



Radio Free Asia



Bringing Free Press to
Closed Societies



An RFA Khmer Service reporter interviews Cambodian opposition party supporters at a post-election demonstration rally in Siem Reap in 2013.

Journalism with a Mission

Radio Free Asia (RFA) is a private, nonprofit, multimedia news corporation. At RFA, we bring award-winning, domestic journalism and uncensored content to people in six Asian countries that restrict free speech, freedom of the press, and access to reliable information beyond their borders. We also provide educational and cultural programming, as well as forums for audiences to engage in open dialogue and freely express opinions.

Working in some of the world's harshest media environments, RFA utilizes on-the-ground reporters and "stringers," as well as vast networks of cultivated in-country sources, citizen journalists, and eyewitnesses who provide leads, tips, images, and video—often at great personal risk—to ensure that their fellow countrymen and women get accurate, timely news and information about what's happening in their communities and neighborhoods.

RFA's nine language services are:

- Cantonese
- Khmer (Cambodia)
- Korean
- Lao
- Mandarin
- Burmese (Myanmar)
- Tibetan
- Uyghur
- Vietnamese



An RFA Myanmar Service journalist reports on the human loss and devastation from overnight arson attacks on a Rohingya village in Myanmar's Rakhine region in 2012. RFA closely covers ethnic tensions and the persecution of minorities in its six broadcast countries.

Driving the News Cycle

RFA reports on in-country developments and local issues and events that are censored or ignored by state-controlled media and the “official” narratives of authoritarian regimes. RFA journalists break stories that often serve as a starting point for audiences to better understand larger trends and events. This coverage often drives conversation and effects change.

RFA impacts news coverage through ongoing stories on topics such as:

- [Human Trafficking \(pg. 9\)](#)
- [Human Rights and the Rule of Law \(pg. 11\)](#)
- [Government Corruption \(pg. 13\)](#)
- [Environmental Issues \(pg. 15\)](#)
- [Religious Persecution \(pg. 17\)](#)



A Trusted, Award-Winning Source

Major international and regional media outlets often cite RFA's reporting, and international professional organizations frequently honor RFA for excellence in journalism. Asian community and opinion leaders, rights activists, and legal advocates value RFA as a resource for trustworthy information and a forum for independent voices.

RFA has won numerous awards, as sponsored by:

- American Women in Radio & Television
- Amnesty International
- The Association of International Broadcasters
- The Hong Kong Journalists Association
- The International Women's Foundation
- The New York Festivals
- The Radio Television Digital News Association
- The Society of Professional Journalists

For more details, visit: rfa.org/about

“RFA not only kept me in touch with news, views, and information from all over the world, it made sure that I was constantly aware of events, thoughts, and personalities relevant to the movement for democracy in Burma. This is the particular invaluable contribution that a station like RFA, dedicated to the strengthening of democratic values and freedoms all over the world, has to make.” —Aung San Suu Kyi



Above is an illustration from our e-book *It's not OK*, which profiles Asia's unsung heroines fighting for human rights in countries under authoritarian rule. At RFA, we regularly publish multimedia e-books, the fastest-growing digital format, in English and our broadcast languages.

Connecting Digitally

Broadcasting via radio (FM, short and medium wave, and satellite) and television (cable and satellite), and posting multimedia content on 10 websites, RFA uses all available platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media accessible within RFA's broadcast countries, to connect with and engage our audiences.

Digital products include:

- **Mobile apps and sites:** Supplying content for smartphone users.
Available in 10 languages for Apple and Android devices
- **E-books:** Presenting stories in multimedia, long-form narrative.
For more information, go to: rfa.org/english/bookshelf
- **Multimedia video series:** Exploring a range of topics in short documentaries.
For more information, go to: rfa.org/english/video

Despite online censorship and blocking, RFA's digital audience grows. For example, viewership of RFA Vietnamese's YouTube videos has increased annually since the channel's launch in 2010 by more than 60%. The majority of the channel's subscribers are in Vietnam.



Human Trafficking

In Asia, millions of vulnerable men, women, and children are susceptible to becoming the victims of human trafficking. But state-controlled press often downplays the dangers and reality. Our reporters investigate modern slavery in all of RFA's broadcast countries. Our online video series "An Invisible World" examines child soldier recruitment in Myanmar, China's "black factories," exploitation in the Thai fishing industry, the plight of Rohingya refugees, North Korean women sold as brides, and other trafficking cases. In 2012, the series won a Hong Kong Human Rights Press Award.

"I want everyone to know about this. I want them to be cautious so that they will not experience such a terrible life as I did."

—Trafficking survivor Prum Vannak speaking in an RFA interview. Vannak was sold onto a Thai fishing boat and endured three years working in miserable conditions before escaping.



Our multimedia project "Breaking Free" collects stories of trafficked individuals who managed to escape their captors. Using animation, graphics, short documentaries, and charts, the project seeks to inform and educate audiences about this widespread problem in Asia.



Human Rights and the Rule of Law

In Asian countries under authoritarian rule, officials often seek to silence community activists, legal advocates, and human rights lawyers who stand up for the “voiceless.” Through threats, detention, and even death, authorities use whatever means they deem necessary to stamp out dissent. While official media ignore these cases, our journalists document them. Through RFA’s reports, audiences get the truth about the ongoing crack-down on Chinese legal professionals, the intimidation of jailed activists’ spouses and family members, the arbitrary detentions of netizens, a Lao civil society activist’s disappearance, arrests of journalists, and the harsh conditions at North Korean labor camps as related by survivors, among other stories. RFA also reports on reformers—those who risk punishment to campaign for greater legal protections—as well as on protests and demonstrations calling for greater rights such as Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement in 2014.

RFA was among the first to report on the case of prominent jailed Vietnamese blogger Nguyen Van Hai, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2012. After our early coverage of his imprisonment, an international outcry ensued. In October 2014, authorities released Hai and sent him to the United States.



“I first learned about Hong Kong’s Occupy Central Movement through shortwave broadcasting by Radio Free Asia. I am thrilled for the people of Hong Kong who bravely fight for democracy and freedom.” — Caller from Huizhou, China (October 2014)



Government Corruption

RFA exposes numerous cases of large- and small-scale corruption and the high cost to citizens and their communities throughout Asia. Because accountability is lacking in places without a free press, RFA brings these incidents and their consequences to light. Bribery, the misuse of public funds to support officials' and their families' lavish lifestyles, indiscriminate confiscation of public and private land and property for personal gain, and the seizing of natural resources are among the many abuses of power uncovered by our investigative journalism.

“RFA covers deforestation, corruption, and land violation news. These issues, which domestic radio stations are frightened to broadcast, are vital to know for me and my country.”

—Message from RFA listener in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

An RFA Khmer cameraman vies for the best shot amid protesting garment workers at a post-election demonstration against Cambodia's ruling party in 2014 in Phnom Penh.



Environmental Issues

Widespread environmental degradation and pollution have had detrimental effects on people's health, livelihoods, and well-being throughout our broadcast region. With growing concerns over chemical blasts at plants in China, the dumping of industrial waste into freshwater lakes and rivers, the damming of major waterways such as the Mekong River, and rampant deforestation in Southeast Asia, RFA investigates the causes and effects of these and other environmental problems.

In June 2010, RFA Cantonese first reported on radioactive substances leaking at the Daya Bay nuclear power plant in the Chinese province of Guangdong. The story caused a media firestorm that led to the implementation of new reporting standards for the facility. RFA's follow-up series "A Citizenry Left in the Dark: China's Nuclear Power Industry" won a Sigma Delta Chi award from the Society of Professional Journalists in 2015.

Our investigative series "Disappearing River" relied on undercover journalism to expose the pollution of China's Dong River, a source of drinking water for 50 million people. After it aired, the Chinese government put 32 polluting factories on notice. The exposé won an award from the Society of Environmental Journalists.



Religious Persecution

Seeking the latest news on the tearing down of hundreds of crosses at Christian churches in Eastern China, religious restrictions imposed on Muslim Uyghurs during Ramadan, or the forced evictions of Vietnamese Catholic parishioners, people in Asia turn to RFA for accurate coverage of religious persecution across the continent. This includes reporting on the arrests of Tibetans displaying the Dalai Lama's image, harassment of Lao Christian families practicing their faith, the imprisonment of Christians in North Korea, and discriminatory laws in Myanmar that target minority Muslims.

In 2015, RFA's Tibetan Service provided extensive coverage of worldwide celebrations marking the 80th birthday of the Dalai Lama, including among Tibetans in China who gathered at monasteries in defiance of Beijing's celebration ban.

"I listen to Radio Free Asia programs every day along with my breakfast." — The Dalai Lama

“My feeling when listening to RFA was
as if I saw a lighthouse of hope.”

—A North Korean defector

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Radio Free Asia

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COVER: Tibetan monks in India listen to a Radio Free Asia report in March 2008 about a protest against the Beijing Olympics.
(Credit: The Associated Press)