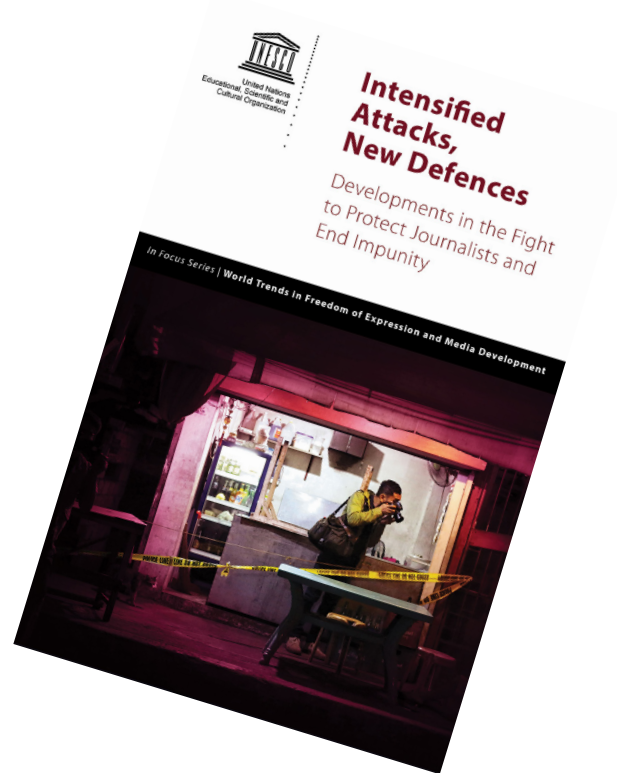




United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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



PREVIEW

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 undermine the foundations of freedom of expression, which is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This report covers the period 2014-2018.¹ It assesses trends in the safety of journalists and media professionals around the world and provides an update on the status of journalist killings, based on condemnations issued by the Director-General and recorded in the UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists.²

Key findings include the rise in the number of journalist killings and other attacks, as well as the continued trend of widespread impunity. The report highlights the changing nature of violence against journalists, with more and more journalists being killed outside of conflict areas, and the growing prevalence of threats and harassment in the online sphere. It also highlights the specific risks being faced by women journalists, including online where they are disproportionately targeted by harassment and abuse.

The intensified attacks against journalists are being met with a growing commitment to monitoring, protection, prevention and prosecution mechanisms for the safety of journalists. New coalitions, involving Member States, civil society, the media and academia reflect a stronger and more coordinated response to the protection of journalists, in line with the logic of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. There is also increasing attention to the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 16.10 on ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, as well as a growing recognition of the need for a gender-sensitive approach to ensuring the safety of journalists.

¹ It presents the main elements of a wider In Focus edition of UNESCO's report on World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. The report is available at <https://en.unesco.org/world-media-trends>

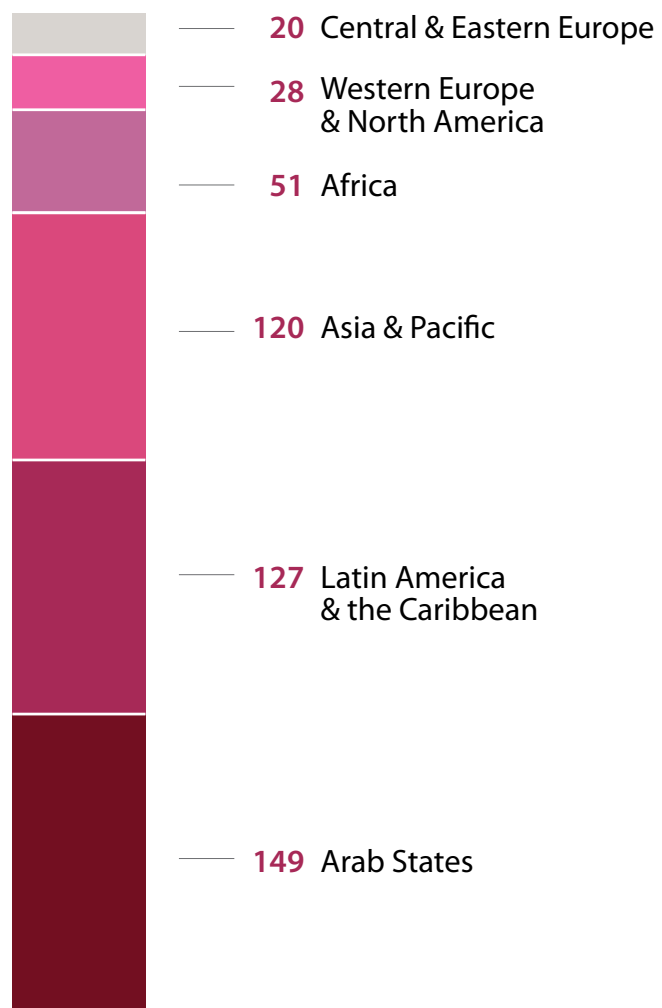
² <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory>

Key trends in journalists' killings over the past five years (2014-2018)

The period between 2014 through the end of 2018 has seen

- **Close to 500 journalists killed. On average, 2 journalists are killed every week.**
- **An 18% increase in the number of killings, as compared to the preceding five-year period (2009-2013).**
- **91% of victims were local journalists.**

NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS KILLED BY REGION IN 2014-2018



JOURNALISTS KILLED IN COUNTRIES WITH ARMED CONFLICT VS NO ARMED CONFLICT 2014-2018



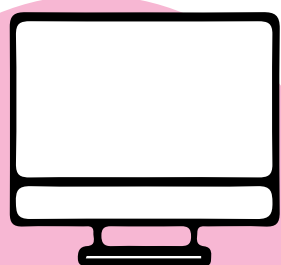
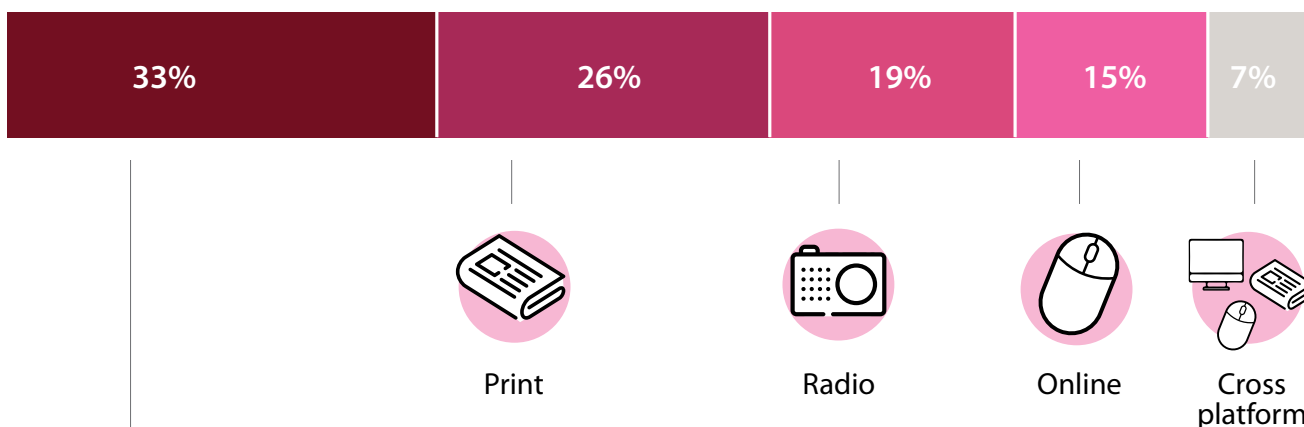
The period saw an inversion in the proportion of journalists being killed outside of conflict zones. While in 2014 and 2015 a majority of journalist killings occurred in conflict regions, in 2017 and 2018 more killings occurred outside conflict regions. This trend reflects the changing nature of violence against journalists, who are increasingly silenced for reporting on issues of corruption, crime and politics.

JOURNALISTS KILLED BY SEX IN 2014-2018



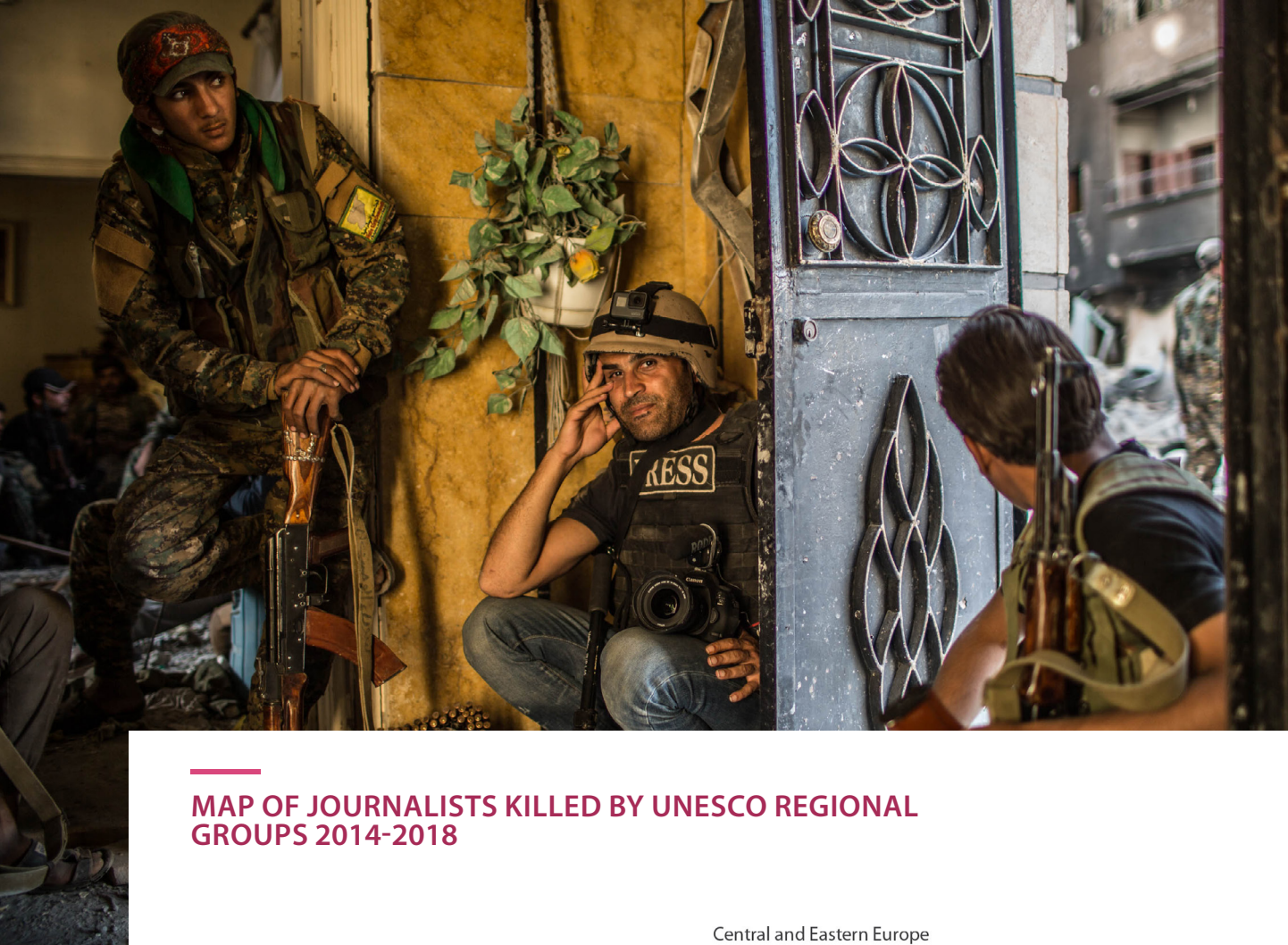
Although the vast majority of journalists killed are men (449), killings of women journalists almost doubled relative to the previous 5-year period (24 female journalists were killed in 2009-2013, compared to 46 in 2014-2018).

JOURNALISTS KILLED BY MEDIA TYPE IN 2018

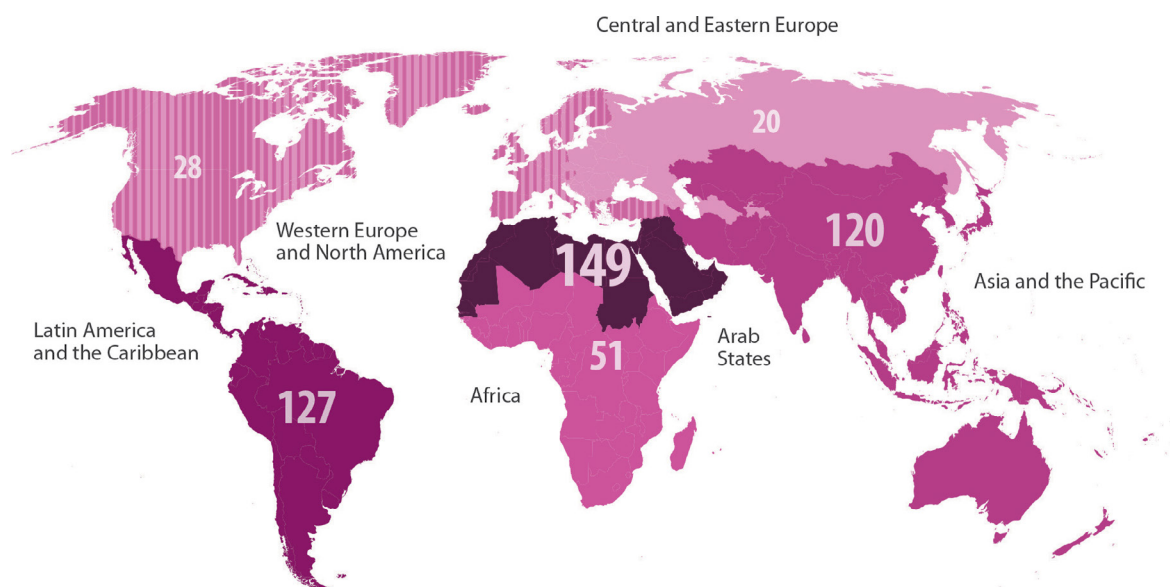


TV

In 2018, TV journalists formed the largest group among journalists killed (32 journalists), followed by reporters working mainly for print media outlets (26 journalists).





MAP OF JOURNALISTS KILLED BY UNESCO REGIONAL GROUPS 2014-2018



Over the five-year period, the three most dangerous countries were Syria, Mexico and Afghanistan. UNESCO recorded 149 killings in the Arab States, the deadliest region, compared to 20 killings in Central and Eastern Europe, the region with the lowest number of fatalities.

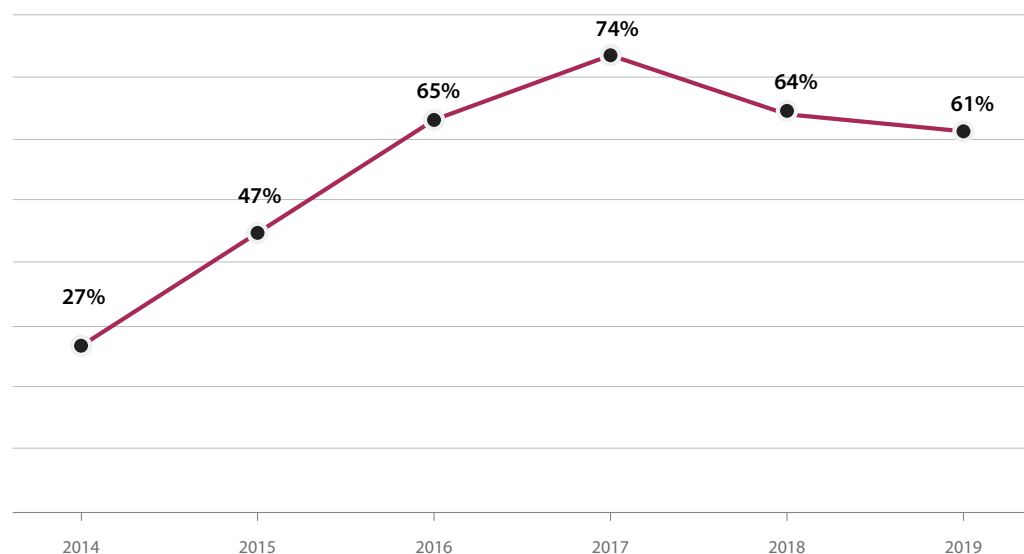
KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS PER COUNTRY 2014-2018

Syrian Arab Republic		54
Mexico		53
Afghanistan		46
Iraq		36
Yemen		31
Brazil		23
India		22
Pakistan		21
Somalia		21
Philippines		16
Libya		15
Guatemala		13
Colombia		12
Honduras		12
Palestine		10
Ukraine		10
Bangladesh		9
South Sudan		9
Turkey		9
France		8
The United States of America		7
Central African Republic		5
Russian Federation		5
Democratic Republic of the Congo		4
Guinea		4
Paraguay		4
Peru		4
El Salvador		3
Cambodia		2
Dominican Republic		2
Finland		2
Myanmar		2
Nigeria		2
Azerbaijan		1
Bulgaria		1
Burkina Faso		1
Burundi		1
Denmark		1
Egypt		1
Indonesia		1
Jordan		1
Kenya		1
Liberia		1
Maldives		1
Malta		1
Mozambique		1
Nicaragua		1
Poland		1
Saudi Arabia		1
Serbia		1
Slovakia		1
South Africa		1
Total:		495

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

The UNESCO Director-General sends an annual request to Member States to provide updates on the status of judicial follow-up of killings of journalists recorded by the Organization.³ Out of the 61 States requested in 2019 to provide an update, 37 responded.

PERCENTAGE OF STATES THAT RESPONDED TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REQUEST IN 2014-2019



In total, 86 Member States have been contacted at least once by UNESCO on cases that occurred between 2006 and 2018. Five Member States have never provided a response.⁴ Of the 1109 killings that the Director-General condemned between 2006 and 2018, the Organization has received information on 733 cases.

³ This information is recorded in UNESCO's online Observatory of killed journalists, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory>.

⁴ These Member States are: Central African Republic, Guyana, Libya, South Sudan and Yemen.

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			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					

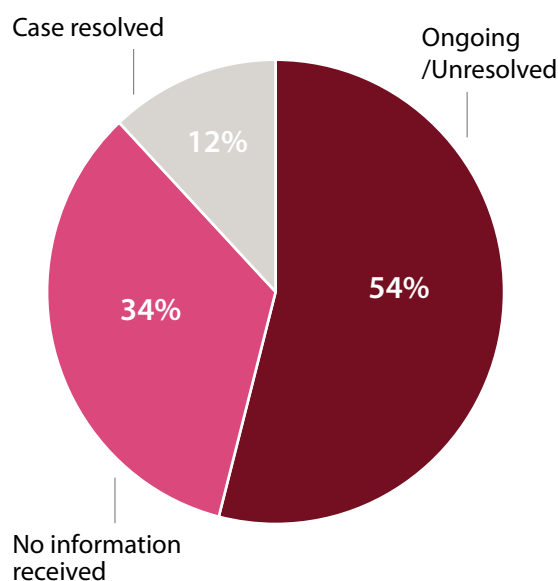
✓ Received ● Acknowledgement ∅ No indication

⁵ Where marked with "x", 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.

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.

Impunity levels high: 88% of cases of killings of journalists remain unresolved worldwide

STATUS OF JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS 2006-2018



The overwhelming majority of cases of killings of journalists recorded by UNESCO remain unresolved, with perpetrators of violent acts against journalists walking freely. 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). 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.

In 2019, among the 37 Member 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.⁷

These include actions to improve monitoring, expand protections, prevent instances of violence against journalists, and address gender-based safety risks.

Increased exposure to other forms of threats and violence

Short of fatal attacks, journalists face other harmful acts that amount to human rights violations, such as violence and intimidation. Journalists have reported facing violence at the hands of armed insurgent groups, organized crime, and state authorities.

Several studies indicate a rise in the number of journalists incarcerated, held hostage, or who have disappeared.⁸ Numerous journalists' testimonies also document the continued use of torture.

Verbal attacks against the media and "fake news"

Throughout the period 2014-2018, a major issue has been the rise in hostile, anti-media rhetoric and the discrediting of newsworthy and accurate journalistic reportage as "fake news", particularly during election periods.⁹

⁷ These States are 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.

⁸ See https://cpj.org/data/reports.php?status=Imprisoned&start_year=2018&end_year=2018&group_by=location

⁹ "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.

Escalating digital threats



- Journalists are exposed to new digital security and privacy threats from both state and non-state actors.
- There is a growing trend in the use of less visible and “distributed” 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 to manipulate journalists into circulating unverified information.¹⁰
- The cyber tools to surveil, harass and silence journalists have become more sophisticated, increasing their power to jeopardize media professionals’ personal safety and that of their sources.
- Disproportionate laws continue to be used in many countries to enforce online censorship, expand surveillance and restrict online anonymity. As a result, many journalists operate with fewer protections for their personal data,
- Cyber-mediated attacks are used to hamper journalistic work, including through the hacking of journalists’ phones and computers, ransomware and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks on news websites.

Women journalists disproportionately targeted by online and offline harassment



- New digital tools have dramatically increased the ability of aggressors to inundate journalists with attacks, including through automated bots and troll armies.
- 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, cultural background, or private life.
- Gender-based violence often intersects with racism and other forms of discrimination.
- According to recent surveys by the IFJ, the International Women’s Safety Institute (IWMF) and Trollbusters, nearly 2/3 of the women journalists surveyed said they have experienced some form of online abuse.¹¹
- Furthermore, women journalists continue to face prejudice and gender bias in their place of work. Sexual harassment remains an issue in many newsrooms.

¹⁰ 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/>

¹¹ 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>

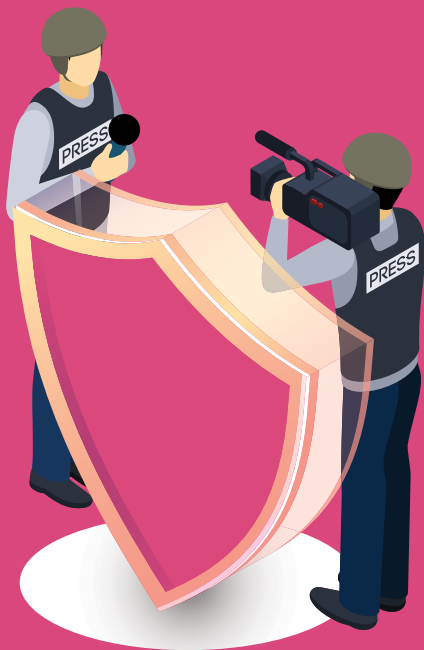


New initiatives tackling safety of women journalists and online safety

New political commitments at the international and regional levels highlight the need for a gender-specific approach for the safety of journalists. These include resolutions by the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and UNESCO as well as regional bodies such as the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR.

New initiatives are being set up to address digital security threats and tackle online abuse of journalists in all its forms. There is a growing list of digital safety toolkits, practical guides and helplines as well as new initiatives by journalists, data scientists and academics to tackle online trolls and disinformation. Among newsrooms, there also appears to be growing commitment to tackle online harassment, for example through enhanced monitoring of comments and formal support mechanisms.

Global trend toward the creation of national mechanisms on the safety of journalists



In line with the recommendations of the 2017 multi-stakeholder consultation on the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, national mechanisms focused on prevention, protection, prosecution, monitoring and reporting have been set up in at least 30 countries in the period under review.

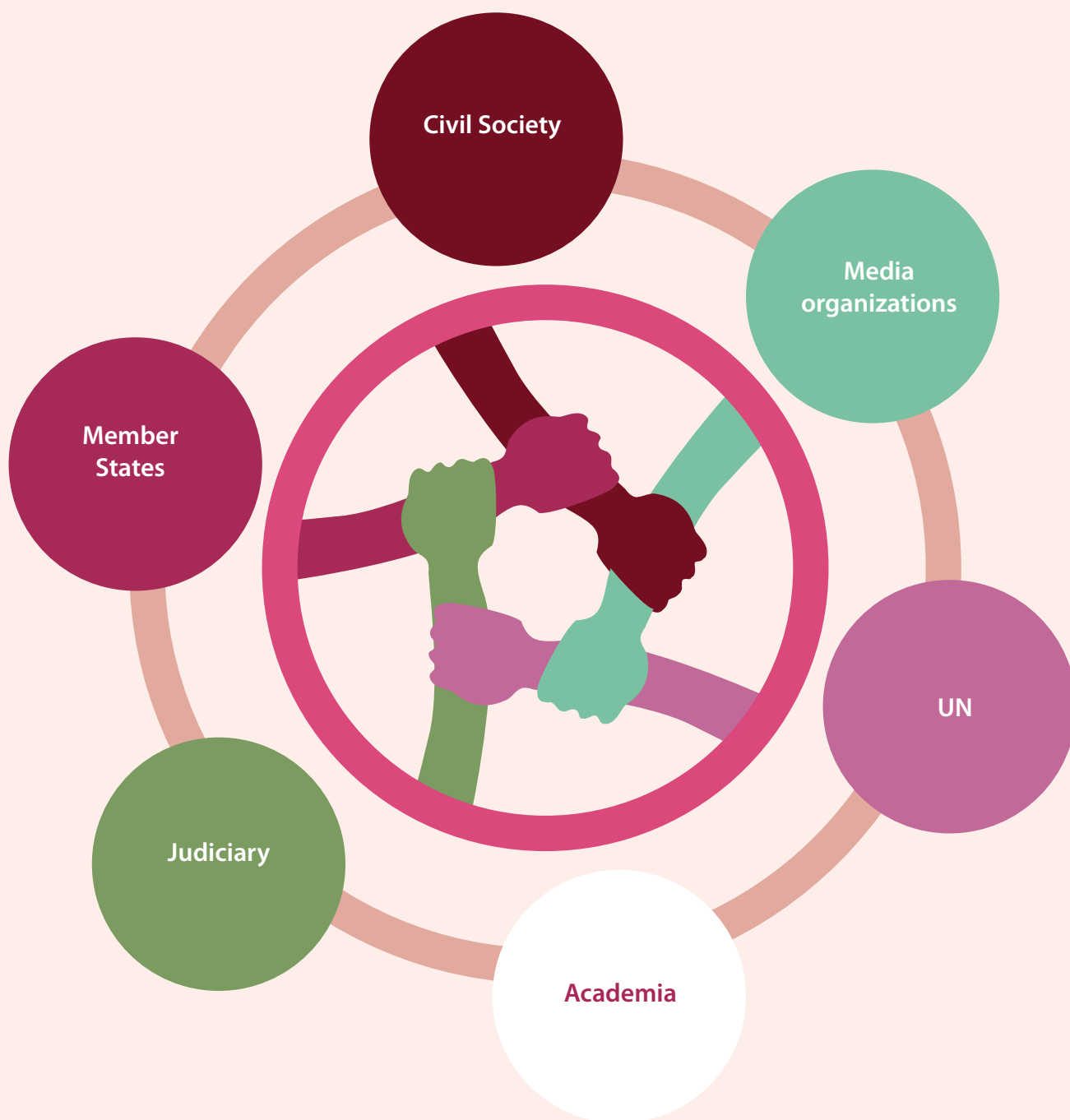
Reporting and monitoring on journalist safety has also been strengthened by the inclusion of a dedicated indicator (16.10.1) on this issue within the framework of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, on which Member States are encouraged to report in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

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;
- the African Union's work towards the set-up of a multi-stakeholder Working Group on the Safety of Journalists;
- the signing by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and OHCHR in 2017 of a Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas, which also covers journalists.

Increased coalition-building on safety of journalists

BUILDING COALITIONS AND CO-OPERATION



Media organizations

- One Free Press Coalition
- *The Washington Post's* Press Freedom Partnership
- The World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA)
- ACOS Alliance

United Nations

- UN Focal Points Network on Safety of Journalists (14 UN entities)

Civil Society

- International Civil Society Coalition on the Safety of Journalists
- IFEX

Member States

- Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists at the UN (New York and Geneva); UNESCO (Paris); and the OSCE (Vienna)
- Multi-Donor Programme (MDP) on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists
- UK and Canada led Global Conference on Media Freedom in London to launch:
 - Global Pledge on Media Freedom (Media Freedom Coalition)
 - Global Media Defence Fund

Academia

- Journalist Safety Research Network (JSRN)
- Annual conference on Safety of Journalists at Oslo Metropolitan University

Judiciary

- UNESCO training of 12,000 judicial actors in Latin America & 1,800 in Africa on international standards regarding freedom of expression and safety of journalists.
- Memoranda of Understanding established between UNESCO and:
 - » Ibero-American Summit of Judges
 - » Inter-American Court of Human Rights
 - » African Court of Human and People's Rights
 - » ECOWAS Court of Justice.
- High-level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom



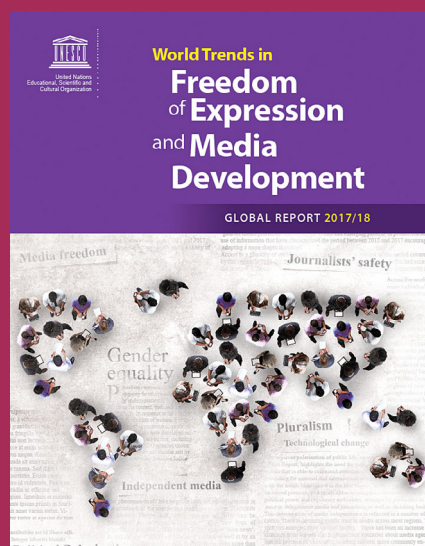
Learn more about UNESCO's monitoring of cases of killings of journalists.

Consult:

en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory

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