



Committee to Protect Journalists

February 13, 2017

Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division,
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

RE: Contribution for Secretary-General's report to the UN General Assembly: safety
of journalists and the issue of impunity

February 8, 2017

To whom it may concern:

The Committee to Protect Journalists ([CPJ](#)) is an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide. We submit this document in response to the questionnaire for the report of the Secretary-General on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. This year's questionnaire seeks information regarding gender-specific challenges to journalists.

CPJ defends the right of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal. The research staff documents hundreds of attacks on the press each year such as killings, nonfatal assaults, restrictive legislation, imprisonment, media closures, threats and other acts aimed at silencing the media.

CPJ systematically tracks data regarding gender in our [database](#) of journalists killed for their work and in our annual [census](#) of imprisoned journalists. According to CPJ's research, at least 81 female journalists have been killed since 1992, seven percent of all journalists. The majority, 58, were targeted and murdered in connection to their work. In 2016, 20 of the 259 journalists imprisoned for their work according to CPJ's annual imprisoned census were women. In 2016, CPJ observed International Women's Day with a campaign highlighting women journalists behind bars. Another way in which CPJ monitors gender based issues is through tagging its alerts and reports online. Each case includes disaggregation by gender. Under the tag of "sexual violence," for example, CPJ has over 2 dozen items going back to 2011.

In recent years, CPJ has conducted in-depth studies on gender-based risks, attacks and challenges to journalists. In 2016, CPJ dedicated its annual report, [Attacks on the Press: Gender and Media Freedom Worldwide](#), to gender issues. The publication found a wide [range of attacks](#) including sexualized violence and online harassment impact female journalists. Chapters included an account by [Colombian journalist](#) Jineth Bedoya Lima who was raped by men in reprisal for her reporting on arms trafficking. Bedoya spoke out against her attackers and launched a more than 15-year battle for justice that is still ongoing. Last year two men were convicted in connection to the attack against her, but other suspects have not been tried. A chapter on the need for [gender-specific security training](#) and another on the role of women in [advocating for press freedom](#) and justice for impunity highlighted specific issues relevant to women. It also examined the [impact](#) of [gender identity](#), exile and [discrimination](#) in the field.

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Attacks on the Press 2016 also highlighted the problem of online harassment of women journalists such as the phenomenon of Internet [trolling](#), which in many cases involving female and LGBT journalists is characterized by threats of physical harm. It looked at [different responses](#) to this onslaught such as training users how to report internet abuse, documenting harassment and the pros and cons of directly responding to trolls. CPJ's technologist participated in a 2015 OSCE consultation on online threats against women journalists and CPJ advocacy director contributed a chapter to the OSCE publication [Countering Online Abuse of Female Journalists](#). CPJ representatives regularly speak on panels and at events related to these issues.

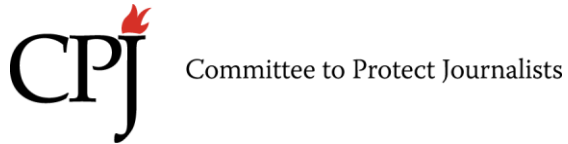
In 2011, following the physical assault in Cairo of broadcast journalist Lara Logan, CPJ launched a special report "[The Silencing Crime](#)" documenting sexual attacks against journalists. The report's author, Lauren Wolfe interviewed dozens of reporters who experienced sexualized violence. Among the findings in the report was that victims often remain silent following attacks not just due to a broad social stigma but for fear of negative repercussions on their careers.

Some key findings from the reports included:

- There practical and concrete [steps](#) that policymakers can take to combat online harassment.
- In recent years there has been an increase in specialized [safety training](#) provided to female journalists.
- In some cultures, gender can [limit](#) professional development for women
- Transgender journalists face immense challenges, as do homosexual reporters, or even reporters simply covering homosexual issues.

CPJ hosted two major events on gender and women in journalism in 2016, one at the Newseum in Washington D.C. which drew significant attention and was webcast as well as one aimed at journalism students at Columbia University in New York City. As part of the ACOS Alliance, which seeks to develop a culture of safety in news organizations and among freelancers, we helped establish a gender-working group and held a coordination session with several press freedom and media development organizations to enhance and improve our attention to issues affecting women journalists and gender issues. CPJ has spoken at several events, panels and conferences about these issues, and continues to seek opportunities to put these issues on the agenda, such as the Internet Freedom Festival, where CPJ is co-organizing a session on trolling of women journalists.

In addition to these reports, CPJ's [Emergencies Response Team](#) provides support to journalists and media support staff working around the world through up-to-date safety and security information and rapid response assistance to journalists at risk including women journalists and those targeted for their coverage of sexual violence, LGBT issues and gender inequality. In January, 2017, CPJ published a safety [advisory](#) on trolls and online abuse with recommendations for preventing doxing and documenting threatening online behavior. CPJ's [journalist security handbook](#) includes a section on assessing and responding to risks of sexual assault.



CPJ isn't alone in increasing its resources and attention towards gender challenges. Attention has grown among the freedom of expression community in recent years, an indication of both the scope of the problem but also of a more positive trend: more and more victims of sexualized violence and harassment are speaking out paving the way for practical discussions about solutions and protection.

For more information on our work please refer to CPJ's website www.cpj.org or contact CPJ's advocacy director at cradsch@cpj.org.

Sincerely,

Courtney C. Radsch

Advocacy Director

Committee to Protect Journalists