

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT CHALLENGES
TO THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS**

**Prepared on the occasion of the UNESCO Media Leaders Conference
on the Safety of Journalists**

by

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INTRODUCTION

Violence and harassment against journalists across the world have increased significantly during the past decade. While uncertainty and risk are inherent in any dangerous environment, "[m]ore journalists have been killed or kidnapped in the last three years than in any period since we began keeping records [in 1992]," said Robert Mahoney, Deputy Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The vast majority of those killed and abducted are local journalists in countries beset by repressive governments, war, organized crime, and/or corruption. Countless journalists have been compromised, attacked, harassed, kidnapped, imprisoned, or killed. The majority are freelancers, who tend to have limited funding and training and, often, no established media outlet to fully support them.¹

There are many factors that pose threats to media workers: conflicts, civil unrest, hit squads, rogue militias, rape and other gender-based attacks, digital harassment, emotional trauma, drug cartels, bombs and crossfire, natural disasters, and epidemics reflect just a few. Many news organizations, particularly in the developing world, cannot afford resources that might make journalists safe, such as security training, legal aid, encryption software, flak jackets, and bodyguards. Furthermore, even media workers employed by comparatively affluent Western news organizations lack awareness about essential training and other resources provided by NGOs or private companies.

This overview report highlights key themes that affect journalists' safety globally, including: 1) impunity for crimes against journalists, which fosters killings and abductions; 2) the range of dangers facing journalists; 3) the lack of resources for comprehensive security training and the hands-off approach of many news media organizations, particularly related to freelance and local journalists in violent societies lacking press freedom; and 4) steps being taken to address the issue.

The report concludes with recommendations for U.N. member states and news media organizations. It comes in the context of growing attention worldwide, much of it inspired by the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (the Plan). The Plan highlights the importance of concerted action by states, journalists, editors, owners, NGOs, and others, without intruding on their different roles and mutual autonomy. Progress has been made in garnering increased attention at the level of UN resolutions. There is growing cooperation among NGOs, and international jurisprudence is being strengthened. The UN Plan defines journalists broadly, including social media users who produce a significant amount of journalistic content. In this context, safety initiatives are developing within the media community (including community media), and this report is aimed to help inform and strengthen these in particular.

¹ UNESCO IPDC, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230101E.pdf>

This report seeks to increase the understanding of media leaders about the threats inherent in the practice of journalism worldwide and suggests what can be done to mitigate these dangers. Media actors must be among the first to speak out about a muzzled or threatened press and the harm it poses to free speech and a healthy society.

We hope this broad look at the media landscape will help participants at the UNESCO Media Leaders Conference on the Safety of Journalists on February 5, 2016 consider the limits of existing responses and consider additional ones. Most importantly, it aims to inspire participants to contemplate and enact steps to better protect journalists working around the globe.

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I. JOURNALISTS' SAFETY AROUND THE WORLD

The issue of journalists' safety has received increasing attention within the media industry worldwide during the past few years. While many journalists who report in dangerous environments, in their home countries or as foreign correspondents, consider uncertainty and risk to be inherent in their work, there are many security threats that can be mitigated. While some nations or regions may be more risky for journalists in general, media workers also may face perils as a result of the specific issues they cover.

This overview is compiled from research and personal interviews with journalists and leading media professionals involved in the issue of journalism security. Research included reports from press freedom non-governmental organizations, industry best practices and standards, and academic research.

What follows is a summary of some of the key challenges that journalists face, which include impunity, threats and violence, and a lack of resources and support from editorial staff and publishers.

II. IMPUNITY

Impunity remains one of the greatest challenges to the safety of journalists around the world. As violence against and harassment of journalists goes unpunished, the problem persists and even increases. However, if real legal consequences exist, perpetrators may think twice before committing such acts. The problem of impunity for crimes committed against journalists is acute and enduring, and it must be addressed by all stakeholders – especially government and state representatives – in order to have any hope of resolution.

According to the UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, fewer than six percent of 680 murders of journalists between 2006-2014 have been resolved.² The issue remains so significant that the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has taken the measure of publishing an Impunity Index,³ which calculates unsolved murders of journalists as a percentage of each country's population. Each year, the index includes murders that occurred during a one-year period and that remain unsolved. Only nations with five or more unsolved murders are included on the index. Cases are considered unsolved when no convictions have been obtained. CPJ's Impunity Index is compiled as part of the organization's Global Campaign Against

² UNESCO IPDC, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230101E.pdf>

³ Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/reports/2015/10/impunity-index-getting-away-with-murder.php>

Impunity.⁴ According to the 2015 Index, Somalia, Iraq, and Syria were among the worst countries in the world in terms of impunity for crimes committed against journalists.⁵

International humanitarian law also offers some recommendations to protect journalists. Article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions provides that journalists are entitled to all rights and protections granted to civilians in international armed conflicts. The same holds true in non-international armed conflicts by virtue of customary international law (Rule 34 of the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) Customary Law Study). In addition, according to ICRC legal expert Robin Geiss, "In order to perceive the full scope of the protection granted to journalists under humanitarian law, one simply has to substitute the word 'civilian' as it is used throughout the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols with the word 'journalist.'"⁶

Furthermore, several legal and UN-based initiatives specifically address the issue of journalists' safety, including but not limited to:

- **UN Security Council Resolution 1738** (adopted on 23 December 2006): This resolution specifically condemns attacks against journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel during armed conflicts and calls upon all parties to end such practices. In addition, the lengthy Resolution declares that journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel and their equipment shall be considered as civilians and respected and protected as such. The Resolution also calls upon all parties to an armed conflict to comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law, and urges states and all other parties to an armed conflict to do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel.
- **Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** This provision states that every individual has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- **UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression:** The Special Rapporteur gathers relevant information relating to violations of the right to freedom of expression such as those against journalists and makes recommendations on ways to better promote and protect the rights of media workers and other related

⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/campaigns/impunity>

⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/reports/2015/10/impunity-index-getting-away-with-murder.php>

⁶ International Committee of the Red Cross, <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/interview/protection-journalists-interview-270710.htm>

professionals. Current Special Rapporteur David Kaye was appointed in August 2014.

- **UN International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists** (held annually on 2 November): This landmark resolution condemns all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. It also urges UN member states to do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability, bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers, and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies. It further calls upon states to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference.
- **UN World Press Freedom Day** (held annually on 3 May): World Press Freedom Day, or just World Press Day, was established by the UN to raise awareness of the importance of freedom of the press and remind governments of their duty to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression enshrined under Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and marking the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek, a statement of free press principles put together by African newspaper journalists in 1991. UNESCO marks World Press Freedom Day by conferring the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize on a deserving individual, organization, or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger.

Despite these measures, calls to action, and recognitions, physical attacks against journalists by government or militant groups are often not prosecuted. As of the writing of this paper, CPJ has 69 open cases posted on its Impunity Index. Eliminating impunity for crimes against journalists is a key aspect of ensuring freedom of the press and promoting free expression. Holding perpetrators accountable is one way to do so; others include ensuring protection of journalists by authorities, as well as building robust legal frameworks that protect freedom of the press.

III. TYPES OF THREATS

Journalists regularly endure threats, intimidation, and abuse in the course of their work. This is meant to frighten, harm, and ultimately silence them. Several kinds of threats endanger journalists' safety, including assassinations, physical attacks, material risk, threats and intimidation, digital harassment, and sexual harassment and violence. Frequent perpetrators include government actors or militant groups who dislike what a

journalist is reporting. Over the last few years, journalists have reported an increase of the categories of abuse or danger described below.

i. Threats to Physical Well-being and Personal Safety

- General harassment by authorities or militant groups, which may include searches of body, home and workplace; street harassment; extortion; surveillance; and sexual harassment.
- Arbitrary detainment, detention, or imprisonment.
- Expulsion from the country.
- Disease.
- Crime, which may include retaliation against journalists who report on corruption or trafficking.
- Exposure to war zones, which may include gunfire, shelling, air strikes, and explosions.
- Protests, including risk resulting either from the response of law enforcement or activity of armed groups or demonstrators. These include beatings, gender-based violence, gunfire, shelling, gassing, trampling, and explosions.
- Physical violence or torture.
- Kidnapping or “disappearing”.
- Gender-based violence.
- Rape and other forms of sexual assault.
- Death threats and assassination. (Reports of journalists being killed have significantly risen in the past decade. According to CPJ, 71 journalists were killed in 2015,⁷ compared with 61 journalists in the previous year.⁸)

ii. Material Risk and Abuse

- Theft or impounding of equipment or documentation.

⁷ Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/killed/2015/>

⁸ Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/killed/2014/>

- Destruction of equipment or materials.
- Ransacking of lodging, housing, and offices.
- Arson.
- Loss or destruction of property which results in additional costs for journalists and media houses, which may lead to financial hardship.

iii. Threats and Intimidation

- Written, verbal, and digital threats to a journalist's safety or the safety of their family and friends.
- Surveillance.
- Hate speech.
- Forced shutdown of media outlets.

iv. Digital Harassment and Attacks

- Direct intimidation via email.
- Harassment on social media. (This may include instigating other individuals and groups to publicly defame and question a journalist's character.)
- Trolling. (This includes posting deliberately offensive or provocative comments online with the intention of eliciting an angry or upset response.)
- Leaked information or doxxing. (This type of abuse entails the public release of private information such as physical address or personal details.)
- Impeded or cut electronic communications and access.
- Hacking private accounts for identity theft or to send false messages that harm a journalist's standing.

In our view, digital harassment is an area of threat to journalists that is worth exploring here in more detail. As more journalists engage in digital journalism and use digital tools in their reporting and publishing, they have received increasing threats to their safety online. Electronic surveillance and eavesdropping can help a hostile party track the

physical movements of journalists and monitor their confidential communications with sensitive sources. This endangers both the reporters and the contacts who trust them.

Little legislation exists on an international or national level to protect journalists from digital harassment and threats. A large number of media workers lack encryption software that can protect their communications – up to a point – or know about cyber safety measures like password protection, limiting exposure and information shared on social media, or communicating through code. News organizations and regulatory bodies continue to struggle with balancing freedom of expression with appropriate steps to combat cyber abuse.

Some news organizations have begun training employees in cyber-protection tools like TOR and PGP, but most organizations do not yet have formal policies. Digital data hacking and theft has proven to be another means of intimidating and silencing media professionals; Bloomberg News and *The New York Times* are just two major media organizations among many that have been hacked. This leads to a distrust of journalists in some communities that view them as unable to maintain interviewee confidentiality and safety.

In addition, while many journalists experience some degree of online harassment, women journalists face unique abuse that is often gender-based. In “Violence and Harassment Against Women in the News Media: A Global Picture,” a 2013 IWMF survey documenting attacks against women journalists, more than 25% of 921 respondents reported threats, substantial criticism, name-calling, verbal abuse, and sexual harassment online.⁹

For example, cameras planted clandestinely in the home of Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova captured intimate encounters between her and her boyfriend. When she refused to stop reporting on corruption at the highest levels of government, images of the videos were posted online. After she accused the government of engaging in a smear campaign, she was arrested on charges of incitement to suicide – widely criticized by human rights organizations as bogus – and sentenced to seven and a half years in prison, where she remains today, for embezzlement and tax evasion.¹⁰

Trolling is also a growing phenomenon. As Amanda Smith, a freelance journalist who specializes in reporting on Kurdish issues in both Turkey and Syria has relayed, it is difficult to know what to do when confronted daily with hundreds of threatening, sexualized, libelous messages that put the subject’s life and career in danger.¹¹ While there is a lot of camaraderie and collaboration in combatting the physical threats faced

⁹ International Women’s Media Foundation and International News Safety Institute, “Violence and Harassment Against Women in the News Media: A Global Picture,” 2014

¹⁰ OSCE, *The Safety of Female Journalists Online*, Elisa Lees Munoz, International Women’s Media Foundation, “Beyond Anecdotal Reports: Some Hard Data about the Online Abuse of Women Journalists,” 2016

¹¹ OSCE, *The Safety of Female Journalists Online*, Elisa Lees Munoz, International Women’s Media Foundation, “Beyond Anecdotal Reports: Some Hard Data about the Online Abuse of Women Journalists,” 2016

by journalists, Smith said, facing threats in the digital space “is a very lonely place.” Aside from other people who have experienced it,” Smith said, “Few defend those targeted.” Like many journalists, she lives in a country where she is not a citizen and her country of citizenship is not the place where the attack is happening. The attack is not happening in any physical, single place, because it is happening virtually.¹²

All journalists must expose trolling and robustly defend their colleagues who are targeted with online abuse. Law enforcement needs to catch up to the crime, and trolls and perpetrators of online harassment should be exposed.¹³

Doxing also occurs most frequently with women journalists and leads to increased physical risk. The objective of gender-based online harassment is to silence female journalists and their colleagues.¹⁴

v. Sexual Harassment and Assault

- Request for sexual favors in exchange for safety, information, continued employment, or access. This may range from demands for intimate photos to coerced sexual acts.
- Sexual assaults by co-workers, supervisors, support staff, sources, or random actors.

We also feel that it is worth expounding further on the area of threats and abuse against women journalists, which, despite its widespread prevalence, is largely underreported. While by and large, women reporters are most often victims of sexual threat and assault in the field, journalists of both genders are believed to generally not report sexual harassment and violence because of the social stigma associated with it and the intimate nature of these acts. Aside from public shaming, they may fear damage to their careers by being labeled as a liability by superiors or being denied substantive but higher-risk assignments. Aside from the psychological distress it causes, sexual violence often carries the additional risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

In order to help alleviate these risks, some work groups have created recommendations for journalists to follow while reporting such as the National Union of Journalists Equality Council’s list of safety guidelines dedicated to women journalists and photographers,¹⁵ which recommend best practices such as meeting visitors or sources with a colleague instead of going alone, and researching gender-based cultural norms

¹² OSCE, The Safety of Female Journalists Online, Elisa Lees Munoz, International Women’s Media Foundation, “Beyond Anecdotal Reports: Some Hard Data about the Online Abuse of Women Journalists,” 2016

¹³ OSCE, The Safety of Female Journalists Online, Elisa Lees Munoz, International Women’s Media Foundation, “Beyond Anecdotal Reports: Some Hard Data about the Online Abuse of Women Journalists,” 2016

¹⁴ OSCE, The Safety of Female Journalists Online, Elisa Lees Munoz, International Women’s Media Foundation, “Beyond Anecdotal Reports: Some Hard Data about the Online Abuse of Women Journalists,” 2016

¹⁵ National Union of Journalists, <https://www.nuj.org.uk/documents/nuj-guidelines-on-violence-against-women>

when reporting in foreign countries. Unfortunately, these measures do not eliminate largely unpredictable threats from a multiplicity of situations and sources.

vi. Other Common Forms of Harassment

- Legal persecution, including threat of civil or criminal lawsuit.
- Infringements on licensing and operations.
- Censorship, including pressure from government or local authorities and pressure from media owners or editors seeking to protect their private interests. This is particularly prevalent in countries where media are state-owned and journalists are unable to report on government affairs without risk to their safety.
- Inability to move freely due to roadblocks, ethnic conflicts, and checkpoints that limit access.
- Demands for payment for information or extortion.
- Some governments may also take legal action against journalists such as charges of treason and physical or electronic surveillance.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the absence of official action to prevent or punish crimes against journalists is a serious problem. Government officials may fail to intervene or protect journalists when they are threatened or attacked by outside parties such as militant groups or drug cartels. Besides not providing protection to journalists in distress, many states fall short in combatting impunity for attacks on journalists. To make matters worse, repressive governments sometimes take legal action against journalists such as charges of treason, incitement to violence, or terrorism. They also target journalists with physical or electronic surveillance. This results from an absence of political will, weak justice systems, corruption, and chaos that allow perpetrators to literally get away with murder.

IV. LACK OF RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FROM EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT AND PUBLISHERS

Both staff and freelance journalists across the globe report a lack of resources from the media organizations they work for to make their work safer, including access to lawyers and trauma therapists, safety training, bodyguards, armored vehicles, body armor, affordable insurance, satellite telephones, and cyber protection tools and training. In addition, many freelancers have said that a lack of adequate pay leads them to cut

corners and take risks such as taking public transportation or not using a fixer. A recent report by the Pew Research Center stated that 88 percent of 671 journalists surveyed identify decreasing resources in newsrooms as one of their top concerns.¹⁶ In addition, throughout IWMF interviews, media professionals reported a decrease in financial resources and equipment. Journalists have also identified a significant lack of physical, psychological, and digital safety training and protocols.

Some journalists simply give up on covering particular stories or beats because of a lack of support and protection from their media organizations. In Mexico, for example, the intimidation and assassinations of colleagues have led many local reporters to cease comprehensive reporting about drug cartels. Marcela Turati, co-founder of the grassroots journalism support group Periodistas de a Pie, states, “killing a journalist has no punishment. The sources of risk are mainly government officials and organized criminal organizations often in collusion with each other. Corruption in the allocation of advertising has corrupted a large number of media [organizations] that serve government spokesmen, silence the problem and not [sic] care for their journalists.”¹⁷

Some large news organizations do have safety measures and protocols in place to protect their journalists and media professionals such as implementing detailed communications plans in the case of danger, providing protective gear, paying for hostile environment and first aid training, and providing robust digital tools. However, the vast majority of media organizations around the world do not have such safety measures in place.

Freelancers and journalists in developing countries and in societies that lack press freedom are especially unlikely to be given any tools by the media organizations that hire them that might keep them safe. They often work alone on stories, in dangerous environments, and without health and travel insurance or safety equipment such as flak jackets and helmets. In order to save money, they stay in unguarded hotels, ride on insecure public transportation, and do not hire translators or fixers who can travel with them and provide life-saving advice about the reporting terrain. They rarely carry the satellite telephones that can serve as a lifeline in a remote location. They do not benefit from security advisers or lawyers who can assist them when they are detained or charged with wrongdoing by authorities. In short, they lack the financial safety net of staff reporters. Rania Abouzeid, a freelance journalist from Lebanon, said that she most often works alone on stories, doing her own fixing, translating, and logistics in dangerous environments. She has asked media organizations for support and received mixed responses, with some offering help and others refusing assistance. All of her work is conducted in dangerous regions or environments.¹⁸ It is also noteworthy that a freelancer was the only foreign journalist who contracted Ebola during the recent outbreak in West Africa.

¹⁶ Pew Research Center Journalism and Media, <http://www.journalism.org/2015/02/05/investigative-journalists-and-digital-security>

¹⁷ Periodistas de a Pie, <http://www.periodistasdeapie.org.mx/entrevista-1.php>

¹⁸ Personal interview, 2015

Journalists face additional costs that media outlets often do not cover while working in unstable regions. These may include:

- Insurance.
- Hostile environment and first aid training.
- Protective equipment, including body armor and medical kits, satellite telephones (for emergency communication in remote areas with no cell phone coverage), and data encryption tools.
- Hotels that are well-guarded and have 24-hour wifi, plumbing, and electricity.
- Hire of reliable vehicles and drivers.
- Hire of dependable and vetted support staff like translators, fixers, and security guards.

Other related challenges may include:

- Balancing personal safety with the risk required to fully report a story. This dilemma especially plagues photographers and videographers.
- Unpredictability of violence or threats.
- Lack of access to training, equipment, or affordable insurance and psychological counseling.
- Lack of information sharing across the media industry and related communities.
- Lack of knowledge about international and national laws that, on paper, protect free speech.

Emotional distress is a common side effect of prolonged exposure to violence and living under threat which media organizations have not addressed satisfactorily. Some of the manifestations of emotional distress stemming from working in dangerous environments include: depression, numbness, anxiety, panic attacks, inability to concentrate, substance abuse, and self-destructive behavior such as driving too fast, seeking out violent situations, or even suicide. Manifestations of this burden for media professionals range from inner turmoil to diagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Journalists who have faced traumatic experiences in their work may self-medicate with alcohol or drugs, and have difficulty admitting to supervisors or peers that they need help. The reluctance can stem from fear of social stigma or not getting assignments, particularly among survivors of sexual assault. Freelancers are even more vulnerable because they often live from assignment to assignment, cannot afford the cost of therapy, or work in countries where counseling is not available. Continued emotional distress can lead to decreased performance at work, bad decision making in volatile situations, risk taking that endangers others, and interpersonal tension.

V. CURRENT SAFETY PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES, AND THE GAPS FOR JOURNALISTS' SAFETY

Recently, there has been a concerted effort to improve safety for journalists by media professionals across the world. Several media development organizations are dedicated solely to the issue of journalists' safety. Appendix A includes a consolidated list of organizations working on this issue, although it should be noted that many others are also engaged on this topic. Leading media professionals have collaborated to create guidelines and initiatives. This report does not seek to replicate those guidelines, but to briefly highlight them in order to illustrate what has been and is being done on the issue of journalists' safety and to shine a spotlight on areas where change is needed.

Two complementary safety guidelines were created and disseminated in 2015 by media professionals who are dedicated to journalists' safety: The Culture of Safety Task Group's **Global Safety Principles and Practices for Freelance Journalists and News Organizations** and the **International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists for Nations and News Organizations**. These guidelines follow the Organization for Safety and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Vilnius Recommendation on Safety of Journalists and the Resolution of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Safety of Journalists and Media Practitioners in Africa, both published in 2011.

In addition, some media organizations have come together within national borders to develop safety measures. For example, Pakistani media leaders met in November 2015 to discuss journalists' safety nationally and produced a list of guidelines, which include having designated emergency contacts inside the newsroom, mandating first aid training for journalists, and holding security briefings before embarking on risky assignments.¹⁹

What follows is a brief summary of these guidelines and the challenges that remain for implementing them. Media professionals are encouraged to review these guidelines at length and incorporate them into their organizational strategies.

¹⁹ International Journalist's Network, <https://ijnet.org/en/blog/pakistani-media-leaders-compile-list-safety-recommendations-journalists>

i. Culture of Safety Global Safety Principles and Practices

The Culture of Safety's Global Safety Principles and Practices were unveiled in February 2015²⁰ specifically with freelance journalists in mind; however, aspects of the guidelines are incorporated by some media organizations for all employees. Seventy-seven organizations signed on and committed to practicing these guidelines. The guidelines provide recommendations for both freelance journalists and media organizations. Suggestions for journalists include safety measures such as completing hostile environment and first aid training and conducting thorough and regular risk assessments. It also includes limited guidelines for collaborating with news organizations. Recommendations for news organizations included guidelines for contracting in-country and freelance journalists, which included providing safety training and equipment, factoring into budgets additional costs freelancers may bear, giving freelance and local journalists fair recognition for their work, and taking equal responsibility for a freelance or local journalist's well-being when publishing their work.

The Culture of Safety group expanded its guidelines in October 2015²¹ to propose additional initiatives related to journalists' safety. These initiatives included researching the possibility of a freelance insurance pool, sharing security information across media organizations, proposing safety training standards, increasing access to and awareness of security trainings for freelance journalists, and adopting anti-discrimination policies.

ii. International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists

The International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists was released in December 2015 as a complement to the Global Safety Principles and Practices. The Declaration focused on the responsibilities of governments and relevant institutions to protect journalists and offered best practices for media organizations that highlight steps they and their staff can take to create safer conditions for media workers.

The Declaration reiterated that responsibilities of governments and relevant institutions should include treating crimes and threats against media professionals as human rights violations. The document emphasized the government's responsibility to ensure the safety of journalists. In addition, the Declaration detailed the rights of journalists and decried violations of those rights and interference with reporting. The Declaration stressed that nations should take appropriate measures to prevent violence against journalists and hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their crimes.

The Declaration also offered several recommendations for news organizations and journalists, including the recommendations that media organizations should adopt effective safety protocols for journalists; increase access to high-quality safety training,

²⁰ DART Center for Journalism and Trauma, http://dartcenter.org/content/global-safety-principles-and-practices#.VN40r_nF-Sp

²¹ DART Center for Journalism and Trauma, <http://dartcenter.org/content/sotloff-foundation-and-four-us-television-networks-sign-onto-safety-principles>

which includes digital safety, trauma, and environmental hazards; develop tools and procedures aimed at ensuring the physical, psychological, and digital safety of journalists; maintain credibility and independence of media and practice ethical journalistic standards; and put the Global Safety Principles and Practices into effect. In turn, journalists should understand international and national laws, as well as international human rights standards and principles. The Declaration also recommended dedicating attention and implementing appropriate measures to gender-specific safety concerns that affect women journalists.

iii. Challenges and Barriers to Implementation of Best Practices

Despite strong and well-considered recommendations to improve journalists' safety, challenges remain. Because all of these guidelines are voluntary, news organizations, media professionals, and other stakeholders must work to encourage and adopt these practices.

As described above, media outlets often fail to apply the above practices in their work with freelance journalists. Media organizations may not know what security training freelancers have completed, so they cannot guarantee use of standard safety procedures and precautions. Organizations may not be willing or able to cover the additional costs for working with freelance journalists according to the practices listed above. In addition, some media organizations fear legal risks and obligations in taking responsibility for freelancer safety. To address these challenges, media organizations may want to consider more formal policies or guidelines when contracting freelancers.

iv. Security Policies and Protocols at News Media Organizations

Most media organizations worldwide do not have an explicit set of policies for security. In many cases where policies exist, journalists are not aware of or have not been involved in either formulating or evaluating them.

However, many news organizations are working to improve their security policies to address a greater range of risks, including digital security threats. Some policies include the following protocols:

- *Risk assessments conducted before assignments by regional managers, dedicated security advisors, and directors.* These often include emergency communication protocols for when staff are in the field.
- *A dedicated editorial safety team.* This would be made up of a manager and a security advisor who devise security protocols for journalists who work in high-risk environments.

- *High-level editorial approval for risky assignments.* Some organizations do not allow staff to pursue assignments deemed too dangerous.
- *Provision of security equipment.* Ensuring that journalists have appropriate tools to conduct their work and respond to emergencies, including satellite phones, medical kits, and body armor.
- *Mandatory insurance.* This may apply to staff journalists only. Many media development organizations and international task forces on journalists' safety have pressed for media organizations to not commission work from uninsured freelancers.
- *Social media and digital policy.* Some organizations may be unwittingly putting their reporters in danger by insisting on an active Twitter or Facebook presence despite the increased vulnerability to harassment online.
- *Treatment of stress and trauma.* Some of the bigger and better-funded organizations have set up confidential hotlines or provide therapist referrals for staff experiencing emotional stress from their work. These outlets are moving towards creating a newsroom culture that removes the stigma sometimes associated with seeking psychological help. Managers or counselors might debrief staff after difficult assignments and create a system where colleagues look after each other, know how to spot signs of emotion turmoil, and know when to encourage treatment and lend support. NGOs and journalist unions provide these services in some countries, but media owners and leaders must work to ensure the well-being of their staff.

Some news organizations engage in constant monitoring and revision of their safety policies, updating them regularly to address new needs. But many policies fall out of date, or are put on paper but not into practice. Many media organizations do not have policies in place on journalists' safety at all, or their policies are vague and do not make real commitments. In addition, while some media organizations have security policies that include specific best practices for women journalists, many fail to include risks with unique gendered components.

Organizational policy varies in its treatment of emergency situations and high risks encountered by its staff. Some organizations may temporarily or permanently relocate a journalist, reach out to appropriate groups or authorities to address the threats, or take action to promote public awareness of the problem.

v. Security Training

Training relevant to journalist security includes:

- Hostile environment, often conducted by ex-military personnel. This sometimes includes modules on civil unrest and war.
- Risk analysis and contingency planning.
- Situational awareness.
- Emergency first aid.
- Kidnapping and hostage negotiation.
- Natural disaster preparedness. (Response to earthquakes, epidemics, hurricanes, etc.)
- Digital security, including encryption methods and general cyber hygiene.
- Psychological and emotional self-care.

News organizations vary in the types of training they offer. Some organizations, like Reuters, have in-house hostile environment courses. Some do not offer training at all. Few provide comprehensive training, and even fewer offer refresher courses.

vi. Digital Security

While some news organizations have policies on digital security and offer training to secure communications, many organizations do not. In addition, there is scant legislation on a national or international level that adequately addresses digital harassment. In many cases, law enforcement agencies simply issue a report and take no further action.

Digital harassment is an increasingly frequent occurrence that has forced journalists to abandon stories or even the profession. This type of intimidation is especially acute for women journalists, who often face graphic rape and death threats that include personal details when they publish work online. Some large online companies such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter widely used by journalists have clauses against harassment and cyberbullying in their Terms of Service. For instance, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter all advise victims of harassment to block and report the offending users, and report to law enforcement if the situation escalates. These measures are limited in scope, however, and do not contain guarantees that harassers

will be punished. If they are removed, harassers may simply create different accounts or use new IP addresses. These measures do not include assistance for journalists encountering other types of online harassment, such as doxxing.

In addition, these policies do nothing to help protect journalists on sites such as Reddit or 4chan, which tolerate hostile postings, especially towards women, or in the comments section of online news sites.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The IWMMF offers suggestions of next steps and guidelines for those invested in the issue of journalists' safety. We hope that this will lead to discussion of creative and concrete solutions during the upcoming conference.

i. Ending Impunity

The top concern cited in this paper is ending impunity for crimes against journalists. Gabriela Manuli of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) stated, "This should be a top priority of civil society, professional organizations, governments, and multilateral institutions worldwide."²²

CPJ continues to update its Impunity Index each year,²³ and UNESCO issues annual reports on impunity – alternating between its report on World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, and the Director-General's report to the International Programme for the Development of Communication. There is consensus in the industry that UN member states should adhere to laws and Security Resolutions that on paper protect freedom of speech, including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Security Council Resolution 1738, and Article 79 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions; however, not all UN member states prioritize implementation of these laws.

Governments must make press freedom a priority. One idea circulating in the industry is to "name and shame" offending governments within the United Nations. Otherwise, they will continue to endanger journalists with impunity.

Member states with poor records of implementation should be pressured to create legislation or reforms that improve freedom of expression. Journalists and media development organizations are often limited in their ability to hold accountable governments that silence, threaten, or harass journalists. This may include partnering with unaffiliated legal professionals or media advocacy groups to support journalists

²² Personal interview, 2015

²³ Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/killed>

who have been unfairly arrested or detained. In this way, the fight for press freedom by journalists is part of the fight for ensuring the conditions for safe journalism.

Professionals interviewed for this report recommended improving the track record and reporting mechanisms for countries reporting on journalists' safety, pushing for greater transparency in the treatment of and value of the press and focusing on diplomatic and political attention to the issue.

ii. Protective Measures, Policies and Resources

News professionals must act to ensure greater responsiveness by states and the international community to the lack of protective measures for journalists and the crisis of impunity. They can cover instances of threats and violence against journalists in greater depth and volume, as well as engage in direct advocacy for raising awareness with those actors who have influence and power to make change.

When considering security protocols and policies and resources made available to journalists, organizations must consider the unique implications of attacks on female journalists. This might include providing medical kits for injuries inflicted during sexual assault, self defense training, and creation of a corporate culture where reporting sexual harassment or violence is encouraged.

iii. Training and Access to Medical Resources

There is also a significant demand for digital security training, mental health resources, and access to emergency assistance, both physical and psychological. Media professionals must encourage news organizations to subsidize or cover hostile environment and first aid training for all journalists, including freelancers and local staff. In addition, news organizations must develop and deploy enhanced security protocols for journalists working in hostile environments or covering dangerous topics. Most journalists killed while reporting are local journalists covering crime, corruption, or business practices; media professionals recommend an increase in both physical and digital security training in country.

Media organizations need to do a better job addressing physical trauma on journalists working in dangerous environments and providing them with the support and medical resources they need.

Newsroom leadership should be more proactive in addressing the psychological well-being of journalists covering hostile and dangerous environments. Managers should advise staff and freelancers about access to affordable and appropriate counseling should they choose to seek it. Management should create a newsroom culture where colleagues are briefed about the signs of trauma and know how to act.

Newsroom managers should be sensitive to the fact that social and online media use can lead to harassment of journalists. Some journalists may limit their online activity or delete their online accounts to avoid such treatment.

iv. Equipment and Other Resources

Many freelancers and local journalists do not have access to health or equipment insurance or equipment such as body armor, medical supplies, and satellite telephones. News organizations should consider mandating comprehensive insurance for journalists working in dangerous places and make sure they have emergency contacts and protocols. Organizations should also consider covering costs for protective measures like insurance and training.

Organizations should also be encouraged to find creative solutions to promote journalists' safety. Many media development organizations offer assistance to help news organizations and individual journalists create processes and protocols, tool boxes, and training. Journalism schools should add instruction related to media law and security, especially focused on digital security, if these curricula do not exist already. In addition, journalists should become familiar with international laws and human rights standards, as well as national laws and the cultural, ethnic, religious, historical, and political contexts of the countries or regions in which they are working.

All professionals in the media and media support arena should be actively working to protect journalists. The media industry must take more responsibility for staff safety, especially for contract freelancers and support staff such as fixers, translators, and drivers. Media organizations should not send staff to potentially dangerous environments without proper insurance, equipment, training, and compensation. To ensure the best implementation of journalists' safety measures, media organizations must collaborate and share resources and best industry practices.

APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN JOURNALISTS' SAFETY EFFORTS

Media organizations actively working on journalists' safety procedures at the time of the publishing of this paper include but are not limited to: the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) News; Agence France-Presse; *Al-Monitor*; Al Jazeera Media Network; Australian Broadcasting Corporation; Blink; Bloomberg; British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); BuzzFeed; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC); CBS News; Cable News Network (CNN); Deutsche Presse-Agentur; Global Radio News; GlobalPost; Guardian News and Media Group; Kyodo News; Los Angeles Times; Mashable; McClatchy DC; *Miami Herald*; National Broadcasting Company (NBC) News; *Newsweek*; Nederlandse Omroep Stichting (NOS); Public Broadcasting Service Frontline; Public Radio International's The World; Reuters; The Associated Press; The Frontliner (Albania); *The New York Times*; *USA Today*; Video News (Japan); and Zuma Press.

Journalism Associations and NGOs focused on journalism safety and security include but are not limited to: the Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC); American Society of Journalists and Authors; Article 19; Association of European Journalists (Bulgaria); Belarusian Association of Journalists; Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma; Center for Journalism and Public Ethics (CEPET); Committee to Protect Journalists; Danish Union of Journalists; Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma; Editors for Safety (Pakistan); European Federation of Journalists; Foreign Correspondents' Club (Hong Kong); Foro de Periodismo Argentino; Free Press Unlimited; Frontline Club; Frontline Freelance Register; Inter American Press Association; International Center for Journalists; International Federation of Journalists; International Freedom of Information Exchange; International News Safety Institute; International Press Institute; International Women's Media Foundation; Iraqi Journalists Rights Defense Association; James W. Foley Legacy Foundation; Journalistic Freedoms Observatory (Iraq); Journalists in Danger (Kazakhstan); Kaliti Foundation; Lifeline Fund; National Press Club; National Press Photographers Association; National Union of Journalists-Philippines; Online News Association; Open Society Foundations (OSF); Open Society Institute (OSI); Overseas Press Club Foundation; Overseas Press Club of America; PayDesk; Periodistas de a Pie; Press Emblem Campaign (Switzerland); Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting; Reporters Without Borders; Reporters Instructed in Saving Colleagues (RISC); Rory Peck Trust; Round Earth Media; Security First (UK); Society of Professional Journalists; Storyhunter; Trauma Training for Journalists; Union of Journalists in Israel; Union of Journalists of South Sudan; WAN-IFRA; Women Photojournalists of Washington; and Words After War.