

12 June 2019

“Standing up against online harassment of women journalists – What works?”

**18th June 2019, 3 pm – 6 pm
Room IV, UNESCO, Paris**

The increase in attacks against female journalists and the specific threats faced by women journalists, including sexual harassment and violence, both online and offline, is a growing concern. With countless victims of violence and intimidation, there is a pressing need to explore new ways to reinforce the safety of women journalists on the ground.

UNESCO has a leadership role in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The General Conference at its 39th session invited the Director-General to reinforce activities aimed at addressing the specific threats to the safety of women journalists, both online and offline. The event is a Member State-driven initiative, in close cooperation with the UNESCO Secretariat.

Attacks on women journalists represent a clear challenge to SDG 5 on gender equality, and to SDG 16.10 which calls for public access to information and fundamental freedoms (and has an indicator specifically on safety of journalists).

The event has two objectives:

- 1) it aims to raise awareness of the global problem of safety of women journalists, with a focus on online harassment that is often paired with offline threats, intimidation and attacks; in this regard, it will also explore the impact of such harassment on the work of women journalists, and how victims themselves deal with and resist these attacks.
- 2) the event will explore practical and concrete ways to enhance the safety of women journalists online, through legislation, capacity building, education and training, including for the judiciary and the police; awareness raising and other safety and support measures, such as protective measures by media owners and managers, and journalistic peer support networks or other resources for victims of online abuse (e.g. Trollbusters’ resources; Access Now’s Digital Security Helpline; Digital Defenders’ emergency grants; Hollaback’s resources; Paladin, anti-stalking advocacy service, etc).

The event will bring together different stakeholders, including female journalists who have been targets of online harassment sharing their experience, journalists associations, media houses, legal experts and social media platforms, to discuss ways to tackle the issue of online harassment of women journalists from various angles, across regions and as part of the different roles and responsibilities of actors called upon to ensure the safety of journalists.

We are also exploring innovative ways to reach out to a broader audience, including young people, in particular journalism students, in the different regions as part of this initiative. A communication campaign may be launched on Twitter and Facebook to raise awareness about the initiative.

Some questions that will guide the discussion:

- How does online harassment and abuse affect the work of women journalists?
- What is the impact of new technologies on safety of women journalists, particularly online, and in what positive ways can technology be used to address threats against women journalists?
- What is the gender-angle to the issue of online harassment? Why does data suggest that women are three times more likely to be the target of online abuse?
- Accountability/Impunity issues: how can abusers be held accountable and impunity be combatted?
- What are different roles and responsibilities of key actors in creating safe spaces for women journalists? How are media organisations addressing this issue, what policies for health and safety issues are in place? What more can they do to help create safe spaces? What is the role of social media providers?
- What are the strategies adopted by Member States that have successfully advanced monitoring, prevention, protection against, or prosecution of attacks against women journalists?
- What country-specific challenges need to be taken into account when developing national mechanisms? What are the challenges for Member States in monitoring and reporting on attacks against women journalists, including within the framework of the SDGs?

Agenda

Time: 3 p.m. - 6 p.m., Room IV
(English and French translation)

15:00 - 15:15:

- Opening remarks by Mr. Moez Chakchouk, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO
- Welcoming remarks by H.E. Ms. Claudia Reinprecht, Ambassador of Austria to UNESCO

15:15 - 16:30:

PANEL 1: The impact of online harassment: women journalists' perspectives

- Moderator: Ms. Nadia Massih, broadcast journalist, France24
- Ms. Francine Compton, journalist, executive producer, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Director of the Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom, Canada
- Ms. Clarice Gargard, journalist, Dutch UN Women's Representative, the Netherlands
- Ms. Tine Johansen, Deputy Chair of the Danish Union of Journalists, Denmark
- Ms. Azizatu Sani, journalist, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Nigeria

16:30 - 17:50:

PANEL 2: Practical and legal measures to tackle online harassment of women journalists

- Moderator: Ms. Nadia Massih, broadcast journalist, France24
- Ms. Nighat Dad, lawyer, Executive Director, Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan
- Ms. Audrey Herblin-Stoop, Head of Public Policy France & Russia, Twitter, France
- Mr. Christophe Israel, Executive Editorial Director, Libération, France
- Ms. Martina Kronström, Managing Partner, Attorney, Sotamaa & Co Attorneys Ltd, Finland
- Ms. Neide de Oliveira, Federal Prosecutor, Brazil
- Ms. Gill Phillips, Director of Editorial and Legal Services, The Guardian, United Kingdom

Closing Remarks:

- Mr. Moez Chakchouk, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

Followed by a verre d'amitié in Salle Pas Perdus.