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FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

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Norway

[Norway](#)[Freedom of the Press 2013](#)

Freedom of expression, media freedom, and the right to access government information are guaranteed under Article 100 of Norway's constitution. There are laws that prohibit hateful expression, but no related court cases were reported during 2012. In 2011, several media outlets brought a joint suit against the government in order to gain access to newly surfaced documents and recordings related to a famous 1985 espionage case against Norwegian diplomat Arne Treholt. The Norwegian Police Security Service had refused to release the documents, citing national security concerns. The case went to the Supreme Court, with a final ruling expected in 2013.

Threats against journalists and media outlets are rare. In July 2010, three Muslim immigrants were arrested in Norway for planning to attack the Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten*, which in 2005 had published cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that sparked a controversy across Europe and the Muslim world. Their trial began in November 2011, and in January 2012 two of the men were convicted on terrorism charges and sentenced to seven years and three and a half years in

prison, respectively. An appeals court upheld the sentences in September.

The public broadcaster NRK, financed by license fees, is dominant in both radio and television, but there is considerable competition from private broadcasters such as the television station TV2. The public-access television channel Frikanalen lost its government funding in 2012 on the grounds that the internet provided many readily available alternatives. Frikanalen had been launched in 2008 as a channel for nonprofit organizations, partly as a response to a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that a government ban on political commercials, designed to ensure equal access to the media for all electoral candidates regardless of varying resources, violated the freedom of expression clause in the European Convention on Human Rights.

Norway has one of the highest newspaper readership rates in the world, with more than 200 newspapers that express a diversity of opinions. Media concentration is a concern, with three major companies dominating the print sector. Many of the leading papers, including *VG*, *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, and *Fædrelandsvennen*, are owned by Schibsted Norge. Competition is still strong, even though the global economic downturn has hurt the advertising market. The government does not restrict use of the internet, which is accessed by nearly 95 percent of the population.

2013 SCORES

PRESS STATUS

Free

PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

10

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3

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