



"Global declines in press freedom" persisted last year, with setbacks highlighted in Israel, Italy, Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere across the world, an annual survey said Friday.

"This marked the seventh straight year of overall deterioration. Improvements in a small number of countries -- including bright spots in parts of South Asia and Africa -- were overshadowed by a continued, relentless assault on independent news media by a wide range of actions, in both authoritarian states and countries with very open media environments."

Israel -- once the only country to be consistently rated free by the group in the Middle East and North Africa -- was ranked as "partly free" because of the Gaza conflict.

The report cited "increased travel restrictions on both Israeli and foreign reporters; official attempts to influence media coverage of the conflict within Israel; and greater self-censorship and biased reporting, particularly during the outbreak of open war in late December."

[More...](#)