



**Indonesia Press Freedom
Situation Report 2025**

**The Press under
Authoritarian
Repression**

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Chapter 1

Global Political Changes and Pressure on the Media

Over the past two years, the global political landscape has been marked by the growing strength of populist and authoritarian forces across regions, from Europe and Latin America to Asia. Several international studies on civil liberties and media freedom point to a consistent trend: conservative right-wing or authoritarian parties and leaders increasingly exploit issues of identity, security, and “anti-hoax” to restrict criticism and mobilize support, often by casting journalists and independent media as a common enemy.

Global press freedom reports have recorded declining scores in many countries, including both established democracies and transitional states, driven by institutional erosion, political polarization, and attacks on media independence and journalists’ safety. Southeast Asia is no exception. The military coup in Myanmar, tightening regulations in Cambodia and Vietnam, and the criminalization of criticism in the Philippines and elsewhere illustrate how global authoritarian trends intertwine with local dynamics to narrow the public sphere. It is within this context that the state of media and journalism in Indonesia must be understood: as part of a broader wave of global democratic backsliding that directly affects media sustainability and the safety of journalists.

1. A Crisis in Media Stability and the Future of Media Workers

Throughout 2024–2025, the media ecosystem in Indonesia and Southeast Asia has experienced declining financial and operational stability, with the most severe impact felt by media workers—particularly journalists. Several international studies on digital media in Southeast Asia show that advertising- and platform-dependent business models generate high levels of uncertainty: algorithm changes, declining advertising spending, and competition with global platforms have forced many newsrooms to undertake aggressive cost-cutting measures, including mass layoffs of journalists and support staff.

Reports and analyses of Indonesia’s media industry reveal similar patterns. Major media companies—across television, print, and online sectors—have pursued cost rationalization by merging desks, pushing extreme multitasking, and relying more heavily on freelance workers without adequate protections. In some cases, dismissals have occurred without union involvement, fair compensation, or transparency in managerial

decision-making, leaving journalists to bear a double burden: job insecurity alongside intensified productivity pressures in an increasingly fragile industry.

2. The Shrinking Public Sphere: Global, Regional, and Indonesian Perspectives

Media conditions are deeply embedded in the broader political context. Globally, there is a clear trend of democratic backsliding and the rise of authoritarian or right-wing populist political forces that view critical journalism as a threat and deploy rhetoric such as “enemy of the people” or “biased media” to delegitimize independent reporting. Numerous studies on press freedom in Southeast Asia confirm that many countries in the region—from Myanmar and the Philippines to Cambodia—have experienced significant declines in press freedom indices, alongside the use of national security laws and online regulations to restrict criticism, shut down independent media, and criminalize journalists.

Indonesia, once widely regarded as a “pioneer of press reform” in the post-1998 period, now stands at a crossroads. Research on digital politics and media control in Indonesia points to the strengthening of what has been described as “authoritarian statism”: the consolidation of executive power, close ties between political elites and media owners, and the deployment of legal instruments and digital regulations to curtail civil liberties, including press freedom. The public sphere narrows as journalists, activists, and citizens who voice criticism face risks of legal complaints, criminalization, or coordinated backlash, leading to the growing normalization of self-censorship.

3. Threats to Press Freedom and the Safety of Journalists

At the practical level, political decline and the shrinking of public space translate into increased risks for journalists. Indonesia's journalist safety index reports indicate that although there is formally a legal framework recognizing press freedom, in practice journalists still face physical violence, intimidation, reporting bans, damage to or confiscation of work equipment, and systematic digital attacks. Legal and journalism studies highlight that instruments such as the new Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) are frequently used—or at least being used as a threat—to target journalists and media outlets engaged in critical reporting, especially on corruption, agrarian conflict, and identity-related issues.

Regional studies on press freedom in Southeast Asia confirm that the criminalization of journalism is often wrapped in narratives of “anti-hoax,” “national security,” or “public morality protection.” This creates a climate of fear that erodes one of the press's main functions: monitoring power and providing a space for public deliberation. Threats to journalists are no longer limited to physical violence in the field but also include online attacks, doxing, character assassination campaigns, and legal suits that are exhausting both financially and psychologically.

There is also troubling news regarding the Press Council. The state budget allocation for the Press Council in 2026 has been completely cut under the pretext of efficiency. This claim of efficiency is unfounded, especially since President Prabowo has expanded the cabinet—clearly consuming substantial budget resources. With minimal funding, the Press Council in 2026 risks paralysis and may be unable to fulfill its functions: handling public complaints, overseeing the implementation of the journalistic code of ethics, and defending press freedom.

4. The Tech Dimension: Between Opportunities, Business Crisis, and Control

The digital transformation that was initially promised as an opportunity for democratizing information has revealed a paradox. Studies on digital media in Southeast Asia reveal that dependence on global platforms (Google, Meta, TikTok, and others) makes media sustainability highly vulnerable to opaque algorithms and monetization policies. When algorithms change or advertising incentives shift, media traffic can drop drastically, forcing newsrooms to chase clicks with fast, shallow content, which reduces space for investigative reporting and ultimately drives down the number of journalists.

On the other hand, research on media control and digital politics in Indonesia and the region highlights how technology has also become a new infrastructure for surveillance and repression. Broad and ambiguous online content regulations, mandatory content blocking, and practices of surveillance and cyberattacks have placed journalists and media under constant threat. Bot attacks, account hacking, and the spread of disinformation targeting critical journalists have become part of an ecosystem that systematically weakens independent journalism and erodes public trust in the media.

Chapter 2

Escalation of Violence and Attempts to Silence the Press

The year 2025 became a chapter full of paradoxes for press freedom in Indonesia. On one hand, journalism continued to prove its role as the last bulwark protecting people's sound judgment amidst a storm of disinformation. On the other hand, the guardians of democracy's fourth pillar had to work under increasingly real pressure and threats, from the newsroom to the streets. Physical violence, digital attacks, intimidation by authorities, and legal suits became specters testing the courage and integrity of journalists. AJI Indonesia recorded 89 cases of various forms of violence against journalists in 2025.

Intervention and intimidation in newsrooms increased and tended to be normalized. From several confidential testimonies, editors revealed that their newsrooms often received calls or messages from influential circles. These messages demanded the removal of certain news items or the suppression of specific issues.

Meanwhile, physical violence against journalists in the field also increased. Impunity—or the absence of legal processes for perpetrators of violence against journalists—has allowed the violence to recur. AJI recorded that throughout 2025, police officers were responsible for 21 cases of physical violence against journalists. Cases of violence occurred mainly during demonstrations, when police displayed violence against both protest participants and workers on duty, including medical personnel and journalists.

The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Indonesia recorded 89 cases of violence against journalists and media outlets during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025. This figure is not merely a statistic, but a representation of 89 wounds inflicted on press freedom.

These attacks manifested in various forms, with three main categories dominating:

- Physical Violence: the highest category, with 30 cases.
- Digital Attacks: in second place with 29 cases, indicating a shift of threats into cyberspace.
- Terror and Intimidation: recorded at 22 cases, instilling a sense of fear systematically.

In addition, other forms of attacks that marked this year included reporting bans, damage to work equipment, deletion of journalistic data, weakening legal suits (SLAPP), and self-censorship practices resulting from external pressure.

On the side of perpetrators, the greatest irony is once again revealed. The police were the most frequently identified perpetrators of violence, with a total of 21 cases, followed by the military (TNI) with 6 cases. However, the highest number of cases came from unknown perpetrators, totaling 29 cases, most of which were related to digital attacks and terror. This indicates that attackers are increasingly skilled at hiding behind anonymity.

These threats are not confined to Jakarta alone, but spread across various regions—from Sorong, Ambon, Kendari, Makassar, to Lombok, Medan, Aceh, and Bali. This demonstrates that journalist safety is an urgent national issue.

A. The Turmoil in August 2025

The peak of violence escalation occurred during the large wave of demonstrations at the end of August 2025. As thousands of students, workers, and civilians took to the streets to protest government policies, journalists covering the events became targets amid the clashes. AJI recorded at least 8 cases of violence occurring during that period alone.

In Jakarta, the demonstration in front of the House of Representatives (DPR) on 28 August ended in chaos. Clashes spread onto the toll roads and railway lines. A tragic incident occurred when a police armored vehicle struck and killed an online motorcycle taxi driver, Affan Kurniawan. The incident, captured on video, further fueled public outrage.

Amid this situation, journalists attempting to document the facts faced intimidation, confiscation of equipment, and physical violence by authorities. Similar patterns occurred in Medan, Surabaya, Semarang, Denpasar, and other cities, where journalists recording police brutality became targets themselves.

B. Notable Cases of Attacks on the Press

Amid the wave of assaults, AJI, together with the Journalists' Safety Committee (KKJ) and the Press Legal Aid Institute (LBH Pers), continued their advocacy efforts. Several notable cases became important markers of the need for resistance and solidarity.

Civil-Law Criminalization: The Agriculture Minister's Lawsuit Against Tempo

The Minister of Agriculture, Amran Sulaiman, filed a civil lawsuit seeking Rp200 billion against Tempo over a news poster from the 16 May 2025 edition. The lawsuit was pursued even though Tempo had complied with all recommendations from the Press Council, including changing the poster headline and issuing an apology. This move clearly represents an attempt to silence the press through legal means.

Through strong advocacy, including solidarity actions in front of the South Jakarta District Court, the panel of judges on 17 November 2025 ultimately accepted Tempo's objection and dismissed the lawsuit. This victory marked an important precedent that press disputes should be resolved through the mechanism of the Press Law, not through general courts. However, the struggle is not over yet, as Minister Amran Sulaiman is currently appealing, and the legal process is ongoing.

Discriminatory Legal Process in the Death of a Journalist in Karo

This tragic case occurred in 2024. The home of Rico Sempurna Pasaribu, a journalist for Tribrata TV, in Karo Regency, North Sumatra, was set on fire on 27 June 2024. The arson killed Rico, along with his wife, child, and grandchild.

Investigations by AJI and KKJ found strong evidence that the attack followed the victim's persistent reporting on illegal gambling practices in the area. This case serves as a grim reminder that journalistic work in Indonesia can still be a matter of life and death.

After significant public pressure, the police uncovered and arrested three perpetrators who carried out the arson. They were subsequently tried and sentenced in 2025. Bebas Ginting alias Bulang (62) and Yunus Syahputra Tanjung (37) were sentenced to life imprisonment, while Rudi Apri Sembiring (37) received a 20-year prison sentence from the panel of judges at the Kabanjahe District Court on Thursday, 27 March 2025. They appealed, but the North Sumatra High Court upheld the life sentences for all three.

Justice remains elusive, as the mastermind behind the murder is still at large. Investigations by AJI and KKJ North Sumatra concluded that there is strong evidence indicating the mastermind is an Indonesian Army (TNI AD) officer with the initials HB, who has been reported to the Military Police (Pomdam I/Bukit Barisan). The name of this army officer was also mentioned by witnesses in court as having close ties to Bulang. However, the legal process remains unresolved and has made no progress.

Terror against Tempo Journalist

On 19 March 2025, Tempo's newsroom received a package containing an earless pig's head. The package was delivered by a courier wearing the uniform of a delivery app. It was addressed to Francisca Christy Rosana, a political desk journalist and host of the podcast Bocor Alus Politik.

On 21 March, Tempo's editor-in-chief, Setri Yasra, went to the National Police Headquarters (Mabes Polri) to report the case and hand over the package as evidence. The following day (22 March), a suspicious cardboard box was found in Tempo's parking area. Upon inspection, it contained six dead rats with their heads cut off, neatly arranged.

Although the National Police Headquarters claimed to have formed a team to investigate the perpetrators and determine their motives, the case has yet to be solved.

Recurring Intimidation by Military Officers

Throughout 2025, the arrogance of uniformed officers has become a recurring pattern. Two cases in Aceh demonstrate how vulnerable journalists are when facing authorities who are intolerant of criticism.

- The case of Davi Abdullah (Kompas TV Aceh): While covering disaster response at Sultan Iskandar Muda Air Force Base on 11 December, Davi was intimidated by Territorial Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Iskandar Muda Regional Military Command, Colonel Inf Fransisco. His phone was confiscated, and two video files from his coverage were forcibly deleted, accompanied by threats and insults claiming that the air base was "his territory."

- The case of Muhammad Fazil (AJI Lhokseumawe): While covering a peaceful protest in North Aceh on 25 December, Fazil, who was recording alleged violence by officers, was approached by a military officer, Chief Soldier Junaidi. His phone was forcibly seized and damaged. The officer also threatened to throw away the device.

These two incidents are clear evidence of abuse of power and the officers' disregard for the Press Law. This is not merely a disciplinary violation, but a criminal act of obstructing journalistic work.

An Emergency of Press – Silencing amid Disasters

One of the most worrying trends at the end of the year was the systematic attempt to restrict information related to disaster coverage in Sumatra. When the public urgently needed accurate information, the state was allegedly intervening. The pattern was clear: intimidation of journalists covering international aid, deletion of reports in major media outlets, and the suspension of live broadcasts from disaster sites.

These actions constitute layered violations:

- Violation of Press Freedom (Articles 8 and 18 of the Press Law): obstructing journalists from reporting facts.
- Violation of the Public's Right to Information (Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution): endangering public safety by hiding the real situation.
- Turning the State into a Producer of Disinformation: When factual reporting is silenced, a single official narrative that may be incorrect is allowed to remain unchallenged.

C. Strengthening Protection in Regions

Amid increasing threats, the struggle to protect journalists can no longer be centered solely in the capital. The year 2025 became an important milestone for AJI Indonesia to strengthen protection foundations at the local level. Through the Safe Journalism Program supported by the Tifa Foundation, AJI, together with the Journalists' Safety Committee (KKJ), actively promoted the establishment of new protective strongholds in regions prone to violence.

This effort was not merely training but an integrated movement to build resilience, align understanding, and formulate joint advocacy strategies. The focus was on holistic safety that includes physical, psychosocial, and digital security.

The Establishment of KKJ in Central Sulawesi

Central Sulawesi, particularly the city of Palu, became one of the main areas of focus for organizing efforts this year. Violence against journalists in this region has become a real and ongoing threat, with patterns of abuse continuously repeating.

Reports from the Advocacy Division of AJI Palu show that intimidation, terror, and restrictions on coverage seem to receive implicit legitimacy because the perpetrators are often members of state apparatus such as the police, military, and public order officials (Satpol PP).

In response to these challenges, AJI Palu, together with the Journalists' Safety Committee (KKJ), organized a series of activities in Palu, including Holistic Safety Training, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and culminating in the launch of the Central Sulawesi Journalists' Safety Committee (KKJ).

This KKJ was officially established through a joint initiative by AJI, PWI, IJTI, AMSI, and PFI, with involvement from advocates from Jatam Sulteng, LBH-APIK, and LPSHAM.

The Declaration of KKJ in Southeast Sulawesi

The alarm bells rang loudly from Southeast Sulawesi. Data from the Advocacy Division of AJI Indonesia shows that Southeast Sulawesi has recorded the highest number of violence cases against journalists in the Sulawesi region over the past three years.

In response to this safety emergency, AJI Kendari, together with KKJ, organized similar activities in Kendari on 24–25 October 2025, culminating in the declaration of the Southeast Sulawesi Journalists' Safety Committee (KKJ Sulawesi Tenggara). This declaration was supported by the Safe Journalism Program from the Tifa Foundation. The membership of KKJ Southeast Sulawesi consists of AJI Kendari, IJTI Southeast Sulawesi, AMSI Southeast Sulawesi, PusPAHAM Southeast Sulawesi, and the Southeast Sulawesi Advocates Network.

D. Digital Attacks on The Rise

AJI Indonesia's Advocacy and Internet Divisions recorded the number of digital incidents or attacks up to December 2025 as the highest in the past 12 years. The total number of incidents or attacks reached 29 cases.

Table 1. Cases and Reports of Digital Attacks Against Journalists and Media

Year	Number of Cases/Reports	Types of Attack	Notes
2020	7 cases	Doxing, DDoS	
2021	5 cases	DDoS, Hacking	
2022	15 cases	Hacking, DDoS, and reports of community guideline violations	The recording of hacking cases involving current and former Narasi editorial staff covers 37 individuals, but they are grouped as a single case.
2023	16 cases	Hacking, DDoS, News website defacement, Social media and WhatsApp account takeover, Media/news website suspension, Social media account suspension, Doxing	
2024	10 cases	Social media account suspension by platforms, email hacking, WhatsApp hacking, doxing, phishing	
2025	29 cases	Social media account suspension by platforms, hacking, doxing, DDoS, impersonation, ransomware, fictitious orders	The highest surge in digital incidents/ attacks in 12 years

The various digital attacks recorded in 2025 show that journalistic work remains highly vulnerable.

The dominant type of attack in 2025 was DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) targeting online media, which prevented media managers from accessing their CMS and stopped the public from accessing information from the affected outlets.

Another attack that requires attention is the suspension of media social media accounts by platforms. Such attacks can be carried out by parties unhappy with media coverage by submitting community guideline violation reports to digital platforms.

One emerging type of attack is the appearance of fictitious orders at two media offices in Batam and Tanjungpinang. These fake order attacks not only harm the targeted media outlets but also affect online motorcycle taxi drivers.

Digital Attacks against Journalists

Specifically targeting journalists, AJI recorded at least seven journalists as victims of digital attacks during 2025.

The attacks were as follows:

1. Impersonation of journalists on the Facebook platform, with narratives claiming that the journalists demanded money in the context of reporting on illegal gold mining in Gorontalo (2 journalists).
2. Doxxing of a Tempo journalist who is also the host of the podcast Bocor Alus Politik, linked to the pig head terror case at the Tempo office.
3. Doxxing of a journalist covering a land-use dispute in Bandung.
4. Doxxing of a fact-checking journalist related to debunking content about COVID-19 vaccines.
5. Doxxing of a member of AJI Semarang, associated with a framing that accused them of being a provocateur during mass protests in Salatiga.
6. Hacking of the WhatsApp account of the editor-in-chief of Konde.co, resulting in the account spreading an .apk-based file.

AJI's Internet Division collected and provided a brief presentation on digital attack cases throughout 2025 in a separate document. This documentation shows DDoS attacks on five media portals and an attempt to take over the CMS of one media portal. Full documentation is available on this link: <https://bit.ly/serangandigital2025>.

The most common types of digital attacks were social media account and CMS takeovers (6 cases), suspension of social media accounts by platforms (4 cases), doxxing (4 cases), and impersonation (2 cases).

Mitigation and Collaboration

This year, mitigation efforts against digital attacks were raised to a higher level through the mapping of personal and institutional security risks, as well as updating advocacy and case handling based on simulations.

AJI's latest research, together with IMS and PR2Media, recommends the need for security SOPs and digital security audits for media companies and journalists to enhance mitigation and reduce the negative impacts of attacks—whether physical, legal, or psychosocial.

AJI Indonesia is part of the Rapid Response Team (TRACE), a collective of individuals and organizations working in digital security. This coalition provides support to high-risk groups, including journalists, activists, media outlets, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders.

AJI Indonesia's Internet Division also participated in drafting the Digital Security Audit Guide for Media Companies together with SAFENet. The Internet Division also collaborated with the Koalisi Bocor Data in the case of the Temporary National Data Center (PDNS), together with SAFENet, LBH Pers, and a network of public lawyers, to file a lawsuit against the state. The trial process is currently in the early examination stage at the court.

On the issue of content moderation, AJI joined the Koalisi Damai, a coalition of 16 civil society organizations. Throughout 2025, this coalition actively provided input and critical feedback on several content regulations, both from the government and digital platforms.

E. Press Freedom in Regions

AJI believes that defending press freedom and protecting journalists can no longer be done exclusively at the national level. The challenges faced by Indonesian journalists—from the media business model crisis and political pressure to digital repression—resonate in many other countries in Southeast Asia and around the world, as shown by various international studies on media, press freedom, and journalist safety.

AJI Indonesia's International and Inter-Institutional Relations Division has expanded collaboration, broadened influence, and strengthened communication with professional organizations in the region, as well as institutions that promote freedom of expression, journalist protection, and media sustainability. These efforts include building solidarity networks, knowledge exchange, joint advocacy, and cross-border collaborative programs aimed at ensuring journalists are not alone in facing pressure, and that press freedom remains upheld as a core pillar of democracy—in Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and globally.

AJI Indonesia has strengthened communication and organizational networks in Southeast Asia through PFMSea (Press Freedom Monitoring South East Asia). PFMSea, which was declared in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, already has networks in six Southeast Asian countries. This network advocates for press freedom that is “not okay” in those countries. From available data, cases of violence against journalists in Southeast Asia from 2022 to 2025 have been reported most frequently in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. It is possible that many cases also occurred in Myanmar, Vietnam, and Laos, but they could not be reported.

Through its International and Inter-Institutional Relations Division, AJI Indonesia succeeded in securing Nany Afrida (Chairperson of AJI Indonesia) as President of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Asia-Pacific region for the 2025–2028 term. The IFJ is a journalists' organization headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. With the election of the IFJ Asia-Pacific President, it is hoped that Indonesia's voice on press freedom and journalists' unions will be more amplified.

Chapter 3

Mass Layoffs in the Absence of the State

The state of industrial relations for media workers in 2025 remained bleak, much like in previous years. It can even be described as a grim year, with a growing number of layoffs and terminations. Industrial disputes have become a latent problem that never seems to end, and instead, the number of victims keeps rising. Media companies, which have served as a system watchdog and whose products are part of democracy's pillars, are instead treating their workers arbitrarily.

As in previous years, layoffs without entitlements and the failure to fulfill normative rights continue. Companies often use intimidating tactics against workers who fight for their rights.

AJI Indonesia's records show that the total number of layoff victims from 2024 to 2025 continued to increase, reaching 922 people, consisting of 373 people in 2024 and 549 people in 2025.

Some cases of industrial relations violations by media companies, including unilateral layoffs, are reported directly to AJI Indonesia's Labor Division. Workers can report their cases through the following link: <https://advokasi.aji.or.id/kasus-ketenagakerjaan-jurnalis>.

Tabel 1: Data Kasus PHK/Sengketa Ketenagakerjaan tahun 2024

No	Media	Number of Layoffs	Employment Status (PKWT, PKWTT, Outsourcing, etc.)	Company Name	Layoff Time
1	CNN Indonesia	80	N/A	PT Trans News Corp	February 2024
2	Gatra	102*	Permanent (PKWTT)	PT Era Media Informasi	Juli 2024
3	CNN Indonesia	20	Permanent	PT Trans News Corp	Agustus 2024
4	Jawa Pos	1	Temporary (PKWT)	Jawa Pos	August 2024
5	Tribun Lampung	3	Temporary	Tribun Lampung	August 2024
6	ANTV	57	N/A	PT Cakrawala Andalas Televisi	December 2024
7	Metro TV	50	Permanent	Metro TV	2024
8	Republika	60	N/A	PT Republika Media Mandiri	May 2024

The total number of workers being laid off: 373 workers

Note: The symbol * shows the total number of layoffs in regions and nationwide

Tabel 2: Data Kasus PHK/Sengketa Ketenagakerjaan tahun 2025

No	Media	Number of Layoffs	Employment Status (PKWT, PKWTT, Outsourcing, etc.)	Company Name	Layoff Time
1	Detik.com	100	Permanent	Detik.com	March 2025
2	Jawa Pos	21*	Permanent	Jawa Pos	March 2025
3	INews Biro Semarang	11	Permanent	MNC Group	May 2025
4	Kompas TV	150	N/A	Kompas TV	May 2025
5	MNC Group (termasuk Biro Semarang)	99	N/A	MNC Group	May 2025
6	Pontianak Pos	20	Permanent	Pontianak Pos	May 2025
7	Jawa Pos	2	Permanent	Jawa Pos	June 2025
8	RTV	45	Permanent	RTV	June 2025
9	CNN Indonesia	10	N/A	PT Trans News Corp	June 2025
10	Inilah.com	20	N/A	PT Indonesian News Center	June 2025
11	TV One	15	Permanent	TV One	July 2025
12	Liputan6	56*	N/A	Liputan 6	2025
The total number of workers being laid off: 549 workers					

Note: The symbol * shows the total number of layoffs in regions and nationwide

Here are some notable labor/employment cases:

1. Radar Selatan (Bengkulu)

The case began when the 2025 Eid Holiday Allowance (THR) was not paid in full. This was followed by the unilateral deduction of workers' salaries. Management justified this by saying the company's financial condition was not good.

When the workers began to question this, it turned out that the company had also fallen behind on contributions to the BPJS Employment program, with the last payment made in January 2025. The company then secretly withdrew the BPJS Employment funds, claiming that the workers had resigned, even though the workers were still being required to work and produce news. When the workers asked for confirmation, the management claimed that the BPJS funds were withdrawn to pay the workers' salaries.

2. BatamTV (Batam)

This case revolves around workers receiving incomplete salaries. Since January 2025, workers' salaries have been paid in installments. Delays continued in the following months, until July 2025, when nine workers submitted a letter to question the delayed and installment-based salary payments.

Instead of meeting with management, the nine workers were threatened with termination or non-renewal of their contracts. Consequently, some workers brought the case to the stage of an industrial relations dispute. The bipartite negotiation process failed to reach an agreement, and by the end of December 2025, the case had entered the tripartite stage involving the workers, the company, and the Batam City Manpower Office.

3. Suara.com (Jakarta and Yogyakarta)

In February 2025, Suara.com management announced efficiency measures across all departments due to a decline in company finances following the implementation of government efficiency policies. The efficiency measures included a change for shift 1 employees who normally started work at 07:00; they were instructed to work from home beginning at 06:00 and only come to the office from 09:00 to 15:00 WIB, while the fourth shift (15:00–00:00) was eliminated. In addition, the company implemented a policy limiting health reimbursements to 70% (previously, health expenses were reimbursed at 100% based on receipts).

In March 2025, management held a meeting to announce salary cuts for all employees. The main message was that the company's finances were experiencing turbulence due to the government's efficiency measures. As a result, salary reductions and travel expense cuts were implemented. Salary cuts ranged from 5% to 30%, based on each employee's performance over the previous three months.

4. Suara Merdeka (Semarang)

Five workers at Suara Merdeka media in Semarang filed a complaint regarding wage deductions that have been ongoing since 2013. The situation peaked during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020–2023), when salaries were cut by 45 percent and have not been restored to date. In fact, the deducted wages are still being repaid in installments with no specified timeframe. Each month, the installment payment is only Rp200,000 from a salary of Rp2,000,000 (after the deduction).

Within a week, they are only employed for two days or two work shifts, due to the company's claim of insufficient funds.

5. PosKota (Jakarta)

On May 21, 2025, journalists were suddenly issued layoff notices via WhatsApp messages from a staff member in Poskota's HRGA department. The termination was unilateral because there was no prior notice, and it was carried out only 10 days before the termination date.

The final month's salary for the affected employees was not paid in full, with only half of the amount due being paid.

6. Kompas.com (Karanganyar)

Workers at PT Kompas Cyber Media (Kompas.com) who work at the branch office in Klodran, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, generally perform work similar to content creators. They do not conduct field reporting; instead, they process information using sources available on the internet. Some of them are employed under contract status, referred to as professional contracts (konpro).

Those with konpro status are paid below the Karanganyar Regency Minimum Wage (UMK) for 2025, which is Rp2,437,110. The workers only receive a take-home pay (THP) of Rp2,400,000. In addition, basic worker rights are not provided, such as compensation pay (for contract workers), annual leave, maternity leave, marriage leave, or menstrual leave. Konpro workers also do not receive THR or BPJS Employment and Health insurance benefits.

The konpro workers raised complaints to the company regarding leave. As a result, they were granted 6 days of leave within 12 months. However, other types of leave, such as maternity leave, were still not provided.

7. Legal Victory of CNN Indonesia Workers

In 2025, CNN Indonesia workers who are members of the SPCI union (Solidaritas Pekerja CNN Indonesia) achieved a legal victory in an industrial relations case against management.

The workers filed lawsuits at two Industrial Relations Courts (PHI), in Jakarta and Surabaya. In mid-2025, the PHI Jakarta ruling (concerning wage deductions and layoffs) and the PHI Surabaya ruling (also concerning wage deductions and layoffs) both ruled in favor of SPCI.

CNN Indonesia management filed an appeal (cassation). In August 2025, the Supreme Court rejected the cassation regarding wage deductions in Surabaya. Then, in early December 2025, the Supreme Court also rejected the cassation concerning wage deductions and layoffs, thereby upholding the PHI decision. As a result, CNN Indonesia management was required to pay the remaining deducted wages and severance pay to the workers who are members of SPCI.

This case was triggered by unilateral wage deductions imposed by CNN Indonesia management at the beginning of 2024. Some CNN Indonesia workers questioned the wage cuts and formed a labor union, SPCI (Solidaritas Pekerja CNN Indonesia), in August 2024. The workers who joined SPCI were then unilaterally laid off. This action was considered union-busting. Consequently, SPCI workers filed a lawsuit with the Industrial Relations Court.

Chapter 4

Ethical Violations and Sexual Violence Prevention in Media Organizations

AJI Indonesia's Education, Ethics, and Profession division recorded that the recurring issue of journalistic ethics violations remained a serious concern throughout 2025. As in previous years, the industry's chronic problems—self-censorship and the breakdown of the firewall between editorial and business—continued to tarnish the face of journalism.

Several media outlets have close business ties or receive substantial advertising from companies that damage the environment. For the sake of advertising revenue, the firewall is neglected, resulting in the disappearance of critical reporting on those companies.

Some media outlets even openly bow to power. Editorial policies exist to avoid critical coverage of certain government institutions or, in some cases, the government as a whole. These media outlets then only report positive stories while ignoring negative facts.

There are even media companies that serve as a melodious mouthpiece for government programs such as Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) and the Red and White Cooperatives. Such media report government programs as if they are flawless, without providing space for oversight and criticism.

Meanwhile, journalists' professionalism needs continuous sharpening. According to the Press Council's records, there were 1,166 complaints related to news coverage in 2025. The majority of complaints concerned lack of balance (covering both sides), clickbait headlines, use of photos without permission, and hate speech. The high number of complaints indicates that journalists' professionalism still needs to be improved.

AJI Indonesia's Education division runs programs to enhance professional capacity for AJI members by offering monthly online journalism classes. The materials provided address common issues that arise during reporting, from how to conduct interviews and write news leads to advanced topics such as constructive journalism.

In addition to member-only journalism classes, AJI Indonesia also conducts various training programs to improve journalists' capacity and professionalism. These activities are open to all journalists, including AJI members, subject to selection and consideration for equitable distribution across regions.

Some of the training programs and scholarships held in 2025 include: investigative reporting for journalists in Sulawesi, public awareness training for immunization, digital security training, training on reporting business and human rights issues, and several other programs.

A. Journalist Competency Test

The budget efficiency policy implemented by President Prabowo has affected funding for the Press Council's Journalist Competency Test (UKJ). The number of UKJ participants funded by the Press Council dropped sharply, from around 1,500 participants in 2024 to only about 250 participants in 2025. It has also been reported that in 2026, there will be no state budget support at all for the Journalist Competency Test.

In fact, the UKJ is a key agenda item of the press community to address issues of professionalism. The competency test is one of the instruments used to improve journalists' adherence to the journalistic code of ethics.

AJI Indonesia, as one of the constituents of the Press Council, did not give in to political pressure arising from the budget policies of President Prabowo's administration. In addition to participating in UKJ programs organized by the Press Council, AJI also organized four independent Journalist Competency Tests. The UKJ, in cooperation with the Press Council, was held twice in 2025, in May and December. Meanwhile, the four independent UKJs were conducted by AJI Jember (June 2025), AJI Bengkulu (July 2025), AJI Yogyakarta (November 2025), and AJI Batam (December 2025).

B. SOP on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence Against Journalists

In 2025, AJI Indonesia's Gender, Children, and Marginalized Groups division, together with the Anti-Sexual Violence Task Force, focused on developing policies to protect victims and witnesses of sexual violence within the journalism sector. AJI views such protection as an integral part of the press institution's commitment to gender justice.

In August 2025, with the support of International Media Support (IMS) and the European Union, AJI Indonesia produced a policy paper on mechanisms for protecting reporters of sexual violence in mass media. The policy paper can be accessed at:

<https://aji.or.id/data/kertas-kebijakan-mekanisme-perlindungan-pelapor-kekerasan-seksual-di-media-massa>

The policy paper aims to encourage media companies to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the prevention and handling of sexual violence against journalists. These SOPs are intended to serve as a foundation that provides clarity and legal certainty for journalists who become victims of sexual violence.

AJI identified several critical issues, particularly the weak protection for reporters and victims of sexual violence within media organizations. This document forms part of a broader effort to create a safe working ecosystem free from sexual violence, while strengthening fair, transparent, and victim-centered mechanisms for handling cases.

The policy paper emphasizes that reporting sexual violence is not an act of insubordination, but rather an essential step toward creating a more just and equitable workplace. AJI Indonesia urges all stakeholders in the media industry not to neglect reporters and victims, and to handle cases thoroughly in ways that deliver justice for victims. Protecting the reporters is part of the press institution's commitment to gender justice and the fulfillment of human rights principles.

From September to November 2025, AJI Indonesia, in collaboration with IMS and the European Union, supported media organizations in developing SOPs for the prevention and handling of sexual violence. A total of 40 media outlets registered to participate in the SOP development process.

AJI's team selected and designated six media organizations to receive direct assistance in drafting their SOPs: The Conversation Indonesia, Harian Jogja, Tribun Jambi, Harian Mercusuar, Inside Lombok, and Koreksi.org.

<https://aji.or.id/informasi/rekrutmen-terbuka-fellowship-penyusunan-sop-kekerasan-seksual-di-media>

In addition, AJI has actively promoted improvements in the quality of news coverage and public awareness regarding sexual violence. One such effort was its involvement in the 2025 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. The campaign was held simultaneously worldwide from 25 November to 10 December. AJI Indonesia also collaborated with the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) to organize a workshop and a journalistic works competition on the theme of femicide. These activities aimed to enhance journalists' understanding of how to report on the most extreme forms of violence against women using ethical standards and a victim-centered perspective.

C. Unfair Media Coverage on Gender and Sexual Minorities

AJI has expressed serious concern over unfair media coverage of gender and sexual minorities. Since 2016 to the present, attacks against LGBTIQ minorities have continued to intensify. LGBTIQ-phobia that leads to discrimination against LGBTIQ communities through mass media reporting remains prevalent. AJI urges media outlets to avoid discriminatory reporting on individuals with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, as such coverage only deepens stigma and hatred.

At both the beginning and the end of the year, AJI's Gender Division identified media coverage that violated the Journalistic Code of Ethics. In January, AJI monitored dozens of online media outlets reporting on the divorce of singer Sherina Munaf and her husband, Baskara Mahendra. These opinion-based reports linked Sherina's divorce to her posts on Twitter (X) expressing support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) communities. Other reports also speculated about the sexual orientation of Sherina and Baskara—matters that are private in nature and have no relevance to the public interest.

Reporting that links to sexual orientation fails to respect the diversity of gender identities and ignores the importance of inclusivity toward gender-based minority groups. Such coverage further entrenches stigma against gender and sexual minorities, ultimately leading to discriminatory treatment.

<https://aji.or.id/informasi/berita-perceraian-sherina-singgung-lgbt-aji-hentikan-sensasionalisme-dan-pengabaian-kode>

From the dozens of media reports monitored, there was a clear tendency to blur the line between opinion and fact. Media outlets also failed to seek confirmation from relevant sources, instead relying on content taken from social media. In some cases, reports were based solely on comments from anonymous netizens whose credibility cannot be justified under journalistic ethics.

In November, AJI monitored several online media reports concerning the viral case of Sister Hong Lombok. The coverage tended to be discriminatory toward individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Labeling a person's gender identity as a "deviation" is not supported by scientific evidence and disregards universal human rights principles. The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirm that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms without distinction, including based on sex or other status.

AJI Indonesia views such reporting as having the potential to increase the threat of gender-based violence and online gender-based violence (KBGO) against LGBTIQ communities in Indonesia. This coverage also ignores the Guidelines on Reporting Diversity Issues issued by the Press Council.

Some media outlets used source quotations and headlines that contained hate narratives, sensationalism, clickbait, bombastic wording, and attacks against minority groups based on gender identity. In addition, the reporting discussed the sexual orientation of Sister Hong Lombok, which should remain a private matter and is unrelated to the public interest.

See the following link:

<https://aji.or.id/informasi/aji-desak-media-massa-tidak-diskriminatif-terhadap-minoritas-gender-dan-seksual-di-lombok>

D. Child-Related Issues and the Climate Crisis

AJI, in collaboration with UNICEF Indonesia, organized a series of workshops, training sessions, fellowships, and an award program for outstanding journalistic works on the theme of children and the climate crisis. The 2025 theme emphasized that the climate crisis is not merely an environmental issue, but a direct threat to children's rights, including their rights to health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, and protection.

The AJI-UNICEF Awards have been held for 10 years, having been launched in 2015 to nurture and recognize journalists who are committed to covering issues affecting children in an ethical, accurate, and integrity-driven manner.

The best journalistic works on children were subsequently compiled into a book. This publication documents the conditions of Indonesian children amid the climate crisis and the rise in violence. Through in-depth reporting, journalists present analysis and real-life stories that are expected to raise awareness among a wider audience. The book can be accessed at the following link:

<https://aji.or.id/data/dampak-krisis-iklim-hingga-kekerasan-pada-anak-kompilasi-karya-jurnalistik-terbaik-tentang>

