



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



**Global Drive
for Media Freedom
Access to Information &
Safety of Journalists**

SOME DATA ON MEDIA FREEDOM AND THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

UNESCO's [World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development 2021](#) report, indicates that media freedom has continued to decline with 85 per cent of the world's population indicating that they have experienced such a decline in their country.

PERSISTING KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS AND IMPUNITY FOR IT

In 2021, 55 journalists were killed around the world. [45 journalists have already been killed in the first quarter of 2022](#). Of particular concern, impunity for these crimes remains high, with only [13 per cent of cases of killed journalists over the past two decades considered judicially resolved](#).



WOMEN JOURNALISTS AT GREATER RISK

The safety of women journalists has particularly taken a worrying trend, with [a 2020 UNESCO/ICFI survey](#) finding that 73 per cent of the 635 women journalists interviewed reporting experience of some form of on-line violence. Further, 20 per cent of 596 women respondents reported having been attacked or abused off-line in connection with the online violence they had experienced.

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) are **law-suits used as a form of legal harassment** to intimidate and restrict critical voices and free expression through expensive and time-consuming legal proceedings.

SLAPPs often target journalists, but also community leaders, unions, journalists, civil society groups, and other groups.

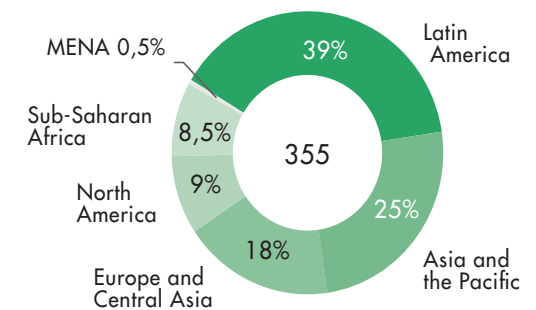
73% of women journalists surveyed reportedly **experienced online violence**

25% experienced **threats of physical violence** including death threats and sexual violence.

26% experienced **mental health impacts** due to online violence.

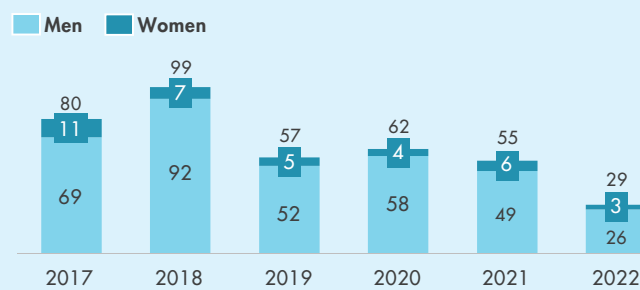
20% have been **tattacked or abused offline** in connection with online violence they experienced.

Analysis of 355 legal cases that bear the hallmarks of slapps initiated by companies between (2015 - 2021)

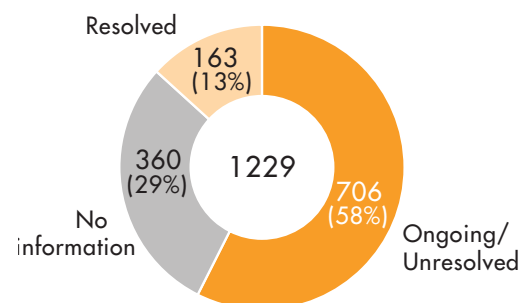


Number of killed journalist in Q1 2022 already at 53% of those killed in 2021

Number of Journalists Killed (2017- June 2022)



Status of judicial investigations into Killings of Journalists (2006 - 2020)

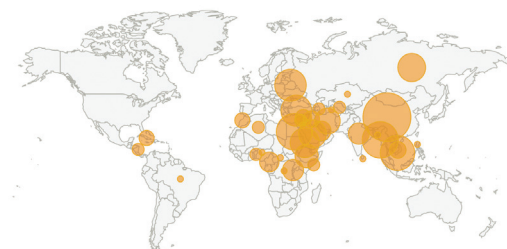


INCREASED NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS DETAINED

[Detention of journalists has increased, reaching a record high of 274 journalists in prison in 2020 as compared to 193 in 2010.](#)

293 Journalists Imprisoned

(As of December 1, 2021)



INCREASED LEGAL HARASSMENT OF JOURNALISTS

In addition, the combination of old defamation laws and a raft of new laws curb online expression, in a flagrant misalignment with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Strategic lawsuits Against Public Participation Laws are also increasingly used against journalists, especially investigative journalists, with a view to compounding their work.

JOURNALISTS INCREASINGLY UNDER SURVEILLANCE

Moreover, an increasing number of reports of States' unlawful use of targeted surveillance technologies against journalists and other members of civil society has emerged, with revelations in July 2021 about abuses of Pegasus spyware in many countries being just the tip of the iceberg. These practices pose not only a grave threat to the safety and security of journalists around the world, but also to journalists' sources, colleagues, friends, and family.

Between 2014 and 2021, 200+ journalist were selected as targets of Pegasus spyware in at least 12 countries, including Azerbaijan, India, Morocco, El Salvador, Mexico, UAE, Hungary, Rwanda, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Togo.

What is the global drive about?

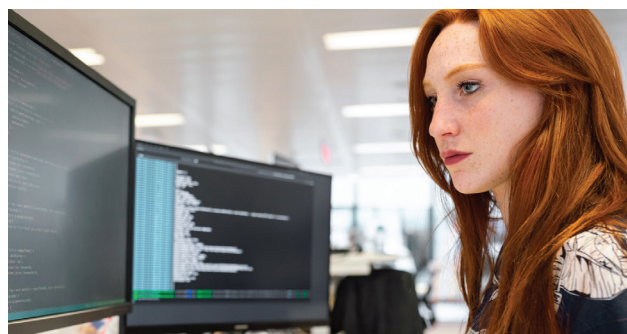
Following a pledge of EUR 7,000,000 made by the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the 2020 World Press Freedom Conference, OHCHR and UNESCO developed a joint roadmap, called the “Global Drive for Media Freedom, Access to Information and the Safety of Journalists” (the “Global Drive”).

Stretching from 2021 to 2023, the roadmap is implemented separately by OHCHR and UNESCO. OHCHR developed a work plan that provides for activities to be implemented both by its Headquarters and 16 field presences covering Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Cameroon, Senegal, Ethiopia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Maldives, Nepal, Gabon, Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Kenya, and Lebanon.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE GLOBAL DRIVE?

The Global Drive aims at:

(i) *fostering an independent and free media and public recognition of the value of access to information; and (ii) Strengthening the protection and accountability for violations against journalists.*



WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ARE FUNDED BY THE GLOBAL DRIVE?

- **Research** activities on specific topics related to media freedom and safety of journalists, such as counter-terrorism, civic space and democracy and constitution building, as well as on the status of the media and safety of journalists in some regions, including the Balkans and the Asia Pacific regions – with the aim to fine-tune and tailor OHCHR’s advocacy;
- **Workshops, meetings and policy dialogues** to enhance OHCHR advocacy on media freedom and the safety of journalists;
- **Training courses for journalists, media workers and professional associations** to increase their knowledge of their human rights, build communities of practice, and improve their awareness on protection measures;
- **Training courses for United Nations Country Teams** to enhance their knowledge on the safety of journalists and improve their capacity to

monitor and report on attacks against them, as well as develop and support protection strategies on the ground;

- **Consultancies to strengthen OHCHR expertise and capacity to monitor and report on attacks against journalists**, including as part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.10.

SOME EXAMPLES OF RESULTS THAT THE GLOBAL DRIVE ENABLED

- In September 2021, OHCHR, in collaboration with the African Union through the Youth for Peace Africa Programme, launched a youth-focused online campaign, called “No Room for Hate Speech”, which has enabled to reach at least one million users on social media platforms. It also enabled to build a community of practice of young influencers that continue, with the support of OHCHR, to expand and engage their followers on human rights and hate speech.
- Through workshops organized in Senegal and Cameroon in October and December 2021, OHCHR contributed to the setting up of networks and communities of practice of more than 60 journalists in West and Central Africa.

• In February 2022, OHCHR organized a United Nations-European high-level policy dialogue on media pluralism and “Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation” that enabled creating an avenue of dialogue with the European Union to further instil international human rights law considerations in coming European Union initiatives, including the initiative against “Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation” and the European Union Media Freedom Act.

• OHCHR has developed a series of webinars for United Nations Country Teams that is being tested by United Country Teams in Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Mexico, Honduras, Thailand, Morocco, Ghana, Bahrain and Lebanon.

• The Global Drive has also enabled to support the work of Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion, notably by helping processing at least 30 additional urgent appeals and building a network with some 30 media actors in the Middle East and Asia regions with a view to increase their protection in case of attacks.

• The Global Drive has also enabled the development by the OHCHR Venezuela team of a protection strategy for civil society actors with a particular focus on journalists and media outlets, as well to organize regional consultations with journalists in Central America to develop minimum criteria to assure the effectiveness of the existing initiatives and protection mechanisms for journalists in the region.

2-3 December 2021
Training.
Limbe, Cameroon



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