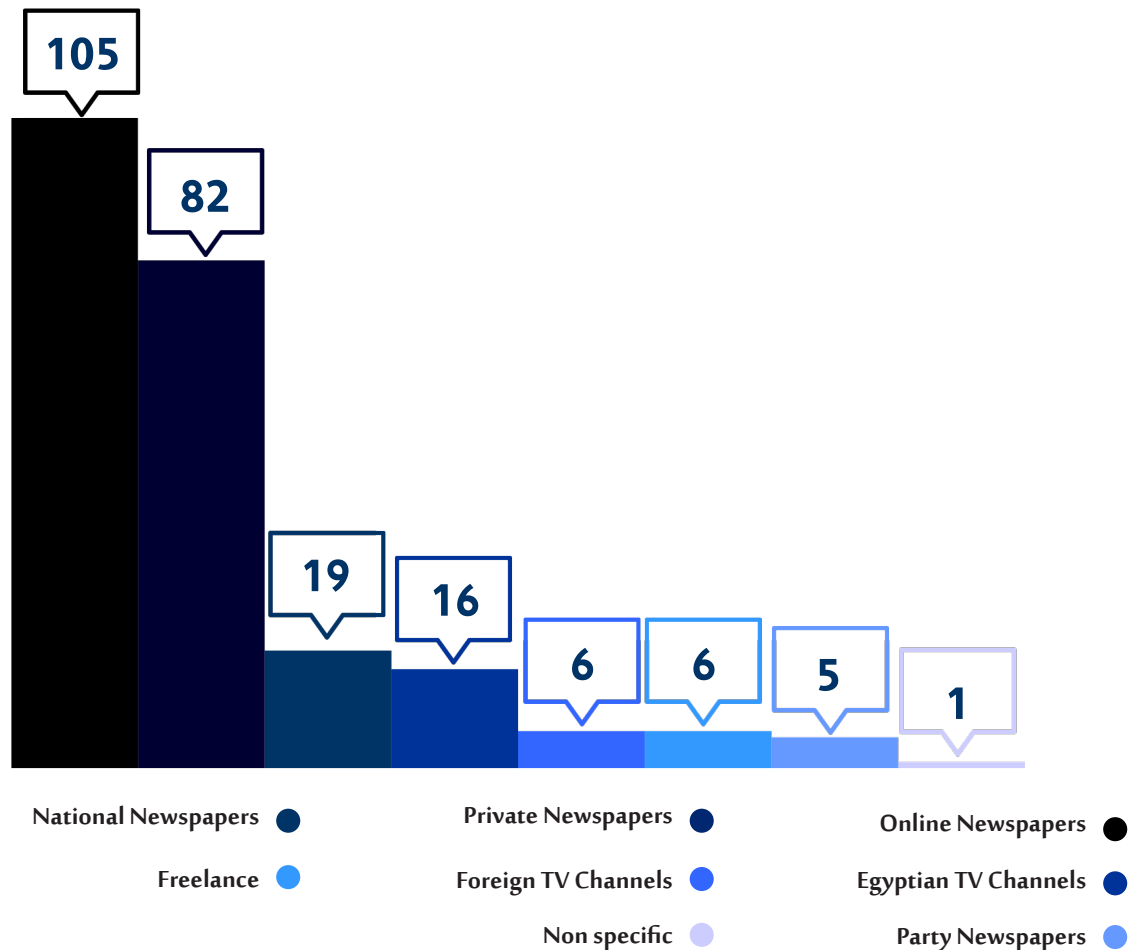
Along 2020, photojournalists were the most vulnerable to violations as they were exposed to 79 violations (with about 32.9%) of the total violations, 68 cases of violations against journalists (with about 28.3%), 42 cases of violations against editors (with about 17.9%), 10 cases against reporters (with about 4.1%), 8 cases against broadcasters and similar cases against editors-in-chief (with about 3.3%), 1 case for each (freelance journalist, writer, media institution) (with about 0.4%). There were 22 cases of violations (with about 9%) non-specific specialty.



Shape (3) Distribute of Violations according to The Journalist/ Media professional Specialty

4- Distribution of violations according to The Journalist's Work Place:

The numbers indicate during the year 2020 that the online newspapers' workers were the most vulnerable to violations, as they were exposed to (105) cases of violations (with about 43.8%) of the total violations, the violations against workers in private newspapers came in second place with (82) cases (with about 34.2%) of the total violations. In addition, there were (19) cases of violations against workers in national newspapers (with about 7.9%) of the total violations, while (16) cases were recorded against workers in Egyptian TV channels (with about 6.7%) of the total violations, then there were (6) cases of violation (with about 2.5%) of the total violations of workers in foreign TV channels, and workers in the free press. There were (5) cases of violation of the right of workers in party newspapers, (with about 2.1%) of the total violations, and finally one case (about 0.4%) that wasn't specified by work place.



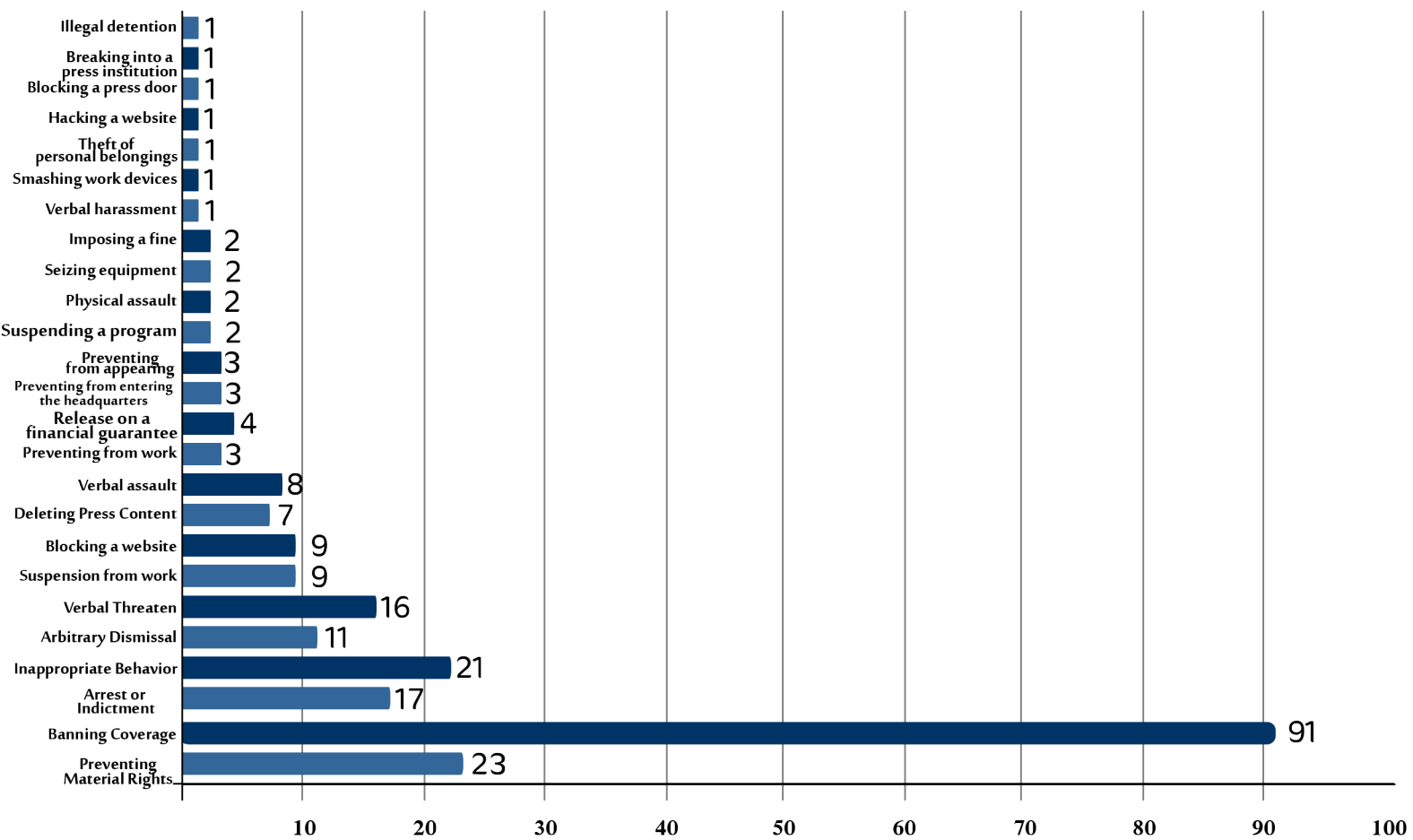
Shape (4) Distribute of Violations according to The Journalist/ Media Work Place

5- Distribution of violations according to The Type of violation:

During 2020, journalists and media professionals were subjected to various types of violations, 3 types of them shaped 56.3% of 24 violations that the Observatory was able to document during 2020, and the 3 violations came as follows:

91 cases of banning coverage (with about 37.9%) of the total violations, 23 cases of preventing material rights (with about 9.6%), 21 cases of inappropriate behavior (with about 8.8%) while other types of violations shaped about 43.7% included (17) violations with about 7.1% in relation to the facts of arrest or indictment, (16) cases of violations (with about 6.6%) for cases of verbal threaten, and 11 cases (with about 4.6%) for arbitrary dismissal.

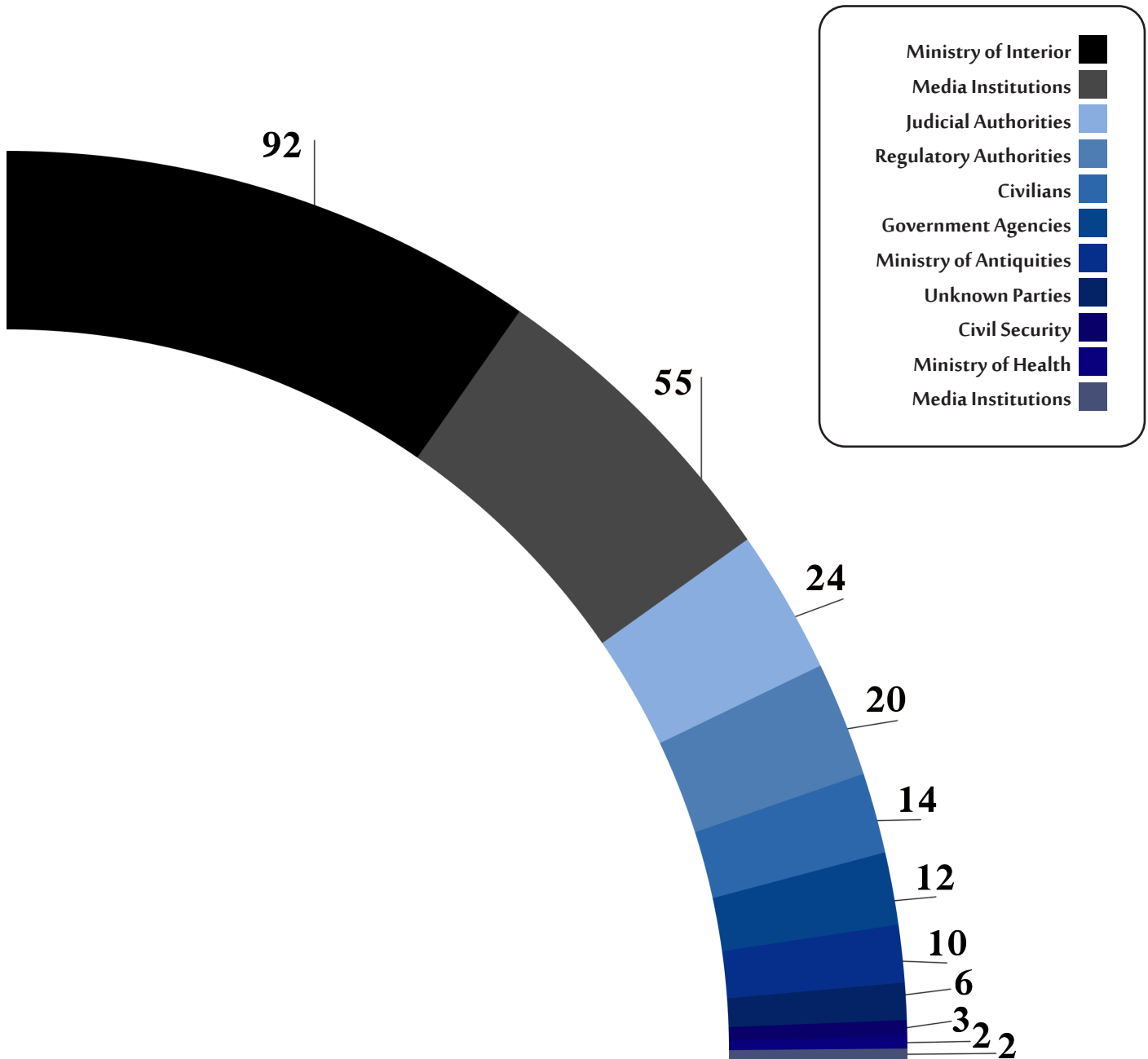
While 9 cases (with about 3.8%) were recorded for each of blocking a website and suspension from work, 8 cases of violations (with about 3.3%) for verbal assault, 7 cases of violations (with about 2.9%) for deleting press content, 4 cases of violations (with about 1.7%) for release on a financial guarantee, 3 cases of violations (with about 1.3%) for preventing from work, preventing from appearing and preventing from entering the headquarters, and 2 cases (with about 0.8%) for each of suspending a program, physical assault, beating, seizing equipment and imposing a fine, and finally one violation (with about 0.4%) for each of verbal harassment, smashing work devices, theft of personal belongings, hacking a website, blocking a press door, breaking into a press institution and illegal detention.



Shape (5) Distribute of Violations according to The Type Of Violation

6- Distribution of violations according to The Aggressor's Side:

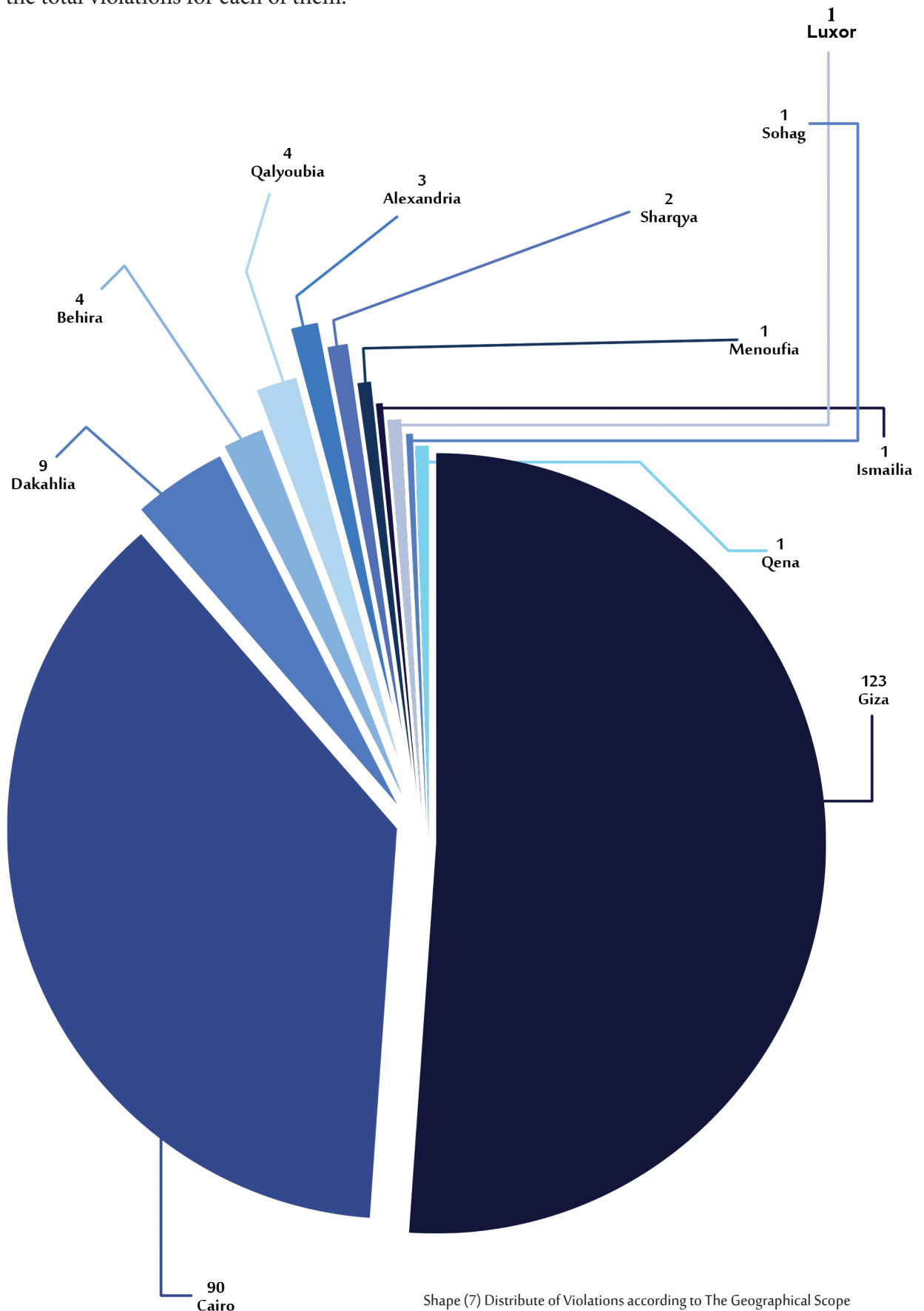
The Ministry of Interior topped the most violators of journalists and media professionals' rights during 2020, as it was responsible for 92 cases of violations (with about 38.3%) of the total violations, followed by press institutions by the involvement in 55 cases of violations (with about 22.8%), while the judicial authorities came in the third place by 24 cases of violations (with about 10%), then the regulatory authorities with 20 cases (about 8.2%), civilians with 14 cases (about 5.7%), the government agencies with 12 cases (about 5%), the Ministry of Antiquities with 10 cases (about 4.2%) of the total violations and finally there were unknown parties with 6 cases (about 3%), then the civil security with 2 cases (about 1.2%), the Ministry of Health with 2 cases (about 0.8%) and the media institutions with 3 cases (about 0.8%).



Shape (6) Distribute of Violations according to The Aggressor Side

7- Distribution of violations according to The geographical scope:

Giza governorate topped the most governorates in which the largest number of violations occurred, with (123) cases of violations (about 51.3%) of the total violations, followed by the capital, Cairo Governorate, with (90) violations (about 37.5%), then Dakahlia Governorate with (9) Cases) (about 3.8%), Behira and Qalyoubia governorates with (4) cases each of them (about 1.7%), while (3 cases of violation) were monitored in Alexandria governorate with about 1.2% of the total violations, and 2 cases of violation in Sharqya governorate by about 0.8% of the total violations, and finally 1 case in each of (Sohag, Qena, Luxor, Menoufia, and Ismailia), with about 0.4% of the total violations for each of them.



Shape (7) Distribute of Violations according to The Geographical Scope

Banned from coverage and inappropriate behaviors, verbal and physical attacks, incidents of arrest and loose accusations, preventive detention without appearing in the courts, and as soon as the journalist / media professional is released, he/ she is recycled in connection with another new case, so that his / her imprisonment continues for several years without an evident crime, besides blocking press and Civil society institutions' websites, having material and moral control over press and media institutions through the executive bodies and sides that regulate journalistic and media work, so that these institutions have become a mouthpiece for the system that only displays what is dictated to it. Furthermore, press and media institutions violate the rights of their employees from withholding their financial rights and arbitrary dismissing them. That was the conclusion of 2020 in the field of journalism and media.

Second Section:

presentation for the violations
against journalists



The second section provides a presentation for the violations against journalists and media professionals during 2020 (January 1st to December 31st, 2020) through statistical analyzes, it became clear that journalists were the most vulnerable to violations during the year as they were subjected to 87% of the total violations that occurred in the journalistic and media sphere in Egypt, while media professionals were subjected to only 9% of the total violations. The fourth quarter was also the fourth quarter of this year in terms of the number of violations. It witnessed (115) violations, representing about 47.9% of the total violations during the year. This increase was mainly due to the many violations that occurred to journalists and media professionals during the House of Representatives elections, which were held from October 24 to December 8, 2020, and the violations which were recorded during this period reached (72) violations, representing more than 63.7% of the total Violations occurred during this quarter, and 32% of the total number of violations monitored within a year. Finally, it became clear that the year 2020 is the largest in terms of the number of violations that journalists and media professionals have been exposed to during the past three years. The total number of violations this year reached 240 cases, while the year 2019 witnessed 171 cases and 218 cases in 2018.

From another side, the most prominent of the specific violations that occurred during the year 2020 were represented in the unfair dismissal, as when the world is passing through the emerging Corona virus pandemic and the exceptional circumstances imposed by the pandemic, various parties continued to violate the rights of journalists and media professionals, including press and media institutions, which arbitrarily dismissed journalists from their work, delayed the salaries of other journalists, and stopped paying them for a period exceeded 6 months. The arbitrary dismissal and withholding financial rights has become, more than ever before, a cruel violation - especially in the circumstances of the pandemic - due to its impact on the economic and social conditions of journalists. The decision to dismiss a journalist from his work or cut off his salary would lead to loss his income source and lack of financial resources in general, which is barely enough to meet the basic needs. Press and media institutions violated the economic and social rights of the journalists by being responsible for dismissing 11 journalists individually, in addition to 3 collective cases in which 80 journalists were dismissed from Al-Ghad TV, 40 journalists from Al-Masry El-Youm newspaper, and 21 journalists from Al-Maidan newspaper. The Foundation also documented 23 cases in which journalists were subjected to withholding their financial rights, whether by reducing or cutting of salaries.

The Egyptian authorities also arrested the journalist of “Darb” website, Islam Al-Kalhi, while covering the death of a young man in Al-Munib, Giza Governorate on September 9, 2020, and he was brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution, which investigated him pending Case No. 855 of 2020 State Security Inventory where decided to imprison him for 15 days on September 10, 2020. The Egyptian authorities also arrested the journalist Basma Mustafa on October 4, 2020 in Luxor Governorate while she was carrying out her field work, covering the death of a young man in the governorate on a police officer hand. The supreme state imprisoned her for 15 days pending Case No. 959 of 2020 and charged her with joining a terrorist group, spreading false news and misusing social media in front of the Public Prosecutor which issued a decision to release her at the same day.

The beginning of 2020 also witnessed one of the most prominent violations during the year against a foreign media organization, as the Egyptian security forces stormed the headquarters of the Turkish Anadolu Agency, and arrested 4 employees of the channel, 3 of them were Egyptians and a Turkish journalist, 2 journalists, including (Hussein al-Qabbani and Hussein Abbas) were investigated by the Supreme State Security Prosecution, in the Case No. 277 of 2020, and they were accused of financing terrorism offenses, deliberately publishing false news and using a private account on a communication site to broadcast and publish these news, which decided to release them on a bail of 10 thousand pounds on January 15, 2020.

In the same context, the Egyptian authorities - for the 4th year in a row - continued to use the policy of blocking websites in a systematic manner to restrict the areas of freedom of opinion and expression, conceal data and information from the public, and close independent media outlets or opposition that represent currents that the executive authorities do not like their speech or discourse. You threaten their interests. As of this writing, over 600 websites have been blocked since May 2017.

Third and Fourth Sections:

analysis of the most
important decisions
issued by the regulatory
authorities for journalism



Provide an analysis of the most important decisions issued by the regulatory authorities for journalism and media work during 2020, and we must bear in mind that some of these decisions impede / affect freedom of journalistic and media work, while others regulate the rights.

The most prominent developments in the press and media field during the year 2020 were the following;

The bodies regulating journalistic and media work in Egypt continued during 2020 in attempts to tighten grip on press and media means. As the Supreme Council for Media Regulation continued to apply various penalties starting from attracting attention and preventing public appearances through stopping broadcasting programs and imposing financial fines, ending with blocking all or parts of the websites, and punitive decisions during 2020 reached 62 punitive decisions exceeding 43 decisions recorded in the 2019.

The executive authority also controlled the national press institutions by controlling the formation of the boards of directors of these institutions. The National Press Authority (whose chairman is appointed by the President of the Republic) selects the Chairman of Board of Directors, who in turn is responsible for selecting 6 members with journalistic, financial and economic experience, while 6 members are elected representatives of the journalists' categories, administrators and workers. Hence, the representatives of more than 10 thousand journalists become only 2 individuals.

The efforts of the National Press Authority in developing national press institutions were characterized by an individual character, and its decisions were supreme without consulting journalists and without conducting societal discussions about them, in parallel with the deliberate marginalization of the Syndicate of Journalists, which indicates the "authority" monopolizing its right to regulate and harmonize the conditions of national press institutions, without any regard for the viewpoint of the journalists and their syndicate.

Even the Syndicate of Journalists during 2020 used Corona virus 2019 as an excuse to postpone the registration committee more than once until it convened at the end of the year, and a large number of journalists have complained about this decision because they feel "damaged" because of their continuous struggle for many years to obtain the Syndicate's membership IDs as well as the additional services and privileges it provides. The most important of which is participation in the treatment project, which is increasingly important in these exceptional circumstances, obtaining a training and technology allowance, as well as an unemployment allowance as one of the important privileges, in the event that the work of some journalists is dispensed with due to the current crisis.

Finally, press and media institutions started 2020 echoing a new decision issued by the House of Representatives, to create the Ministry of State for Media Affairs, to be headed by Osama Haykal, the former Minister of Media on December 22, 2019. After the appointment of the new "minister", voices raised to indicated that there is a constitutional violation of the decision due to the abolition of the Ministry of Media in the constitution issued in 2014. It was replaced with 3 independent bodies that regulate journalistic and media work in Egypt: The Supreme Council for Media Regulation, the National Press Authority, and the National Media Authority, but we can assert that these opposing voices were right. The legislative authority was able to circumvent this constitutional text by appointing "Heikal" to the position of "Minister of State" and not a minister, who is a minister without a ministerial portfolio, to assign a number of responsibilities by the executive authority.

This decision denotes the attention of the executive authority to what observers press and media scene in Egypt have turned to, which is characterized by a state of confusion and randomness in managing the press and media file. The 3 bodies worked without harmony and disagreement in the light of a state of competition over who is in the hands of the supreme authority regulating and controlling the media. This severity has been exacerbated by the lack of clarity of powers of each authority in the relevant laws, whether Law No. 92 of 2016, or the subsequent Law No. 180 of 2018, which came from broad and elastic terms of reference that are subjected to multiple and different interpretations according to the whims of everyone.

This confusion in performance and competition over the monopoly of the "supreme authority" was reflected in a number of incidents that emerged during the last three years, including: The outbreak of a conflict between the "Supreme Media" and the National Media Authority over the former headquarters of the Ministry of Media, whereby each institution wants to allocate the headquarters in its favor, what caused a conflict in the statements about the legal entitlement of the headquarters between the "Council" and the Authority. The Supreme Council for Media has entered into another conflict with the National Press Authority over the eligibility of either institution to choose the heads of boards of directors and editors of national newspapers "Makram Muhammad Ahmed", head of the Supreme Council for Media Regulation, stated that changing heads of boards

of directors and editing national newspapers doesn't belong to the National Authority and the press, but falls under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council for Media, according to the law.

All of that indicates that the press and media file in Egypt is managed by hidden arms, according to short-term political visions, which change from time to time, resulting in decisions characterized by contradiction and lack of clarity, and overlap between the competencies of the different bodies and the Minister of State, which shows a general picture of confusion and randomness.



The Monitoring and Documentation Program aims to follow up on all violations against journalists, media professionals, and press and media institutions in Egypt. It adopts its own methodology in the monitoring process, which is based on 3 main axes in monitoring violations; The first: field monitoring through the field work team, and the second: communication with victims to ensure that violations have occurred against them and document their testimonies, and the third: takes place in the absence of field information or direct communication, and monitoring and documentation is carried out through newspapers and channels via electronic media.

The Monitoring and Documentation Program serves as the department's center for the work of the Egyptian Observatory for Press and Media; Through it, the legal aid and support program is informed of the issues that must be worked on, and the other research programs are informed of the urgent issues at this time that need to be worked on.