



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Intensified Attacks, New Defences

Developments in the Fight
to Protect Journalists
and End Impunity

In Focus Series | **World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development**



Published in 2019 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 7, place de Fontenoy, 7523 Paris 07 SP, France

© UNESCO 2019

ISBN 978-92-3-100359-2



This publication is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<http://en.unesco.org/open-access/termsuse-ccbysa-en>).

For the use of any material not clearly identified as belonging to UNESCO, prior permission shall be requested from: publication.copyright@unesco.org or UNESCO Publishing, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP

This study should be cited as follows: UNESCO. 2019. Intensified Attacks, New Defences – Developments in the Fight to Protect Journalists and End Impunity, In-Focus edition of the World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Paris.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization. The same disclaimer applies to commissioned UNESCO publications cited in this study.

Editorial coordination: Saorla McCabe

Research team: Theresa Chorbacher, Mickaela Churchill, Elisa Kirkland, Saorla McCabe

Graphic design, cover design and typeset: Marc James

Cover photo: © Kimberly dela Cruz

p.12 © Cristina Villota Marroquin

p.21 © Radeno Haniel

p.26 © Fred Cifuentes

p.32 © Kajoba Nicholas

p.36 © Alfred Yaghoobzadeh

p.42 © Cengiz Yar

p.43 © Nidal Alwahidi

p.44 © Getty Images

p.48 © Slim Ayadhi

Acknowledgments

UNESCO wishes to thank the peer reviewers of this publication for their insightful comments and suggestions: Michael Pavicic and Evelien Wijkstra (Free Press Unlimited), Olunifesi Suraj (University of Lagos), and Berta De Sancristobal (UNESCO Culture Sector). Thanks to Asako Nozawa (OHCHR) for reviewing the section on the Universal Periodic Review. Acknowledgments are also due to the UNESCO staff that provided inputs during the finalization of the report: Mehdi Benchelah, Andrea Cairola, Oscar Castellanos, and Sylvie Coudray.

This publication was supported by Sweden and the Multi-Donor Programme (MDP) on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists.



Printed in France

Intensified Attacks, New Defences

Developments in the Fight
to Protect Journalists and
End Impunity

In Focus Series | World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



About the In Focus Series

Intensified Attacks, New Defences – Developments in the Fight to Protect Journalists and End Impunity

This In-Focus edition represents follow-up to UNESCO's 36 C/Resolution 53, wherein the Organization's Member States requested UNESCO to monitor the status of press freedom and safety of journalists and to report on the developments in these fields to the Organization's General Conference. In addition to the current In-Focus Report on the safety of journalists, two more Reports – respectively on media and elections, and access to information – are being published in 2019 and reported to the 40th General Conference. The present Study zooms in on a key issue of relevance to UNESCO's mandate on freedom of expression, and it feeds into the Organization's 2019 commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

This Report also serves as a stepping stone towards the next full *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development* edition to be published in 2021. That edition will take further stock of the issues covered herein, and will contextualize the developments in safety within a holistic review of other trends in freedom of expression.

The three In-Focus Reports, and earlier editions of the World Trends Report (including regional editions), can be found at <https://en.unesco.org/world-media-trends>



Access to Information:
A New Promise for Sustainable Development

Access to Information: A New Promise for Sustainable Development

The surge of access to information (ATI) laws reached 126 worldwide by the end of 2019. This Report explores recent developments in regard to the laws and their implementation, covering evolving international standards, models for implementation bodies, and new digital challenges and opportunities. In order to understand the drivers of change, the Report examines trendsetting activities within UNESCO, the Sustainable Development Agenda, the Universal Periodic Review, the Open Government Partnership, and the standard-setting work of regional intergovernmental organizations and national oversight bodies. The research also draws on unique UNESCO surveys and analysis of Voluntary National Reports presented at the United Nation's High-level Political Forum. The research shows how Sustainable Development Goal 16.10 offers a new opportunity for advancing ATI.





Elections and Media in Digital Times



Elections and Media in Digital Times

The increasing digitalization of societies has led to unprecedented opportunities to seek, receive and impart political information and ideas, which are the lifeblood of elections. But there are also growing concerns about the effects on public debate arising from misuse of digital technologies and fragmentation in the communications environment. Political micro-targeting of individual voters is driven by aggregated personal data, which is not always obtained in lawful ways. New digitally-enabled tactics in political funding, campaigning and advertising, are often lacking in transparency. Meanwhile journalists, whose output can empower the electorate, are under increasing attack. It is against this backdrop that this Report identifies recent trends on disinformation, attacks on the safety of journalists, and disruption in election communications. The report lists possible responses in order to safeguard media freedom and integrity while strengthening news reportage on elections in digital times.

Contents

Foreword	6
1. Executive Summary	8
2. Journalists' killings over the past five years (2014-2018): key findings	10
2.1 The death toll in the past five years is close to 500	10
2.2 Fewer killings in the Arab state region compared to previous years	13
2.3 Continuing trend: more journalists killed in countries not experiencing armed conflict	14
2.4 Overwhelming majority of victims are local journalists	14
2.5 Foreign journalists more likely to be killed in conflict areas	15
2.6 TV journalists are under high risk, especially when working in conflict areas	15
3. Member States' responses: status of judicial enquiries on cases of journalists killed from 2006 to 2018	16
3.1 Member States' response rate rises and falls over 2014-2019	18
3.2 Only 12% of cases resolved worldwide	19
3.3 Actions and good practices reported by Member States to promote safety of journalists and to combat impunity	20
4. Global cooperation on safety of journalists	28
4.1 International networks and initiatives to enhance the safety of journalists	28
4.2 Global trend towards the creation of national mechanisms on the safety of journalists	32
5. Taking stock of initiatives to monitor the safety of journalists	34
5.1 Member States reporting on SDG 16.10.1 in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)	34
5.2 Shadow reporting on SDG 16.10.1	35
5.3 UPR recommendations to Member States on the safety of journalists	36
6. Non-fatal attacks against journalists	38
6.1 Prison and exile	38
6.2 Kidnappings and disappearances	40
6.3 Physical violence and torture	41
6.4 Anti-media rhetoric and violence	42
6.5 Psychosocial trauma	43
7. Rising threats to the digital safety of journalists	44
8. Gender dimensions of journalists' safety	49
8.1 Killings of women journalists in the period 2014-2018	50
8.2 Other safety issues faced by women journalists	50
8.3 Online harassment of women journalists	52
8.4 Growing awareness of the specific threats faced by women journalists	53
9. Conclusion	55
Annex A: Mandate of the Director-General and methodology	56
Annex B: Timeline of UN resolutions on safety of journalists adopted since 2014	58
10. Bibliography	62

Foreword

In follow up to the 2017/2018 edition of the “World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development,” and in preparation for the next edition to be published in 2021, UNESCO introduces this In-Focus Report on Safety of Journalists. It is one of three reports published in this series, addressing three thematic areas: Access to information (ATI); Media and Elections; and Safety of Journalists.

UNESCO has long been at the heart of global initiatives to protect journalists. This Report comes against the backdrop of UNESCO’s continued leadership in coordinating the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (2012). Since September 2015, UNESCO contributes to monitoring progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. This incorporates an indicator 16.10.1, by which Member States report on the safety of journalists including through Voluntary National Reviews. Furthermore, the Organization supports the creation of sustainable monitoring mechanisms at national level on journalistic safety and impunity issues.

The safety of journalists and the fight against impunity for crimes committed against them are essential to guaranteeing the fundamental right to freedom of expression, which is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, however, the fundamental work of journalists and media personnel around the globe is shrouded by a climate of increased insecurity and fear.

The Report covers the period 2014-2018, with a number of additional references to significant developments in 2019. It takes stock of trends in journalist killings and other attacks faced by media professionals. It is founded upon the condemnations issued by the Director-General as recorded in the UNESCO observatory of killed journalists, which is based on a mandate conferred in UNESCO General Conference 29 C/ Resolution 29 (1997), as well as information provided by Member States and studies published by international NGOs and academia. Among the key findings, the Report emphasizes the continued trend of impunity for attacks against journalists, and it highlights the increased prevalence of digital threats and harassment online, including those targeting women journalists. It sheds light on new reporting and monitoring initiatives on the safety of journalists, notably within the framework of SDG indicator 16.10.1, and looks at current initiatives as reported by Member States about efforts to prevent, protect against and prosecute crimes against journalists.

This study provides a holistic assessment on the safety of journalists around the world as well as a yearly update on the status of journalist killings, with the aim to encourage multi-stakeholder dialogue on further strengthening the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Identifying and analyzing trends can help propose adequate action-oriented and coalition-based responses.

I strongly commend recent efforts by Member States and other actors to report on the safety of journalists and establish national multi-stakeholder mechanisms for monitoring, prevention, protection and prosecution. Pursuing and extending such efforts will prove essential to work towards advancing the SDG 2030 Agenda.

Moez Chakchouk

Assistant Director-General for
Communication and Information
UNESCO

1. Executive Summary

Around the world, journalists endure countless attacks on their life, their dignity and the integrity of their work. These abuses affect the ability of the media to impart information to the public, and undermines the foundations of freedom of expression.

The period between 2014 through the end of 2018 has seen 495 journalists killed, according to UNESCO data, which represents an 18% increase in the number of killings as compared to the preceding 5-year period (2009-2013).

Based on the number of killings, the most dangerous regions for journalists are the Arab States region, the Latin America and Caribbean region and the Asia and the Pacific region. Across all regions the vast majority of killings were of local journalists, rather than foreign reporters. The five-year period saw an inversion in the proportion of journalists being killed outside of conflict zones. While in 2014 a majority of journalist killings occurred in conflict regions, in 2017 and 2018 more killings (55% in both years) occurred outside conflict regions. This trend reflects the changing nature of violence against journalists, who were increasingly silenced for reporting on issues of corruption, crime and politics. Although the vast majority of journalists killed are men, killings of women journalists almost doubled relative to the previous 5-year period (24 female journalists were killed in 2009-2013, compared to 46 in 2014-2018).

The issue of impunity remains widespread, with only 131 cases of journalists' killings reported by Member States as being resolved since 2006, representing an overall impunity rate of 88%. There is a very slender improvement of the impunity rate over the years, although this cannot yet be taken as a trend. At the same time, the percentage of responses by Member States to requests for information on judicial follow-up to killings noted by the Director-General has declined after an initial rise. From a 74% response rate in 2017, the figure in 2019 dropped to 61%.¹

¹ Each year, UNESCO sends a request to Member States in which killings of journalists have been recorded requesting them to update the Director-General on the status of judicial enquiries into each case.

Beyond fatal attacks, journalists endured other violations such as physical attack, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, imprisonment and torture. Harassment and other harmful acts are increasingly prevalent in the online sphere, and are especially dire for women journalists. The surge of anti-media rhetoric in populist political discourse across regions has contributed to decreased public trust in journalists and media workers. This has created a more hostile environment for journalists in many countries, and in some cases has also paved the path for laws curtailing freedom of expression and reduced protections for journalists and their sources.

However, at the national and global level there is growing commitment to the setting up of monitoring, protection, prevention and prosecution mechanisms for the safety of journalists. There is also increasing attention to the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target SDG 16.10 on ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, as well as a recognition of the need for a gender-sensitive approach to ensuring the safety of journalists.

Around half of the States that reported to UNESCO in 2019 also provided information on concrete measures to improve safety of journalists and the same number of States agreed to full transparency by making the documents available on UNESCO's online observatory.²

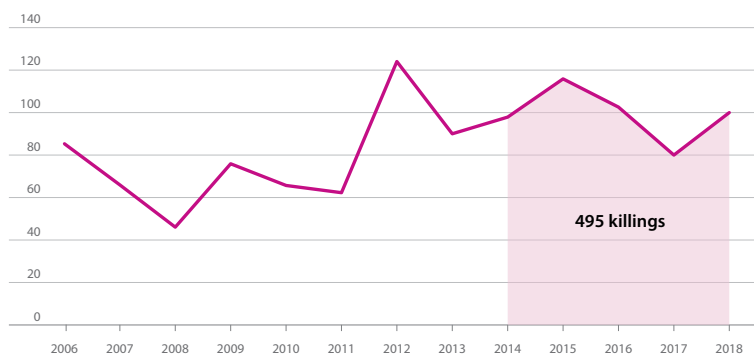
¹ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory>.

2. Journalists' killings over the past five years (2014-2018): key findings

2.1 The death toll in the past five years is close to 500

The following chapter analyzes trends regarding killings of journalists recorded by UNESCO in the 5-year period between 2014 and the end of 2018.

Number of killed journalists worldwide (2006-2018)



UNESCO recorded 495 killings of journalists and media support staff between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018. During this period, 2015 saw a peak, with 116 journalists killed. There was then a decrease in the number of fatalities with 80 journalists killed in 2017, followed by an increase in 2018, with 99 deaths. In the preceding 5-year period (2009-2013), UNESCO recorded lower numbers, with 418 recorded killings, meaning there is an 18% increase between the two periods.

The numbers remain alarming: on average, two journalists are killed every week. Based on UNESCO sources, over the period of five years, Syria was the most dangerous country for journalists, followed by Mexico and Afghanistan. Out of the five most dangerous countries, three are in the Arab region, one in Latin America and the Caribbean, and one in Asia and the Pacific.

Killings of journalists per country, according to UNESCO data (2014-2018)

Syrian Arab Republic		54	Palestine		10
			Ukraine		10
			Bangladesh		9
			South Sudan		9
			Turkey		9
Mexico		53	France		8
			The United States of America		7
			Central African Republic		5
			Russian Federation		5
Afghanistan		46	Democratic Republic of the Congo		4
			Guinea		4
			Paraguay		4
			Peru		4
			El Salvador		3
Iraq		36	Cambodia		2
			Dominican Republic		2
			Finland		2
Yemen		31	Myanmar		2
			Nigeria		2
			Azerbaijan		1
			Bulgaria		1
Brazil		23	Burkina Faso		1
			Burundi		1
			Denmark		1
India		22	Egypt		1
			Indonesia		1
Pakistan		21	Jordan		1
			Kenya		1
			Liberia		1
Somalia		21	Maldives		1
			Malta		1
			Mozambique		1
Philippines		16	Nicaragua		1
			Poland		1
Libya		15	Saudi Arabia		1
			Serbia		1
Guatemala		13	Slovakia		1
			South Africa		1
Colombia		12			
Honduras		12			

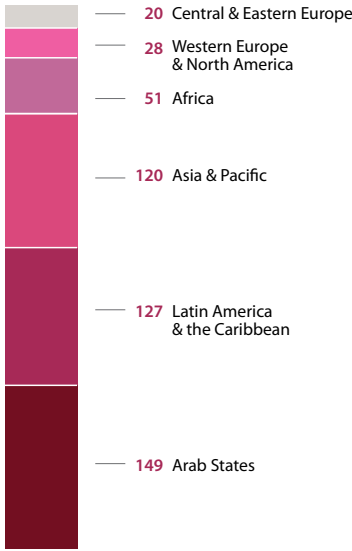
Total: 495

Acts of fatal violence are committed against journalists in all world regions; however, there are significant regional divergences. The Arab States region, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific account for more than three quarters of killings. In half a decade, UNESCO registered 149 killings in the Arab States, the deadliest region, compared to 20 killings in Central and Eastern Europe.



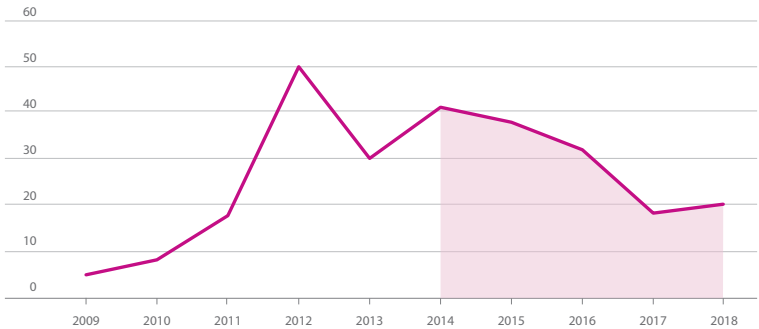
2.2 Fewer killings in the Arab States region compared to previous years

Number of journalists killed by region in (2014-2018)



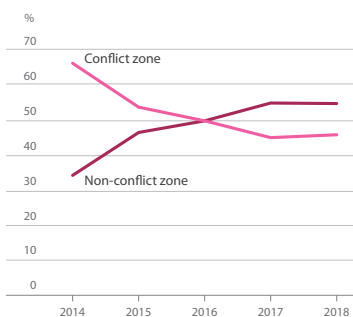
While over the 2014-2018 period, the Arab States region registered the highest number of killings, in 2018 Asia and the Pacific replaced the Arab States as the most dangerous region of the world, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. In the Arab States, killings of journalists were at a high in 2012, with 50 recorded killings of journalists. Since then, the numbers have been declining and, in 2018, 20 killings of journalists were recorded.

Number of journalists killed in the Arab States Region (2009-2018)



2.3 Continuing trend: more journalists killed in countries not experiencing armed conflict

Percentage of journalists killed in countries experiencing armed conflict vs no armed conflict (2014-2018)

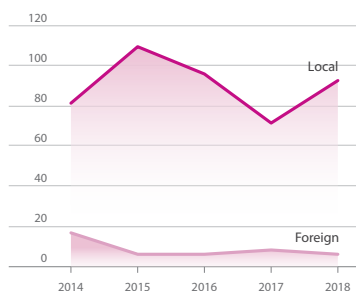


Over the 2014-2018 period, the trend regarding the proportion of killings of journalists in conflict zones compared to those outside of conflict zones has been reversed. While in 2014, 66% of killings occurred in countries experiencing armed conflict, in 2017 and 2018 the majority of journalists were killed in non-conflict areas (55% in both years).

This trend is linked to the decline in the number of killings in conflicts in the Arab States region, and the rising number of killings in Latin America and the Asia and the Pacific region. It points towards a shift in the circumstances, motives and type of perpetrators involved in killings of journalists. In 2014 and 2015, a majority of killings occurred in conflict areas, which includes killings in crossfire, as well as targeted killings committed by parties to the conflict. In 2017 and 2018, the majority of killings were perpetrated in non-conflict areas, and in a number of cases with the apparent motive of silencing critical reporting and creating an atmosphere of fear.

2.4 Overwhelming majority of victims are local journalists

Number of local and foreign journalists killed (2014-2018)



Like in previous years, the large majority of killed journalists were not on assignment in foreign countries but lost their lives close to home. In 2014-2018, 91% of all killed journalists were locals. During this period, 43 foreign journalists lost their lives. In 2018, six of the 99 journalists killed were foreigners. Among them, three were Russian reporters, killed while working in the Central African Republic. The other three were Ecuadorian journalists kidnapped in Ecuador, but killed on Colombian territory.

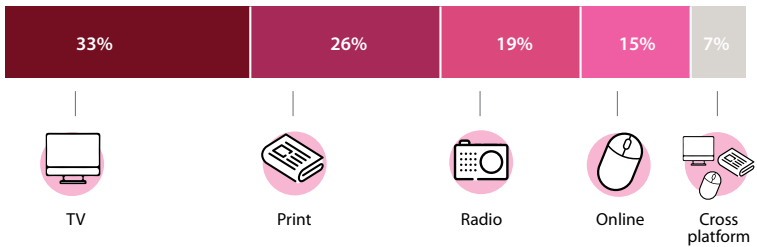
2.5 Foreign journalists more likely to be killed in conflict areas

A larger percentage of foreign journalists are killed in countries experiencing armed conflict. Among all 43 foreign journalists killed in 2014-2018, 67% were on assignment in a country experiencing armed conflict. In the same period, 51% of local journalists killed were nationals of a country experiencing armed conflict.

In the past five years, the largest number of killings of foreign journalists (17) occurred in 2014, and all of these took place in conflict areas. In the following years, the number of killed foreign journalists was consistently lower, at under 10 killings per year.

2.6 TV journalists are under high risk, especially when working in conflict areas

Journalists killed by media type in 2018



Another trend reported in previous years has continued: TV journalists form the largest group among journalists killed in 2018. That year, 32 of the victims of fatal attacks were working for TV stations, of which 72% in countries experiencing armed conflict. Twelve of the killed TV journalists lost their lives in Afghanistan, 5 in Somalia and 3 in the Central African Republic. In some of these cases, TV journalists were covering the site of an attack or explosion when a second explosion or attack occurred.

In 2018, the second largest group among journalists killed were reporters working mainly for print media outlets (26 journalists). Together, TV and print journalists accounted for more than half of all killed journalists.

3. Member States' responses: status of judicial enquiries on cases of journalists killed from 2006 to 2018

The overwhelming majority of cases of killings of journalists recorded by UNESCO remain unresolved, with perpetrators of violent acts against journalists walking freely. Impunity for crimes against journalists has a chilling effect on press freedom in that it further emboldens potential perpetrators to silence journalists through violence. Furthermore, impunity can lead to self-censorship among journalists, especially when reporting on topics such as crime, corruption and politics. The root causes of impunity are varied, but statistics show that impunity rules in countries currently experiencing armed international or internal armed conflict. Furthermore, impunity predominantly takes root in countries with strong criminal networks and high rates of corruption combined with weak legal systems.

The following section analyses responses by Member States to the annual request by the UNESCO Director-General regarding updates received up till the end of September 2019 on judicial follow-up of killings of journalists recorded by the Organization. UNESCO continuously records and condemns killings of journalists worldwide, based on a mandate conferred to the UNESCO Director-General in the Organization's General Conference 29 C/ Resolution 29 (1997) on "Condemnation of violence against journalists"³. Furthermore, at the 26th session of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC (2008), Member States requested the Director-General to prepare an analytical report on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, based on information provided by Member States.⁴ In 2011, Member States passed 36 C/Resolution 53 requesting UNESCO to "monitor [...] the status of press freedom and safety of journalists [...] and to report on the developments in these fields to the General Conference". Information about killings and judicial follow-up to them is recorded in UNESCO's online "observatory of killed journalists"⁵. The online observatory also contains the letters received by UNESCO from States, insofar as consent has been given to make the letters publicly available. In 2019, 18 States, representing 49% of all States that responded, agreed to full transparency by making their response accessible online.

³ UNESCO General Conference 29 C/ Resolution 29 "Condemnation of violence against journalists" (1997), available at <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/resolution29-en.pdf>.

⁴ IPDC Council Decision, adopted at its 26th session (2008), http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2008_decision_safety_of_journalists.pdf.

⁵ UNESCO Observatory of killed journalists, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory>.

Overview of responses received from States to the Director-General's request in 2019

	Response in 2019	Authorization received to publish response on UNESCO Observatory		Response in 2019	Authorization received to publish response on UNESCO Observatory
Afghanistan	✓	∅	Libya		
Angola			Maldives		
Bahrain	✓	YES	Mali	✓	∅
Bangladesh	✓	NO	Malta	✓	YES
Brazil	✓	YES	Mexico	✓	YES
Bulgaria	✓	YES	Mozambique	✓	YES
Burkina Faso	✓	YES	Myanmar	✓	NO
Burundi	●		Nepal		
Cambodia	✓	∅	Nicaragua	✓	∅
Central African Republic			Nigeria	✓	YES
Colombia	✓	YES	Pakistan ⁶	●	
Congo (Republic of)			Palestine	✓	YES
Democratic Republic of Congo			Paraguay	●	
Dominican Republic			Peru		
Ecuador	✓	NO	Philippines	✓	∅
Egypt			Russian Federation	✓	YES
El Salvador	✓	YES	Saudi Arabia		
Eritrea			Slovakia	✓	YES
Georgia	✓	YES	Somalia		
Greece	✓	∅	South Sudan		
Guatemala	✓	∅	Sri Lanka		
Guinea			Syria	✓	∅
Guyana (Republic of)			Tanzania		
Haiti			Thailand	✓	∅
Honduras	✓	NO	Turkey	✓	NO
India			The United States	✓	YES
Indonesia	✓	YES	Uganda		
Iraq	✓	∅	Ukraine	✓	∅
Kenya	✓	YES	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	✓	YES
Kyrgyzstan			Yemen		
Liberia					

✓ Received ● Acknowledgement ∅⁷ No indication

⁶ Prior to receiving the Director-General's request, Pakistan provided information regarding judicial follow-up of one case of a killing of a journalist.

⁷ Where marked with ∅, the concerned State did not respond on whether the reply may be made available online, whereas blanks denote cases where States did not reply to the Director-General's Request.

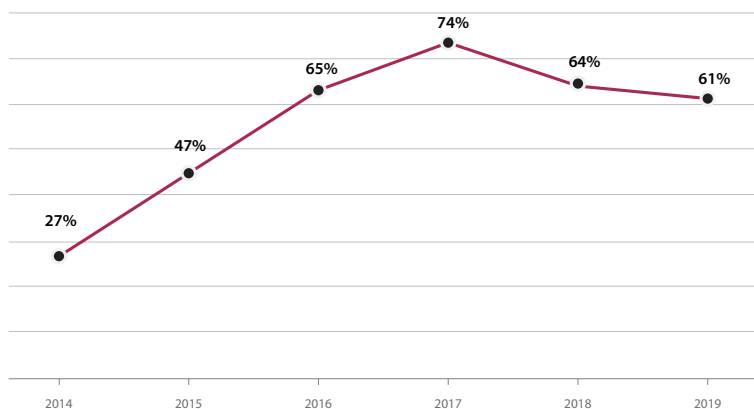
3.1 Member States' response rate rises and falls over 2014-2019

The response rate by Member States to the request for information increased from 27% in 2014 to a peak of 74% in 2017. However, in 2018 there was a drop, with only 64% of Member States providing a reply. This decrease continued in 2019, with 61% of States providing a response.

In 2019, UNESCO requested information from the 61 States in which the Organization had recorded killings of journalists between 2006 and 2018, and for which UNESCO records indicated that the cases had not been resolved or judicially archived according to information received from Member States. These cases pertained to 967 out of the 1109 killings that UNESCO recorded between 2006 and 2018. The remaining cases are those that UNESCO has categorized as resolved or archived, also based on the information submitted by Member States in previous years.⁸

Out of the 61 States requested in 2019 to provide an update on the status of judicial enquiries on the killings of journalists, 37 produced a reply. Among these, 34 provided information on the judicial procedures following killings of journalists. Three Member States acknowledged receipt of the Director-General's request and stated that information regarding the judicial follow-up would be provided, however this had not been received at the time of drafting this report (September 2019).^{9, 10}

Percentage of States that responded to the Director-General's request in 2014-2019

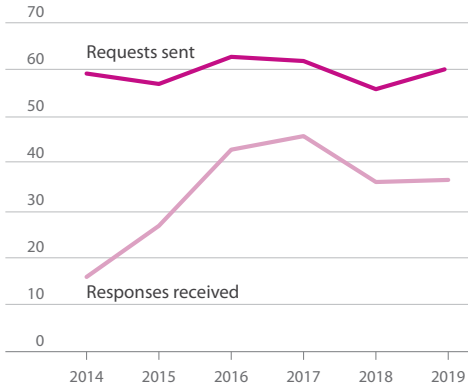


⁸ For information regarding UNESCO's methodology in categorizing the status of judicial enquiries please see Annex A.

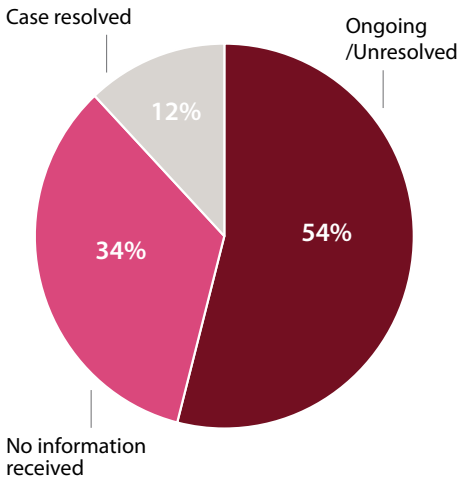
⁹ These Member States are Burundi, Pakistan and Paraguay.

¹⁰ Please consult the UNESCO online observatory for updated information.

Number of countries that were sent a Director-General's request and number of countries that responded (2014-2019)



Status of judicial enquiry into killings of journalists (2006-2018)



It is the countries in which unresolved killings of journalists have been recorded by UNESCO that are requested to provide information on judicial follow-up. Since the reporting mechanism on the safety of journalists was mandated and set up in 2008, 86 Member States have been contacted at least once by UNESCO on cases that occurred between 2006 and 2018, among which five Member States have never provided a response.¹¹ Of the 1109 killings that the Director-General condemned between 2006 and 2018, the Organization has received information on 733 cases.

3.2 Only 12% of cases resolved worldwide

Out of all cases of journalist killings recorded and condemned by UNESCO between 2006 and 2018, Member States have reported only 12 percent as having been judicially resolved. This statistic represents a small increase on that registered previously, with a resolution rate of 10 % reported by UNESCO in 2017 and 11% in 2018. It would be premature at this point of writing to assess this as a trend, although it does correlate with increased attention to safety and impunity across indicators such as developing national mechanisms, the SDGs and awareness of gender dimensions of attacks on journalists.

For the majority of cases where information has been received, UNESCO assesses that these are either ongoing or remain unresolved.

¹¹ These Member States are: Central African Republic, Guyana, Libya, South Sudan and Yemen.

The highest percentage of resolved cases has been reported in Central and Eastern Europe (48% of cases resolved), followed by Western Europe and North America (45% of cases resolved). For the Central and Eastern Europe region, this signifies a 5% increase in the number of cases resolved compared to 2018. The region with the lowest percentage of resolved cases is the Arab States region, where only 1% of cases have been reported resolved by the concerned Member States. The large majority of journalists' killings in the Arab States region occurred during armed conflict, in some cases still ongoing, which substantially complicates judicial follow-up in the short-term.

Status of judicial enquiry into killings of journalists (2006-2018)

	Case resolved	Ongoing/ Unresolved	No information received so far	Total cases	% unresolved
Central and Eastern Europe	21	23	0	44	52%
Western Europe and North America	14	17	0	31	55%
Latin America & the Caribbean	50	191	11	252	80%
Africa	16	68	44	128	88%
Asia & the Pacific	25	147	124	296	92%
Arab States	5	156	197	358	99%
Total	131	602	376	1109	

3.3 Actions and good practices reported by Member States to promote safety of journalists and to combat impunity

In the 2018 IPDC Council Decision on the Safety of Journalists, Member States reiterated their commitment to strengthening capacity at national level to monitor and report on safety of journalists. Since 2017, UNESCO invites Member States to include in their letters to the Director-General an update on “actions taken by [the] country to promote the safety of journalists and to combat impunity”, and “highlighting the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work.” This initiative arises from the 2016 IPDC Decision on the Safety of Journalists and 39 C/Resolution 39 of the General Conference. The contributions made by Member States help UNESCO to share good practices for improving journalists’ safety around the globe.

In 2019, among the 37 States that responded to the Director-General's request, more than half (51%) provided information on concrete actions taken to improve the safety of journalists, combat impunity and/or respond to gender-specific issues. Countries that reported on such actions taken were (in alphabetical order): Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Malta, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United States.

These included actions to improve monitoring, expand protections, prevent instances of violence against journalists, and address gender-based safety risks. The section below provides an overview of the initiatives reported to UNESCO in 2019 by Member States.

Monitoring crimes against journalists

In recent years several Member States reported having sought to combat impunity by introducing in recent years new policy instruments and monitoring bodies to gather information on crimes against journalists (for example: Iraq, Palestine, and the Russian Federation) or by reinforcing existing mechanisms (Colombia).

In 2019, the Russian Federation established a joint Centre for Monitoring Violations of Journalists Rights. Palestine reported the establishment of a National Centre of Journalists' Safety headed by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate in partnership with various media and civil society organizations.

Ukraine noted its cooperation in the Council of Europe Online Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists,¹² which monitors and disseminates information on serious concerns about the freedom and safety of journalists. The platform acts as a mechanism to track incidents of violence against journalists, provide early warning and quick response to safety threats.

¹² Council of Europe. "Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists" <https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom>



Protecting journalists against attacks and prevention measures

Member States have informed UNESCO of various initiatives to prevent attacks against journalists and/or human rights defenders, and provide protection programmes and personalized security measures to those under threat (reported by Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico). Several have also actively encouraged journalists facing threats to seek protection.

Colombia reported extensively on its efforts to strengthen institutional protection mechanisms for journalists and “social communicators”, such as the Persons Protection Unit. It has also held dozens of inter-institutional workshops and meetings, with a view of implementing its Plan of Action for the Prevention and Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Social Leaders, Communal Leaders and Journalists.

Mexico highlighted its Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and informed about the protection measures this mechanism provides to hundreds of journalists and its work with 32 states to facilitate cooperation on such measures.

In September 2018, Brazil broadened the scope of action of its Protection of Human Rights Defenders programme (PPDDH) to include “social communicators,” thereby officially recognizing any media workers who received threats based on their work as a group entitled to specific protections.

In 2019, Ecuador announced the creation of a Constitutional Committee for the Protection of Journalists and Communication Workers, whose aim is to coordinate among various state institutions and civil society to adopt agreements, protocols and mechanisms to prevent and protect human rights violations against workers in communication.

In July 2018, Slovakia’s Ministry of Culture launched a Temporary Working Group on enhancing legal protections for journalists.

Other initiatives reported by Member States to ensure better protections for journalists include allocating additional resources to law enforcement (for example: Colombia, Russian Federation, Slovakia) including public prosecutors (as reported by Ukraine), and providing safety training to journalists and media personnel (reported by Iraq, Nigeria, Palestine, Russian Federation, the United States). The United States reported that since 2013, its State Department has supported more than 2000 media professionals with training on physical security, digital security, and psychosocial care.

Several Member States said they have also adopted specific measures to improve the work of journalists in crisis situations. This includes the mapping of risks and threats (reported by Brazil) or the provision of specialized training for media personnel. Ukraine, with the support of UNESCO, also conducted training for law enforcement officers to raise awareness on freedom of speech and the safety of journalists in February 2018. The Philippines informed about the publication of a “Handbook on Personal Security Measures for Media Practitioners: The Dos and Don’ts of How to Protect Yourself and Your Family” by the Philippine Presidential Task Force on Media Security. In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office Nigeria, organized a two-day training workshop on Conflict-Sensitive-Reporting and Safety of Journalists in January 2018. The Russian Federation noted that annual trainings and practical courses are organized for media personnel active in areas of armed conflicts, counter-terrorism operations, emergencies and riots.

Specialized prosecution and investigation units

A number of Member States reported that they are taking action to address impunity, by developing and implementing new criteria, guidelines and policy instruments to reinforce actions to investigate and prosecute crimes against journalists and/or human rights defenders.

In 2018, Brazil reinforced the process of receiving, registering and forwarding complaints that accommodate the specificities of journalists, and improved the flow of information between the National Ombudsman for Human Rights and the Protection Programme.

Indonesia noted the establishment of a guideline for Handling Cases of Violence against Journalists as determined by the Indonesian Press Council in 2013.

Some Member States reported on the appointment of special prosecutors for crimes against journalists (Honduras, Iraq, and Ukraine). For instance, Honduras' Public Prosecutor's Office appointed specialized prosecutors to handle exclusively crimes targeting vulnerable groups. Prosecutors were appointed in cities with a higher incidence of violence against journalists.

Guatemala's Human Rights Prosecution Section, in charge of investigating and prosecuting those accused of acts committed against journalists, includes a specific unit for crimes against journalists. In 2018, Guatemala noted the approval of several new policy instruments to reinforce criteria and tools for action in accordance with investigation and prosecution of crimes against journalists and human rights defenders.

In 2018, the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior established a special investigation unit for crimes against journalists. This unit is tasked with looking at unresolved cases from previous years as well as investigating more recent cases of killings of journalists.

Mandated through a Presidential Decree in 2016, Ukraine set up a Council for the Protection of Journalists and Freedom of Speech. This body includes representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office and aims to facilitate investigations of unlawful actions against journalists.

Other measures reported by Member States

A multi-stakeholder approach

Across Member States, responses reflected a multi-tier, multi-stakeholder approach to the protection of journalists, with initiatives to support and coordinate joint activities with journalist associations or unions, non-governmental and civil society groups. This includes the opening of dialogues through working groups and committees to discuss a range of issues affecting journalists' safety, including adjustments to institutional and legal framework (for example: Colombia, Ecuador, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Palestine, the Russian Federation, and Slovakia). Several Member States also informed UNESCO of hosting various conferences, seminars and roundtables on the freedom of speech and journalists' security: for instance, in 2019 Bangladesh conducted a number of consultation meetings with journalists and civil society, police and other law enforcement actors. Bulgaria held a Press Freedom Conference in Sofia in May 2018 on the topic of media freedom and pluralism in the EU, which culminated in the adoption of the Sofia Declaration for Media Freedom in Europe.¹³ Ukraine also held a number of seminars and round tables on the topic of freedom of speech. The United States noted its active participation in the July 2019 Global Media Conference on Media Freedom in London, through which it endorsed the Global Media Freedom Pledge and committed to participate in the Media Freedom Coalition initiative, whose aim is to facilitate and coordinate joint action on individual cases of violence against journalists.

Raising awareness and strengthening international norms

Other reported efforts aimed to raise awareness on the issues of journalists' safety and impunity and increase recognition of the relevance of international standards and norms on protecting the human rights of journalists. In December 2018, Brazil launched the "Aristeu Guida Da Silva Handbook – International Standards for the Protection of Human Rights of Journalists and Other Communicators"¹⁴ whose aim is to disseminate standards of the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS) on prevention, protection and ensuring access to justice in cases of violence against journalists.

¹³ Sofia Declaration for Media Freedom in Europe. 2018. Available at https://www.enpa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Latest%20updated%20version%20Sofia%20Declaration%202018_0.pdf.

¹⁴ "Aristeu Guida Da Silva Handbook – International Standards for the Protection of Human Rights of Journalists and Other Communicators." Available in Spanish <https://media.sipiapa.org/adjuntos/185/documentos/001/825/0001825035.pdf>

In 2019, Ecuador adhered to the 1994 Chapultepec Declaration and signed the Agreement for the Creation of the Inter-Institutional Committee for the Protection of Journalists and Communication Workers, further ratifying its commitment to defending freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The Russian Federation noted the contribution it made to the development of decision No 3/18 on Safety of Journalists adopted by unanimity at the 25th Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in December 2018.

Legal reform to enhance freedom of expression

Some Member States also reported on recent legal reforms and broadened guarantees relating to freedom of expression and press freedom (Ecuador, Honduras, Indonesia, Malta, and Myanmar). In May 2018, Malta passed new legislation changing libel and defamation laws, and granting enhanced legal protections to journalists.

Ecuador noted the approval in December 2018, of reforms to the Organic Law on Communication of 2013, which enhanced freedom of expression and of the press and brought the law in line with international standards.

Addressing safety of women journalists

In recent years, a number of Member States reported on actions to bring a gender-sensitive approach to the protection of journalists, to understand and counter discriminatory stereotypes of women journalists, and develop strategies to mitigate particular safety issues facing them.

Mexico highlighted the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, which incorporates a gender perspective in its risk analyses, to weigh environments of discrimination, violence against women, and additional risk burdens derived from women's status, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the protection measures. Iraq noted in its response that its National Committee of Journalists Safety had held a number of workshops and training sessions on the safety of women journalists.

Some Member States acknowledged as a high priority the topic of the safety of female journalists and recognized the importance of tackling the online harassment that they disproportionately face. Bulgaria noted its commitment to supporting further deliberations on how to address challenges affecting women journalists as part of its continued dialogue with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Bangladesh and Slovakia referred to the establishment of a working group for the same purpose.

Nigeria informed UNESCO of its work with groups such as the Nigerian Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) on issues relating to safety of its members. Nigeria also highlighted its gender-balanced approach to training workshops and capacity-building programmes held at the regional and national levels.



4. Global cooperation on safety of journalists

4.1 International networks and initiatives to enhance the safety of journalists

Intergovernmental Organizations

Between 2014 and 2018, resolutions and decisions to promote the safety of journalists have been adopted at the UN General Assembly (2014, 2015, 2017), UN Security Council (2014), UNESCO governing bodies and IPDC (2014 - 2018), and the UN Human Rights Council (2014, 2016, 2018).¹⁵ At the regional level, an OSCE Ministerial Decision on the Safety of Journalists was adopted by all 57 participating States on 7 December 2018. The Decision inter alia urges “political leaders, public officials and/or authorities to refrain from intimidating, threatening or condoning – and to unequivocally condemn – violence against journalists”.

Within the framework of the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, multiple initiatives to ensure better coordination in promoting the safety of journalists have been set up by diverse actors over the past years.

United Nations

At the level of the United Nations, a UN Focal Points Network, which spans 14 UN agencies was reactivated in 2018.¹⁶ The Focal Points Network coordinates various preventative actions regarding safety of journalists across the United Nations, including in specific cases of attacks against journalists. UN entities that have reported implementing actions in the field of enhancing the safety of journalists include OHCHR, UNESCO, UNODC, UNDP, UN-Women, and the Department of Global Communications of the UN Secretariat.¹⁷

Member States

States also increasingly cooperate on the subject and Groups of Friends of the Safety of Journalists have been set up among Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, the UN in New York and Geneva, and most recently at the OSCE in Vienna. These groups meet regularly and have organized a range of events on journalists’ safety issues.

¹⁵ For more details on the contents of these texts, please refer to Annex B.

¹⁶ The creation of the Network was requested by the UN Secretary General and the involved agencies are: UNESCO, OHCHR, UN/DPKO, DPA, DPI, UN/DOCO, OCHA, UNODC, UNDP, UNHCR, UN Women, ILO, WHO, and WFP.

¹⁷ See Secretary-General Report to the UN General Assembly, A/74/314, <https://undocs.org/A/74/314>

In October 2016, the UNESCO Director-General approved the creation of a Multi-Donor Programme (MDP) on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP), triggered by a major donation from Sweden.¹⁸ The MDP supports activities to promote the adoption and application of relevant policies and normative frameworks to strengthen the environment for freedom of expression and press freedom and to support sustainable and independent media institutions. The pooling of funding within this framework promotes programmatic coherence, donor coordination, and gives UNESCO the flexibility to channel funds towards emerging strategic priorities and most pressing needs to achieve the Expected Results in the C/5 Programme as agreed by Member States. Donor countries contributing to the MDP, in addition to Sweden, include Austria, Canada, Iceland, and Norway. Other Member States that in 2019 attended the MDP's Donors' Advisory Group (DAG) as observers included Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In July 2019, the United Kingdom and Canada convened a Global Conference on Media Freedom in London to launch a Media Freedom Campaign. Over 100 countries were represented at the conference by governments, civil society and the media, among which approximately 60 were at ministerial level. The occasion saw the launch of a "Global Pledge on Media Freedom" that forms the basis for a coalition of like-minded countries.¹⁹ In September, it was announced that the Media Freedom Coalition had been joined by some approximately 30 signatory countries.²⁰

At the London conference, the United Kingdom also announced the establishment of an independent panel of legal experts whose work will include safety of journalists. In addition, a Global Media Defence Fund has been created and will be administered by UNESCO. This Multi-Partner Trust Fund equips UNESCO with an additional modality for receiving voluntary contributions to implement the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists. The activities of the Global Media Defence Fund will focus specifically on improving international legal cooperation; reinforcing national protection mechanisms and peer support networks and supporting investigative journalism to tackle impunity for crimes against journalists.

¹⁸ <https://en.unesco.org/news/sweden-commits-additional-48-million-unesco-reinforce-strategic-partnership>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-pledge-on-media-freedom/global-pledge-on-media-freedom>

²⁰ <https://www.wired-gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/>

[Protecting+media+freedom+around+the+world+Lord+Ahmads+UNGA+2019+statement+26092019162000?open](https://www.wired-gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/Protecting+media+freedom+around+the+world+Lord+Ahmads+UNGA+2019+statement+26092019162000?open)

Civil society

Civil society cooperation has been bolstered by the International Civil Society Coalition on the Safety of Journalists which has been active since 2017 and comprises 26 organizations as well as one global network of freedom of expression organizations (IFEX).²¹ This Coalition synergizes with the ongoing work of other specialized cooperation mechanisms such as the Journalists in Distress Network, and the efforts of IFEX and other NGOs whose members and partners encourage responses by Member States to UNESCO's requests for information about judicial follow-up to cases of killed journalists. It also organises missions to contexts where journalist safety is at risk.

At the Global Conference on Media Freedom in London in July 2019, the Coalition drafted a set recommendations to improve the protection and safety of all journalists and media workers in compliance with existing international obligations and standards. Recommendations to Member States included a reminder of the need to raise the issue of impunity to the forefront of efforts to curb the violence against journalists, and a call to establish a standing instrument for the UN to investigate violent crimes against journalists, as proposed by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Killings.²²

Academia

In the academic sphere, cooperation and knowledge-exchange regarding research on Safety of Journalists has been further strengthened by the Journalist Safety Research Network (JSRN).²³ The JSRN was founded by the Centre for Freedom of the Media (CFOM) at Sheffield University in cooperation with UNESCO in 2016 and brings together 180 members from all over the world. In 2019, the JSRN set up an online repository of work produced by its members on safety, impunity and media freedom and standards.²⁴ Another example of successful cooperation in the academic sector is the annual conference on Safety of Journalists at Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslo Met), which was organized for the fifth time in November 2019.

²¹ The members are: The International Civil Society Coalition on the Safety of Journalists, which includes the ACOS Alliance (A Culture of Safety Alliance), Article 19, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the European Journalism Centre, Free Press Unlimited, Freedom House, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, the Global Forum for Media Development, the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, IFEX, the International Federation of Journalists, International Media Support, the International News Safety Institute, the International Women's Media Foundation, Internews, the International Press Institute, the International Research and Exchanges Board, the Media Foundation for West Africa, the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms, Open Society Foundations, PEN America, PEN International, the Rory Peck Trust, Reporters Without Borders, the Samir Kassir Foundation (SKeyes Centre for Media and Cultural Freedom) and the Southeast Asian Press Alliance.

²² ARTICLE 19, 'Recommended commitments for States attending the Global Media Freedom Conference', <https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Recommended-commitments-for-States-attending-the-Global-Media-Freedom-Conference-9-July-2019.pdf>

²³ See: <https://jsrn.shef.ac.uk/>.

²⁴ See: <http://www.cfom.org.uk/jsrn-repository/>.

Media organizations

There have also been some efforts by networks of news publishers, encouraging news organizations to improve safety protocols. The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) encourages its members to sign on to the “Global Safety Principles documents”²⁵ and produces a podcast which looks at different aspects of safety of journalists.²⁶ The ACOS Alliance brings together news organizations, freelance journalists and NGOs, with the specific aim of improving safety of freelance journalists.²⁷

Since March 2019, the “One Free Press Coalition”, a partnership that has so far been joined by more than 30 media organizations, has published its “Ten Most Urgent” cases on a monthly basis. This list, published by all partners on their main outlets, spotlights 10 names of journalists who are “under threat, incarcerated or facing injustice” in order to draw attention to their situation.²⁸ The “One Free Press Coalition” is also a member of *The Washington Post’s* initiative “Press Freedom Partnership”. Under this partnership, *The Post* provides press freedom organizations with complementary advertising and draws attention to their work through a monthly newsletter.²⁹

A further example of the media industry’s engagement towards improving safety of journalists is the “Press Freedom Conference” organized by the European Magazine Media Association and the European Newspaper Publishers Association in March 2019 in Bratislava.³⁰

Judiciary

As regards the judiciary, over the past years, UNESCO has trained some 12,000 judges, prosecutors and their personnel in Latin America and 1,800 members of the judiciary and civil society representatives in Africa on international and regional standards regarding freedom of expression and safety of journalists. UNESCO has established Memoranda of Understanding with the Ibero-American Summit of Judges, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the African Court of Human and People’s Rights, and the ECOWAS Court of Justice.

²⁵ “Global Safety Principles and Practices” available at <https://www.wan-ifra.org/articles/2015/10/06/global-safety-principles-and-practices>.

²⁶ See here <https://www.wan-ifra.org/articles/2018/01/31/the-backstory-a-media-freedom-podcast>.

²⁷ See here <https://www.acosalliance.org/>.

²⁸ See: <https://www.onefreepresscoalition.com/>.

²⁹ See: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/pressfreedom/>.

³⁰ See here <https://pressfreedomconference.com/>.

4.2 Global trend towards the creation of national mechanisms on the safety of journalists

The 2017 multi-stakeholder consultation on the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity assessed progress in the first five years of implementing the Plan. One of the recurrent points made by participants of the consultation was to strengthen structures for safety of journalists on the national level.³¹ The Outcome Document highlights the importance for Member States to consider developing national monitoring, prevention, protection and prosecution mechanisms. This aligns with the request to Member States in a Resolution adopted by the 39th General Conference of UNESCO in 2017.³² The Outcome Document also encourages UNESCO to “expand the scale of provision of technical advice to Member States in terms of draft laws, media law reform and national mechanisms dealing with safety issues which address monitoring, prevention, protection and prosecution.”³³

National mechanisms of various kinds have been set up in at least 30 countries in the period under review. As described in the above section on good practices reported to UNESCO by Member States in which killings of journalists occurred, the mechanisms include special investigative units, independent commissions and task forces, personal protection schemes as well as rapid response systems. Depending on local needs and circumstances, the scope, aims and actors involved in these mechanisms vary. It is noteworthy that steps towards the setting up of such national mechanisms have also been taken in countries that had not (or have not recently) experienced killings of journalists (e.g. Italy, Sweden, Tunisia, United Kingdom), but where there is concern about the range of other types of attacks on journalists that are taking place.

In 2017, a publication by International Media Support studied national safety mechanisms in seven countries.³⁴ The report found that national mechanisms have the potential to create safer work environments for journalists. Emphasizing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, the study suggested that active multi-stakeholder participation, joint objectives and leadership, and national reach are assets that can make a safety mechanism especially effective. In addition, the study noted that mechanisms must find a good balance between addressing safety of journalists in the country holistically and generating concrete, focused results.

³¹ Consultation Outcome Document (2017), <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Journalists/OutcomeDocument.pdf>.

³² UNESCO General Conference Resolution 39 C/ Resolution 39, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889.nameddest=39>

³³ Ibid, 3.

³⁴ These countries are: Afghanistan, Colombia, Indonesia, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines. See: International Media Support, “Defending Journalism” (2017). https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1_Journalist-Protection-Book-Digital-1.pdf

UNESCO has facilitated a number of multi-stakeholder discussions on the topic, such as a conference in Paris (2017)³⁵ as well as regional conferences in Nairobi (2017) and Addis Ababa (2018). UNESCO and the Civil Society Coalition on the Safety of Journalists have strengthened their coordination over the period 2014-2018 and supported the piloting or reinforcement of national mechanisms in a number of countries around the world.

There is also a growing number of regional initiatives to tackle the threats faced by journalists. Among them, the Council of Europe's Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists facilitates sharing of information regarding threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom, and expedites responses in Council of Europe Member States. In Africa, UNESCO has been collaborating with the African Union towards the set-up of a multi-stakeholder Working Group on the Safety of Journalists with the aim of developing the group into a robust coordination mechanism in the region.

In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) signed in 2017 a Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas, a text whose definition of human rights defenders includes journalists.³⁶



³⁵ "UNESCO Member States discuss what works in national systems to protect journalists," UNESCO, 13 December 2017, <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-member-states-discuss-what-works-national-systems-protect-journalists>

³⁶ OHCHR (2017). "Launch of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas." www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22282&LangID=E.

5. Taking stock of initiatives to monitor the safety of journalists

5.1 Member States reporting on SDG 16.10.1 in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

Resolutions at the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council and UNESCO³⁷ encourage Member States to include in their annual reporting on Sustainable Development, as well as in the periodic Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), information on SDG indicator 16.10.1. This indicator reads: “The number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months”.

As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development review mechanisms, the VNRs provide a voluntary mechanism for countries to report to the UN General Assembly on the status of the implementation of the SDGs. UNESCO has supported and encouraged Member States to reinforce their SDG monitoring and reporting efforts on the safety of journalists, including within the framework of the periodic VNR exercises.³⁸

A small number of Member States included specific information on the status of the safety of journalists in their 2019 VNR reports.³⁹ Several countries reported on the number of cases of killed journalists in 2018. Algeria noted how the Organic Law on Information (2012) embodies the protection of journalists.⁴⁰ Iceland reaffirmed its commitment to addressing issues of violations of the freedom of expression of journalists, which have been highlighted in judgments delivered by the European Court in recent years.⁴¹ Indonesia, based on information from the Indonesian Press Council and the Alliance of Independent Journalists, noted in its 2019 VNR the need to address certain challenges involving physical and non-physical violence against the press by particular groups.⁴²

³⁷ UNGA resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1 encourages Member States to strengthen their reporting on safety of journalists and to include this in their annual reporting on Sustainable Development (<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1>). See also UNESCO General Conference 39 C/Resolution 39 (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889>); UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/39/6 (<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/6>); UNESCO Executive Board Decisions, 202 EX/ Decision 5.I.K (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259824>) and 206 EX/Decision 5 I.B. (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367821>).

³⁸ UNESCO contributed to a guide produced by the United Nations Development Programme titled “SDG Reporting Guidance” <https://www.sdg16hub.org/node/312>

³⁹ This assessment is based on information gathered from the 2019 VNR reports listed in the HLPF database, by searching for the keywords “16.10.1”, “journalists”, “media”, “safety journalists”, “harassment journalists”. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/?str=>

⁴⁰ Algeria Voluntary National Review 2019. Available in French at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23441MAE_rapport_2019_complet.pdf p. 149

⁴¹ Iceland Voluntary National Review 2019. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23408VNR_Iceland_2019_web_final.pdf p. 102

⁴² Indonesia Voluntary National Review

In its VNR report to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), Iraq reported on the number of killings of journalists from 2015 through 2017. The report noted the recent formation of the Iraqi National Committee for the Protection of Journalists and the Fight against Impunity. Under the chairship of the Ministry of Justice, the Committee seeks to monitor the protection of journalists, to report on risks and threats, and to provide official information and reports on the subject. Iraq also provided information about the formation of a Special Investigation Unit in the Ministry of the Interior to follow up on cases of violations against journalists and media professionals.⁴³ The VNR process in Iraq included a consultation process organized by UNESCO and local and international civil society partners.⁴⁴

5.2 Shadow reporting on SDG 16.10.1

Shadow reporting, undertaken by NGOs and other civil society actors to supplement or provide alternative information to government reports, is aimed at strengthening reporting and monitoring mechanisms on indicator 16.10.1. In 2019, Voces del Sur - a collective of Civil Society Organizations from eight Latin American countries - published an in-depth shadow report on the implementation of SDG 16.10.1 that covered eight countries in Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela).⁴⁵ While noting important differences in the scale and severity of threats against journalists, press freedom and freedom of expression in the countries studied, the report distinguishes several regional trends, highlighting in particular that journalists continued to face intimidation, violence and judicial and police harassment throughout 2018. These threats were found to be most prevalent in the context of political demonstrations or events, or for journalists reporting on the special interests of political elites.⁴⁶ The report also provides recommendations to be implemented by journalists, civil society, governments and at the United Nations level. This includes the implementation by States and governments of measures to protect journalists, prevent and prosecute crimes against them as well as the creation of multi-stakeholder coalitions or national monitoring mechanisms to accelerate progress on SDG 16.⁴⁷

In the academic field, researchers from the Centre for Freedom of the Media (CFOM) at the University of Sheffield have sought to enhance the monitoring of attacks against journalists by harnessing the power of computerized data gathering and analysis from a range of different sources.⁴⁸

⁴³ Iraq Voluntary National Review 2019. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23789Iraq_VNR_2019_final_EN_HS.pdf p. 63

⁴⁴ UNESCO holds consultation meeting on Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Access of Information and Journalists Safety': <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/unesco-hold-consultation-meeting-voluntary-national-review-vnr-access-information-and>

⁴⁵ See <https://www.vocesdelsurunidad.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Informe-1-Ingles-espaol-1.pdf>

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-58.

⁴⁸ "Academics strengthen research into safety of journalists," UNESCO, 10 July 2019. <https://en.unesco.org/news/academics-strengthen-research-safety-journalists>

5.3 UPR recommendations to Member States on the safety of journalists

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a process involving the periodic review by the UN Human Rights Council of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. It provides each State an opportunity to report on the actions they have taken to improve human rights within their countries, and facilitates the sharing of good practices. UNESCO, as per its General Conference approval of the 39 C/5 Programme, provides contributions to the UPR process on the safety of journalists. Each UPR cycle lasts four and a half years and currently, the third UPR cycle is ongoing (2017 until 2021).⁴⁹ At least 231 recommendations made in the three UPR cycles address the issue of safety of journalists.⁵⁰ Most of the actions recommended were ranked as action level 4 (general action) and action level 5 (specific action). A total of 176 out of the 231 recommendations on the safety of journalists were supported by the concerned Member State, while the remaining recommendations were noted.

By September 2019, 84 Member States had received recommendations and 43 Member States gave recommendations. Out of all Member States under review, Mexico received the most recommendations on safety of journalists (13 recommendations), followed by Kyrgyzstan and Montenegro (9 each) and Honduras, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan (8 each). Among the Member States that gave recommendations, Czechia was the most active (24 recommendations), followed by Austria and Norway (21 each), Canada (14), France (13) and Lithuania (10).

Recommendations given so far span a range of issues regarding prevention of crimes against journalists, protection of journalists and prosecution of perpetrators. Concretely, it has been recommended to “comply with obligations under international law” regarding freedom of expression or to “refrain from arbitrary arrest and the use of criminal libel law (...) against journalists”. Recommendations also include calls to “adopt effective measures to prevent any harassment or intimidation” of journalists, to “end intimidation, threats and physical attacks” against them, and to “adopt a national policy on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders”. Around the topic of impunity, recommendations have included to “combat impunity (...) including by investigating (...) murders” of journalists or to “prosecute crimes and violations against human right defenders and journalists”. To ensure follow-up of previous recommendations, at each UPR cycle the foregoing recommendations to a Member State are addressed.

⁴⁹ See the calendar of reviews of the current UPR cycle: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_3rd_cycle.docx.

⁵⁰ This number was established by searching for the keywords “safety journalists”, “attacks journalists”, “harassment journalists” in the UPR info database and subsequently deleting duplications. See: <https://www.upr-info.org/database/>. Additional information can be researched in the Universal Human Rights Index (UHRI): <https://uhri.ohchr.org/>.



6. Non-fatal attacks against journalists

Short of fatal attacks, journalists face other harmful acts which amount to human rights violations, such as violence and intimidation. Thus, in 2018, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution⁵¹ calling upon States “to strengthen national data collection, analysis and reporting on the number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture and other harmful acts against journalists and associated media personnel, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.10.1”. UNESCO is contributing agency for this dedicated indicator on the safety of journalists, while OHCHR is the custodian agency. Indicator 16.10.1 also references where a range of crimes intersect with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, developed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, thereby pointing to additional potential data sources for monitoring the range of attacks on journalists beyond killings.⁵²

The relevance of the SDG 16.10.1 indicator can be seen against the backdrop of journalists in regions around the globe being touched by different forms of violence and arbitrary restriction.⁵³ Despite growing awareness of these dangers, this trend appears to have intensified in the last few years. Several studies indicate a rise in the number of journalists incarcerated and/or held hostage,⁵⁴ and numerous journalists’ testimonies document the continued use of torture. Threats of violence and intimidation have been further magnified by the rise of digital journalism, and new mutations in digital security threats along with digitally-mediated attacks.

6.1 Prison and exile

In all regions of the world, media professionals are at risk of facing arbitrary action for their journalistic activities. Retaliation by official actors can take the form of threats of imprisonment, judicial harassment, or in some cases, arbitrary detention. As defined by SDG indicator 16.10.1, detention is considered arbitrary when it does not conform to existing national laws, or when it is deemed unjust or unnecessary.⁵⁵ In most cases, journalists are detained under terrorism, spying, conspiracy, or anti-state charges. Harsh legislation regarding libel and defamation which exceeds international standards of necessity and proportionality criteria for any restriction on freedom of expression, can likewise result in cases of imprisonment.

⁵¹ UN Human Rights Council. The safety of journalists. A/HRC/RES/39/6 (September 2018). Available at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/6>

⁵² SDG Indicator 16.10.1 Metadata, accessed here: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=16&Target=16.10>

⁵³ CPJ. (2017). “The Best Defense. Threats to journalists’ safety demand fresh approach.” Available at https://cpj.org/reports/Best-Defense_WebNews.pdf

⁵⁴ See https://cpj.org/data/reports.php?status=Imprisoned&start_year=2018&end_year=2018&group_by=location

⁵⁵ SDG Indicator 16.10.1 Metadata

Recent technological developments have brought about new legislation in some countries, in an effort to better control what information and content is shared through these new technologies. For instance, Reporters without Borders (RSF) registers the adoption of a series of new cyber-laws in Asia and the Pacific and in the Arab region, which allow for arbitrary surveillance and possible arrest of online journalists.⁵⁶ Similarly, more and more countries are adopting legislation to counter disinformation with the risk that such laws can criminalize critical and investigative journalism and editorial opinion.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) recorded 271 journalists behind bars in 2017, the highest number recorded by the organization since it started its monitoring activities in 1990.⁵⁷ The number then fell to 251 imprisoned journalists the following year.⁵⁸ In its 2018 prison census, CPJ found that 98% of jailed journalists were imprisoned by their own government. The census also points out a rise in the number of jailed female journalists, which make up 13% of all jailed journalists with 33 cases in total that year, an 8% increase from the 2017 figure.⁵⁹

In comparison, RSF recorded 326 incarcerated journalists, citizen-journalists, netizens and media contributors in 2017.⁶⁰ The number then proceeded to rise by 7%, with 348 journalists in jail as of 1 December 2018. Furthermore, data collected by RSF highlights the fact that six countries, located in Western Europe and North America, Asia and the Pacific and the Arab region, have concentrated the highest numbers of imprisoned journalist year after year since 2014.⁶¹ The data also show an increase in the number of women among incarcerated journalists over the 5-year period under study, rising from 3% of all detained journalists in 2014 to 7% in 2018, with 24 cases in total.⁶²

⁵⁶ RSF (2018). « Bilan RSF des violences contre les journalistes en 2018 ». <https://rsf.org/fr/actualites/bilan-rsf-des-violences-contre-les-journalistes-en-2018-tous-les-voyants-sont-au-rouge>

⁵⁷ As indicated in the first World Trends Report (2014), many governments have maintained that journalists have not been jailed for their journalism but for other reasons. UNESCO does not have sufficient information to assess which imprisonments are arbitrary or otherwise. As the first Report noted, however, "incarceration for legitimate journalism work is unnecessary and disproportionate in terms of international standards."

⁵⁸ As explained in CPJ's 2018 round up, the number initially provided in CPJ's 2017 end of year report was erroneous and subsequently corrected in the database the following year. See CPJ (2017). "Record number of journalists jailed as Turkey, China, Egypt pay scant price for repression." <https://cpj.org/reports/2017/12/journalists-prison-jail-record-number-turkey-china-egypt.php>; See also

CPJ (2018). "Hundreds of journalists jailed globally becomes new normal." <https://cpj.org/reports/2018/12/journalists-jailed-imprisoned-turkey-china-egypt-saudi-arabia.php>

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ In its monitoring of imprisonment, RSF also includes citizen-journalists, netizens and media contributors in its figures, resulting in a higher figure than that reported by the CPJ.

⁶¹ See RSF's annual round-up of deadly attacks against journalists from 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

⁶² RSF (2014). "Round-up of Abuses Against Journalists" <https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/2014-rsf-round-up-of-abuses-against-journalists-2014.pdf>; RSF (2018). "Worldwide Round-Up of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018." https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/worldwide_round-up.pdf

A noticeable trend in the incarceration of journalists has been the growing share of citizen-journalists, and people in NGOs who are doing journalism, within the overall number of detained journalists. This appears to reflect their growing importance, especially in countries experiencing conflict.⁶³

Judicial harassment can at times continue after a jailed journalist's sentence is served, and even beyond their release from prison. In its 2018 yearly round-up, RSF documented numerous cases where journalists remained in detention for months beyond their initial release dates.^{64 65}

In the face of threats of imprisonment, or threats of violence from either official or non-official actors, a number of journalists have no choice but to abandon certain beats, leave the profession altogether, or go into exile. According to CPJ, 82 journalists were forced into exile between 1 June 2014 and 31 May 2015.⁶⁶ Of the respondents to the survey conducted by CPJ for that period, 51% cited threats of imprisonment as the main reason for their going into exile. Comparatively, RSF counted 139 exiled journalists for the year of 2014, in addition to 20 citizen-journalists.⁶⁷

In contrast to these statistics, it is also the case that over the period a number of countries have undergone considerable positive change, notably in Africa, and have seen the release of jailed journalists, the return of exiled journalists, investigating cases of impunity for killings of journalists, as well as a general improvement of freedom of expression.

6.2 Kidnappings and disappearances

Journalists can be targeted by armed insurgent groups and organized crime groups for economic gain, or as a means of political pressure. They can also be kidnapped in an effort to silence their reportage, and can at times be accused of espionage. Holding journalists hostage can moreover form part of a wider strategy to instil an atmosphere of fear among the general population.⁶⁸

According to data collected by RSF, the number of journalists held hostage has risen from 43 in 2014 to 60 in 2018, which represents a 39.5% increase over five years. Most of these cases occurred in countries currently experiencing

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ RSF (2018). "Worldwide Round-Up of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018." https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/worldwide_round-up.pdf

⁶⁵ Some journalists are in like manner subjected to strict house arrest conditions upon their release from prison, with police supervision that hinders them from practicing their journalistic activities freely.

⁶⁶ CPJ (2015). "452 Journalists Forced Into Exile Since 2010." www.cpj.org/exile

⁶⁷ RSF (2014). "Round-up of Abuses Against Journalists." <https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/2014-rsf-round-up-of-abuses-against-journalists-2014.pdf>

⁶⁸ RSF (2015). "RSF annual round-up: 110 journalists killed in 2015". https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_2015-part_2-en.pdf

armed conflict in the Arab region. In 2018, 90% of these cases involved local journalists.⁶⁹ Local journalists, and in particular freelancers, often lack the resources, equipment and training to ensure their own safety in areas affected by armed conflict, and are subsequently more at risk of being kidnapped and/or taken hostage.

Additionally, there has been a rise in journalists reported as having disappeared. CPJ recorded 58 cases of disappeared journalists in 2014 and 65 in 2018, which represents a 13% increase.⁷⁰

6.3 Physical violence and torture

Journalists undergo violence at the hands of armed insurgent groups, organized crime, as well as state officials. In recent years, various civil society organizations such as IFEX and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) have reported on cases of violence against journalists committed by security forces in all regions of the world. The journalists affected believe they have been deliberately targeted, often while covering demonstrations.

While no substantive data regarding the torture of journalists as a particular category of victims is currently available, civil society organizations, human rights groups and the media have regularly received claims of torture by journalists from all regions of the world.

In the 2018 Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression records and denounces instances of torture against journalists in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The Report documents several decisions taken by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights regarding cases of physical and psychological torture of journalists that had been brought to its attention.⁷¹ The African Union's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information recalls, in the 64th Inter-Session Activity Report, a commitment to fight impunity for crimes such as torture, murder, arbitrary arrest and detention, kidnappings, intimidation and threats which "undermine independent journalism and the free flow of information."⁷²

⁶⁹ RSF (2018). "Worldwide Round-Up of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018." https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/worldwilde_round-up.pdf

⁷⁰ CPJ https://cpj.org/data/missing/?status=Missing&start_year=2018&end_year=2018&group_by=location.

⁷¹ OEA/Ser.L/V/II. "Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2018, Volume II – Annual Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression." Available online <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/reports/annual.asp>

⁷² African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (2019). "64th Inter-Session Activity Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information." Available online https://www.achpr.org/public/Document/file/English/Comm%20Mute_64_Act_Report_FFAl_ENG.pdf

6.4 Anti-media rhetoric and violence

Another worrying trend in the period 2014-2018 was the prevalent use of rhetoric that is hostile to the media as well as the discrediting of newsworthy and accurate journalistic reportage as “fake news”. In some countries, this has helped foment in parts of the population a sense of resentment and contributed to a questioning of trust in the media. These declining levels of trust create a vulnerable working environment for all journalists and media workers. There is also growing concern that political actors are using claims of “fake news” as a rationale for stricter laws which can curtail freedom of expression and muzzle journalists in particular.⁷³

Hostile discourse appears to have sometimes served as a justification for perpetrators of attacks against journalists. RSF reports that it has recorded numerous cases in Asia and the Pacific as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean where physical and verbal violence against journalists could be traced back to anti-media speeches held by members of the political sphere.⁷⁴ Similarly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



⁷³ See for instance, IFJ (2019), “Truth vs. Misinformation: the collective push back - South Asia Press Freedom Report 2018-2019”. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368232/PDF/368232eng.pdf.multi>

⁷⁴ RSF (2019), “2019 World Press Freedom Index - A cycle of fear.” <https://rsf.org/fr/classement-mondial-de-la-liberte-de-la-presse-2019-la-mecanique-de-la-peur>

has expressed concern regarding the public vilification of media workers and justification of violent attacks on them in some countries in the Central and Eastern Europe Region.⁷⁵

6.5 Psychosocial trauma

The frequent exposure of journalists to physical and verbal violence, be it while covering dangerous beats or in their daily professional life, can result in lasting psychological trauma for journalists. According to International Media Support, this issue is of particular importance for local journalists, who often have little or no possibility of leaving a hostile or dangerous working environment. IMS states the issue of psychosocial safety has not garnered as much attention as physical safety, although it is as integral a part of the safety of journalists.⁷⁶ As a result, many media workers resort to self-censorship or abandon beats they previously covered, with negative consequences for freedom of expression and free access to information. While verbal violence against journalists may be seen in cases such as political rallies, it is also – and largely – mediated by digital communications where Internet technologies are abused as a vector for crimes against journalists (see Section 7).

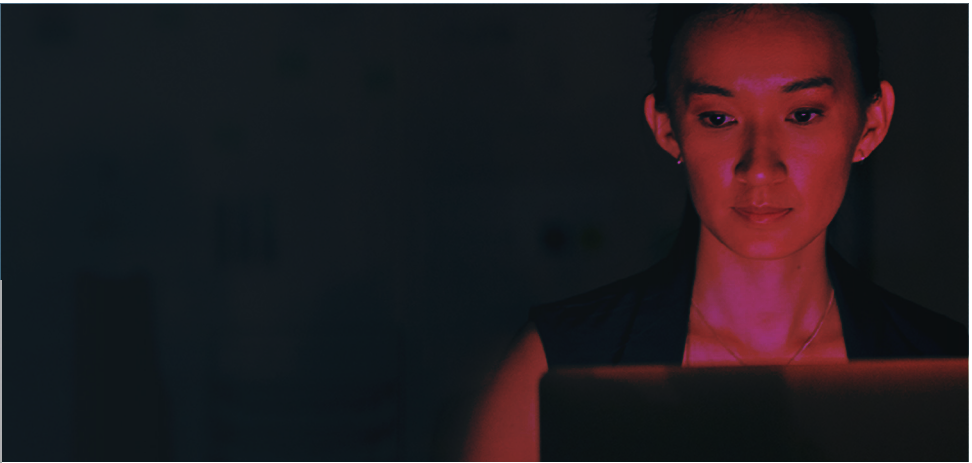


⁷⁵ A/HRC/39/23. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on available mechanisms concerned with ensuring the safety of journalists (2018). Available online: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/23

⁷⁶ IMS (2019). "Assessment Report – Fear, trauma and local journalists: Cross-border lessons in psychosocial support for journalists." Available online: <https://www.mediasupport.org/publications/>

7. Rising threats to the digital safety of journalists

The rise of the digital era has profoundly affected journalistic news practices, by changing the way news is gathered, checked and disseminated. It has altered news sourcing techniques, and redefined how journalists interact with their audiences and the wider public. While social media and digital platforms create new channels for journalists to publish and express opinions freely, they also expose journalists to new digital security and privacy threats from both state and non-state actors.



Over the past five years, there has been a growing trend in the use of less visible and “distributed”⁷⁷ tactics for censoring and silencing journalists. These involve manipulating the flow of information to bury or distract from journalistic content in order to prevent its dissemination, as well as manipulating journalists into circulating unverified information.⁷⁸ The cyber tools to surveil, harass and silence journalists have also become more sophisticated, increasing their power to not only undermine journalists’ work, but to also jeopardize media professionals’ personal safety and that of their sources.

As the types of threats facing journalists continue to evolve, the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) and Trollbusters have identified three categories of threats and attacks against journalists: “invasion of privacy”, “direct harassment” and “denial of access”. These threats have the potential to connect and overlap as attacks against journalists in the digital sphere may enable or promote attacks offline (see Figure below).

⁷⁷ Daniel Arnaudo. “A New Wave of Censorship: Distributed Attacks on Expression and Press Freedom” Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) Digital Report. (24 May 2018). Available at <https://www.cima.ned.org/publication/new-wave-censorship-distributed-attacks-expression-press-freedom/>

⁷⁸ See Ireton, C and Posetti J. 2018, Journalism, fake news and disinformation. Paris: UNESCO. <https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews>; Donovan, J and Friedberg, B. 2019. Source Hacking: Media Manipulation in Practice. New York: Data & Society. <https://datasociety.net/output/source-hacking-media-manipulation-in-practice/>

Categories of attacks and harassment against journalists (based on an idea by IWMF and Trollbusters, 2018)⁷⁹



At the state-level, an ongoing trend is the continued use of vaguely-worded laws which disproportionately enforce online censorship and expand surveillance, also often without measures to ensure independent oversight and transparency. These developments have contributed to an increasingly risky climate for journalists, who have to operate with fewer protections for their personal data, their information and their sources.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ "International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and Trollbusters (2018). "Attacks and Harassment. The Impact on Female Journalists and Their Reporting." Available at <https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Attacks-and-Harassment.pdf> p. 22.

⁸⁰ "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye" (2015), A/HRC/29/32, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session29/Documents/A.HRC.29.32_AEV.doc.

There is also a trend whereby advances in bulk data collection have outpaced oversight and transparency mechanisms. Mass surveillance, both real and perceived, has had an altering effect on the behaviour of journalists, by making it more difficult and even dangerous for them to communicate with their sources.⁸¹ In a number of states across different regions, there are attempts to reduce online anonymity and encryption, which further impacts the ability for journalists to protect their sources.⁸²

Measures to ban Virtual Private Network (VPN) services are present in over a dozen countries,⁸³ while legislation forcing users to reveal their real names when posting or publishing online is already a practice in some countries and is currently being debated in parliaments around the globe.⁸⁴ In 2017, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) noted that at least nine southern African countries had mandatory SIM card registration, without the corresponding data-protection legislation.⁸⁵ These measures may interfere with the media's ability to impart information of public interest and have negative ramifications on freedom of expression.

Evolving digital technologies have given rise to new forms of attacks on news gathering and publishing. These include the hacking of journalists' phones and computers, ransomware and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks on news websites. DDoS attacks, which work by flooding a targeted server with Internet traffic so as to block access to it, have been used in a number of cyber-mediated attacks on the media. In 2016, an attack on a US-based Domain Name Systems (DNS) provider led to the temporary shutdown of several websites, including *The New York Times* and Twitter.⁸⁶

In March 2017, the Council of Europe published a survey of 940 journalists across 47 member countries, which found that 53% of the journalists polled had faced some form of cyber harassment, including personal attacks, public defamation and smear campaigns.⁸⁷ The increased prevalence of online abuse is in part facilitated by the environment of anonymity and weakness of norms of civility that can accompany interactions in the online sphere. New digital tools have also dramatically increased the ability of orchestrated cyber aggressors to inundate journalists with attacks on social media platforms, news websites and other digital spaces.

⁸¹ Stephenson Waters (2018). "The Effects of Mass Surveillance on Journalists' Relations With Confidential Sources," *Digital Journalism*, Volume 6, Issue 10, p. 1294.

⁸² "Democracy at Risk: Threats and Attacks Against Media Freedom in Europe," 2019 Annual Report by the Partner Organisations to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists. <https://rm.coe.int/annual-report-2018-democracy-in-danger-threats-and-attacks-media-freed/1680926453> p. 11

⁸³ Freedom House (2017). "Freedom on the Net 2017". Available at https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTN_2017_Final.pdf p. 13

⁸⁴ Laura Kayali. "Austria's bid to end online anonymity triggers crackdown fears" *Politico*, 6/2/2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/austrian-conservatives-want-to-end-online-anonymity-and-journalists-are-worried/>

⁸⁵ MISA (2017). So This Is Democracy? State of media freedom in Southern Africa 2017. Available at http://misa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Full-report_STID2017.pdf

⁸⁶ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/22/business/internet-problems-attack.html>

⁸⁷ Marilyn Clark and Anna Grech. Journalists under pressure - Unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship in Europe (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017) p. 13. Link to extract: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168070ad5d>

Online harassment is above all psychologically damaging, and can affect journalists' ability to concentrate on work as well as to resist pressures for self-censorship. The harassment engenders fears of retaliation and of damage to their credibility. This online intimidation also has the potential to place a journalist in physical danger and vulnerable to "mob" action as well as further targeted attack. When a journalist is attacked or murdered, he or she is often first targeted by threats and abuse online. "Doxxing," the online practice of exposing an individual's "private or personally identifiable information"⁸⁸ – such as phone numbers, emails or home addresses – can also jeopardize physical safety. This was the case for CNN journalist Andrew Kaczynski in 2017, who had his personal information leaked online, leading to him and his family receiving dozens of threatening phone calls.⁸⁹ This was also the case for Brazilian journalist Ana Freitas, who was targeted for an article she wrote on online harassment of women and minorities. After her address was leaked online, she began receiving packages filled with worms, eventually leading her to leave her home for several weeks out of fear for her safety.⁹⁰

Some cyber-mediated attacks appear to be organized by paid or voluntary actors acting without respect to human rights; they may equally be the work of automated bots. A growing number of state and non-state actors are enlisting the help of these tools in an attempt to influence online discussions and sway public opinion. In this, journalists are often targeted for ongoing investigative work or in response to stories already published.⁹¹ Trolls and bots are used in a wide variety of online attacks on journalists that aim to discredit, humiliate or intimidate them into silence. For instance, there is a visible trend whereby they mass post demeaning memes or photos, insulting hashtags and even death threats so that they go viral. They also launch "email bombs", sending thousands of hateful messages or emails to journalists' accounts within minutes. Another example is in mass reporting attacks, whereby journalists are repeatedly flagged in an attempt to have their accounts banned or their publications removed from digital platforms.⁹² Reporting on elections, corruption, or other political topics has always heralded additional risks for journalists, but these risks are vastly increased because of the speed and scale of activities of troll armies and bots.

⁸⁸ Jonathan McCully. (2019). "Legal Responses to Online Harassment and Abuse of Journalists: Perspectives from Finland, France and Ireland." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Press Institute (IPI). <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/413552?download=true>, p. 6

⁸⁹ RSF (2018). "Online harassment of journalists: the trolls attack," https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_report_on_online_harassment.pdf p. 17

⁹⁰ CPJ. "Responding to Internet Abuse," 27 April 2016. <https://cpj.org/2016/04/attacks-on-the-press-responding-to-internet-abuse.php>

⁹¹ Freedom House (2017). "New Report - Freedom on the Net 2017: Manipulating Social Media to Undermine Democracy." Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-freedom-net-2017-manipulating-social-media-undermine-democracy>

⁹² For more information on troll and bot attacks, see Reporters Without Borders (2018). "Online harassment of journalists: the trolls attack," https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_report_on_online_harassment.pdf

Addressing the growing trend of online harassment against journalists presents numerous challenges. Due to the high importance of online platforms and digital media in journalistic news production, many journalists face significant pressure to maintain an active presence on social media, making cyber-mediated violence difficult to avoid. This is particularly true for freelance journalists who lack the support of media organizations, and who may depend on social media for their livelihood. Several studies highlight that existing legal remedies and law enforcement resources are in some cases insufficient for dealing with most forms of online harassment, which in turn can discourage journalists from reporting threats to management or police.⁹³

However, in recent years there have been a number of new initiatives aiming to address digital security threats and tackle online abuse of journalists in all its forms. Among newsrooms, there appears to be a growing commitment to tackle online harassment, for example through enhanced comment monitoring and formal support mechanisms that encourage journalists to report incidents of online abuse.⁹⁴ There is also an increased focus on prevention, with a number of news organizations holding workshops on digital security and responding to online harassment.

Journalists must continuously update their digital information and source security practices to fit new legal and digital threats. This is particularly challenging for freelance and citizen journalists or bloggers, who may lack specific resources and guidance on information security. However, there is a growing list of digital safety toolkits, practical guides and helplines available online to assist journalists.

Journalists, data scientists and academics are also teaming up in projects to expose troll armies and bot networks and tackle disinformation used to crowd out quality journalism and attack journalists. In the Philippines, the news organization Rappler has assembled such a team to track and expose this kind of harassment and intimidation.⁹⁵ Amidst mounting pressure for social media platforms to play a more active role in preventing harassment, hate speech and disinformation, some platforms are partnering with journalists and journalism associations, introducing new safety tools for journalists as well as operating initiatives to filter out disinformation and give higher priority to journalistic content.⁹⁶

⁹³ Jonathan McCully (2019). "Legal Responses to Online Harassment and Abuse of Journalists: Perspectives from Finland, France and Ireland." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Press Institute (IPI). <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/413552?download=true>.

⁹⁴ See for instance IPI (2019). Newsroom Best Practices for Addressing Online Violence against Journalists. <https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/IPI-report-online-harassment-06032019.pdf>

⁹⁵ Hofileña, Chay F. "Fake Accounts, Manufactured Reality on Social Media." Rappler, October 16, 2016. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/investigative/148347-fake-accountsmanufactured-reality-social-media>

⁹⁶ See Mike Isaac, "In New Facebook Effort, Humans Will Help Curate Your News Stories," New York Times, 20 August 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/20/technology/facebook-news-humans.html>. See also Facebook (2017). "Facebook Safety for Journalists Guide."

8. Gender dimensions of journalists' safety

Women journalists and media workers the world over face a multitude of risks and dangers because of both their profession and their gender. These threats can arise anywhere, whether from working in the field, online or in the newsroom. Women journalists encounter threats to their physical safety, such as assault, sexual assault, rape and even murder. Studies show that female journalists are targeted more frequently and more viciously by online abuse

and harassment than their male colleagues. This abuse is often highly sexualized, based not on the content of their work, but on their physical traits, personal life or cultural background.⁹⁷ In this way, gender-based violence can closely resemble – and intersect with – abuse and discrimination faced by journalists from ethnic or religious minorities or who identify as LGBTI. Its aim is often to silence women not just for their journalistic output, but for speaking out as women.

In one research sample by the IFJ in 2018, nearly two thirds of the women journalists surveyed said they had experienced some form of online abuse.⁹⁸ IWMF and Trollbusters reported similar results in an international survey of nearly 600 women journalists, which revealed that online threats or harassment exceeded the number of reported physical threats or harassment.⁹⁹ Both online and offline threats and attacks against women journalists are reported to have increased over the past five years.¹⁰⁰ In both surveys, nearly 40% of the respondents who reported facing an online offence said they had avoided coverage of certain topics as a result.



⁹⁷ IPI (2019). Newsroom Best Practices for Addressing Online Violence against Journalists. <https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/IPI-report-online-harassment-06032019.pdf> p. 28

⁹⁸ According to a 2018 survey of 267 journalists in which 58.7% of respondents were women. See International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), "IFJ Survey: two-thirds of women journalists suffered gender-based online attacks," 7 December 2018. <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/human-rights/article/ifj-survey-two-thirds-of-women-journalists-suffered-gender-based-online-attacks.html>

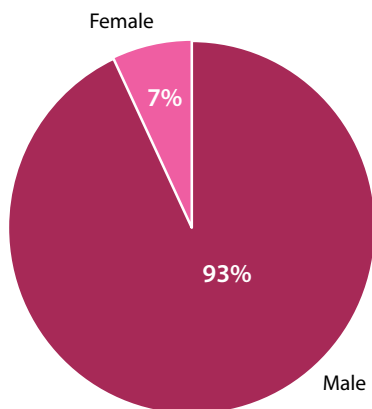
⁹⁹ International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and Trollbusters (2018). "Attacks and Harassment. The Impact on Female Journalists and Their Reporting." Available at <https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Attacks-and-Harassment.pdf> p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 25.

8.1 Killings of women journalists in the period 2014-2018

In the period from 2014 through 2018, UNESCO denounced the killings of 46 female journalists, representing 9 per cent of all journalists killed throughout the five-year period, an increase of 2 percentage points since the period 2012 – 2017. As in previous years, in 2018 the percentage of female journalists killed was significantly lower than that of their male counterparts. This gap exceeds the gender gap in the overall representation of men and women in the journalism workforce, where female journalists make up roughly one third of the workforce worldwide.¹⁰¹ The discrepancy is attributable to the fact that female journalists are less likely to be working in warzones and other volatile regions, or reporting on topics such as politics or crime. These gender disparities may result from long standing gender stereotypes and the widespread perception that it is more dangerous for women to be journalists than for men.¹⁰² Several studies also suggest that the lack of female leadership in media organizations contributes to exclusionary practices in newsrooms, such as assigning fewer female correspondents to cover political content or to report in conflict zones.¹⁰³

Percentage of men and women among killed journalists in 2018



8.2 Other safety issues faced by women journalists

While attitudes about women in the newsroom have dramatically evolved over the years, women journalists continue to face prejudice and gender bias in their place of work. This is particularly the case in countries where the exclusion of women from public debate is a norm, and female journalists boldly voicing their opinions and challenging the status quo may be perceived as “unfeminine” or threatening. Nevertheless, hostile rhetoric, public shaming or sexual objectification directed at female journalists is a trend observed across all regions.

¹⁰¹ The Global Media Monitoring Project (2015). http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/imported/reports_2015/highlights/highlights_en.pdf p. 2. See also International Women’s Media Foundation (2011). Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media. <https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf> p. 6.

¹⁰² Janet Harris, Nick Mosdell and James Griffiths (2016). “Gender, Risk and Journalism, Journalism Practice,” 10:7, p. 903.

¹⁰³ Ibid. See also Women’s Media Center report (2019). “The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2019.” <https://tools.womensmediacenter.com/page/-/WMCStatusofWomeninUSMedia2019.pdf>

The pressure to conform to hegemonic cultural mores may in some cases take a toll on the quality of their reporting, such as by pressuring women to not speak alone with male sources, or avoid covering certain topics. Numerous studies have shown that women are more frequently targeted for reporting on certain sensitive issues, such as political subjects, gender and women's issues, LGBTI rights, as well as traditionally "masculine" topics.¹⁰⁴ In their March 2018 report titled "Women's rights: Forbidden subject," RSF registered dozens of incidents from 2012 through 2017 of verbal and physical attacks against journalists in response to their coverage of women's rights – including 11 murders.¹⁰⁵

Sexual harassment in the workplace remains a prevalent issue in many newsrooms. A 2014 survey by the International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) found that of a number of women who reported facing "threats, intimidation and abuse," the majority said that this occurred in the workplace, most often by male bosses, supervisors and coworkers.¹⁰⁶ Female reporters also encounter these issues with their sources and audiences. This abuse may occur privately, as is often the case with unwanted sexual advances or coercion, but also publicly, during an interview or even on the air. This type of gender-based violence has also been noted in the field of sports journalism. An example was at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, when several female reporters were sexually harassed, groped or kissed by fans while reporting live at the matches.¹⁰⁷ In Brazil, after a number of similar incidents took place during the Copa Libertadores, a group of 52 Brazilian journalists banded together to launch the anti-harassment campaign called #DeixaElaTrabalhar or "Let Her Work,"¹⁰⁸ Their campaign video was aired during a football match in Rio de Janeiro's Maracanã stadium on 25 March 2018.

The #MeToo movement has resonated within media industries around the globe, fueling discussions on sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace and inspiring offshoots such as #YoTambien in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the #WeToo movement in Japan and the Republic of Korea.¹⁰⁹ It has led to the formation of new solidarity groups and emboldened women journalists to come forward with accounts of abuse. Still, many women choose not to report incidents of abuse, in some cases because of social

¹⁰⁴ See Gina Masullo Chen et. al. (2018) "Women Journalists and Online Harassment." The University of Texas at Austin Center for Media Engagement. See also Eckert, S. (2018), "Fighting for recognition: Online abuse of women bloggers in Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States", Wayne State University, USA.

¹⁰⁵ RSF (2018), "Women's rights" Forbidden subject." Available online at <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-shines-light-forbidden-coverage-womens-rights> p. 8

¹⁰⁶ International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) (2014). "Violence and Harassment Against Women in the News Media: A Global Picture." <https://www.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Violence-and-Harassment-against-Women-in-the-News-Media.pdf> p. 4

¹⁰⁷ Sanna Pekkonen and Helsingin Sanomat "At World Cup, female reporters seek end to harassment", International Press Institute, 6 July 2018. <https://jpi.media/at-world-cup-female-reporters-seek-end-to-harassment/>

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Downie. "Brazil's 'Let her do her job' campaign demands respect for female sports reporters," Committee to Protect Journalists, 18 April 2018.

<https://cpj.org/blog/2018/04/brazils-let-her-do-her-job-campaign-demands-respec.php>

¹⁰⁹ See for example Linda Hasunuma & Ki-young Shin (2019). "#MeToo in Japan and South Korea: #WeToo, #WithYou." Journal of Women, Politics & Policy, 40:1, 97-111. See also Taylor, Mishell Parreno, Heather M. Vigil, and Santiago Madalena. "#MeToo and how it may Impact You Too Across Latin America." Labor Law Journal 69, no. 4 (Winter, 2018): 242-244.

stigmas, but also for fear of professional damages such as losing future work, or being taken off a story.¹¹⁰ While some media organizations have anti-harassment policies, many do not have any protocols to counter or report abuses. According to a 2017 survey of almost 400 women journalists in 50 countries by the IFJ, two-thirds of those surveyed did not formally report incidents of abuse, while only “26% of workplaces had a policy covering gender based violence and sexual harassment.”¹¹¹

8.3 Online harassment of women journalists

Online harassment is reflective of the larger patterns of discrimination against women and girls in society. This violence has many forms, including sending or publishing misogynistic or demeaning comments, jokes and memes, as well as sexually explicit or even pornographic content. One example of this type of attack against a woman journalist was in 2018, during a week-long smear campaign where she faced calls for her to be “gang-raped” and had videos posted where her head was digitally superimposed onto the head of a porn actress.¹¹² In their report “Women’s rights: Forbidden subject”, RSF highlights that women journalists are among the main targets of troll attacks. As CEO and executive editor of the Philippine news site Rappler, Maria Ressa has faced an overwhelming amount online abuse and trolling, and in 2016 was targeted by a social media campaigns around hashtags such as #ArrestMariaRessa that have added to the pressure.

Legal charges against Rappler were criticized by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, David Kaye.¹¹³ Ressa, who has also served as chairperson of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, has led a strong push-back campaign against these attacks.¹¹⁴

Although online harassment against journalists is sometimes dismissed as harmless, routine or “part of the job”, the psychologically damaging effects of cyber-mediated attacks can be significant and long-lasting. Like other forms of abuse, survivors may experience emotional stress and/or symptoms of post-traumatic stress, lowered self-esteem, increased distrust, and health problems.¹¹⁵ The climate of impunity that plagues interactions in the digital sphere further magnifies the damaging potential of online attacks and harassment.

¹¹⁰ IWMF and Trollbusters (2018), “Attacks and Harassment,” p. 41

¹¹¹ International Federation of Journalists, December 2018. <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/human-rights/article/ifj-survey-two-thirds-of-women-journalists-suffered-gender-based-online-attacks.html>

¹¹² See <https://www.indiatoday.in/trending-news/story/journalist-rana-ayyub-deepfake-porn-1393423-2018-11-21>; <https://cpj.org/2018/04/indian-freelancer-receives-graphic-threats-followi.php>

¹¹³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23984&LangID=E>.

¹¹⁴ Posetti, J. 2017. Fighting back against prolific online harassment: Maria Ressa. In Kilman, L. 2017. An Attack on one is an attack on all: successful initiatives to protect journalists and combat impunity, p. 37-40. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/arks:/48223/pf0000259399>

¹¹⁵ IWMF and Trollbusters (2018). “Attacks and Harassment,” p. 48.

The chilling effect of repeated and widespread abuse against women journalists may lead women journalists to self-censor, abandon stories, publish under a different name, restrict their professional growth, or even prompt them to quit. The attacks have also been found to affect retention rates of women journalists, especially early-career journalists. The IWJF and Trollbusters found in their survey that nearly one third of their respondents who were victims of threats and attacks indicated that the experience had made them consider leaving the profession.¹¹⁶ This silencing of women's voices not only depletes freedom of expression by interrupting their journalistic work, but also distorts the media landscape by omitting certain points of view, and perpetuates the dynamics of inequality both in the newsroom and in society.

8.4 Growing awareness of the specific threats faced by women journalists

It has been a trend over 2014-2018 that global recognition of the specific issues affecting women journalists has been increasing with each year. New political commitments at the international and regional levels highlight the need for a gender-specific approach for the safety of journalists. Following recommendations made in the UN Secretary General's report on the safety of women journalists in 2017, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for training and awareness raising on "sexual and gender-based discrimination, and violence against women journalists," the implementation of gender-sensitive strategies to combat impunity and for Member States to "provide adequate support, including psychosocial support, to victims and survivors."¹¹⁷ At UNESCO, the General Conference in 39C/Resolution 39 invited the Director-General to reinforce activities aimed at addressing the specific threats to the safety of women journalists, both online and offline.¹¹⁸ In 2016, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors calling on Member States to make gender-specific perspectives "a central feature of all measures and programs dealing with the protection of journalists and other media actors and the fight against impunity."¹¹⁹

In a 2018 report, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) drew particular attention to the case of indigenous women journalists, who may face an increased risk of experiencing violence as a result of "structural patterns affecting community media; intersectional discrimination against indigenous women; and the high public profile they may acquire in defense of the rights of indigenous peoples and/or the rights of women in their territories."¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹¹⁷ UN General Assembly. The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. A/RES/72/175 (December 2017). <https://documents-uds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/456/40/pdf/N1745640.pdf?OpenElement>

¹¹⁸ UNESCO General Conference 39 C/Resolution 39. Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889>

¹¹⁹ Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 2016 at the 1253rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

¹²⁰ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression" (October 2018). <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/docs/reports/WomenJournalists.pdf> p. 31

There has also been increased focus on the issue of online attacks against women journalists. In 2018, the UN Human Rights Council adopted two resolutions respectively urging States to put in place “safe gender-sensitive preventive measures and investigative procedures in order to encourage women journalists to report offline and online attacks against them,”¹²¹ and calling for “gender-sensitive responses that take into account the particular forms of online discrimination.”¹²² In December 2018, the OSCE Ministerial Council similarly adopted a Decision on Safety of Journalists recognizing “distinct risks faced by women journalists, including through digital technologies.”¹²³ Since 2015, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has run the “Safety of Women Journalists Online” (SOFJO) outreach campaign, to respond to the need for comprehensive data on the safety of women journalists across its 47 participating States.¹²⁴ The campaign’s online repertoire compiles resources on online harassment of female journalists, including publications and essays from reporters, resources on digital safety, and newsroom practices.¹²⁵

Growing awareness has also led to more initiatives by governments, NGOs and civil society to counter gender-based threats to women journalists. A number of hotlines, secure online platforms, and training manuals have been established in the last few years with dedicated resources for female journalists. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) have created the Women’s Reporting Point, an online tool that allows victims to confidentially and anonymously report threats to female staff, and seek help and support.¹²⁶ The International Association of Women in Radio & Television (IAWRT), with support from UNESCO, published the Safety Handbook for Women Journalists in 2017. The safety manual covers issues such as risk assessment and travel safety in conflict zones, rape as a weapon, and psychosocial safety when dealing with survivors.¹²⁷

UNESCO in 2019 has also reinforced its activities aimed at addressing the safety of women journalists, focusing on three main axes: research, capacity building, and awareness-raising.¹²⁸ In September 2019, UNESCO initiated steps towards a study on good practices in tackling online harassment of women journalists. Training for both women journalists and media managers was being planned in India, Sri Lanka, Mali and Senegal. Members of the Group of Friends for the Safety of Journalists at UNESCO organized in June 2018 a conference on tackling online harassment with the participation of journalists, media managers and internet companies.¹²⁹

¹²¹ UN Human Rights Council. The safety of journalists. A/HRC/RES/39/6 (September 2018). Available at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/6>

¹²² UN Human Rights Council. The promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet. A/HRC/RES/38/7 (July 2018). <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/38/7>

¹²³ OSCE Ministerial Council. Decision No. 3/18 Safety of Journalists. MC.DEC/3/18 (December 2018). Available at <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/406538?download=true>

¹²⁴ The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. “#SOFJO - Safety of Female Journalists Online.” <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/370331?download=true>

¹²⁵ OSCE. “Safety of Female Journalists Online.” <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/safety-female-journalists-online>

¹²⁶ European Federation of Journalists. “Women’s Reporting Point.” <https://europeanjournalists.org/campaigns/womens-reporting-point/>

¹²⁷ International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) (2017). “What If...? Safety Handbook For Women Journalists.” <https://www.iawrt.org/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/11/IAWRT%20Safety%20Manual.Download.10112017.pdf>

¹²⁸ See here: <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-receives-300000-usd-swedish-postcode-foundation-tackle-safety-women-journalists>. Also: Vega Montiel, A. and Macharia, S. (eds). 2019. Setting the gender agenda for communication policy: new proposals from the Global Alliance on Media and Gender; Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368962.locale=en>

¹²⁹ See here: <https://en.unesco.org/news/journaliststoo-unesco-conference-puts-spotlight-online-harassment-women-journalists>.

9. Conclusion

The trends outlined in this report show that practicing journalism continues to pose great risk to the personal safety of many journalists. Over the past five years (2014-2018), UNESCO recorded 495 killings of journalists and associated media personnel.

Some trends regarding the lack of safety of journalists have remained constant, while other trends have changed. Before 2016, UNESCO consistently reported a majority of journalists killed in conflict zones. In 2017 and 2018, more than half of all killings of journalists occurred in countries not experiencing armed conflict. In line with the previous period, however, local journalists are shown to be at a much higher risk of deadly attacks and the majority of victims remain male reporters. Impunity for crimes against journalists still reigns with an overall rate of 88% of cases of killings of journalists remaining unresolved.

Aside from fatal attacks, trends show increased exposure to journalists to other forms of attacks and violence offline and online. These include kidnapping, forced disappearances, unlawful imprisonment, rhetorical violence and physical attacks. Digital threats to journalists' security has become a growing issue in recent years, both because of the emergence of automated bots and troll armies which vastly increase the scale and scope of online attacks, as well as the expansion of arbitrary surveillance and the limitations on online freedoms visible across many countries. A trend is that female journalists in particular are disproportionately hit by online harassment, becoming targets of overlapping forms of violence for their work as journalists and because they are women.

It is not yet evident that a trend is emerging regarding the decline in the responsiveness of Member States to UNESCO's call for information on judicial follow-up to killed journalists. But there is a clear trend to states and international organizations becoming more seized with the issue of safety in a range of other areas, and this is complemented by increased momentum in the legal sphere, the UN, civil society, the media and academia. Good practices are coming to light such as national mechanisms to monitor, protect, prevent and prosecute. The UPR and SDG VNRs, and new funding schemes, are developments to note.

Overall, there is momentum to strengthen programmes and increase resources to promote the safety of journalists and to tackle impunity, through multi-stakeholder engagement and coordination, capacity-building initiatives and research and monitoring efforts. These steps remain key to securing a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers and ensuring the implementation of the UN Plan of Action.

Annex A: Mandate of the Director-General and methodology

The information in this report on the status of the investigations carried out on each of the killings condemned by the Director-General is based solely on the updates provided by concerned Member States.

The cases of killings of journalists are systematically condemned by the Director-General of UNESCO through press releases. [General Conference 29 C/Resolution 29](#) (1997) mandates the Director-General to “condemn assassination and any physical violence against journalists as a crime against society, since this curtails freedom of expression and, as a consequence, the other rights and freedoms set forth in international human rights instruments”. This mandate has been reinforced by other resolutions, such as [General Conference 36 C/Resolution 53](#) (2011), which calls on UNESCO to monitor the status of press freedom and safety of journalists in coordination with other UN bodies.

Regional groups mentioned in this report are based on UNESCO’s regional voting groups to the Executive Board, as shown here:

http://www.unesco.org/eri/cp/ListeMS_Indicators.asp.

The information provided by Member States has been analyzed for the purpose of this study and categorized as follows:

1 “Resolved”

The status of a case regarding the killing of a journalist is considered as “Resolved” if the Member State has provided one or more of the following responses to the Director-General’s request to provide information concerning the status of the investigation:

- a) The perpetrator(s) of the crime has (/have) been brought to justice and been convicted by a court of law.
- b) The suspected perpetrator(s) of the crime died before a court case could take place or be completed.
- c) The judicial process has revealed that the death was not related to the victim’s journalistic practice.

The Director-General no longer requests status updates once a case is deemed to have been resolved.

2 “Ongoing/Unresolved”

The status of a case regarding the killing of a journalist is considered as “Ongoing/Unresolved” if the Member State has provided one of the following responses to the Director-General’s request to provide information concerning the status of the investigation:

- a) The case is currently being investigated by law enforcement agencies or other relevant authorities.
- b) The case has been taken up by the judicial system but a final verdict has not yet been reached and the suspect(s) has (/have) not been convicted and sentenced. The “Ongoing/Unresolved” category also applies to cases where only one of the suspected killers has been convicted and sentenced.
- c) The journalist has been reported by the Member State as having been killed by foreign actors beyond national jurisdiction.
- d) A court of law has acquitted the suspected perpetrator(s) of the crime (for example due to lack of or tampered evidence).
- e) A court of law has ruled to archive the case or is otherwise unable to be processed through the judiciary system (for example, due to statutes of limitations). This category therefore also includes those cases for which a judicial process has been completed, but where no person(s) has (/have) yet been successfully held accountable in terms of due legal process, and hence where impunity in regard to the killing(s) still remains unresolved.

The UNESCO Director-General continues to request status updates for such cases, except in cases c. and e.

3 “No information received so far”

“No information received so far” is used if the Member State has never provided information to UNESCO on the status of the investigation, whether this year or in previous years.

‘Acknowledgments’, as described on page 18, are included in this category insofar as they do not include any specific information on the judicial follow-up into the cases of killings of journalists condemned by the Director-General. The Director-General continues to request status updates for such cases.

Annex B: Timeline of UN resolutions on safety of journalists adopted since 2014

2014

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 27/5 on the safety of journalists (A/HRC/RES/27/5)

This Resolution builds upon and strengthens the Human Rights Council's 2012 Resolution by urging Member States to bring perpetrators of violence against journalists including, inter alia, those who command, conspire to commit, aid and abet or cover up such crimes, to justice, and to ensure that victims and their families have access to appropriate remedies. The Resolution calls upon States to implement a number of strategies to counter impunity, such as the formation of special investigative units or independent commissions, the appointment of special prosecutors and the adoption of specific protocols and methods of investigation.

UN Security Council Resolution 2222 (S/Res/2222)

This Resolution urges all parties involved in armed conflict to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists and media professionals and to take appropriate steps to ensure accountability for crimes committed against journalists working in these situations. The Resolution also affirms that UN peacekeeping operations should report on specific acts of violence against journalists in situation of armed conflict.

2015

UN General Assembly Resolution 69/185 on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (A/RES/69/185)

This Resolution condemns unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists and strongly condemns the prevailing impunity for such attacks. It urges States to do their utmost to prevent violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy, thorough, independent and effective investigations into all alleged violence and calls upon States to create and maintain in law and practice an enabling environment for journalists.

UNESCO 196th Executive Board Decision on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (196 EX/31)

This Decision strongly encourages Member States to actively provide information, on a voluntary basis, concerning the judicial investigations of killings of journalists to UNESCO. It also requests the UNESCO Director-General to report on the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. This includes through strengthening cooperation and information sharing with professional organizations, civil society groups and other actors, facilitating capacity building in Member States and further developing the Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media and the Journalist Safety Indicators.

UN General Assembly Resolution 70/162 on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (A/RES/70/162)

This Resolution calls upon States to implement more effectively the applicable legal framework for the protection of journalists and media workers in order to combat prevailing impunity for attacks and violence against journalists. It also stresses the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international and regional levels, including through technical assistance and capacity building, with regard to helping to improve the safety of journalists at the national and local levels.

2016

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 33/2 on the safety of journalists (A/HRC/RES/33/2)

This Resolution calls upon States to ensure that measures to combat terrorism and preserve national security or public order do not arbitrarily or unduly hinder the work and safety of journalists. It also calls upon States to protect in law and in practice the confidentiality of journalists' sources. The Resolution emphasizes that in the digital age, encryption and anonymity tools have become vital for many journalists to exercise freely their work and calls upon States not to interfere with the use of such technologies.

2017

UNESCO 202nd Executive Board Decision on the progress report on safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (202 EX/Decision 5.I.K)

This Decision takes note with interest a progress report by UNESCO's Secretariat on work on safety of journalists and the issue of impunity and the Multistakeholder Consultation on Strengthening the Implementation of the UN Plan of Action. It requests the Director-General to continue work towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16.10, and monitoring of indicators 16.10.1 and 16.10.2. The Decision encourages Member States to reinforce their efforts in ensuring the voluntary implementation of the UN Plan of Action at national level and strongly urges Member States to provide information on judicial investigations into the killings of journalists. It also calls on Director-General to reinforce activities addressing the specific threats of the safety of women journalists.

UNESCO 201st Executive Board Decision on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (201 EX/Decision 5.I.I)

In this Decision, UNESCO's Executive Board expresses its commitment to the safety of journalists and media workers. It acknowledges the specific risks faced by women journalists and encourages Member States to develop national prevention, protection and prosecution initiatives. It strongly urges Member States to continue to provide voluntary responses concerning the judicial investigations of the killing of journalists and to develop effective monitoring mechanisms for this purpose.

UN General Assembly Resolution 72/175 on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (A/RES/72/175)

This Resolution condemns unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. It also condemns specific attacks on women journalists in the exercise of their work, including sexual and gender-based discrimination and violence, intimidation and harassment, online and offline. The Resolution calls upon States to implement more effectively the applicable legal framework for the protection of journalists and media workers in order to combat impunity. It also recognizes the decision of the Secretary-General to mobilize a network of focal points throughout the United Nations system to intensify efforts to enhance the safety of journalists and media workers.

UNESCO 39th General Conference Resolution on strengthening UNESCO's leadership in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (39 C/Resolution 39)

This Resolution welcomes UNESCO's efforts towards the formalisation of a system of focal points for the safety of journalists within the relevant United Nations entities. It also encourages Member States to strengthen the voluntary implementation of the UN Plan of Action at country level and invites the UNESCO Director-General to reinforce actions addressing threats to the safety of women journalists online and offline.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet (A/HRC/RES/38/7)

This Resolution emphasizes the risks with regard to the safety of journalists in the digital age, including the particular vulnerability of journalists to becoming targets of unlawful or arbitrary surveillance and/or interception of communications, in violation of their rights to privacy and to freedom of expression. It also condemns unequivocally online attacks against women, including sexual and gender-based violence and abuse of women, and calls for gender-sensitive responses that take into account the particular forms of online discrimination. It additionally calls upon States to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling online environment so that journalists may perform their work independently and without undue or unlawful interference, including by allowing them to secure their communications and to protect their sources.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 39/6 on the safety of journalists (A/HRC/RES/39/6)

This Resolution condemns unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers and expresses grave concern that the vast majority of these crimes go unpunished. It also calls upon States to strengthen national data collection, analysis and reporting on the number of verified cases of killings other harmful acts against journalists and associated media personnel, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.10.1.

The Resolution calls upon States to tackle gender-based discrimination, including sexual and gender-based violence, threats, intimidation, harassment and incitement to hatred against women journalists, online and offline. It also urges States to put in place safe gender-sensitive preventive measures and investigative procedures in order to encourage women journalists to report attacks against them, and to provide adequate support, including psychosocial support, to victims and survivors.

2018

2019

UNESCO 206th Executive Board Decision on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (206 EX/Decision 5.1.B)

In this Decision, UNESCO's Executive Board strongly urges Member States to continue to provide on a voluntary basis information on judicial investigations into these killings in response to the Director-General's requests. It further encourages States to continue to ensure the voluntary implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity at the national level, inter alia through the development of national information, prevention, protection and prosecution systems, as well as reporting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 16.10.1. It also invites the Director-General to prioritize activities addressing the specific threats to the safety of women journalists, both online and offline.

Bibliography

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. 2019. 64th Inter-Session Activity Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. Available at https://www.achpr.org/public/Document/file/English/Comm%20Mute_64_Act_Report_FEAI_ENG.pdf

Arnaudo, D. 2018. "A New Wave of Censorship: Distributed Attacks on Expression and Press Freedom." Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA). (24 May 2018). Available at <https://www.cima.ned.org/publication/new-wave-censorship-distributed-attacks-expression-press-freedom/>

Brazil Ministry for Human Rights. 2018. Aristeu Guida Da Silva Handbook – International Standards for the Protection of Human Rights of Journalists and Other Communicators. Available in Spanish <https://media.sipiapa.org/adjuntos/185/documentos/001/825/0001825035.pdf>

Chen, GM., et. al. 2018. Women Journalists and Online Harassment. The University of Texas at Austin Center for Media Engagement, 1-6.

Clark, M. and Grech, A. 2017. Journalists under pressure - Unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship in Europe. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Link to extract: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168070ad5d>

Committee to Protect Journalists. (CPJ). 2015. "452 Journalists Forced Into Exile Since 2010." www.cpj.org/exile

CPJ. 2016. "Responding to Internet Abuse," 27 April 2016. <https://cpj.org/2016/04/attacks-on-the-press-responding-to-internet-abuse.php>

CPJ (Special Report by Beiser, E.) 2017. "Record number of journalists jailed as Turkey, China, Egypt pay scant price for repression." Committee to Protect Journalists <https://cpj.org/reports/2017/12/journalists-prison-jail-record-number-turkey-china-egypt.php>

CPJ. 2017. The Best Defense. Threats to journalists' safety demand fresh approach. Available at https://cpj.org/reports/Best-Defense_WebNews.pdf

CPJ (Special Report by Beiser, E.) 2018. "Hundreds of journalists jailed globally becomes new normal." Committee to Protect Journalists <https://cpj.org/reports/2018/12/journalists-jailed-imprisoned-turkey-china-egypt-saudi-arabia.php>

CPJ.2018. "Indian freelancer receives graphic threats following false accusations against her." Committee to Protect Journalists. <https://cpj.org/2018/04/indian-freelancer-receives-graphic-threats-followi.php>

CPJ. 2019. "Egyptian photojournalist Shawkan finally free after over 5 years in jail." <https://cpj.org/2019/03/egyptian-photojournalist-shawkan-finally-free-afte.php>

Council of Europe:

- Council of Europe. "Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists". Available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom>
- Partner Organisations to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists. Democracy at risk: threats and attacks against media freedom in Europe, Annual Report 2019.
- Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 2016 at the 1253rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016806415d9#_ftn1

Declaration of the participants in the Conference "Media Freedom and Pluralism" in Sofia, 18 May 2018. Available at https://www.enpa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Latest%20updated%20version%20Sofia%20Declaration%202018_0.pdf

Donovan, J and Friedberg, B. 2019. Source Hacking: Media Manipulation in Practice. New York: Data & Society. <https://datasociety.net/output/source-hacking-media-manipulation-in-practice/>

Downie, A. "Brazil's 'Let her do her job' campaign demands respect for female sports reporters," Committee to Protect Journalists, 18 April 2018. <https://cpj.org/blog/2018/04/brazils-let-her-do-her-job-campaign-demands-respec.php>

Eckert, S. 2018. Fighting for recognition: Online abuse of women bloggers in Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. *New Media & Society*, 20(4), 1282–1302.

European Federation of Journalists. "Women's Reporting Point." <https://europeanjournalists.org/campaigns/womens-reporting-point/>

Facebook. 2017. "Facebook Safety for Journalists Guide." <https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/blog/introducing-facebook-safety-for-journalists-resources>

Freedom House. 2017. Freedom on the Net 2017. Available at https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTN_2017_Final.pdf

Freedom House. 2017. "New Report - Freedom on the Net 2017: Manipulating Social Media to Undermine Democracy." Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-freedom-net-2017-manipulating-social-media-undermine-democracy>

Global Media Monitoring Project. 2015. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/highlights/highlights_en.pdf

Harris, J., Mosdell, N. and Griffiths, J., 2016. Gender, risk and journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 10(7), pp.902-916.

Hasunuma, L. and Shin, K. 2019. #MeToo in Japan and South Korea: #WeToo, #WithYou. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 40:1, 97-111.

Hofileña, Chay F. "Fake Accounts, Manufactured Reality on Social Media." *Rappler*, October 16, 2016. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/investigative/148347-fake-accountsmanufactured-reality-social-media>

India Today. 2018. "I was vomiting: Journalist Rana Ayyub reveals horrifying account of deepfake porn plot." 21 November 2018. <https://www.indiatoday.in/trending-news/story/journalist-rana-ayyub-deepfake-porn-1393423-2018-11-21>

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. 2018. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression. <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/docs/reports/WomenJournalists.pdf>

International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT). 2017. "What If...? Safety Handbook For Women Journalists." https://www.iawrt.org/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/11/IAWRT%20Safety%20Manual_Download.10112017.pdf

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). 2018. "IFJ Survey: two-thirds of women journalists suffered gender-based online attacks," 7 December 2018. <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/human-rights/article/ifj-survey-two-thirds-of-women-journalists-suffered-gender-based-online-attacks.html>

IFJ. 2019. "Truth vs. Misinformation: the collective push back - South Asia Press Freedom Report 2018-2019." <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368232/PDF/368232eng.pdf.multi>

International Media Support (IMS). 2017. Defending Journalism. https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1_Journalist-Protection-Book-Digital-1.pdf

IMS. 2019. "Assessment Report – Fear, trauma and local journalists: Cross-border lessons in psychosocial support for journalists." Available at <https://www.mediasupport.org/publications/>

International Press Institute. 2019. Newsroom Best Practices for Addressing Online Violence against Journalists. <https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/IPI-report-online-harassment-06032019.pdf>

International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). 2014. "Violence and Harassment Against Women in the News Media: A Global Picture." <https://www.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Violence-and-Harassment-against-Women-in-the-News-Media.pdf>

International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). 2011. Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media, 2011. <https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>

International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and Trollbusters. 2018. "Attacks and Harassment. The Impact on Female Journalists and Their Reporting." Available at <https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Attacks-and-Harassment.pdf>

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. 2018. Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2018, Volume II – Annual Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 30. March 17, 2019. Available online <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/reports/annual.asp>

Isaac, M. 2019. "In New Facebook Effort, Humans Will Help Curate Your News Stories," New York Times, 20 August 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/20/technology/facebook-news-humans.html>.

Ireton, C and Posetti J. 2018. Journalism, fake news and disinformation. Paris: UNESCO. <https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews> ;

Kayali, L. 2019. "Austria's bid to end online anonymity triggers crackdown fears." Politico, 6/2/2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/austrian-conservatives-want-to-end-online-anonymity-and-journalists-are-worried/>

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). 2017. So This Is Democracy? State of media freedom in Southern Africa 2017. Available at http://misa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Full-report_STID2017.pdf

McCully, J. 2019. "Legal Responses to Online Harassment and Abuse of Journalists: Perspectives from Finland, France and Ireland." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Press Institute (IPI). <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/413552?download=true>

OSCE Ministerial Council. Decision No. 3/18 Safety of Journalists. MC.DEC/3/18 (December 2018). <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/406538?download=true>

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. "Safety of Female Journalists Online." <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/safety-female-journalists-online>

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. "#SOFJO - Safety of Female Journalists Online." <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/370331?download=true>

Pekkonen, S. and Sanomat, H. "At World Cup, female reporters seek end to harassment", International Press Institute, 6 July 2018. <https://ipi.media/at-world-cup-female-reporters-seek-end-to-harassment/>

Perlroth, N. 2016. "Hackers Used New Weapons to Disrupt Major Websites Across U.S." New York Times, 21 October 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/22/business/internet-problems-attack.html>

Posetti, J. 2017. Fighting back against prolific online harassment: Maria Ressa. In Kilman, L. 2017. An Attack on one is an attack on all: successful initiatives to protect journalists and combat impunity, p. 37-40. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259399>

Reporters Without Borders (RSF). 2014. "Round-up of Abuses Against Journalists." <https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/2014-rsf-round-up-of-abuses-against-journalists-2014.pdf>

RSF. 2015. "RSF annual round-up: 110 journalists killed in 2015." https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_2015-part_2-en.pdf

RSF. 2017. "RSF round-up: these figures are alarming." <https://rsf.org/en/reports/rsf-round-these-figures-are-alarming>

RSF. 2018. Online harassment of journalists: the trolls attack. https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_report_on_online_harassment.pdf

RSF. 2018. "Worldwide Round-Up of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018." https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/worldwide_round-up.pdf

RSF. 2018. "Women's rights" Forbidden subject." Available online at <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-shines-light-forbidden-coverage-womens-rights>

RSF. 2019. "2019 World Press Freedom Index - A cycle of fear." <https://rsf.org/fr/classement-mondial-de-la-liberte-de-la-presse-2019-la-mecanique-de-la-peur>

"SDG Reporting Guidance" <https://www.sdg16hub.org/node/312>

Taylor, M.P, Vigil, H.M. and Madalena, S., 2018. # MeToo and How It May Impact You Too Across Latin America. Labor Law Journal, 69(4), 242-244.

UNESCO:

- IPDC Council Decision, adopted at its 26th session (2008), http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2008_decision_safety_of_journalists.pdf.
- IPDC Council Decision, adopted at its 30th session (2016), https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ipdc_30_council_decisions_en.pdf

- IPDC Council Decision, adopted at its 31st session (2018), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000266235?posInSet=3&queryId=7da2d0a2-ee19-421d-8828-d103f52c4359>
- UNESCO Executive Board 201 EX/Decision 5.I.I, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/6>
- UNESCO Executive Board 202 EX/Decision 5.I.K, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259824>
- UNESCO Executive Board 206 EX/Decision 5.I.B, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367821>
- UNESCO General Conference 39 C/Resolution 39 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889>
- UNESCO General Conference 29 C/Resolution 29, available at <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/resolution29-en.pdf>.
- UNESCO General Conference 36 C/Resolution 53, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000215084>
- UNESCO Observatory of killed journalists, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory>.
- “UNESCO Member States discuss what works in national systems to protect journalists,” UNESCO, 13 December 2017. <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-member-states-discuss-what-works-national-systems-protect-journalists>
- “Sweden commits additional \$48 million to UNESCO to reinforce strategic partnership” UNESCO, 10 July 2018. <https://en.unesco.org/news/sweden-commits-additional-48-million-unesco-reinforce-strategic-partnership>
- “Academics strengthen research into safety of journalists,” UNESCO, 10 July 2019. <https://en.unesco.org/news/academics-strengthen-research-safety-journalists>

United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Global pledge on media freedom. 11 July 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-pledge-on-media-freedom/global-pledge-on-media-freedom/>

United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office. “Protecting media freedom around the world: Lord Ahmad’s UNGA 2019 statement,” 26 September 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-need-every-country-to-recognise-that-attacks-on-media-freedom-are-beyond-the-pale>

United Nations:

- OHCHR Consultation Outcome Document (2017). Strengthening the Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Journalists/OutcomeDocument.pdf>.
- OHCHR (2017). "Launch of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas." www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22282&LangID=E.
- OHCHR. "UN expert calls on the Philippines to drop charges against Rappler," 6 December 2018. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23984&LangID=E>
- Secretary General Report to the UN General Assembly, A/74/314, <https://undocs.org/A/74/314>
- UN General Assembly, A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1> (November 2017)
- UN General Assembly. A/RES/72/175 (December 2017). <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/456/40/pdf/N1745640.pdf?OpenElement>
- Human Rights Council, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 26 September 2018 - The safety of journalists, 5 October 2018, A/HRC/39/6. <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/6>
- Human Rights Council. The promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet. A/HRC/RES/38/7 (July 2018). <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/38/7>
- Human Rights Council, 'Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights', A/HRC/39/23, 6 August 2018. Available online: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/23
- UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity can be accessed in all official UN languages here: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/un-plan-on-safety-journalists_en.pdf
- "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye" (2015), A/HRC/29/32, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session29/Documents/A.HRC.29.32_AEV.doc

Voces del Sur. 2019. A Region Split. Between light and shadows. Shadow report on the Compliance of the SDG 16.10.1 in 8 LAC countries. <https://www.vocesdelsur.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Informe-1-Ingles-español-1.pdf>

Waters, S. 2018. The Effects of Mass Surveillance on Journalists' Relations with Confidential Sources: A Constant Comparative Study. *Digital Journalism*, 6(10), pp.1294-1313.

Women's Media Center. 2019. The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2019. <https://tools.womensmediacenter.com/page/-/WMCStatusofWomeninUSMedia2019.pdf>

Additional resources:

See: <https://jsrn.shef.ac.uk/>.

See: <http://www.cfom.org.uk/jsrn-repository/>.

See: <https://www.wan-ifra.org/articles/2018/01/31/the-backstory-a-media-freedom-podcast>.

See <https://www.acosalliance.org/>.

See: <https://www.onefreepresscoalition.com/>.

See: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/pressfreedom/> .

See <https://pressfreedomconference.com/>.

Intensified Attacks, New Defences

Developments in the Fight
to Protect Journalists
and End Impunity



In Focus Series | **World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development**

The aim of this Report is to provide a holistic assessment on the safety of journalists around the globe as well as a yearly update on the status of journalist killings. The study covers the period 2014-2018, as well as several developments in 2019. It takes stock of trends in killings of journalists and other attacks faced by media professionals. It is based on UNESCO's monitoring of killings as recognized by the Director-General of the Organization, as well as information provided by Member States and research by international NGOs. Among the key findings, the Report emphasizes the continued trend of impunity for attacks against journalists and highlights the increased prevalence of digital threats and harassment online, including those targeting women journalists. It sheds light on new reporting and monitoring initiatives on the safety of journalists, notably within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (and indicator 16.10.1). In addition, it covers good practices as reported by Member States, to enhance efforts to monitor, prevent, protect and prosecute in relation to safety of journalists.



9 789231 003592



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

**Communication and
Information Sector**