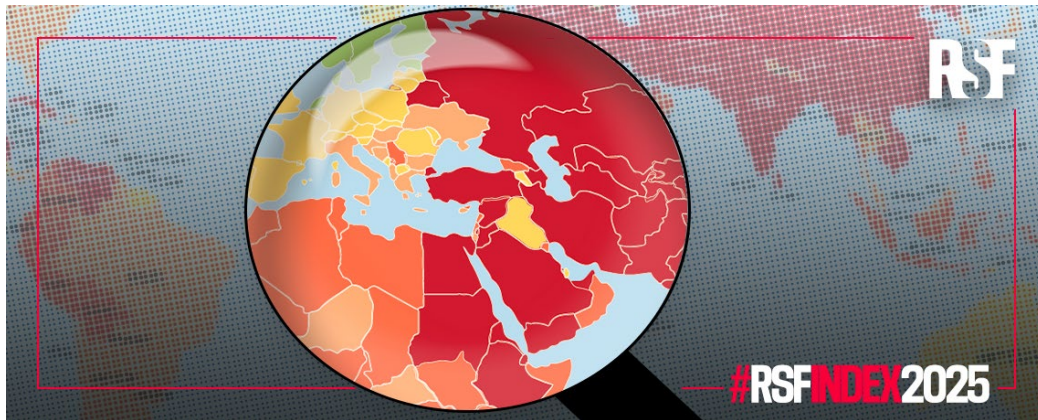
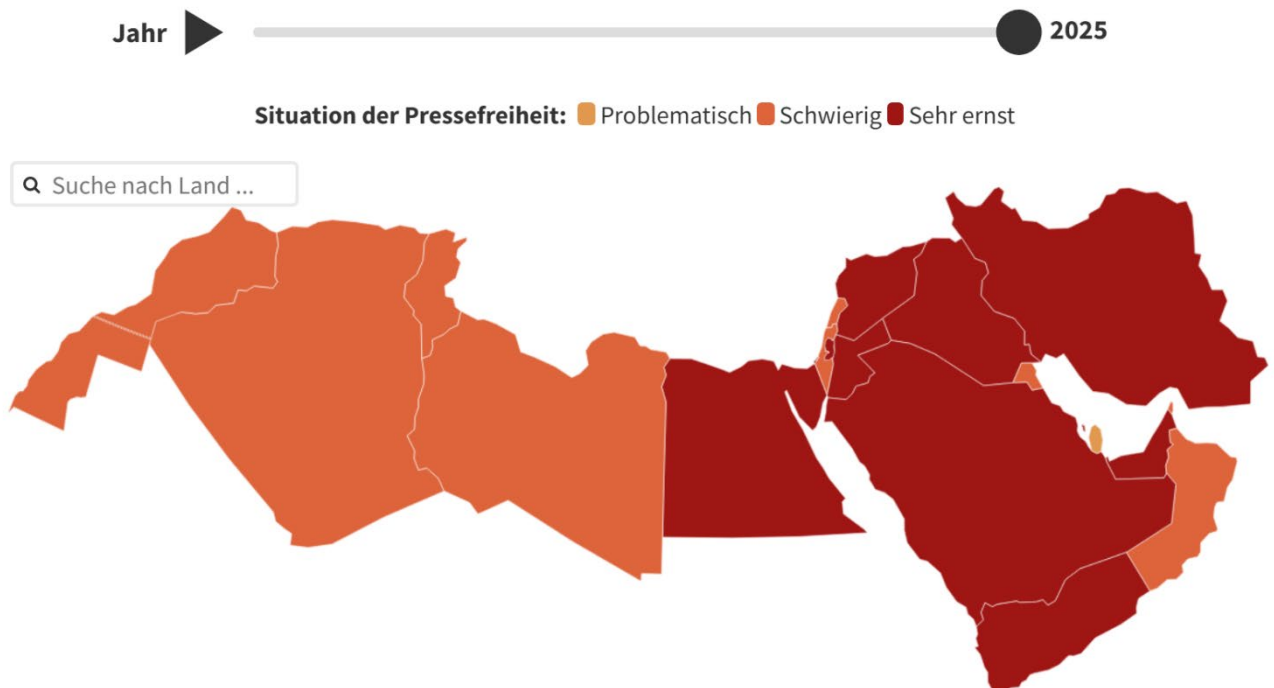


## Middle East - North Africa: The free press trapped between crackdowns and economic insecurity



In this region, economic pressure continues to weaken a press already ravaged by violence perpetrated with impunity by law enforcement, military forces and armed groups.



Quelle: Rangliste der Pressefreiheit, [Link zum Teilen](#)  
© Blanche Marès / Reporter ohne Grenzen

## **From physical violence to economic repression**

On top of the shocking number of journalists killed by the Israeli army in Gaza, outlets in the Palestinian territory have seen their newsrooms and equipment destroyed, and a blockade has stifled the press corps in the strip. This keeps [Palestine](#) (163rd) as one of the most dangerous states in the world for reporters. The violence against journalists extends beyond besieged Gaza and into the West Bank, where Palestinian journalists are held in Israeli prisons. [Israel](#) (112th) continues to repress its own news media and dropped a further eleven places in the Index. [Jordan](#) (147th) has also fallen, notably due to a draconian law used against reporters covering the repercussions of the violence in Gaza. It now ranks close to [Yemen](#) (154th), where years of war have fragmented the country into different zones controlled by various regional foreign influences, dismantling the independent press. In [Egypt](#) (170th), state efforts to suppress coverage of the financial crisis have kept the country in the Index's bottom ten. Meanwhile, hopes of a political renewal have contributed to [Lebanon](#)'s upward shift (132nd) despite an economic crisis weakening the media landscape and leaving outlets vulnerable to all forms of pressure.

## **Outlets caught between economic precarity and autocratic petromonarchies**

Despite the progress in [Syria](#) (177th) that came with the fall of Bashar al-Assad's dictatorship and the new administration's declared commitments to press freedom, the country must now rebuild a media landscape in ruins. In [Iran](#) (176th), the reign of terror continues as the incessant arrests of journalists keep independent outlets under pressure. [Iraq](#) (155th) and [Bahrain](#) (157th) remain in the bottom quarter of the Index. The Gulf countries that are most economically prosperous, such as Saudi Arabia (162rd), [Oman](#) (134th), [Kuwait](#) (128) and [Qatar](#) (79th) – the highest-ranking country in the region for the second consecutive year – display higher economic scores. However, this does not guarantee the existence of a free press, which remains hampered by repressive legal systems, political pressure and threats against journalists. Due to these factors, and an economic decline, the [United Arab Emirates](#) (164th) dropped four places.

## **Tunisia: North Africa's only country in decline**

In neighbouring North Africa, financial pressures are also affecting the media, notably in [Tunisia](#) (129th), which fell by eleven places and experienced the region's largest drop in the economic indicator (-30 places) due to a political crisis where independent media are deliberately targeted. [Morocco](#) (120th, up 9 places) and [Libya](#) (137th, up 6 places) slightly

rose in the Index yet remain in the bottom third due to recurring attacks on media independence. [Algeria](#) (126th) also experienced a modest upward shift in the Index despite the persistent judicial harassment of media professionals due to the presidential pardon granted to journalist Ihsane El Kadi after 22 months of detention.