



Journalism under Pressure:

A mapping of editorial policies and practices for
journalists covering conflict

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Preface

This report concludes the findings of a survey among journalists and editors in seven countries about issues related to safety and working conditions in conflict areas. The project was funded by the Norwegian UNESCO Commission and we wish to thank the commission for the opportunity to work with this important topic.

Every day we hear reports in the news about journalists killed or harassed. Safe working conditions are necessary so that reporters can get access to events and sources, and a precondition for doing their jobs and giving the audience and decision makers first-hand knowledge of what is happening at the scene of important events. As the pressure on journalists is a global issue, we have included seven countries on four continents in this study. An interesting part of this report is the comparison of the situation for journalists in diverse countries and, obviously, we find similarities and differences. Violence and threats against journalists are a global phenomenon, even though Norwegian journalists, for instance, generally have safer working conditions than do their colleagues in the Philippines. But Norwegian journalists are increasingly also threatened in Norway and, obviously, are at risk when they travel to conflict zones in other countries. Editors have difficult decisions to make before sending their reporters to places that could put them in danger; the objective of this report is to highlight the decisions made by editorial staff, as well as challenges on the ground in conflict areas.

We engaged local researchers in the countries included in the survey because they have the local knowledge necessary to select the informants and conduct the interviews. They are co-authors of this report and without their work, this project would never have taken place. Many thanks to Lilian Ngusuur Unaegbu (Nigeria), Vivian Ninsiima (Uganda), Soumaya Berjeb (Tunisia), Binod Kumar Paudel (Nepal), Christine Anne Roque (Philippines) and Greta Paiz (Nicaragua).

I wish to thank all the journalists and editors who found interest in the project and took time to answer our questions. Many thanks also to Oslo and Akershus University College for support and conducive working conditions, and to all our colleagues at the Department for Journalism and Media Studies for giving us feedback to early drafts of questionnaires and preliminary drafts for the reports. A special thanks to Erik Adrian Eileng and Yan Hoffmann for taking care of the difficult administrative work involving researchers in so many countries, and to Monica Seeber for proofreading.

Even though we are two editors, most of the everyday work, coordination of the work with researchers in all the seven countries, conducting the Norwegian interviews and doing the main part of the analyses was done by research assistant Marte Høyby – to whom many thanks for an excellent job.

Rune Ottosen
Project leader
Oslo, 9 March 2015

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I. Introduction

The background to this project is the paradox that journalists in conflict areas have never had better formal legal protection – and at the same time never have so many journalists been targeted while doing their jobs as reporters (Reporters Without Borders, 2014). According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), close to 2,500 journalists have been killed on the job since 1989.

In 2006 the United Nations Security Council, after lobbying by the IFJ, unanimously voted for a resolution:

... deeply concerned at the frequency of acts of violence, including deliberate attacks, in many parts of the world against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, in armed conflicts, the Security Council today condemned such attacks and called on all parties to put an end to such practices. Unanimously adopting resolution 1738 (2006), the Council recalled, without prejudice to the war correspondents' right to the status of prisoners of war under the Third Geneva Convention.

Nevertheless, the question of impunity must be addressed; according to International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), perpetrators of crimes against journalists go unpunished in nine out of ten cases.

UNESCO's work with press freedom and the safety of journalists

UNESCO is the United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom across member states. In its 29th session, 1997, the General Conference adopted Resolution 29 'Condemnation of Violence against Journalists', inviting the director-general to condemn such violence as a crime against society. The argument was that the safety of journalists should not only be addressed under the protection of civilians in armed conflict, but also as a societal challenge directly linked to freedom of expression and international human rights. Accordingly, UNESCO has recently integrated journalists' safety prominently into its efforts to promote freedom of expression.

In April 2012, UNESCO adopted the 'UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity'. On 25 September 2014, the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations adopted Resolution 27/L.7 on journalists' safety and the issue of impunity – reiterating and reinforcing the 2012 resolution. Resolution 27/L.7 specifically responds to 'recent attacks and violence against journalists ... in particular in situations of armed conflict', emphasising

that journalists are to be ‘considered as civilians and shall be protected as such’. It furthermore acknowledges the particular risks to female reporters and emphasises the ‘importance of employing a gender sensitive approach to address the safety of journalists’.

The second issue to be addressed by the same resolution is that of impunity and its negative effects on the protection of journalists, stating that ‘ensuring accountability for crimes committed against journalists is a key element in preventing future attacks’. Thus, it calls for ‘all states to develop and implement strategies to combat impunity for attacks and violence against journalists’ and also encourages the adoption of the ‘good practices’ discussed and developed during panel discussions in June 2014, which are compiled in the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights about good practice for the safety of journalists.

The practices are:

- a) the creation of special investigative units or independent commissions;
- b) the appointment of a specialised prosecutor; the adoption of specific protocols and methods of investigation and prosecution;
- c) the training of prosecutors and judiciary regarding the safety of journalists;
- d) the establishment of information-gathering mechanisms such as databases to permit the gathering of verified information about threats and attacks against journalists;¹
- e) the establishment of an early warning and rapid response mechanism to give journalists, when threatened, immediate access to the authorities and protective measures.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights addresses freedom of expression as an individual right. The issue of human rights is thus closely connected to human rights and working conditions for journalists.

UNESCO has also been engaged in practical security training together with the International Federation of journalists (IFJ) and International Media Support (IMS). A series of handbooks

¹ It is important to note that the protection of journalists as civilians is only in force as long as they refrain from participating in hostilities or any form of military action. This also applies to journalists who wish to protect themselves by carrying weapons, or other equipment aimed at facilitating hostile actions.

and guidelines for journalists working in conflict areas has been published in cooperation with Reporters Without Borders (see UNESCO's home page for details).

To underline the seriousness of the matter, a special day for world press freedom (3 May) has been introduced. Every year on this date a special award, the Guillermo Cano/ UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize is given to honour a person or organisation working in the field of safety for journalists.

In September 2013, the UN General Assembly decided to make 2 November every year an international day for the ending of impunity. It took place for the first time in 2014.

The International Program for the Development of Communication

Since 2008 the general director of UNESCO has reported every year to the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC) about the status of safety for journalists. The IPDC is a small but vital instrument of UNESCO based on the idea that media development in many countries is closely connected with working conditions for journalists. IPDC has supported projects and developed guidelines and indicators for developing countries to draw attention to safety issues. In a November 2014 report from the IPDC secretariat it was revealed that of 593 reported cases of violence against journalists only 39 (6.6 per cent) had been solved. In 172 cases (29 per cent) there was a legal process investigating the cases. In a majority of the cases (62 per cent) information about the status of the cases is missing (IPDC Report dated 20-21 November 2014).

The role of the Council of Europe in protecting journalists and media

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. All its member states have agreed on a treaty designed to protect human rights along with democracy and the rule of law through the European Convention on Human Rights. It has a central role in setting standards and acting as a watchdog to uphold Article 10 of the Convention. Article 10 states that everyone has a right to freedom of expression and information. The importance of the Council of Europe is critical, given that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union use its standards and regularly refer to its work.

The focus of the Council of Europe on the safety of journalists and journalism is mainly based on addressing impunity and the professional and human rights of different types of actors within journalism. Its major recent effort has been the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The aim of this plan is to intensify

the standard-setting and cooperative activities within member states for the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists in response to the alarming deterioration of safety that journalists and other media actors have been experiencing recently worldwide, and especially in Europe.

The Council of Europe has been trying to promote dialogue between international institutions and media freedom organisations to lay the ground for warning mechanisms and a rapid response capacity, possibly through the development of an Internet platform. Furthermore, several legal frameworks have been established to ensure that this effort is embedded within political texts and initiatives. For instance, the International Human Rights law was created to provide general guidance to member states, mainly to reinforce the protection of journalists within states and usually to protect them from the abuse of local authorities. The International Humanitarian law was promoted to be used in armed conflicts and therefore in an international context. Other mechanisms, not based on treaties, have also been formed to complement laws; they are usually institutional and political mechanisms shaped as a response to the new demands created over time.

II. Objective, method and structural considerations

Objective

The objective of the survey was to understand how journalists experience the pressure of threats and respond to a degraded security situation in the field, and to map editorial practices and policies for journalists at work in conflict zones.

Choice of countries and project contributions

Besides the authors of this report, seven collaborative partners were temporarily employed to undertake the interviews and analyses in Nepal, the Philippines, Uganda, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Nicaragua. Colombia was initially included in the study, but was taken out due to time pressure. The collaborative partners have, additionally, written a country report based on a suggested framework – a collection of contributions about the local context of each country. Countries were chosen to represent a broad geographical context, and as a result of available candidates for international collaboration.

Defining conflict

The definition of conflict reporting decided upon for this study is outlined on the first page of the survey form as *reporting on armed or violent social conflict*. The statement further clarifies that ‘we aim to include answers related to *both armed conflict and organised crime*; any type of reporting in which the journalist is putting her or his life at risk for the job based on potential threat from actors involved in the conflict’.

Anonymity

For safety reasons the identities of interviewees are protected and kept confidential throughout the report. Where informants gave consent to reveal their identities the report may use their names, but in most cases pseudonyms are created to protect other persons referred to or involved in any recorded incident. Because the survey is based on total anonymity we consulted Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD) and asked whether formal approval of registration of the project was necessary. NSD is the data protection official for around 150 research and educational institutions, including all Norwegian universities, university colleges, health enterprises, hospitals and independent research institutions and centres of expertise. The conclusion was that no formal registration was necessary.

Methodology

The methodology for this study comprised semi-structured interviews accompanied by survey forms designed as a multiple choice survey and encompassing 29 questions, out of which most were ‘only one answer’, some were ‘multiple answers’ and three or four were ‘open answer’. This design was chosen in order to collect as much accurate information as possible. The survey forms developed for the editors were only slightly different from those used for the journalists – most of the same content was covered in both, but some adjustments had to be made to adapt to the different nature of the work and working conditions.

Additionally, the project instructed all UNESCO project participants to undertake the interviews in personal meetings or by Skype, in order to clarify potential problems and assist the informants in understanding and filling out the form correctly. Other information given by the informant in the interview and answers to ‘open answer’ questions were also to be recorded, either by notes or on tape.

Consequently, each informant was to be consulted not only about their preferred options for answers in the survey form, but also about additional follow-up questions aiming to provide further details about the answer in a spoken reference. The authors of this study do not know to what extent this was actually done, but the general impression is that most of the interviews were conducted in this way. However, only the interviews from the Philippines were submitted together with transcriptions of the interviews, and this information has been especially useful to study certain impressions more thoroughly. The interviews from Norway also contain a substantial amount of spoken information additional to the survey answers. Other interviews were submitted with some additional information although with fewer direct statements and observations from the informants.

Developing the survey forms to be used in the interviews was the first part of the process. They were initially prepared in three languages (Norwegian, Spanish and English), but only the English and Spanish versions were used. A total of 73 journalists were interviewed for the study, which aimed specifically to reach those covering conflict and working in conflict zones. However, to secure that those interviewed were part of the target group we included the question ‘Have you previously covered conflicts of war-like conditions in your own country or abroad?’ to which four out of the 73 journalist informants answered ‘never’. As these four represented informants from differing countries (Nicaragua, Nepal, Uganda and Nigeria), they did not

distract from the total response from any one country, and their participation is therefore included in the sample.

Media representation is somewhat weighted towards print news, television and video – while photojournalists and bloggers (categorised as ‘digital’) are under-represented. ‘Several platforms’ refers to journalists who used to work only for television or radio and who now, owing to evolving media business models, produce material for TV, radio and the web.

Methodological constraints

The geographical scope of the research (seven countries in four continents) brought some challenges to both methodology and analysis. On the one hand, the different context in these countries permits the study to say something about the situation for journalists in conflict zones regardless of where they work, how they work and for whom they report. On the other hand, it does not provide sufficient evidence to claim its reliability in each country, nor does it provide a thorough understanding of causal conditions. While its cross-national focus on four continents proves that the issue is one of global concern, underlying dynamics depend greatly on their differing societal, political and economic contexts, and thus deserve closer scrutiny.

The coding process was rather complicated owing to the design of the surveys. First of all, 29 questions in each of two different survey forms is a lot to put into a system. Furthermore, the mix of only one answer, multiple answers and open answer in the survey, and the additional information added in the interviews, created challenges in the coding process. We did not have an adequate technological system to handle such variety in the content to be coded, and thus Excel was used to plot a mix of numbers and words. Consequently, the analysis of the data was done manually and deliberately – we found what we were looking for – and, hence, the data presented in this report does not answer all the questions in the survey forms, and may prove inadequate to cover all significant findings.

Working with three languages was another challenge. Instructions to the UNESCO project participants, letters with statement of purpose, contracts, and the survey forms were first constructed in Norwegian and/or English and then translated into Spanish. After the material was collected it was all translated into English.

We also experienced inconsistent use of the survey forms among our collaborative partners, and differences in how interviews were conducted; instructions were interpreted rather inconsistently. Some submitted their contributions with a larger share of qualitative data, while

others had merely distributed the survey forms to their informants and retrieved them with the information informants had been able or willing to provide under the circumstances. The country reports also differed in length, quality and content, and consequently this part of the report demanded restructuring.

Finally, source protection became a challenge for both the research process and the presentation of analysis. The informants were pledged anonymity, and many did not wish the interviews to be recorded – mainly for two reasons. The journalists fear for their own safety owing to pressure from external forces outside the newsroom; and some also worried about career liability within the newsroom and the journalist environment. The editors would mainly care about protecting their reporters, and did not wish to expose cases of after-effect or trauma by naming them; some also expressed concern about insurance, and were cautious about giving away details about agreements with insurance companies. The reason for this is probably related to the agreement with the insurance companies and the vulnerability to attack if details are disclosed.

Terminological considerations

This study uses the term ‘editor’ for the 27 editors or leaders interviewed for the study. Some are editor-in-chief and some are leader or editor of a smaller section of the news station or paper – but all are included as ‘editor’. ‘Journalists’ are all the 73 journalists interviewed for the study, regardless of how they work as a journalist, what they cover, or for which media platform they produce; and freelancers, local journalists, TV reporters and any other types of journalism are covered by this term throughout the report. ‘UNESCO project participant’, or just ‘project participant’, refers to the international collaborating parties doing research and writing contributions to the project. The editors of this report are referred to as the ‘authors’.

III. Country reports

Country report: Nepal

Binod Kumar Paudel

Short description of the local media landscape

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the Constitution of Nepal guaranteed the freedom of speech which paved a way for the establishment of new media houses in the private sector. The interim Constitution 2007 provides for freedom of opinion and expression in Article 12(3) and the right to publication, broadcast and the press in Article 15 with certain prohibitions (Gaunle, 2012). The Department of Information lists 6,570 registered newspapers, among them 568 dailies (200 in Kathmandu and 368 outside Kathmandu); 2,492 weeklies (1,111 in Kathmandu and 1,381 outside Kathmandu); and 6,570 others (4,049 in Kathmandu and 2,540 outside Kathmandu). The records of the Ministry of Information show 360 FM radio stations in regular operation, and 75 television stations that have been given the licence to broadcast.

The sample for this survey consists of newspapers, radio and television journalists. *Gorkhapatra* is the oldest newspaper and is run by government. *Annapurna Post* and *Nagarik* are national broadsheet dailies and *Janadesh* is a weekly newspaper. Similarly, Ujyalo 90 FM, Radio Mirmire, Nepal television and Kantipur television are also included in this sample.

As in other countries, the use of new media is increasing in Nepal. The number of journalists with access to online media is growing every day. Blogs, online journalism and various social networks have become platforms to exercise the freedom of expression in Nepal (Gyaunle 2012). Many newspapers, radio and television have regularly updated websites. Online news portals and online magazines are also in operation.

In our sample *Gorkhapatra*, Radio Nepal and Nepal television represent government media, whereas *Janadesh*, Kantipur Television, Radio Mirmire and Ujyalo 90 FM represent media run by political parties. All others are private media houses.

Local background of conflict coverage: Journalists and media interviewed

The state-owned Gorkhapatra Corporation is the oldest media company in Nepal. Its publications are *Gorkhapatra* (Nepali daily), *The Rising Nepal* (English daily), *Madhupark* (Nepali literary monthly magazine), *Yuba Munch* (Nepali monthly digest targeted at youth) and *Muna* (Nepali monthly magazine targeted at children).

Radio Nepal is a state-owned station that began transmission with a 250-watt shortwave transmitter in April 1951, covering the Kathmandu valley. It then expanded its coverage throughout the country. For a long time it used short wave and medium wave to send signals. Since November 1995 it has been using FM to reach remote areas.

Nepal Television (NTV), Nepal's first television station, was established in 1985. Its mission was to 'produce and telecast programs on educational, religious and cultural conservation, to promote national unity, conserve heritage and promote national interest' (cited in Mainali, 2013). For 16 years it relied on terrestrial broadcasting but since July 2001 it has been using both satellite and terrestrial broadcast systems. It has a network of 15 transmission stations.

Kantipur television was launched in July 2003. It sets aside 40 per cent of its time for news and current affairs and 60 per cent for entertainment (Mainali, 2013)

Local political events and conflicts of importance

Nepalese press and media have suffered serious attacks and harassment during a decade-long Maoist armed conflict and the direct rule of King Gyanendra. Many media workers have lost their lives, many journalists have been arrested and abducted, and several media houses have received threats and been attacked. Numerous local journalists have been compelled to leave their employment (Sharma, 2008). The Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) has confirmed the murder/killing of 35 journalists from July 2001 to August 2012 and four journalists have 'disappeared'. The latest recorded disappearance was of journalist Madan Paudel of Radio Tamor on 16 September 2012 (FNJ Website).

Although the ten-year civil war in Nepal ended in 2006 after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, threats against journalists are still reported frequently, although the nature and intensity of the threats has changed. Some of the cases recorded by the FNJ are:

Two journalists were brutally attacked by a group led by former constitutional assembly member of UCPN Maoist, Prem Bahadur Tamang and Ramsharan Poudel in Rasuwa (central region of Nepal) on 28 April 2014. Journalist Som Bahadur Tamang and Malfurwa Tamang were there to cover the programme organised by UCPN Maoist in Laharepouwa, Rasuwa.

On 21 May 2014, journalists Bhagatram Tharu (sub-editor of the *Prabhat Ghosana Daily*) and Sunil Regmi (affiliated with *Madhyapaschim Sandesh*) were mistreated by the police while they were on a reporting assignment. The police officer also placed handcuffs on another journalist, Chhetranath Devkota, the correspondent of Mountain Television. Devkota's camera and

motorcycle were seized when he inquired about the incident in which the other two journalists were mistreated.

On the evening of 7 January 2014 the editor-in-chief of the *Nagarik Daily*, Prateek Pradhan, was attacked by an unidentified group near Baneshwar-Bhimsengola road in the capital. Pradhan's car (Ba 5 Cha 3959) was vandalised in the incident. An unidentified group of three or four motorcyclists carrying swords, metal rods and wooden sticks attacked and escaped, breaking the rear mirror of the car.

On 24 January 2014 two journalists from Bardibas-7, Mahottari (central region of Nepal), Gita Chimoriya, affiliated with Radio Darpan, and Santosh Pokhrel, editor of *Bardibas Khabar Daily*, were mistreated and their lives were threatened over published and broadcast news about a road accident in the district by Dev Raj Kafle and Buddhiraj Neupane, known as Sanjay. They had threatened Pokhrel over the phone and threatened Chimoriya in her office.

According to a 2014 report by Freedom Forum (a civil society organisation crusading for freedom of expression and of the press in Nepal) a soldier, Upendra Basnet, attempted to rape a woman journalist in Khotang, a hilly eastern district of Nepal, on 4 April 2014. The radio journalist was returning from her office. Basnet was arrested by the police and handed over to the Nepalese army.

The Morang correspondent of the *Nagarik Daily*, Khilanath Dhakal, was attacked on 5 June 2011 and the Sankhuwasbha correspondent of the *Annapurna Post* (also vice-chairman of FNJ Sankhuwasabha), Kishor Budathoki, was attacked on 12 August 2011. Manoj Rai is in the Morang jail for his involvement in the attack on Dhakal while the police are still said to be searching for Parshuram Basnet, the mastermind behind the attack. The district court of Sankhuwasabha sentenced Bikas Rai and Rupak Rai to five years in jail for their involvement in the attack on Budathoki, who has been forced to move from his hometown owing to the insecurity he feels in his home district, and is practising journalism from Biratnagar (Gaunle, 2012).

Journalistic norms and practices and experience of freedom of expression

The year 2013 witnessed fewer incidents of press freedom violations than 2012, according to the Press Freedom Status Report of 2013 by the Freedom Forum.² The report stated that 59 incidents of press freedom violation occurred in 2013, as against 147 in 2012 and 96 in 2011. The violations had surged in 2012 on the eve of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (27 May) while the violations of freedom of expression (especially the freedom of speech) mounted in 2013 in the run-up to the 19 November election of the second Constituent Assembly.

Although many persons involved in physical attacks on journalists and issuing threats have been identified, only a negligible number of them have been investigated and punished. These are examples of how the government is not serious about safeguarding media freedom – instead of taking action against those involved in the anti-press and free expression activities, the government has in the past tried to withdraw the cases filed against individuals involved in the abduction and killing of the journalists. However, one attempt to withdraw a case was filed by a Supreme Court order. Although the government tried to withdraw cases filed against the Maoists cadres involved in the abduction and murder of journalist Prakash Singh Thakuri, the Supreme Court prevented the withdrawal and in July 2011 the Kanchanpur District Court decided to hear the case again. This is one example of how the government and political parties are promoting impunity (Gaunle, 2012).

The reporters who actually reported from the conflict zone were either on the inside, with the Maoists, or travelling to the conflict zone embedded with government security forces. In this situation it is difficult in practice for them to be neutral or unbiased while reporting. Willingly or unwillingly, they may easily favour the party who has arranged for the reporting (one journalist mentioned in our interview that the media house could not manage the reporting independently).

Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity

Journalists in Nepal feel insecure while covering sensitive issues but they seem to make an effort to handle smaller threats by themselves. Among the interviewees there was a clear

² Retrieved 28/08/2014, from <http://www.freedomforum.org.np/content/publications/reports/other-reports/viewdownload/26-other-reports/264-nepal-press-freedom-report-2013.html>

distinction between journalists working in the capital and those based in different districts, who are in a much more risky situation than those working in Kathmandu.

The editors and journalists working in government media said that an editor cannot do much when journalists are threatened while reporting and that they should coordinate with the security forces in their district. The journalists working in private media said that they rely much more on the FNJ than on their editors. This reflects some gap between the editors and the journalists, and may be a challenge to the journalists' security. More research needs to be conducted to identify the causes of this gap, which could possibly stem from the political affiliation of the journalist; the fact that editors might not be in a position to implement the minimum wages provision (that is, financial issues); or that the journalists might get other benefits by using or misusing their journalistic identity.

In one interview, a journalist spoke about punishment and suffering as a result of a report. She was harassed initially and then expelled from the media organisation where she was working because of a few critical investigative reports on social crime, especially about women, and she experienced 'mental torture'.

Other observations

According to journalists and editors the major safety and security problem is their professional security. Gaunle (2012) mentions that journalists are compelled to work in situations where they do not get letters of appointment, and in some cases do not receive the minimum pay on time.

The interviews with journalists and editors led to the conclusion that their safety and security is the responsibility of journalists themselves. This is even more pronounced among the journalists working in districts outside Kathmandu. In cases of serious threat they rely more on the FNJ than their own organisation. This shows that either the editors and media houses are not in a position to assist their reporters stationed in the districts or that they feel the security of journalists should be dealt with by government security forces at district level.

Almost all journalists interviewed for this survey were engaged in conflict reporting during the period of civil war. They perceive more recent threats as common and simple threats and try to handle them by themselves, reporting them to their editors and the FNJ only if the threat is serious.

As most of the journalists are affiliated with political parties, it is hard to know whether the threats are due to their news coverage. Only further research could identify the real causes.

In-house training and a mechanism for transferring the knowledge and experience of journalists who covered conflict during the civil war might be useful to journalists today and in the future. Both the editors and the journalists felt that further training (physical and professional) was necessary to prepare journalists for reporting on conflict and organised crime.

Country report: Philippines

Thea Alberto and Christine Roque

Overview: Media in the Philippines

Article III, Section 4 of the Philippine Constitution is crucial in defining the media landscape in the Philippines. The passage states: ‘No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.’ This part of the Constitution all but determines the mode of operation of the Philippine media, as well as its coexistence with the government. Journalists and their organisations are also protected by law not to divulge their sources, unless a court order justifies this for state interest. In essence, freedom of the press is given importance in the Philippines.

A free press is a point of pride of any democratic country, and the Philippines is recognised to have the ‘freest press’ in Southeast Asia (Maull et al., 1998: 19). Despite this rosy depiction, some of the facts concerning Philippine media may paint a different picture.

Characteristics of Philippine media

According to the Federal Research Division of the United States Library of Congress, in 2004 the Philippines had 225 television stations, 369 AM and 583 FM radio broadcast stations, and five shortwave stations. In print media, the newspaper with the highest circulation at 260,000 is the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, followed by *Philippine Star* and the century-old *Manila Bulletin*, all of which are published in English. The largest and oldest television network is the ABSCBN Corporation, one that reopened after the EDSA Revolution, while its biggest competitor is the GMA Network. The Manila Broadcasting Company is the largest radio network. There are two government-run TV stations, PTV4 and IBC 13.

The greater part of the press (print, radio, television, online) in the Philippines is privately owned. The most prominent media outfits, especially those in print and television, are often owned by rich and influential families. As such, commercial interests, rather than government intervention, inevitably shape press coverage. As Kalinga Seneveratne (2008: 45) points out, the ‘barriers’ to a free press in a country like the Philippines are ‘commercial’ and ‘not necessarily posed by the government’. It is not uncommon for news reports to have a perceived slant towards some of the commercial interests of ownership, although they do also mention or disclose the relationship of the news to the owners of the media outfit.

Violence against journalists

Perhaps a feature of any ‘free’ press is that its members sometimes end up being in the news themselves. The Philippines is no exception, although not in a positive light. Even after the collapse of President Ferdinand Marcos’s dictatorial regime in 1986, members of the press are still subject to violence and its corresponding unofficial censorship.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 77 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1992, making the country the world’s second most dangerous place (after Iraq) for journalists. The largest concentration of slain journalists (61 per cent) is of journalists covering the local political beat whereas the next largest group (43 per cent) is of journalists covering corruption stories. In an effort to probe the spate of killings, the national police even created a committee called Task Force Usig but have yet to deliver results.

The worst single attack, now known as the Maguindanao massacre, was recorded on 23 November 2009. This is considered by the CPJ to be the ‘single deadliest event for journalists in history’. Reports claim that as many as 36 newspeople were killed in a roadside kidnap/ambush at the town of Ampatuan in the province of Maguindanao. Some of the corpses were hastily buried in an attempt by the perpetrators to cover up the crime. The ambush was immediately judged to be political in nature. The people killed were part of a convoy the aim of which was to deliver (for the journalists among them, to cover) the filing of a certificate of candidacy of Esmael Mangudadatu, whose political rivals from the Ampatuan clan were charged with the crime. The Maguindanao massacre has become the most gruesome symbol of not only the warlike nature of local government politics in the Philippines but also of the increasingly dangerous work of journalists. Unfortunately, five years since the killings, there have been no convictions or significant progress in the cases except for the arrest of members of the Ampatuan family.

Cybercrime law and libel

Journalists do not only face threats in physical form. They also encounter legal challenges concerning their craft and the practice of free speech/press freedom. Perhaps the most sensational libel case in recent history concerned the late president Corazon Aquino, who successfully sued columnist Louie Beltran and newspaper publisher Maximo Soliven in 1991, both of whom reported that the then chief executive hid under the bed at the height of a *coup d’état*.

Later presidents also tangled with the press. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* struggled in 1999 after advertisers pulled out *en masse*, allegedly following a directive from then president Joseph Estrada. The *Inquirer* eventually survived. Estrada was also blamed for the crisis in the *Manila Times*. He had been annoyed by an article connecting him to an irregular deal, and he sued the paper for 101 million pesos. After the owners of the paper issued a public apology, key editors of the paper resigned in protest.

In 2012, President Benigno ‘Noynoy’ Aquino III signed into law the Cybercrime Prevention Act, which earned criticism for its supposed anti-freedom of speech nature. The most direct effect of this Act concerned not the traditional journalists and press people but the new era bloggers, informal journalists, and sundry ‘netizens’. These segments of the burgeoning population of new Internet journalists rejected the supposed ‘chilling effect’ that could occur as a result of the law. There are also efforts to decriminalise libel in the Philippines. Advocates say that to brand libel a crime is against democratic values. The Philippine ranking on press freedom has also declined in recent years. In a 2014 report by the international media watchdog Reporters without Borders, Philippines was placed at 149 out of 180 countries. When sought to react, the government vowed not to impede press freedom.

Problems within

Despite the challenges faced by the Philippine media from external (political and commercial) forces, it is also not immune from problems within its own ranks. Just like any national media, the Philippine press is subject to criticism over its handling of the news and the actions of its practitioners. The media coverage of the Manila Hostage Crisis on 23 August 2010 is an example of the ethical issues faced by media in the Philippines which was berated for its coverage because the hostage-taker was able to strategise against law enforcers by watching the news on television, with live updates carried by local TV network newscasts. Some journalists were also blamed for the botched rescue in which they acted as negotiators and aired live the demands of the hostage-taker. The eventual failure of the rescue operations (resulting in the deaths of several Hong Kong nationals) was blamed not only on the ineptitude of the police but also on the media coverage. The crisis eventually soured already strained relations between the Philippines and Hong Kong.

The Philippine media, especially television broadcasters/presenters, face added scrutiny during elections. Although neutrality is the norm, positive or negative slants on a candidate can be perceived. The situation is sometimes exacerbated by conflict of interest when the owner of a

media company runs for office or overtly endorses a candidate. Then there are cases of broadcasters running for office, the most popular being Noli de Castro who ran and won as vice-president, and Loren Legarda, who is in the Senate. Such is journalists' star power in the Philippines that you even see news anchors starring in TV advertisements or posing on huge billboards on major highways.

Policing the ranks

Journalism as profession in the Philippines has also been marred by allegations of corruption. In a book published in 2004, the veteran journalist Chay Florentino Hofileña claimed that election campaign budgets made their way to media practitioners. This practice seeks to 'tone down' the negative publicity of political candidates, as Hofileña told an interview with *Asia Pacific Media Indicator*. Corruption in the media has long been tied to the poor salaries of journalists. In an article in the *Philippine Journalism Review*, it was noted that some journalists have resorted to corruption to augment their meagre pay.

Various organisations have since moved to educate Filipino journalists on ethical practices, and to amplify their data gathering skills. The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) and the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP) have created avenues for journalists to share techniques, improve reportage, and discuss ideas of how to cope with traumatic coverage. NUJP also issues an alert to its wide network whenever a journalist under threat calls for help. During unfortunate incidents when journalists are killed, NUJP seeks donations to provide scholarships for their children.

Key events in the Philippines

Insurgency has been a persistent problem in some parts of the Philippines. The military has been waging a decades-long war against the communist New People's Army operating mostly in provinces, and peace negotiations seem not to be in sight. Over the years, several groups in Mindanao have been blamed for skirmishes with the military. In September 2013, the breakaway Moro National Liberation Front (Bangsamoro Republik) was accused of leading a series of attacks that involved civilian hostages as they attempted to take hold of key parts of Zamboanga City as part of their declaration of independence. Clashes between MNLF and the Philippine military not only shut down airports and key establishments but also killed dozens of civilians and displaced over 100,000 people. This all took place amid a separate peace deal the government is trying to formalise with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

There are also threats from Abu Sayyaf, which has already been tagged as a terrorist organisation by the United Nations and the US. The Islamist militant group has carried out bombings in Southern Philippines but mostly operates and earns money by kidnapping foreign tourists in the vicinity of Jolo. In April 2014, the group abducted a German couple on a yacht in a Palawan resort. The couple were later released, the bandits claiming to have received a multimillion dollar ransom from the German government. Around 1,115 foreign hostages are still in captivity. Abu Sayyaf also has links to international terror groups al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah.

At times, coverage of these events has been strongly criticised by the government and the public. The distance of the siege area to Manila (where major news outfits are located) means that news coverage is often merely a compilation of quotes from (usually contradicting) officials. In some cases, reporters themselves have become news – the latest publicised case is the Abu Sayyaf kidnapping of Ces Drilon, a news anchor of the major TV network ABS-CBN, in 2008. The station initially requested a news blackout from the press for her safety. She and her cameramen were held captive for nine days before she was released after negotiations. Her camp claimed that no ransom was paid.

Challenges

Media in the Philippines remain dynamic and competitive. While that may be good, it can also pose threats.

Social media is beginning to change the reportage landscape in the Philippines. Now, talking heads are less common and you often see headlines quoting ‘netizens’. Citizen journalism is a growing trend, with newscasts allotting airtime to random people sending in their video reports. Crowdsourcing is the new name of the game but news organisations have yet to master the verification of these reports.

Journalists interviewed

The journalists interviewed in this study, except for the photojournalist, are all based in Manila. They all have years of experience in war and conflict reporting in the field. This is too small a number, however, to statistically represent the situation of journalists in the Philippines.

Gender perspectives

Violence against journalists in the Philippines knows no gender. The deployment of women journalists, however, has become more difficult, particularly the cover of high-risk areas in

Mindanao. The women journalists interviewed in the study believe that the threat of kidnapping, rape or sexual violence against them is real. Most of them have faced the threat of being kidnapped or the risk of ‘being forced into marriage’ when visiting ‘rebel or terrorist camps’. The turning point for most newsrooms in the country was the kidnapping of a prominent woman journalist by the Abu Sayyaf. All interviewees witnessed and experienced the clear shift of their newsrooms’ priorities when it comes to providing training on security, safety, reporting in hostile environments and providing adequate equipment when covering high-risk areas.

While the editorial leadership would like to assign reports or coverages based on the competitiveness of its staff over its gender, the field reporters interviewed in this study observed that the question of safety clearly outweighed other factors in the decision-making process. There was a time, according to them, that women were no longer allowed to cover some areas in Mindanao (some of them have successfully challenged this practice). But since the news cycle has shifted as peace talks with the MILF progress there is less need for the Manila-based journalists to fly to Mindanao and supplement their correspondents’ coverage.³

Other observations

The journalists interviewed in this study are facing new challenges of conflict reporting, from insurgency and high profile crimes to disaster reporting. The country is starting to feel the force of climate change. Extreme weather conditions have become the new normal and journalists who are highly trained in surviving and reporting in hostile environments are considered the first pick in covering natural disasters like typhoons, landslides, earthquakes and flood and its relief and rehabilitation. Many of them have described the trauma of reporting the devastation from Haiyan and other typhoons. During Typhoon Haiyan, reporters became victims themselves – they struggled with securing food and water and, at one point, lost all communication. The challenge of survival also came amid hundreds of deaths and extreme devastation, and no kind of training or experience had prepared them for coverage like that. More reporters are now pushing for training on ‘the new normal’, especially on how to survive when local government and the rule of law collapse. Some newsrooms have responded to this need faster than in the past, when training of conflict reporting was taken for granted – some TV stations have invested in training their reporters in operating lifeboats and other essential survival and communications equipment when covering typhoons, landslides, floods,

³All women interviewed in this study belong to networks or newspapers that are led by women, as are most newsrooms in the country.

earthquakes and other natural catastrophes, and some newsrooms have started to formalise the need for debriefing and consultation with psychologists or trauma specialists.

Country report: Tunisia

Soumaya Berjeb

Short description of the local media landscape

In light of recent changes in the media sector in Tunisia, experts describe the Tunisian media landscape as a real challenge, and some of them speak about what has changed in the media sector since 14 January 2011.

Before 2011, Tunisian journals, TV channels, radio stations and news websites were aligned to spread a positive image about the Ben Ali regime. The authorities dominated and controlled Tunisian journalists for a long time – about 50 years or longer.

Before 17 December 2010, journalists were banned from practising their profession regularly, and were harassed by the authorities. In this context, a Tunisian expert has described the journalists' situation clearly, saying that 'those who worked in the field can generally be split into three categories':⁴

1. A minority (10 per cent or less of the sector) who rejected the system altogether. They ended up either leaving the industry or being fired (if not jailed), or were lucky enough to find their way out of a very corrupt, very complicated environment. They tried to 'skirt' the red lines and work as freely and as securely as possible.
2. A good number (nearly a third) who had neither the qualifications nor the opportunity to work elsewhere than in a media company. In order to secure their status, they had only to obey orders and play the game as it should be played. At best, they tried not to be involved in the widespread corruption that marked the sector. And in all cases they ended up by being more 'employees' than journalists, waiting for their salaries and promotions, nothing more.
3. A majority, of which most graduated from the Press Institute, who were willing and predisposed to serve the system and the regime.

The Ben Ali regime had established the Ministry of Information that was the direct tool of controlling not only official media channels but also the alternative and social media.

⁴ See the interview with Sir Mourad Teyeb, veteran journalist, producer and rights activist, about what has changed in the media sector since 14 January 2011. <http://www.jasmine-foundation.org/en/?p=910>

A lot has changed. One cannot but recognise the huge freedom Tunisians have enjoyed since 2011: freedom of expression, freedom of movement, freedom of belief, and so on. Professionally, 14 January marked the beginning of a phase in which the media is supposed to play a fundamental role in society, far from the interference of public authorities and political and financial lobbying.

Despite the serious attempts by many journalists and new media companies (mainly broadcast and online), Tunisians still have a negative perception of the media.⁵ Public and private mainstream media receive just as much criticism as before the revolution – or even more, for their impartiality and lack of professionalism. That explains why many Tunisians, including the educated and wealthy classes, still find alternatives in social media and the unstructured online news outlets (mainly amateur sites), which they feel they can trust more than mainstream media.⁶

Local background of conflict coverage: Journalists and media interviewed

Since 14 January 2011 Tunisian media is unrestricted. Many newspapers have been established; many television channels (15) and radio stations (FM). The biggest Tunisian public media institutions are Tunis Africa Agency (TAP), Dar El Anwar, Dar El Sabeh, (SNIP), national television channels TV1&TV2, as well as the 14 national radios. The best-known radio stations in Tunisia are Shems FM, Mosaique FM (two radio stations which became public after the Tunisian revolution) and Express FM (private radio).

In this survey, we focused on different forms of media and we interviewed journalists who belong to public and private media such as Radio Gafsa, Radio Tataouine, Saraha FM, *el chourouk* Journal, National TV, Telvza TV, National Radio1, *Akademia* Magazine, TAP, Saraha Fm, Twensa news website), Jawhra FM, Radio Jeunes and others.

Most of the journalists interviewed emphasised the importance of freelancers, but they could not give any clear information about employment conditions or remuneration.

⁵ <http://www.jasmine-foundation.org/en/?p=910>

⁶ Ibid.

Local political events and conflicts of importance

The media have no guarantee of legal protection in their work. Although the situation is not comparable with the days of Ben Ali, some events show that even since the installation of the democratic government the safety of journalists is still threatened by the forces of law and order.

During the demonstrations on 19 and 20 February 2011, acts of violence were perpetrated against local media. According to the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT), a journalist was attacked by plainclothes policemen and two media groups (Dar Al Amal group and SNIPE-La Presse) were victims of vandalism by protesters.

On 5 and 6 May 2011, several journalists were victims of police brutality during demonstrations violently suppressed by security forces who even entered the newspaper *La Presse*. Reporters Without Borders and the SNJT immediately condemned the attitude of law enforcement. ‘The violence used by police in recent days against journalists bring back bad memories, as if the old methods were back, nearly four months after the fall of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali,’ commented Jean-François Julliard, secretary general of Reporters Without Borders.

On 15 July 2011, several journalists were beaten by police. SNJT filed a complaint against the Ministry of Interior for violation of journalists’ rights. Reporters Without Borders again deplored the statements of Prime Minister Caid Essebsi who, in a speech to the nation on 18 July, clearly likened journalists to troublemakers, putting into question their responsibility for the violence that ran through Tunisia.

Since the second half of 2011 journalists have faced the rise of religious extremism. The more radical movements are quick to attack the media and journalists when they approach religious issues critically. More worryingly, the latest incidents have occurred since the appointment of the new democratic government and are sometimes caused by its own supporters.

On 4 January 2012, a newspaper reporter was attacked by plainclothes officers while covering a protest by teachers to the minister of higher education against the government’s policy.

On 11 January 2012, a reporter from the TV station Nessma was attacked in front of the Ministry of the Interior by individuals who came to support the action of the public authority. Moreover, Salafists groups have recently threatened journalists from the daily *Le Maghreb*, following the publication of a survey of this trend in Tunisia. Sixteen attacks against 21 journalists from various media were recorded in March 2013, according to the latest report from the Tunis Centre for Freedom of the Press.

In February 2013, some journalists were threatened and banned from work because of a police interdict forbidding them to work on the ‘Chokri Belaid’ assassination for security reasons.

In March 2013, many journalists (men and women, working for private and public TV channels, public radio, private newspapers and electronic journals) were assaulted. March 2013 was marked by a decline (compared with the previous three months) in the number of attacks, although death threats against four journalists were recorded during that month. On another level, the report noted a decline in the number (two) of calls to journalists by the Crown, although March saw the continuation of the court hearing of three journalists.

In August 2013, many journalists were endangered because of political conflicts, especially the El Rahil demonstration against the former government of Ali Laaryedh.

In July 2014, many attacks against journalists were registered after the terrorist attacks in Kef and the Kasserine Governorate, and other places.

Local and international conflict, publics and politics in context

The most important international issues in Tunisia concern its borders with Libya and the Libyan crisis. Journalists cover events on the Libyan borders under attacks and bombings, without any protection or routines for safety. Tunisian journalists are very committed to their work; some admit that they do not have the courage to reject an assignment, even if the assignment may lead to death. One of them spoke about a rocket which fell next to him when he was covering an event on the Tunisian-Libyan border.

Additionally, insurgency has become one of the major problems, as exposed in the last two years (2012-2014) in the Tunisian west, on the Algerian border, and the al Qaeda attacks. One of the journalists interviewed spoke about a mine explosion when he was covering an event in El Chaanbi mountain in the Kasserine Governorate.

Journalistic norms and practices, and experience of freedom of expression

On 12 October 2011, Reporters Without Borders opened an office in Tunisia. ‘The local team will aim to challenge authorities on violations of freedom of the press, and to accompany them in the construction and development of a sector of the stable release, ethical and independent.’⁷

⁷ See the *Africa Report* article ‘Reporters Without Borders opens bureau in Tunis’. Posted on Wednesday, 12 October 2011 14:27. <http://www.theafricareport.com/Press-Release/reporters-without-borders-opens-bureau-in-tunis.html>

On 14 January 14 2012, the anniversary of the Tunisian revolution, Reporters Without Borders wrote an open letter to the Tunisian authorities to inform them of their concerns about freedom of expression in the Tunisian media. According to TAP agency, the National Authority for Reform of Information and Communication (INRIC) addressed to the president of the Republic, the head of government, the president and members of the National Constituent Assembly, a message in which it recommended 14 urgent measures to remedy the situation facing the sector of information and communication. Pending the completion of its final report, INRIC deems necessary to implement these recommendations as soon as possible. The proposals are:

1. Promulgation of the law regulating the new legislation, namely –

- Decree Law No. 41 of 2011 dated 26 May 2011 regarding public access to official documents held by public bodies, as amended and supplemented by Decree-Law No. 54 of the 2011 dated 11 June 2011.
- Legislative Decree No. 115 of 2011, dated 2 November 2011, on freedom of the press, printing and publishing.
- Decree Law No. 116 of 2011, dated 2 November 2011, on the freedom of audio-visual communication and the creation of an Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA).

2. Installing the HAICA created under decree law, in order to organise the sector and to ensure the freedom and diversity of audio-visual communication; and to protect against violations and abuses of ethics. The HAICA, composed of representatives of all stakeholders, is a specialised structure that is part of the new Tunisian democratic judicial system. This is, indeed, a jurisdiction with two degrees, as are the regulatory bodies in place in democratic countries and whose mission is to contribute to the protection of freedoms and guarantee the right of the defence in cases of dispute. The decree establishing the HAICA is more liberal than some comparable laws in many democratic countries. It contains no custodial sentence.

These two proposals have been realised in Tunisia to establish real press freedom; HAICA has stated its mission and has become a functioning professional entity of observation and defender of press freedom in Tunisia.

The journalists interviewed insisted on the role of the union (SNJT) in empowering journalism authority in the country.

Safety of journalists and issue of impunity

In this context, the interviewed journalists focused on some issues such as the absence of journalist safety routines in conflict zones. Some, however, did mention advice or some psychological support. Examples are to be found in the interview survey forms.

Gender perspectives

A noteworthy observation is that the majority of students of journalism at the Press Institute during the last five years (and even before) are female – which reflects well on women in the Tunisian media education landscape. It does not mean, however, that they are automatically granted positions in the media industry.

Moreover, our interviews with female and male journalists did not indicate any particular difference between genders in the workplace. In Tunisia, the new constitutional dispensation speaks about gender equity in the nation.⁸ Female journalists appear to have the same functions, tasks and jobs as men. Sometimes, women take leading positions such as head of the union – for example, the former SNJT president, Madame Nejiba Hamrouni. In addition, the new executive office of SNJT contains several women journalists and reporters.

Good practices

In more recent times, some journalists in Tunisia have completed training courses in order to be more effective on the ground. The African Centre for Training of Journalists and Communicators (CAPJC) is one of the national organisations that provide such training for Tunisian and African journalists. But despite training Tunisian journalists suffer from lack of material and finance.

Tunisian journalism has experienced remarkable growth because of the presence of journalists and the intelligence they provide. The respondents were informative about their preparations for working in conflict zones, especially the sites of insurgency groups.

Other observations

To some extent, Tunisian editors seem unaware of what journalists experience at work in conflict zones. Some editors insisted that they understood, but the journalists are not convinced. Many of the editors do not speak about certain topics (such as danger, propaganda, human rights

⁸ See <http://www.elle.fr/Societe/News/Tunisie-l-egalite-femmes-hommes-entre-dans-la-Constitution-2651416>

and physical harm) with their reporters. Editors did not have any special arrangements to protect journalists; they merely provide recommendations, advice and reading matter.

Some journalists are so anxious for their lives and their safety that they have tried to make demands for a security policy, and some say that due to the nature of their work they want extra help such as police assistance. They have invited the authorities to look more closely at their security issues.

Journalists do not properly prepare themselves for work in conflict zones. The Tunisian army recently organised special training for journalists to strengthen their skills in crisis zones in Tunisia, and especially in covering attacks by insurgency groups. Journalists in the provinces are now requesting such training.

Obstacles to freedom of expression no longer come only from the state, but also from other policy makers. The owners and/or managers of the media often impose their views, based on commercial and/or opportunistic considerations, to the editor. Sometimes, the journalists' fragile salary conditions lead them to accept employer guidelines and to practise self-censorship for fear of consequences for their career or employment. This applies especially to freelancers. The role of the SNJT needs to be strengthened in order to ensure better protection for journalists in conflict zones and dangerous situations.

Objectivity is one of the real remaining challenges after the 14 January 2011 uprisings in Tunisia. The journalists interviewed for this survey spoke a lot about this challenge and about their efforts to take it into account in their work. Other incidents mentioned particularly by the journalists were the El-Rahil demonstration, the Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi assassinations, the events of 9 April 2012, the Gbolat attacks, the Kef attacks, the Kasserine terrorist attacks, the Tataouine events on the Libyan border, the El Chaanbi mountain, assassinations by army agents, Syliaana attacks and others.

Country report: Uganda

Vivian Ninsiima

Background

Since independence in 1962, Uganda has progressively increased the scope of news reporting from one radio and television station to over 220 radio stations and ten television stations. The number of privately-owned media houses increased remarkably after 1994, when the first privately-owned radio station hit the airwaves. Uganda has four mainstream English newspapers; the *New Vision*, which is government-owned; the *Daily Monitor*, a privately-owned newspaper that reports from an independent angle; the *Observer* and the *East African*. There are a number of newspapers in various local dialects, magazines and tabloids. The increase of media houses has brought its share of challenges.

The UNESCO survey is intended to collect information about the experiences of editors and journalists in conflict reporting. Key respondents were journalists and editors from five main media houses, mainly in television and print media. Fifteen questionnaires were handed to journalists in print and other media, and ten completed questionnaires were returned (from four women and six men). Five questionnaires were handed out to editors and four were returned, from one woman and three men. The age bracket was between 26 and 64. This was a balanced choice of media houses – state-owned and privately-owned – which are the main sources of news.

According to many human rights organisations (Uganda Human Rights Network, Uganda Human Rights Initiative, Africa Media Barometer), various laws have been put into place to control media freedom. Uganda's Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, including freedom of the media. In addition, Article 14 (1) of the Constitution gives every citizen the right of access to information held by the state. However, laws such as the Anti-Terrorism Act (2002), the Press and Journalist Act of 2000 and the Regulation of the Interception of Communications Act of 2010 contradict these freedoms. The recently passed Public Order Management Act 2013 seeks to regulate the conduct of public meetings as well as discussion of issues at such meetings and the Press and Journalists Amendment Bill 2010 is intended to enforce annual registration and licensing of newspapers by the statutory Uganda Media Council and eventually make it a crime to publish unfavourable information about government activities and public officials.

The Constitution and other related legislation provide various clauses with regard to freedom of expression and the rights of journalists; Article 29 (1) (a) guarantees the right to free expression, which includes the freedom of the media. Article 41 (1) gives every citizen the right of access to information in the possession of the state. Article 43 (1) states that these and other fundamental rights shall be enjoyed as long as this does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of others, or the public interest. Article 43 (2) (c) goes on to say that any such limitations should only be those acceptable and demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society, or what is provided in the Constitution.

In April 2011 the Access to Information Act came into force. The Act and the subsequent regulations are supposed to give effect to Article 41 of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens the ‘right to access information in possession of the state or any other organ or agency of the state except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the state or interfere with the right to privacy of any other person’. Therefore there are a number of pieces of legislation directed at freedom of expression and the media which, according to human rights organisations and civil society organisations, infringe on various freedoms, making them unconstitutional.

Local background of conflict coverage, and journalists and media interviewed

Uganda has an oversaturated media with most of the over 200 radio stations mainly delivering entertainment. There are, however, a few which stand out: Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), the government-owned television station, Nation Television (NTV) which is privately owned; the *Daily Monitor*, a privately-owned newspaper; and the *New Vision*, a newspaper in which the government has a majority of shares. For the purposes of this survey, journalists and editors were selected from mainstream media houses and have reported numerous conflict-related stories.

Local political events and conflicts of importance

Uganda had experienced a series of armed and non-armed conflicts over the years. Since it attained its independence in 1962, power changed hands through *coups d'état* – until 1986, when the current president, Yoweri Museveni, took over in the last *coup* that the country has experienced. Nevertheless, conflict resumed in form of a rebellion against the new Museveni regime. One of the conflicts was the Lord’s Resistant Army rebellion which started in 1986 and lasted until 2006 when a truce was signed by rebels and government.

Sporadic demonstrations planned by the opposition members to show their dissatisfaction with the government have resulted in full-blown clashes with the state security agencies, and journalists were caught in the crossfire as police attempted to disperse crowds with teargas, pepper spray, rubber and live bullets. Most of the informants could relate to this experience and most of the direct effects on the journalists involved being exposed to tear gas, and injuries sustained during the chaos.

Another significant event was the closure of some media houses for publishing a letter written by a former army general about the current president supposedly grooming his son to succeed him – a number of top officials who disputed this move were to be assassinated. The *Daily Monitor* (among other media houses) shut down for 11 days amid a heavy police presence that declared its premises a ‘crime scene’ in order to search for the said letter. Conditions were laid out before the newspaper’s premises could be reopened: it was agreed that reporters could only publish stories that were properly sourced, verified, and factual. Stories that could generate tensions or ethnic hatred, or cause insecurity or disturb law and order, were prohibited.

Many of the informants were directly affected by the chaos that erupted during that time. They were detained, their workplaces were shut down, and what they could publish (including what topics could be discussed on talk shows) was dictated. These events resulted in a reduction of news reporters’ independence and infringed their constitutional right to a free press.

Local and international conflict, public opinion and politics in context

Uganda has been involved in external conflicts including the LRA war that spilled over into Central African countries of Congo, Chad and Central African Republic. The most recent conflict is the South Sudan war to which Uganda was the only country that sent troops. Somalia, on the other hand, is a continuous case of conflict and Uganda is one of the few East African countries that have sent troops as peace keepers under the United Nations AMISOM. However, members of the opposition in the government say that Uganda should not meddle in the affairs of neighbours except in emergencies and, further, that the numbers of casualties and deaths are not fully accounted for. The coverage of external conflicts in which the country is involved is limited – according to the survey, many media houses have restricted conflict reporting for political, financial and security reasons.

Journalistic norms and practices, and experience of freedom of expression

Uganda was listed as number 110 out of 180 countries included in the Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index 2014, compared to ranking at number 104 in 2013.

According to Africa Media Barometer, a number of the laws are repressive for journalists and limit the constitutional provision of freedom of expression. Political issues are handled with caution following threats of closure of media houses if the material published could cause hatred or incite violence among the public. Women tend to be reluctant to cover conflict related stories, considering the high risks involved, which also include insomnia, post-traumatic stress and psychological disorders.

Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity

According to the interviews, security levels are low. Basic protection (for example, safety vests and headgear) is often provided for contractual staff although not for freelance journalists. According to one of the informants, freelance journalists are most vulnerable as media houses are not legally obliged to offer them insurance. Responses to the question about whether journalists should be sent out to cover sensitive topics were largely negative.

Gender perspectives

There are more men than women in conflict reporting in Uganda. The high risks involved do not make it a desirable area in journalism and many women have abandoned it, resorting to writing lifestyle articles. One of the informants said that the effects of tear gas had given her chest pains.

Other observations

The poor conditions for freedom of expression are demonstrated by the constant threats some of the informants experienced when their workplaces were shut down, and in the violence they encountered when trying to cover the stories amid teargas and police retaliation. Some of the informants were detained for reporting stories that would allegedly incite violence among the public, for example, clashes between members of the opposition and police.

Measures to handle the after-effects of the threatening situations that journalists faced were not clear. Some of the informants were not aware that they existed. The editors, however, stressed that brief sessions with the reporters take place before and after reporting the stories and that, depending on the intensity of after-effects, more professional help is called in.

Journalists chose not to wear protective gear when covering clashes, as it makes them more susceptible to arrests, detainment, injuries, and verbal threats.

One of the main factors limiting conflict reporting is budgetary and financial constraint. Conflict reporting is more expensive than other forms of reporting. The remuneration of

workers in many media houses is not entirely satisfactory, causing de-motivation. Some of the informants talked of payment per article or per story, and others were on contract.

The age of journalists and editors interviewed were between 26 and 46 with the exception of one older respondent.

Conclusion

Uganda has not experienced armed conflict in over 15 years and the conflicts that journalists engage in are of a political nature. Uganda is growing less safe for journalists in general, and conflict reporters specifically. This is evident from the repressive laws and the other hindrances and restrictions imposed on journalists and the media at large. Civil society and human rights organisations are working to ensure that the freedom of the press and expression is realised in Uganda and that journalists' rights are protected and their safety assured. Owing to the above challenges, editorial staff and journalists alike are reluctant to engage in conflict reporting, and many rely on secondary information.

Country report: Nigeria

Lilian Ngusuur Unaegbu

Short description of the local media landscape

The history of print media in Nigeria goes as far back as the 1840s, when the European missionaries used community publications to promote Christianity. This led to the establishment of the '*West African Pilot*' a brainchild of the late Dr Nnamdi Azikwe and was used alongside other newspapers (by Ernest Okoli, Obafemi Awolowo and Lateef Jakande) to push for Nigeria's independence in 1960. Until the 1990s, most television, radio and newspapers houses were government-owned but today many privately-owned media houses have emerged. National newspapers include the *Nigerian Tribune* established in 1949, *Vanguard*, *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *ThisDay*, *The Sun*, *News Watch*, *Daily Independent*, *Daily Post*, *Leadership*, *Daily Trust*, *The Nation* and very recently *Daily Telegraph*. Today there are over 200 national, regional and local newspapers with the private newspapers sourcing money mainly from advertisements placed by powerful people in society (this suggests that media publications may be biased). Before the signing of the Freedom of Information Act in May 2011, media houses adhered to the tradition of 'publish and be damned' because of the many years of military rule and the huge secrecy of government conduct. In addition, statutes such as the Official Secrecy Act, Evidence Act and the Statistics Act not only restricted government officials from divulging information but also prohibited anyone from receiving and reproducing such information (Afolayan, 2012).

Bloggers and online media publications such as Sahara Reporters have continued to change the landscape of media reporting in Nigeria alongside growing awareness among the youth.

Local background of conflict coverage: Journalists and media interviewed

Nigeria's largest television and radio houses (Nigerian Television Authority and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria) are owned by the state. The privately-owned newspapers mainly cover national news, with little coverage of international news. The newspapers have dedicated conflict reporters.

Local political events and conflicts of importance

Violent conflict claiming the lives of hundreds of people in Nigeria is not new. Between July 1967 and January 1970, Nigeria witnessed her only civil war, the Biafran war. It was an ethnic, economic, religious and political tension, mainly between the Hausas in the north and the Igbos

of the south leading to the attempted secession of the then southern provinces as the Republic of Biafra. During the war over a million civilians died from famine and fighting (BBC, 2000). The war almost tore Nigeria apart and till today many Igbos hold resentment, portraying it as a genocide.

Several conflicts have been registered in the northern part of Nigeria, but the Zango-Kataf conflict in southern Kaduna State in 1992 is notable. The conflict was the result of religious and ethnic rivalry and illustrates how the highly partial approach of government has succeeded in inflaming conflict. Zango-Kataf is an enclave of mainly Muslim Hausa-Fulanis in an area dominated by the mostly Christian Katafs. In February 1992, rioting broke out when the local government council decided to move the local market from a Hausa area to one dominated by Katafs. Sixty people died. In May, worse rioting broke out, resulting from Katafs attacking the Hausa community, and 400 people were killed. The violence spread to Kaduna, where Hausa youths directed their anger towards Christians. Several churches were burned down and Christian ministers killed. Tens of thousands of people fled their homes.

In 2000, the Sharia riots broke out when the Kaduna State House of Assembly proceeded to debate the imposition of Sharia in Kaduna State. The riots took place in Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, Katsina; an estimated 3,000 people were killed. This was followed by reprisal attacks on Hausa Muslims in Abia State where over 450 were killed. Several other religious and ethnic conflicts, especially in northern Nigeria, have led to thousands of deaths, tens of thousands injured and millions fleeing their homes. Sampson (2012) identified several factors that drive this religious violence, including (although not limited to) religious intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism; obstructive and disruptive modes of worship; disparaging preaching and stereotyping; government patronage and marginalisation; and sensationalism in media reportage.

Several conflicts in Benue and Nasarawa states between Tiv sedentary farmers and Fulani migrant herdsmen have continued to claim dozens of lives. These violent conflicts have continued for years and arise when Fulani herdsmen lead their flocks into farms belonging to Tiv farmers, destroying them. Angered by their loss, the farmers set out to kill the livestock. This leads to reprisal attacks by the Fulanis on Tiv communities, especially at night. On one occasion, the Benue governor's convoy was attacked on its way to visit victims.

In recent times the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed lives in the hundreds. The first notable attack of the sect on Christians was in July 2009. Over 700 were killed and 3,500 were

displaced. In June 2011 the suicide bomb attack at the police headquarters in, Abuja left 6 persons dead and 73 vehicles destroyed. In August of same year, the sect claimed to be responsible for the suicide bombing at the UN House, Abuja. Eleven UN personnel and 12 non-UN personnel died. In the 2011 Christmas day car bombing at St Theresa's Catholic Church, Madala, Niger State, 45 were killed and several others were injured. Since then the number of sporadic bombings and shootings by the sects has continued to rise. The kidnapping of over 200 girls from Chibok Girls Secondary School on 13 April 2014 received international notice. With this human rights violation now over 120 days (at the time of writing), the need to #BringBackOurGirls continues to gain media attention.

Local and International conflict, public opinion and politics in context

Nigeria continues to play the 'big brother' role in peacekeeping and integrative efforts in African countries challenged by political instability. Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping dates back to 1960 when Nigerian police and military were deployed to take part in the crisis in Congo. Records from the Ministry of Defence shows that in June 2013 there were about five thousand officers in nine UN peacekeeping missions within and outside Africa. According to the UN's IRIN, Nigeria has more troops in global conflict resolution than any other African country and is the fourth largest contributor to global peacekeeping in terms of manpower. Analysts point to the February 2014 re-election of Nigeria as chair of the UN Peacekeeping Operations Panel as an acknowledgement of her contribution to global peace. But a good number of Nigerians have reservations, especially over the financial losses the country suffers while taking part in such missions. In assessing the human, material and financial losses in Nigerian peacekeeping efforts, Hamman and Omojuwa (2013) concluded that Nigeria has lost more than it has benefited. Since 1960, Nigeria has lost over 2,000 soldiers and expended over 10 billion dollars.

Some Nigerians are of the opinion that the country's many peacekeeping roles have negatively affected the military's response to internal insurgencies. The question posed is: why is the country participating in foreign peacekeeping while it cannot keep the peace at home, with people dying from the Boko Haram insurgency and other violent ethnic conflicts?

The internal deployment of military personnel also raises concern among citizens. A case in point is the recent deployment of thousands of military and policemen to the Ekiti State gubernatorial election, 'forsaking', in the opinion of many, more than two hundred girls held hostage in Sambisa forest in Borno State.

Nigeria's continuing involvement in peacekeeping operations on the continent is in line with its foreign policy Afrocentric posture (Babalola, 2014). In addition, the senate president, Senator David Mark, explained that the continued deployment of troops is in the best interest of the country especially if such conflicts will have ripple effects in Nigeria. The UN's IRIN suggests that one reason Nigeria continues peacekeeping in Africa is to keep the army busy and limit its vulnerability to another military takeover.

Journalistic norms, practices and experience of freedom of expression

Journalism in Nigeria is in a deep credibility crisis. The 'brown envelope syndrome' has eaten deep into the fabric of journalism in Nigeria. According to Aderemi (2013), 'brown envelope' is any form gratification which a journalist receives to cover an event or influence his or her judgment. It can go in two ways: from source to the journalists in the hope of swaying the journalist coverage, or from journalist to source in the hope of getting exclusive information. This means that journalists are tempted to sell or to kill a story – or even to fabricate one. Furthermore, violent conflicts and intimidation by security agencies have continued to affect the output of the average Nigerian journalist (Adaja, 2012). Although Nigeria's ranking on the World Freedom Press Index has improved from 145 in 2010 to 112 in 2014 with the signing of the Freedom of Information Act in 2011, there is still a long way to go as there has been very little change on the ground. As indicated by the journalists interviewed, several factors affect journalism in Nigeria – some are lack of insurance; police and military harassment of journalists; the nature of recent conflicts; and risk allowance payment (analysis of some of these issues is provided in this report's last section).

Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity

The practice of journalism in Nigeria is far from free or fair. Journalists in Nigeria continue to suffer harassment and intimidation even outside the coverage of conflict. The killing of Dele Giwa – journalist, editor and founder of *Newswatch* magazine – over two decades ago by a parcel bomb sent to his home sent shock-waves throughout the country. It was the first time a journalist had been killed in that manner. Since then it has been killings, harassment and arrests – one after the other.

The 27 April 2012 same-day bombing of two newspaper houses in Abuja and Kaduna in which nine people lost their lives counts as a notable attack on journalists. The bombing was linked to a *ThisDay* newspaper report on the activities of the Boko Haram.

Another incident of note is the arrest and harassment of six journalists working with *The Nation* newspaper by policemen in Lagos for their coverage and reproduction of a letter apparently sent by the former president Olusegun Obasanjo to President Goodluck Jonathan. In the letter Obasanjo asked Jonathan to replace some public institution officials. Obasanjo claimed the letter was forged.

While filming the demolition of an illegal building in Abuja, the bureau chief of the *Daily Times* newspaper was chased from the scene and a policeman involved in the chase was quoted as saying ‘Walahi (swearing), if I get you I will beat you up and break that camera and your teeth for talking to me like that.’ The news report stated that she was rescued by passers-by. Several other detentions, beatings and harassment of journalists have been recorded. This issue came up several times during the course of the interviews.

Another instance of press censorship was the cutting short of a live programme on a state-owned TV station. The management of Gloryland Television (owned by Bayelsa state government) abruptly stopped a live discussion 25 minutes into the hour-long programme because one of the invited guests questioned the state government’s disbursement of flood alleviation funds.

On 21 January 2013, the Lagos state government issued a circular prohibiting its political office holders and civil servants from giving interviews to journalists or speaking on its behalf. The head of service who issued the notice said it was aimed at stopping public office holders from divulging government policies still under consideration.

The above examples was taken from a paper, ‘Ending impunity and promoting the safety of journalists and media workers’, delivered by Hajiya Bilkisu Yusuf at the 2013 World Freedom Celebration in Abuja.

Gender perspectives

In Nigeria, the journalism profession has always been considered a man’s occupation into which women should not tread. This has changed significantly with a growing number of women journalists emerging at both national and international level. Although the number of women has increased, however, the gender-based challenges associated with the profession are not declining. The female reporters interviewed for this survey all mentioned that they have been harassed by males. One even explained that on several occasions, men had offered her money and asked her for sex in order for her to continue and succeed. Some talked of being harassed

sexually in the field, outside their homes and, at times, in their work place. There are incidents of telephone and face-to-face threats.

Aside from sexual and other abuses, women reporters interviewed lament not being taken seriously and mostly given beats that dwell on entertainment and other social issues even when they strive to bring in stories outside the box. Observation from the survey suggests that very few women are allowed to cover conflict. It is seen as a job for men.

The domination of the news media by men and the preponderance of male perspectives in the reporting of news have also brought about a situation where there is little focus on the participation of women in the political and economic spheres of the country. Women's perspectives are also not given adequate coverage in the media and are considered as lightweight news and frivolous. This shows how professional indoctrination and market realities rule the processing of information (Anyanwu, 2001). It also shows conformity with the sociocultural norm and with religious practice, especially in the northern region of the country where women and girls are locked up at home or wear hijab when they go out. They are not allowed to speak to men. With very few women journalists available, and most conflicts occurring in the northern region, important information such as gender perspectives on these conflicts is lost or under-reported. This coincides with the newspaper analysis of Anyanwu (2001), who concludes that pictures of women are seen in newspapers but their voices are hardly heard.

Good practice

All journalists interviewed are full-time employed in varying media. Freelance journalism in Nigeria is not popular and this was confirmed by the responses during interviews.

Other observations

Many of the journalists interviewed indicated that the fear of being harassed by law enforcement agents such as the police and military discourage them from going out to cover stories, especially when they are not invited. This can be linked to the immense secrecy in the conduct of government activities and the lack of understanding between journalists and law enforcement agents. One journalist interviewed said: 'Law enforcement agencies see us [journalists] as a hindrance to effectively doing their jobs.'

Harassment by militants also occurs. One journalist said he was once threatened on the phone and asked to pay a ransom into a certain bank account or he and his family would be killed. This has affected his social life as he fears militants may recognise and harm him.

One journalist indicated that the quality of conflict reporting is largely influenced by the lack of trust between law enforcement agencies and journalists. Law enforcement agencies often hide essential information, and this affects the quality of reports.

There is no life insurance for journalists. All the journalists interviewed said that they were not covered by life insurance other than a general policy. One journalist said that this issue has continued to come up in annual conferences and professional association gatherings, but nothing much has been done.

Training is inadequate. Some journalists revealed that aside from the usual daily editorial briefings they get no form of conflict reporting and peacekeeping engagement training. This applied more to journalists in privately-owned media houses than those working in state-owned media who acknowledged that they got some necessary training. As those working in the privately-owned media houses are in the majority, this means that most journalists are not adequately trained to cover violent conflict or peacekeeping missions.

Of the journalists interviewed, only a few were willing to carry out risky assignments. This was surprising, as the journalists acknowledged that they have been adequately trained in conflict coverage in the Nigeria Defence College, Jaji. This implies that with adequate training more journalists will be willing to carry out risky investigations.

Some interviewees said that no added risk allowance is paid for covering conflicts. Financial reward as motivation cannot be overlooked and a lack of it can limit many a journalist's desire to pursue a story. From a different perspective, a journalist explained that the payment of a risk allowance can subsidise salaries and increase savings for a journalist's family in the case of a mishap.

The nature of the recent conflicts in Nigeria has hindered journalists from adequately covering them. The Boko Haram insurgency is an example. Members of the Boko Haram are extreme ideologists who do not reason with journalists – or any person, for that matter. One journalist interviewed claimed that Boko Haram have lost focus and it is increasingly difficult to understand what they are fighting for. They do not have any 'rules of engagement'. In addition, they do not invite journalists to capture their side of the story. This, he said, differs significantly

from the Niger Delta crisis where the fighting was about resource control and repair of the environment degraded by the exploration for oil. The Niger Delta militants gave audiences to journalists to properly capture their side of the story. Another journalist interviewed, who has received several awards and recognition for being the first reporter to have direct contact with Niger Delta militants with a detailed story clearly outlining the cause they were fighting for, said that even though he is experienced in conflict reporting, and familiar with the northern part of Nigeria, he is not interested in seeking to interview any member of Boko Haram even if he is invited. 'I cannot trust people who are out to kill and destroy with no definite reason. Niger Delta militants had a vision with demands, but Boko Haram – what do they want? If [it] is to Islamatise Nigeria, why are they also killing Muslim faithful?'

Interviewees indicated that they have been threatened a number of times in the last five years, mostly through emails, SMSs and telephone calls. As one journalist said, 'The horror of violence lasts long in the subconscious.' It was deduced from the survey that not all media outfits have a well-defined routine for dealing with threats to staff. Even where such practices are available they seemed to be superficial.

One editor said: 'Staff receive counselling on how to handle future situations and get assurance that the firm is always available for support.' Another said: 'A formal report is made to management for review and subsequent action.' These remarks suggest a lack of proper medical evaluation and the monitoring of staff suffering psychologically or emotionally. This has a serious effect on conflict reporting in that most journalists are not willing to go the extra mile. As said by one of the interviewees: 'No story is worth a journalist's life.'

The majority of the journalists, especially those from the private media, made a strong call for training while those who have had some training called for more and for better training. Specific areas of need include peacekeeping operations, rules of engagement, and precautionary measures in situations involving bombs and intense fighting. All the interviewees said there is dire need for life insurance for journalists undertaking risky assignments. Some also advised that enforcement agencies should be trained to trust and respect the rights of journalists covering conflicts or crime investigations.

Country report: Nicaragua

Gretta Paiz

Short description of the local media landscape

Two recent studies made by the World Association of Community Radio in Central America (AMARC-Central America) and the Media Observatory section of the Nicaragua-based Communication Research Center (CINCO), conclude that threats and aggression towards journalist in Nicaragua have increased in recent years. Between May 2013 and July 2014 alone there were 13 documented attacks. None of these have been investigated by the authorities in spite of official complaints. As a result, journalists from all over the country delivered a letter of protest to the national police demanding a halt to impunity and the investigation of the documented incidents. However, there has not been any response from authorities.

Background of journalists interviewed

Most journalists who were interviewed have long experience in their work, many over twenty years. A few have just started and thus have a fresh look at the situation. Their work includes printed media, radio, TV and the Internet. They are often active within human rights movements, and especially in feminist and indigenous issues. Some have also specialised in violence and organised crime. All the journalists say that they are active in social media as a way of denouncing, mobilising and influencing.

Local political events and conflicts of importance

Some of the cases that describe the aggression towards journalists are:

- In May 2013 Martha Vásquez and Manuel Esquivel from *La Prensa* newspaper were prevented from doing their professional jobs by the security of the Judicial Complex of Managua.
- In 2013 Ramón Potosme, editor of *La Prensa*, was unable to do his work; he was assaulted by the director of the Supreme Electoral Council of Public Relations.
- In 2013 Roberto Martínez, was assaulted by officials of the national police while covering a youth protest organised in solidarity with the elderly.
- In 2013 Ismael López, from the television programme *Esta Semana*, was investigated by officials from the national army due to his work.

- In 2013 Elizabeth Romero and Manuel Esquivel from *La Prensa* were persecuted, filmed and insulted by security agents of the national police when assisting an interview in Danlí, Honduras, about a case known as ‘the rearmed Nicaragua’. The images were distributed to governmental media as propaganda, with the objective of denigrating their work as journalists and with the clear message that they would be under surveillance by the state and other authorities.
- In November 2013 Martha Vásquez and Uriel Molina from *La Prensa* were illegally detained when investigating the property of people related to drug dealing.
- In May 2014 the TV programme Zona Libre broadcast in a local channel of the San Rafael del Sur municipality, was closed on request from the municipal mayor Noel Cerda, based on accusations of publishing information that criticised his authority.
- In May 2014 Izayana Matínez and Lucía Navas from *La Prensa* newspaper were abused by police forces at a protest arranged by traders in front of the Customs General Directorate (DGA – Dirección General de Aduana).
- In July 2014 Edgardo Trejos, from Channel 2 television, was intentionally run over by a large car while working on an investigation at the Center for Health Products (CIPS). The car was driven by the director of the institution and was registered at the Ministry of Health.
- In July 2014 Jeaneth Ángeles Obando and Francisco Javier Castro, cameramen from Channel 2 television, and Manuel Esquivel, a photographer from *La Prensa*, were all assaulted by a group of men on motorbikes who were known to be connected to the government, while they were covering a conflict at the Supreme Electoral Council.

Journalistic norms, practices and experience of freedom of expression

The media observation study by CINCO describes how today’s corrupt institutions and secret police related to governmental officials have negatively affected the work of journalists and the capability of the media to cover conflict. Journalists are constantly denied access to information and contact with key persons, and are only given access to information provided by governmental media. Further, journalists and media houses not affiliated to the government are given less financial assistance and general support.

Additionally, journalists are systematically attacked and assaulted when reporting on protests and civil uprisings. All consulted in this study rated the current environment for journalism in Nicaragua 'hostile towards journalists who are not on the government's side'. Nevertheless, the government and its institutions have consistently declared that there is no censorship of media communication in newspapers, radio, television, or the Internet.

The reality is that journalism and media communication is starting to favour the government. There is a tendency not to focus on the threats, and the coverage of events suggests an environment of security, trust and liberty in Nicaragua. Journalists who are critical of this rarely express their views for fear of reprisals. They censor themselves and block information, thereby supporting governmental secrecy.

Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity

It is quite obvious that self-censorship among Nicaraguan journalists has increased. Most news stories nothing to do with the topics that are really important to the country and its people. There is a constant watchfulness over the airing of controversial topics, and many important issues are not being dealt for fear of the authorities. It is clearly risky to criticise anything related to the government – political parties, governmental activities or public institutions.

Threats, harassment, and judicial processes dog those who carry out investigative journalism. About 91 per cent of the journalists recently interviewed by the World Association of Communitarian Radio have said that they feel threatened. Nevertheless, there are still some media houses which maintain high standards, not only in Managua but in other areas of the country as well.

Country report: Norway

Rune Ottosen and Marte Høiby

Short description of the local media landscape

As a result of a press subsidy system introduced in 1969, the Norwegian print media consists of a large number of newspapers. The aim of the subsidy was to protect newspapers from closing down, to maintain a diverse press, and to sustain local competition among newspapers. In short, this support provides different economic benefits for newspapers, and has made the Norwegian newspaper landscape extensive. By the end of 2013, there were 229 newspapers in Norway, the highest number since the Second World War. Yet, as in other countries, the total print run is decreasing.

This is affecting the tabloids above all. *VG*, an example of a tabloid, was Norway's biggest newspaper for many years, but today the subscription paper *Aftenposten* is the biggest, and *VG* the second biggest. The era of political party press is long gone, but critics claim that there are still differences between the right-wing and left-wing press, and that their party roots are still visible in many newspapers. *Dagsavisen* represented the Norwegian 'Labour Party' during the party press era, and is today considered a left-wing newspaper. *Aftenposten* was a right-wing newspaper during the party press era (and belonged to the party 'The Conservatives'), and has to a certain extent remained a conservative newspaper. *VG* cannot be placed on either side, and has never belonged to any party. It is a true tabloid.

The role of the state in the media requires constant scrutiny (even in cases where the state provides press subsidies).

According to investigative analyses by TNS Gallup, the most important source of news in 2013 is the Internet, followed by TV, radio and newspapers.

Local background of conflict coverage: Journalists and media interviewed

The biggest Norwegian media houses are Norwegian Broadcasting (public service) and TV 2 (commercial television). The biggest newspapers are *Aftenposten* and *VG*, both belonging to the Schibsted company, which owns five out of Norway's ten biggest newspapers. Other sizeable papers are Oslo-based newspapers such as *Dagbladet*, *Dagsavisen* and *Klassekampen*. They provide solid foreign coverage and regularly report on conflicts nationally and abroad. Finally, Norway has only one major news agency: Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB), established in

1867. Most newspapers, radio and television subscribe to NTB's services, and the agency is owned collectively by the press (European Journalism Center, 2014).

The major news outlets are: *Aftenposten*, *VG*, *Dagsavisen*, NRK, TV2, NTB, *Dagbladet*, *Klassekampen* and *Morgenbladet*. Norway has three profiled freelancers (one male and two female) who produce on a regular basis for one or several of the newspapers listed above. Netizens and citizen journalists have not yet gained very much influence in the Norwegian media landscape.

Local political events and conflicts of importance

On 22 July 2011, the government buildings in Oslo were targeted and hit in a bombing attack which killed eight people and was followed by a mass shooting at a Workers' Youth League (AUF) camp on the island of Utøya, where another 69 people, mostly teenagers, were killed. In August 2012 Anders Behring Breivik was convicted of mass murder, for causing a fatal explosion and for terrorism. On the day of the attacks, Breivik distributed a compendium of texts online entitled '2083: A European declaration of independence', describing his far-right militant ideology. In the declaration, he laid out a worldview including a significant focus on 'Islamophobia'.

Two teams of court-appointed forensic psychiatrists examined Breivik before his trial. The first report diagnosed Breivik as a paranoid schizophrenic. A second psychiatric evaluation was commissioned following widespread criticism of the first. The second evaluation was published one week before the trial; it concluded that Breivik was not psychotic during the attacks or during the evaluation. He was instead diagnosed with a narcissistic personality disorder. His trial began on 16 April 2012, with closing arguments on 22 June 2012.

On 24 August 2012, the Oslo District Court issued findings that Breivik was sane, and guilty of murdering 77 people. He was sentenced to 21 years in prison, in a form of preventive detention that required a minimum of ten years of incarceration and the possibility of an extension of that incarceration for as long as he is deemed a danger to society. This is the maximum penalty in Norway; he will probably remain in prison for the rest of his life. Breivik announced that he did not recognise the legitimacy of the Oslo District Court, and therefore did not accept its decision; he claims he 'cannot' appeal because this would legitimise the authority of the court. The media coverage of this event has been a crucial debate about conflict coverage in Norwegian media (Østerud, S. 2012; Ottosen and Bull, 2012).

Other important events in which Norway has been involved are NATO's out of area operations in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. Several studies have documented media coverage of these wars (Nohrsted and Ottosen 2001, 2004, 2005, 2014), (Eide and Ottosen 2002, 2013) and Hammer (2010).

In 2008 Carsten Thommassen, journalist in the daily *Dagbladet* was killed in Kabul while covering the visit to Afghanistan of the Norwegian foreign minister at the time, Johnas Gahr Støre. This was a critical event for Norwegian editors' attention to security and safety among journalists (Ottosen, 2009).

In 2009 the freelance journalist Pål Refsdal was kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Refsdal was doing research for a documentary film from inside a Taliban military camp when a faction of the group decided to capture him and his Afghan interpreter and to demand a ransom for their release. Refsdal and his colleague were released five days later. The circumstances of their release are not known.

Local and international conflict, public opinion and politics in context

The role of Norway and Norwegian media cannot be understood without considering the role of Norway's membership of NATO and close alliance with the US: Norway's former prime minister, Jens Stoltenberg, took the position of general secretary of NATO after the Norwegian election in 2013 was won by the current prime minister, Erna Solberg. NATO's operations are centred on the Middle East/Western Asia and Eastern Europe, and the most recent include military attacks in Pakistan (2011), military intervention in Libya (2011), and Norwegian troops to Iraq and Afghanistan (2014) along with a series of operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to the present. While the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) had decided to end its mission in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, NATO continues a follow-on mission to train and sustain the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). NATO has also participated in the Iraqi war by training Iraqi forces through a programme that lasted from 2004 to 2011. The Norwegian armed forces have contributed troops and personnel to these wars, and are also still present in countries in Eastern Europe: Bosnia from 1992 and Kosovo from 1999 – although to a lesser extent since 2004 when it was decided to reduce their presence in these areas and increase the focus on the escalating war in Afghanistan.

The overwhelming majority of Norwegians support NATO membership. All the political parties in Parliament (Stortinget) support the need for basic security and there has been no opposition in Parliament to Norway's out-of-area policy. Opinion polls, however, show that a significant minority opposed the Norwegian military presence in conflicts such as Afghanistan and Libya. The peace movement and political parties on the left outside Stortinget (Rødt) are also in opposition to the current military policies.

Journalistic norms and practices, and experience of freedom of expression

Norway is listed as number three on the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index for 2014. According to a Norwegian freedom of expression barometer (TNS Gallup, 2013), 82 per cent of Norwegians feel that 'in Norway, everyone can express their meanings freely'. However, only 7 per cent agree, and 21 per cent partly agree, with the statement 'I can express what I want without being judged or condemned by society at large'; and 31 per cent agree that 'women are often harassed when they express themselves in public'.

The public censure of journalists for expressing their sentiments is exemplified by reaction to the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza, about which several Norwegians are reporting and are facing massive criticism from people who support an Israeli occupation. The reporters have decided to come out in the media with their stories, and to be open about how it affects them to be harassed and threatened in their private lives and the public space. Although this particular conflict is politically tense and affects society more broadly, it shows up the risk in contributing to public debate. The future media environment is in danger of self-censure, as are freedom of expression and democracy in Norwegian society at large.

Gender inequality is revealed by statements from women reporters interviewed for this study; they experience being harassed, especially in social media, more often than their male colleagues, and often because they are women. During the ongoing coverage of Gaza, the first journalist to react publicly to harassment by the public was one of Norway's most profiled and experienced woman reporters, Sidsel Wold, who works for Norwegian Broadcasting. In an interview with *VG* she said that she had been so psychologically exhausted that at one moment she wanted to leave the work and go home. After Wold's reaction, several others, both men and women journalists from other media, stepped forward and told their personal stories of how it affects them to work under such psychological pressure.

Regardless of the gender perspective of this issue, it is a problem when reporters who work in conflict areas are more distressed by the pressure of public opinion than the physical dangers

on the ground, and it is reasonable to assume that mental exhaustion can have a direct effect on their security precautions and risk evaluation.

Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity

Norway is considered one of the safer countries in the world in which to practice journalism. However, the journalists considered for this study are those who travel to or live in conflict zones – mainly in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and some countries in the Eastern Europe – to cover foreign affairs (several of them also covered the Balkan war, although those experiences are beyond the time-scale of this study). The security of these journalists are more or less level with that of local journalists, depending on which stories they cover, where they operate, who they work for and what training they have been given, their experience, local knowledge and so on. Freelancers are among the most vulnerable conflict journalists; according to interviewees for this study they take more risks, have less professional support and are often younger and less experienced. Their low income is also mentioned as a factor to increase risk, as it prevents them from using safer options for transport and accommodation. According to our sources, local freelancers come out worst; they are often left at the scene when everyone else is evacuated by their employers. Sometimes they do not get the bylines they deserve although they contribute at a higher risk.

Gender perspectives

Women reporters experience some stress through the effects of harassment and sexual harassment. Unfortunately, the sample for each country is not adequate for an interpretation of whether, as a whole, women are affected more than men in those countries, but in Norway this research found that all harassment is a significantly larger problem for women reporters than for their male counterparts. Sexual and other types of harassment normally comes from males, in physical encounters in the field and outside their homes (for those who live in the area they cover), but also in the public sphere of the Internet and by personal contact through e-mail, SMS and voicemail. For the coverage of foreign affairs, the participation of female reporters is crucial, especially for Norway, whose engagement abroad is often situated to countries where female reporters can access sources (women and children) who their male colleagues may not be able to interview. Without female reporters present in those areas, the Norwegian press cannot deliver coverage of civilian perspectives in places where Norway and NATO are involved in military operations.

Good practices

A few Norwegian freelance journalists have settled in the Middle East and Afghanistan to come closer to the events and build their own networks and sources. As freelancers on contract, they do in fact get the same security training, security equipment, insurance and health benefits as their fully-employed colleagues. Others may have to buy their own insurance and equipment.

Norwegian editors say that they always routinely file a report to the police about threats to their employees.

This year (2014) one of the Norwegian editorial managements is arranging its own security course for journalists covering foreign affairs. The positive effects may be that journalists are better prepared when a situation occurs and can aid in saving lives on the ground among both their colleagues and other civilians.

Other observations

In general, the Norwegian informants feel that safety training and equipment, as well as psychological treatment, is available to them either through the company they work for or at an affordable price (as completely independent freelancers). Freelancers who deliver frequently for the larger media houses are to some extent covered by the business policies of the houses to which they deliver.

Harassment may be a growing problem owing to new (social) media platforms and to the generally increasing and uncontrolled public participation in new media.

Many Norwegian media houses contract local journalists, or fixers, for shorter periods of time, and such agreements often go through an employed journalist or correspondent. The use of pictures and footage distributed by the wires is also common practice.

IV. Findings and analysis

The survey form used in interviews, and additional information given by the informants, together lay the foundation for this report. For the most part, the project participants contributing to the study conducted the interviews by meeting their informants personally – this has given them the opportunity to record information beyond the options in the survey form and to gather more comprehensive and more nuanced information about the circumstances leading to the responses and to the general trends in the findings. This section will outline some general trends in the answers and statements from informants, and discuss some specific cases which they highlighted of their own accord. It is important to stress that the findings do not present statistics of the general state of conflict reporting today. Rather, they reveal some of the issues with which conflict reporters are struggling, in seven chosen countries across four continents.

i. About the informants

Most of the informants interviewed for the study, are journalists – between 10 and 12 from each country. In addition, three to five editors from each country were included, to support or to compare statements from journalists. Altogether, the survey encompasses information from 100 informants: 73 journalists (24 women and 49 men) and 27 editors (8 women and 19 men). In choosing informants we aimed specifically for journalists who have covered conflict frequently during the past five years. We also aimed to include a certain percentage of female reporters in order to gain gender perspectives of conflict reporting, although this would create a distorted image of women's participation, given the unequal share of gender representation in this sector. In spite of our efforts to include female informants, their total representation was a mere 32 per cent.

Media platforms

The project attempted to include a variety of media platforms, organised into seven categories, in the sample. However, many media platforms are overlapping these days, and nearly half of the informants placed themselves in more than one category.

As seen in the table below, photojournalism and digital journalism (bloggers, netizens and citizen journalists) are not numerous among the informants. There were no clear methodological instructions for the inclusion or exclusion of this group in the sample, but

possible reasons may be that citizen journalists and netizens can be more difficult to define than the typical conflict reporter; and there are not many among veteran war reporters, as this type of journalism is recent. They also may not match the stereotype of the war reporter, and were thus unintentionally ignored when the sample of informants was chosen, despite their important role in the local coverage of conflicts.

Media platform	Number of informants
News (print and internet)	39
Television/video	21
Radio	18
Several platforms	15
Photo	3
Digital	1
Other	3
Total number of editors and journalists responding	100 (100 %)

Table 1: Type of media in which the journalists and editors work.

Those who report working for several platforms are mainly those who initially worked in television but now have to cover for radio and web as well. Overlapping media platforms are an increasing trend which lead to significantly more work for each journalist and possibly also their editors. This may be part of the reason the study, which aimed at including a broad media representation in its sample, has failed to include an adequate number of photojournalists— there may not be enough journalists working solely as photographers to choose from. Many of them have converted to video, and so consider themselves part of the category ‘television/video’. Radio journalism is included to some extent, as radio plays a crucial role in community news in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. However, radio journalism is also accounted for within the ten per cent of ‘several platforms’.

According to a Filipino editor, radio journalists are at extra risk owing to the ‘live’ nature of its reporting:

I believe that radio is the most neglected and is the whipping boy of Philippine journalism. If you notice, most of the killed journalists come from radio. The common misperception is that radio reporters or commentators are careless or uneducated. Radio does not have

the same gravitas as print or not as glamorous as TV. But, radio reporters are more vulnerable to risk and exposed because they do instant and live coverages. When you're a print journalist, you can cover the news from the radio ... I am saddened by the state of radio journalism in the Philippines. I see it as a *bibingka* [a traditional Filipino dessert made of rice flour] you experience heat below and on top.

Editors

As the study is focused on working conditions for the journalists, extensive information about the editors beyond their positions in the organisational leadership is considered less relevant. The survey form offered four options for identification of their positions in the editorial management, to which all 27 editors responded. The number of respondents listed for each option was: Editor-in-chief (10); editorial leader of a section or department (15); administrative leader (1); other (1).

Journalists: employment status and experience

Seeking to include all kinds of conflict reporting, this study aimed to interview journalists in different working conditions – from those fully employed by a company or the wires to those working independently from bureaux and companies – and those in-between. It specifically aimed to include a small, but essential share of freelancers or independent journalists, and succeeded in doing so in most of the countries, especially Nicaragua and Norway. Ideally, there would be more information about the conditions for freelance journalism in all the countries, but they may be more difficult to reach or identify if not connected to, or frequently producing for, a bureau or news station.

In total, 19 per cent of the interviewed journalists are freelancers or employed on temporary contracts, while the remainder are fully employed. Most of the freelancers or stringers interviewed are from Norway and Nicaragua. The sample from Nepal has included two and samples from Nigeria, Uganda, Tunisia and the Philippines have each contributed one. Within the total sample of journalists, those from the Philippines and Norway report longer experience working as journalists than those from the other countries, and of those the Nicaraguan journalists report the most. While this proves that the survey has successfully included both experienced and less experienced journalists among its informants, it may similarly have influenced some of the more substantial findings between countries. Thus although the limited number of informants from each country is too small to constitute a comparative value between

countries, the findings are additionally weighed against these minor but significant differences between samples from each country.

Journalists from the Philippines, Norway and Nepal reported the highest level of experience in conflict coverage (counted in the number of times covering conflict). However, estimating the level of experience of reporting conflict is highly dependent on the reporter’s subjective understanding of what a conflict is and how a ‘time’ is measured. If a journalist goes to a conflict zone to cover ten days of fighting that may qualify as anything from a single time to the number of times the journalist actually observed fighting during that stay. Adding even more uncertainty to this measurement, those journalists who live in a conflict zone may not report fighting as a number of times but, rather, as a constant state of reality. Nevertheless, the purpose of including this dimension in the survey was to measure the relevance of their experiences. It was important to understand the informants’ background.

Employment status	Number of journalists	Years of experience	Number of journalists	Number of times covering conflict	Number of journalists
Fully employed	59	0 – 5 years	6	Never	4
Freelancer	9	5 – 10 years	23	1 – 3 times	13
Vacant position	3	10 – 15 years	17	3 – 5 times	5
Other	2	15 – 20 years	11	5 – 10 times	11
		20 years or more	16	10 – 20 times	8
				More than 20	32
Journalists responding	73 (100%)		73 (100%)		73 (100%)

Table 2: Journalists’ employment status; journalists’ years of experience (the level of experience is estimated by giving journalists options for how many years they have worked as a reporter in five- year periods); and journalists’ experience of covering conflict or war-like conditions in their own country or abroad, given in the number of times they have covered conflict.

ii. Threats and risk assessment

A majority of the journalists interviewed report experiencing direct threats in relation to their work during the past five years. Only 11 out of the 73 journalists reported not having been exposed to direct threats during the five past years, and all but two of them reported significantly less experience as a journalist or less experience in covering conflict. Thirty-two reported having been threatened, or been in an especially threatening situation, two to five times; 19

counted five to ten times, or more. Journalists from the Philippines came out as considerably more threatened than any of the others, whereas Uganda and Nigeria reported slightly higher levels of threat than the rest.

Measuring threats to journalists in terms of experience, however, is as precise as measuring rain in drops. How much it takes for a journalist to feel threatened may vary with their personality, previous experience, after-effects or posttraumatic stress disorder, feeling of being in control, or the place and its surroundings. The study never intended to document the actual threats experienced by the journalists but, rather, the extent to which they felt threatened. For the individual journalist, this is what determined their working conditions and which could consequently affect their practices and choices. However, a follow-up question was added to the survey, to map what it was that made them feel threatened.

Accordingly, it became evident from the returned survey forms that the journalists were far from agreeing about what constitutes a threat. A couple, who first responded that they had not experienced being threatened more than once or twice, changed their minds when they were offered the option of describing the actual nature of threats they might have experienced. There could be several reasons for this: perhaps, after more thought about their experiences, they may have remembered more uncomfortable incidents. Or perhaps, when first answering the question, they did not have a clear idea of whether their experiences ‘qualified’ as a threat – and some may not have known to what extent this was to be defined by themselves or by the survey.

The question that encouraged them to define the threats they experienced clearly showed incidents by which most people would be likely to feel threatened. Most of them consisted of violent offence (24 journalists reported this), verbal threats (29) and unease in the area (31). Eighteen of the journalists had been threatened with weapons, and 19 had received personal threats via SMS, e-mail or voicemail. Six had experienced threats against family members or friends and five had experienced ‘other’ undefined threats. The data is overlapping, meaning that each informant had been given the opportunity to check all applicable options. Also, it should be noted that those answering this question were for the most part those who reported feeling threatened in the previous question; the few not having felt threatened at all ignored this question altogether.



Graph 1: The graph shows the types of threats experienced by the journalists (given in numbers in the horizontal axis) in the past five years.

The journalists appear to have been mentally and physically affected by the threatening situations. Twenty-eight stated that even though they were not physically hurt they suffered mentally to some extent. Nine stated that their experiences resulted in minor injuries; three that they required treatment by a doctor; and one reported being hospitalized.

As seen in the graph below (Graph 2) the option of answering ‘other’ is noteworthy; 20 journalists took the option of answering ‘other’ as a single reply or in combination with one of the other replies. A weakness in the survey form should be taken into consideration here: the form did not offer the option of being *unaffected both physically and mentally*, and some may have chosen this option to state that they experienced none of the other without specifying this.



Graph 2: The graph shows the outcomes of the reported threats. The horizontal axis gives the number of journalists reporting each value, and they may overlap. Only those who reported receiving threats or experiencing threatening situations have answered and are included in this data.

Local and international journalists – provincial or urban coverage

Informants reported that there is a clear difference between working locally or abroad, and working in urban areas or in the provinces. Usually, working in the districts is likely to increase risk to themselves at work as well as putting constant pressure on their families. However, in the Philippines, for instance, impunity at national level caused threats and risk to spread beyond geographical borders; if a reporter has offended the wrong people he or she could be targeted at any location. Even though the Filipino informants seem to have covered wars abroad (such as in the Middle East), as well as in the districts of their own country, they experience continuous pressure in relation to the safety of their families, as they cannot avoid also covering national and local stories at times when they are not deployed away from home.

An editor says that: ‘Provincial reporters are more prone [to threats] ... rebels, secessionists... They may feel safer inside the camp, but they only get to cover one side.’ He says that threats to family or friends usually happens in election coverage or reporting about gambling, prostitution or drugs, while verbal threats are experienced frequently by reporters regardless of assignment. This is echoed by the journalists themselves. According to the same editor, radio reporters in rural areas are especially at risk and are often attacked in the studio, while print journalists, on the other hand, are ‘slapped with libel’.

Threats to local journalists often consist of pressure to ‘tone down the story’ through stalking, threats towards family, physical or verbal ‘notifications’ – or they can be pressured into accepting bribes. One reporter told about being abducted; he was taken from his house and brought to a place where someone tried to bribe him. He responded by asking for time to think about it, and escaped, but was afraid not to accept the bribe as that would signal his unwillingness to cooperate. Several of the journalists interviewed had experienced attempted bribery numerous times.

Civil war or local political conflict is also more difficult for local journalists, who often experience pressure to choose sides. This was perhaps most evident in the answers from Nepal, where the civil war ended quite recently, in 2006. Informants say that fear of social and economic exclusion has been a contributing factor to their reporting, and there were incidents of someone losing their job through accusations of bias towards one party or another. Despite

the pressure, the journalists reported that ‘staying factual’ keeps them safer, and one said that not taking sides is the only way to survive as a reporter. One journalist was forced to abandon family when accused of being a Maoist supporter:

Due to reporting from conflict, the security forces accused me as Maoist supporter. My life was in continuous threat, so I was compelled to join the Maoists and report for their media. I had to abandon my house, family ... In the later stage I was even expelled from the [Maoist] media organisation. During the conflict, it was practically impossible for balanced reporting in our Nepalese context.

Another journalist in the same country gave an example that accusations of bias were also a threat from the other side of the table: ‘... it created a difficult situation for me as one of the [protagonists] accused me of taking a favour from the government.’ The linking between bias/objectivity and risk assessment is discussed further below in the section on Self-censorship.

Freelancers

Another group of journalists evidently at risk are the local and international freelancers. As explained by an international freelancer based in the Middle East: ‘The local freelancers suffer the most; they take the highest risks, they are untrained and unequipped, they barely get paid, and they don’t even get the bylines.’ When they also are young and inexperienced this combination can constitute a death trap. Some informants told stories of local freelancers who started out as ‘fixers’ and ended up selling their stories to big international news houses, a few reportedly ending up being contracted. While these cases are probably exceptions to the rule, they show that there are opportunities for those willing to take the risk – for as long as they manage to survive. It was summed up by one of the fully-employed international correspondents: ‘If you find yourself next to a freelancer [in the field], you know that you have gone too far.’

Parachute journalism and spot news

One of the trends in the answers is that editors prefer sending their reporters to conflict areas for a shorter time period, and pull them back as soon as they ‘have the story’. Results altogether point towards increased restrictions for covering conflict, a larger number of informants reporting being more careful about *keeping* journalists in conflict zones than about *sending* them there. Some editorial leaders say that in fact their journalists now travel more than before,

but that they do not wish to keep a reporter in a conflict zone for a long time. Some journalists and editors think that one or two weeks in a conflict zone is the ideal length of time, but they give slightly different reasons for this: while the journalists focus on planning, resources and safety, the leaders add that they wish to protect the psychological wellbeing of their journalists and that two weeks in a tense area is likely to affect mental strength and focus. They also emphasise that their employees need an adequate time to rest in between risky assignments. One Norwegian correspondent says that: ‘as long as you go quickly in and get out fast, and you have good contacts and a well-planned stay, the risk is considerably lower’.

One could consider that the correspondents (journalists living abroad on long-term contracts) are a counter to the trend of increasing on-the-spot coverage, but although they stay for longer in the region they cover, most correspondents interviewed for this study do not reside in the hotspots of the conflict – and even less so when the security situation worsens. Their understanding of the conflict depends largely on their ability and desire to interact with the local context – local people’s relation to, or viewpoint of, the conflicted area and the information offered by national or local media.

Covering war and organised crime

The conditions affecting journalists’ safety and prosecutors’ impunity also differs in countries affected by organised crime and those affected by war or war-like conditions. In Latin American countries (represented by Nicaragua in this study) with criminal groups and drug trafficking, potential perpetrators are invisibly present everywhere (Hjelde, 2006) whereas in a war zone they may be easier to locate and identify. However, as an experienced editor said, ‘the wars today are less straightforward than before’, referring to the ambiguous boundaries of modern international conflicts.

Local warlords based in districts, or insurgency groups, are other challenges that affect the working conditions of journalists in some countries and in particular limit movement and access to sources owing to safety concerns. In this study, Nigeria and the Philippines come out as two countries in which the journalists are particularly affected by political or religious factions. Nepal and Tunisia, on the other hand, are two countries representing a more coherent political development towards reconciliation and peace, and this may nurture hope and optimism among the journalists there.

Threats facing female journalists

Although covering local conflict in the provinces appears to be among the most dangerous assignments for a reporter, one can also ask whether the risk differs between women journalists and their male counterparts. Most of the threats to women, according to male and female informants, consist of sexual harassment and verbal threats, abduction, rape and capture into forced ‘marriage’, especially when covering local conflict in provincial areas. Several mentioned the risk of not being let out again if entering a camp or area under the control of certain insurgency groups. Kidnapping, rape and violence is of regular concern for women journalists at work.

Impunity, a threat to journalism

For each journalist killed, many more are silenced. According to a special report issued by the Committee to Protect Journalists CPJ), in nine out of ten journalist killings the perpetrators are never prosecuted (CPJ, 2014). The issue of impunity is thus a main focus in the United Nations’ Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity. Although threatening journalists has been a measure to control information for long time, there has been little investigation into how impunity affects a journalist’s motivation – the incentive to work is a key driver in the journalist profession and when journalists experience their colleagues being killed without consequences it weakens their sense of purpose. An editor explains that every time the journalists decide to take a risky assignment, they measure the risk against the ‘catch’. When impunity prevails, journalists may refrain from publishing the story – not through lack of courage, but because they cannot find a reason to do so. This is one of the main messages in the answers to questions about the effect of violence to journalists.

This point is also manifest in a statement from a Filipino editor in a documentary film about press freedom in the Philippines two years after the massacre in Maguindanao, where 58 people were killed, over half of whom were journalists (Roque and Zahorsky, 2011):

The journalist doesn’t own the newspaper. He wouldn’t go bankrupt. The world would continue revolving without that story. This is how journalists think today. It’s not a do-or-die mentality that his story must be published. To them, ‘Ah, if the article won’t be printed, it’s okay’. Not unless the journalist has an advocacy. Perhaps, that is exactly what we need.

The massacre has been described by the CPJ as the ‘single deadliest attack on journalists in history’ (CPJ, 2009) and it still has a major effect on journalists in the Philippines today. No one has yet been convicted for the offence and legal justice is making little progress.

Multi-tasking, work overload and criticism in public

Some of the respondents pointed to the workload as another main challenge. They report for television, radio and the Internet in one day, and one says that the workload has more than tripled in recent years. In particular, interviews with television workers reveal this; those who previously only reported for television now produce an additional piece for radio and another for the web. A heavy workload affect exhaustion and pressure, and may also pose a threat to security as standard routines are replaced by less well planned shortcuts.

Also influencing safety and health is the constant pressure from public opinion in social media. The opportunity for laypersons to participate in public discussion forums integrated in mainstream media sites seems to have evoked an interest in openly expressing subjective opinions about the skills, or even personal characteristics, of certain journalists (Wold, 2014). The opportunity of using commentary fields as a platform for criticism can have unfortunate effects on the reporters who cover conflict, because political controversy is often inherent in conflict. Social exclusion and defamation is another threat acknowledged by the informants, of whom several have been affected by social attacks in one way or another – and common to them all is that they experienced it as an attack on their professional integrity. Journalists point to such accusations as more upsetting than criticism not related to their professional skills. Accusations are often centered on qualities such as truthfulness and impartiality, and can thus be used effectively to weaken a journalist's professional reputation along with their emotional wellbeing.

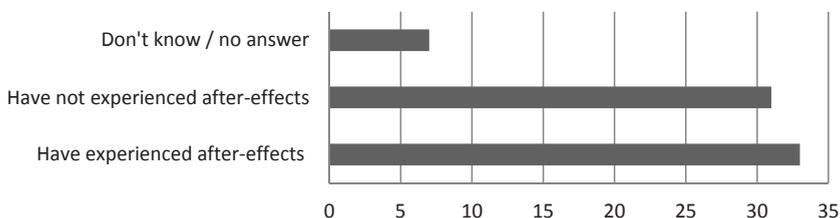
Harassment and threats directed towards journalists in social media, on e-mail, SMS and voicemail is reported to trigger reactions such as insomnia, depression, frustration and anger. According to some of the informants who experienced this, it had a greater effect on their ability to work than the more physical dangers on the ground. If the journalists’ motivation to withstand the dangerous nature of conflict reporting come from a wish to ‘do good’, everyday accusations of lies, inaccuracy and bigotry can be a heavy burden to bring to work.

The importance of being rested and healthy when going on assignments was also a concern for the editors, who said that journalists who suffer from mental exhaustion or depression face

higher risks in a conflict zone as they affect concentration and, consequently, risk evaluation. Several of the editors said that they frequently ‘check up on’ their reporters and ask them to take a few days or weeks off if necessary.

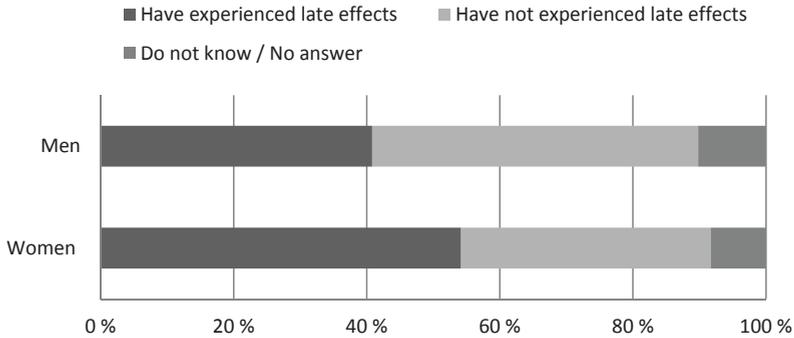
iii. After-effects

Thirty-three of 73 journalists interviewed for this study answer that they have experienced or are experiencing after-effects due to work-related incidents. An equal number (33) answered, on the other hand, that they did not, and had not experienced after-effects. The remaining seven did not know whether they had experienced after-effects. There is some unreliability implicit in the findings, as informants who have not undergone professional treatment to identify such issues may find it difficult to label the reactions they experience. For example, several report to be overly ‘aware’, ‘on guard’ or ‘alert’ in situations where other people act unwary; a reaction which is core in hypervigilance, an identified condition in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



Graph 3: The graph shows the numbers of journalists (horizontal axis) responding to whether they experience after effects from incidents occurring while at work.

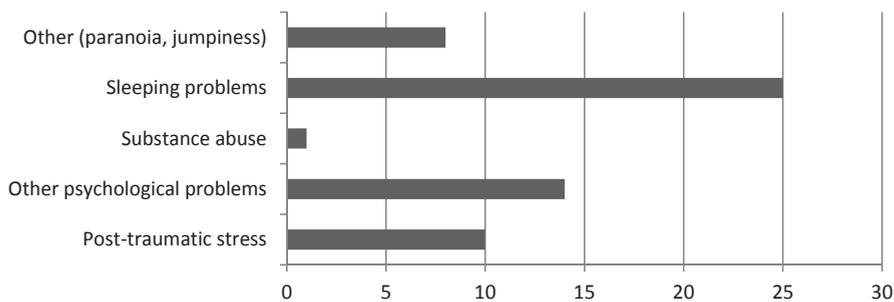
There is no evident imbalance in the proportional segments of men and women journalists reporting after-effects; it appears rather consistently across genders in spite of findings pointing towards gender-related threats discussed above. Twenty men said they had experienced after-effects, as against 24 who had not; and 13 women say they did experience or had experienced it, versus ten who said they did not or had not. The remaining seven (five men and two women) said that they did not know whether they were experiencing after-effects or had experienced them, or they did not answer the question (one woman and one man).



Graph 4: The graph shows the per cent (horizontal axis) of women and men journalists responding to whether they experienced after-effects from incidents occurring while at work.

Types of after-effects and impact

As illustrated in the graph below, sleeping problems are frequent among the journalists, although in most cases not immediately reported as an after-effect. Some informants first answered ‘no’ when asked if they were experiencing or had experienced after-effects, but still checked one or two of the options on the list of after-effects when the options were presented to them. This again indicates that it was difficult for them to recognise and label the issues that they may have been dealing with.



Graph 5: Types of after-effects reported by journalists. The horizontal axis shows the number of journalists who have reported each value. Answers are overlapping and diffuse; many have responded several and some of those answering none still indicate that they were bothered by emotional reactions that contradict their initial answer.

Although many journalists stated that they preferred to deal with traumatic coverage in the company of colleagues, and over drinks, only one reported substance abuse resulting from using alcohol to deal with trauma. Many journalists say that receiving death threats is something they are used to – although they are more affected when their families are threatened, especially if they have to take longer periods of time away from their spouse or partner and children.

Shame and culture

Informants for this survey are anonymous and thus could report after-effects to a greater extent than if they were identified, considering the potential consequences (questions about the suitability of the career) of reporting incidents. While the interviews were not specifically aimed at disclosing the underreporting of incidents, some contributing causes came through in their general statements. Two main issues mentioned by informants are professional integrity and cultural ‘machismo’. An editor describes it explicitly:

The culture plays a role. If you admit that you need psychological help, your reputation will suffer ... You’re considered lucky if the editor even asks about what you’re going through internally after a coverage.

The editor who made this statement had become more aware of reporters’ emotional reactions after receiving training from the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, and is now a partner of the national journalist union’s peer support group. After this, the editor has been trying to arrange informal debriefings with reporters.

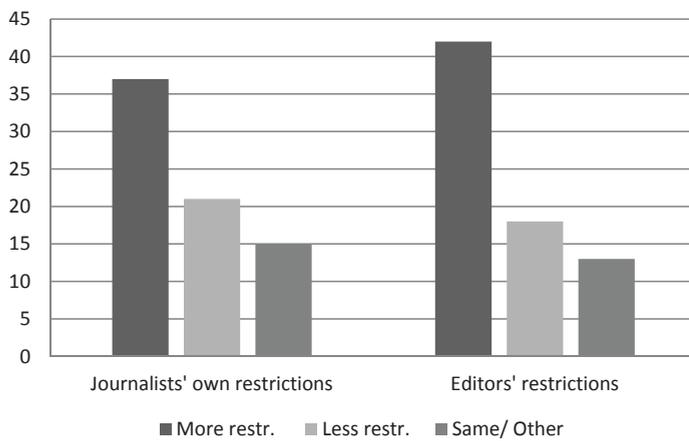
iv. Restriction levels

The hundred interviews conducted with journalists and editors cannot give a statistical answer to whether reporters across continents have become more circumspect in their work over the five past years. However, the information provided responds to the conditions of the journalists and the editors interviewed, and the tendencies reported are very clear: Nearly half of the journalists interviewed say that they have become more cautious themselves, and more than half that their editors have become more restrictive (Graph 12, below). More than three quarters of the editors say that they have become more restrictive of keeping their reporters in conflict areas, and half that they are more restrictive about sending them to conflict zones even for short assignments (Graph 13). The results clearly show that increasing insecurity and the targeting of

journalists in the field limits their ability and willingness to cover conflict from the site, and increases restrictions from the editorial leadership.

Journalists

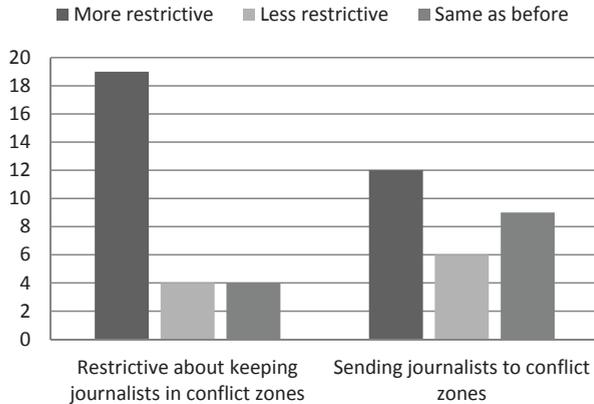
A trend in the answers from the journalists is that they perceive their editors as more cautious than themselves, and that they would like to travel more often and closer to the hotspots than their editors will allow. It may often be the editor that sets restrictions, and who ‘pulls them out’ when a situation escalates, and at an earlier stage than the journalists wish for themselves.



Graph 6: journalists' opinion on (i) their own restriction level for covering conflict in the five past years and their opinion on (ii) their editor’s restriction level for covering conflict in five past years. The number of journalists responding to each value is given in the vertical axis.

Editors

Among the editors, of those who reported that the number of journalists they send had remained unchanged, many acknowledged the increasing dangers and explained that ‘we probably send as many, but we are more careful about where we send them’. Often, this means that they do not send their journalists to the hotspots but, rather, to a safer location nearby, and thus they do not automatically get access to firsthand information from the conflict.



Graph 7: Editors' opinion on own restriction level for (i) keeping journalists in conflict zones in five past years, and (ii) sending journalists to conflict zones in five past years. The number of editors responding to each value is given in the vertical axis.

Between countries

Among editors, the total share of those reporting being ‘less restrictive’ about keeping journalists in conflict zones are from Tunisia and Nepal – two countries that at the moment are benefiting from recent enhanced political cooperation locally. In the cases of the Nepalese informants, a majority of both the journalists and the editors answered explicitly and voluntarily that they have become less cautious ‘because there is less conflict’. The civil war in Nepal ended in 2006, and it seems that the journalists and media are enjoying more freedom and safer conditions. Similarly, Tunisia endured the 2011 revolution and has in 2014 successfully held parliamentary and presidential elections without provoking significant turmoil during this time.

Financial restraint, wire-news and propaganda

To map other potential constraints and reassure that the issue of security was the main reason for increased editorial restrictions (although this had been clearly articulated in the question), the survey form incorporated a follow-up question offering the option of other issues that may at the same time affect decisions. The answers show that while security is the main editorial concern, economic aspects are also part of the editorial awareness. On the other hand, some editors said that although they were dealing with constantly tightening budgets, conflict coverage was not necessarily the most affected, in spite of the higher costs of production from the field. In Norway, for example, the two biggest editorials are in fact increasing their focus on international news; the national broadcasting company (NRK) is expanding with two

correspondent positions (in Berlin and Istanbul), and the biggest newspaper is going multi-medial and has hired extensively to their new TV section covering news, sports and entertainment. Two out of three Norwegian editorial leaders interviewed for the study said that international news is a priority. However, the recent targeting of journalists in the Ukraine conflict, Gaza and Syria/Northern Iraq makes it difficult to access first-hand sources and observations.

It is also mentioned by editors in several countries, across continents, that the availability of pictures through the wires (for example, AP, AFP, Reuters) makes it feasible to cover conflict without having to send own journalists, as an efficient alternative from both a security and an economic aspect. As suggested by one editor, ‘... [with] the availability of wire services it became more convenient for local media to get news, rather than engaging their own reporters to cover in conflict areas. We no longer cover wars like in Syria or Iraq.’

Another editor echoed that they depended on the wires to cover news in areas where they did not have reporters, and gave the example of the Central African Republic. He said that such coverage often relied on pictures and footage by local or unknown photographers, distributed by the wires and accompanied by a summary of multiple online news sources (second-hand information). He added that they could not always know what the picture or footage presented, and that the best way to be ethically correct was to be explicit in the published piece about the uncertainties of the material presented. Unfortunately, this kind of news production can easily create assumptions and, at worst, form propaganda, especially for countries at war.

Issues of finance and security are interconnected in many statements from the editors:

The desk has become more cautious. Many are willing to cover, but there are so many ifs and buts, particularly on the safety of reporters – their personal security. In fact, when you make a reporter cover something, it includes a lot of waivers.

Security reinforces an already pressing economic situation for many editors, and mapping restrictions resulting from economics or from safety cannot be treated as entirely separate exercises.

Women covering women

Given the record of threats specifically concerning women, some question whether women should be deployed to all the same assignments as men. As put by an editor: ‘Gender

consideration is naturally part of our risk assessment. If women in particular are attacked at a site, we will be reluctant to send them.’ And another: ‘Men are usually deployed in conflict/violence coverage. We only have one woman reporter. She covers politics. It is also a dangerous beat, but not as risky as war coverage where there’s action and violence.’ One editor also mentioned that there are assignments particularly suited to women. It is important to note that most of the informants who mentioned gender did so on their own initiative, or it came up as a natural part of the conversation in the interview. However, most did not mention it, and may not have been aware that they could bring it up.

Answers in this study suggest that it is mainly women who focus on women's issues in conflict coverage. Although several of the women journalists interviewed for the study reported, without prompting, that they included women’s perspectives in all the topics they covered (in conflict coverage) none of their male counterparts did the same. If this suggests a general trend among journalists and editors, the presence of women journalists in conflict zones becomes important in order to obtain information about women’s concerns related to war or organised crime.

Sexual harassment and sexist deployment

Women journalists are encouraged to report incidents of sexual assault. At the same time, reported incidents of sexual assaults, harassment and threats specifically aimed at women contribute to increasing the restrictions to their deployment in the field. One of the women reporters interviewed for the study said:

You need to be able to convince the bosses that it’s not dangerous for women. But the kidnapping of women made an impact on the desk. There’s some word going around that female kidnap victims were raped in the past including the foreign hostages. It sends a signal that if you’re a woman, you will be raped. When [woman reporter] was kidnapped, we noticed that they’re more careful in deploying women.

Restricting women from work as a result of reporting experiences of sexual assault may unfortunately encourage the under-reporting of such cases. Women journalists who compete for new assignments could be reluctant to report dissatisfaction or expose vulnerability. As expressed by one of the women reporters in this study: ‘I believe I was allowed to cover the defence beat because I look macho and not fragile’. Reluctance to report incidents is not limited to the women but becomes a restraint on all reporters and male journalists are also exposed to the pressure of being able to ‘handle it’. Several male reporters indicated that they did not want

to show ‘weakness’ by reporting after-effects and injuries, as this could lead to exclusion from new assignments. This way of thinking is expressed in a statement by one of the editors: ‘We also don’t force [the assignment] even on our senior reporters. If you don’t feel comfortable [with it], it will not be taken against you or you will not be seen as ‘unreliable’.’ Even though the journalists’ own limits are respected, some fear being considered ‘unreliable’ if they refrain from accepting an assignment.

Fragility as an attribute of women in general, merges with other characteristics such as youth and inexperience, as in this statement from an editor:

It [kidnap incident involving woman reporter] also affected sending female journalists. Not just the women but also those who are not senior or experienced in those kinds of situations. We don’t just send the ‘younger’ ones. We no longer deploy the ‘newbie’ into those types of coverages.

While this statement merely signals a leader’s responsibility and readiness to protect employees’ safety and wellbeing, it also – when put into the context of so many other editors’ responses to sexual violence against women reporters – indicates a trend that takes the decision making of own risk assessment away from the women journalists more than that for men. None of the editors in this survey expressed concern about gendered risks to their male employees. One could say that male reporters are freer to make their own risk assessments and to act on them.

One editor stated that women reporters could have advantages in conflict zones, seemingly posing a lesser threat to their surroundings and appearing more sensitive in matters that demand a sensitive approach. The categorisation of assignments into those suited to women and those suited to men continues to reinforce the stereotypes of men and women reporters, and may discriminate against women as soft and men as insensitive only because of their gender – whether this is a concern for the freedom and participation of women reporters or a concern for the safety of the men is debatable. But at the core of this issue may lie the fact that the adaptation strategies rely on stereotyped gender roles. It also poses a line of questions to the issue of gender categorising individuals.

v. Routines and measures for security

To map the safety measures, equipment and training provided to the journalists, the survey contained a question with a checklist in which a number of alternatives were given. The result shows that such measures in general are scarce, and the answers given by journalists are for the most part consistent with those of the editors.

Routines for security: Security courses and other training

In the study, the informants were given options for differing security measures and were asked to check off all applicable. There was no option for choosing ‘none’. Still, 30 out of the 100 informants (30 per cent) added ‘none’ to the survey form as their only answer.



Graph 14: journalists’ and editors’ own reporting of security training and equipment offered or received.

As illustrated in the graph above, the majority of the informants had not received first aid training or training for working in conflict zones. Nigeria, Tunisia and Nicaragua rated significantly lower in this than the other countries, and Uganda and Nepal slightly lower. Of all the journalists interviewed from Uganda, Tunisia, Nigeria, Nepal and Nicaragua – in total 54 of the journalist informants – only five had received practical training (a security course) and only five were covered by insurance. Altogether, 44 of these journalists had neither – and none had both.

Two countries that seem to have considerably better routines for preparation are Norway and the Philippines. It is worth noting, however, the potential methodological liability of the fact that the Filipino and Norwegian journalists report longer work experience in their work than the others. With their experience in the field they may be attached to international media houses with larger economy and more advanced security routines.

The most commonly-given answer to the check-list of safety measures was informal meetings and debriefings internally in organisations. Some added that they had received contributions from the Red Cross (in Uganda) and the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (in Tunisia). A Ugandan editor said that they had seminars funded by international organisations working for press freedom and journalists' rights, and that a lot of literature on journalism professionalism and human rights was distributed by the Uganda Human Rights Commission. However, none of this was defined as routine.

For Norwegian editors, the focus on security courses arranged by external expert institutions is significantly greater than in the other countries, while the focus on internal debriefing may be somewhat less. The Norwegian media have the economic means to provide such courses; labour conditions in Norway are strictly regulated by law (*Arbeidsmiljøloven*), and the labour union is strong in the country. That they do not focus on internal briefings can be explained by the simple fact that none of the Norwegian journalists interviewed for the study covered conflicts in their own country. In general, they stated that they were quite autonomous in their jobs, and that they and their editors generally considered that the journalists themselves had the best understanding of the circumstances on the ground. The Norwegian editors have journalists abroad in several different countries at the same time, and could not always have the most up-to-date knowledge of those circumstances.

Norwegian media companies are now beginning to organise security courses on their own initiative, although in collaboration with external partners. This may indicate an increased focus on security for journalists in Norway, or merely a growing market for this kind of enterprise.

Norway is different in many ways – first in the fact that all contracted journalists are offered security training prior to working in conflict zones, and this includes contracted freelancers and stringers. In many cases, completion of a security course is mandatory for all employees working abroad. They are equipped with the best personal protective equipment such as helmets and flak jackets to protect against knives, bullets or shrapnel, navigation tools and medical kits.

Some of the editors also had substantial experience with security training, and updated this training every five years.

Informants from the Philippines also differed to some degree from the others in regard to preparation prior to working in conflict zones. Several leaders are trained in order to pass on expertise to employees, and most of the journalists interviewed had completed security courses and had some personal protective equipment.

The journalists in Tunisia, Nicaragua and Nigeria come out as the least prepared with regard to both training and equipment. To the question in which they were asked to choose all applicable options for safety measures, ten out of 15 Tunisian, nine out of 13 Nicaraguans, and five out of 17 Nigerians checked neither, and offered ‘none’ as their only answer. Informants in these countries are not adequately covered by medical insurance either and some are covered by a halfway solution in which fully employed staff get insurance cover for 50 per cent of their costs. The rest is a personal expense.

Grab bags and medical kits

Some reporters said they had access to vests and helmets, but the majority did not. Medical kits, carried by all Norwegian journalists, usually contain first aid equipment. Other protective gear is helmet and vests – perhaps the most asked-for among the journalists, and the most customary. A general impression is that the focus on security is increasing in accordance with tighter restrictions for covering from conflict zones, but that financial means to act on it is scarce. As suggested by one of the journalists:

When it comes to protective gear, it’s steadily improving. We used to have none. It’s either you borrow your gear from someone else, buy your own or just pray. Our first aid kit has basic supplies like gauze and paracetamol. Before, when I was covering a riot, my helmet was substandard. You could feel the impact from the rioters’ makeshift Molotov. But ... last year, I was already equipped with ‘legit’ protective gear. It now looks like it will save you.

And by another:

You would want more clear-cut protocols and provision of helmets and bulletproof vests. We don’t have those. It takes them so long to purchase equipment. It’s always a kneejerk reaction. Even our photographers don’t have gear. Our photographer had to borrow from

Reuters ... The newspapers are so focused on politics and not so much on security, not until the mid 2000s ... Our office reacts very slowly unlike the wires, who are always prepared. But at least our newspaper makes an effort to send people to conflict coverages. The others rely heavily on wires.

Not all the journalists indicated that they wished to carry their protection equipment with them, or on them. It is often heavy, and takes up space, especially the old vests and helmets and, in addition to technological gear for photo or video production, it constitutes a significant extra to the luggage. It is usually not very discreet and may be in the way both physically and emotionally when working among people who do not have the same privileges. Another problem when travelling with security gear is the trouble of being subjected to thorough scrutiny at every border control or checkpoint on their way. It is often in someone's interest to keep a journalist from entering a conflict zone, and what they carry with them is sometimes used as a justification.

Local safety measures

Standardised commercial safety training offered – often at considerable expense – fails to reach many journalists working locally. But strategies to get around threats also develop among the journalists and editors themselves, in a less organised way. They include, for instance, taking different routes to and from the office, working different hours, and anything that can disturb an apparent routine in their work pattern such as a shift in the focus of the coverage (for example to cover government corruption one day and environmental issues the next) and having several journalists altering one story at different times – anything to avoid being singled out as a significant threat to a particular group is mentioned by editors as a strategy. When necessary, they cut bylines and dates, in order not to reveal the locations of their reporters, and frequently they cut the entire story and choose not to publish. When the pressure gets too strong on a journalist, he or she is sent to a safe house, a hidden and protected location heavily guarded, for example by the military.

The following quote from one of the editors well summarises this type of local risk adaptation:

Before the coverage, we do an informal briefing or training on 'how to cover'. For instance, how not to offend the resource persons like farmer beneficiaries, or how to make a grab bag. A grab bag may contain several mobile sim cards, extra cellphones, food and water. This is very bare, though. You also teach your driver defensive driving or combat

parking. This is also where we discuss risks and weigh decisions. Do you ride an army truck? This puts our reporters at a higher risk. Sometimes we refuse, but when everyone is covering we let the reporters go with the military. But that is very rare ... you don't want them to think you're biased or you practise restraint in covering them and so to prove that we are not anti-military, we cover them.

In the Philippines there have been discussions about carrying firearms at work, but it is not clear to what extent this is an issue today. Media workers in the Philippines are still affected by the 2009 massacre in which many lost a colleague or a friend, an incident which is likely to affect the media environment for many years to come. An editor explained: 'Some carry firearms, but not when covering conflict areas. They own guns because they feel they are threatened. They feel it's macho although there is no clear-cut policy on carrying firearms to work. They [also] use it for home security.'

Another editor on journalists carrying firearms:

I don't agree to journalists carrying firearms. This becomes a magnet for danger. However, violence against the media becomes a reason for them to own guns. Personally, you shouldn't carry firearms, but if they want to own guns, that's their choice.

Self-censorship

Self-censorship and moderation is a common strategy for keeping safe, as explained by one of the informants: 'For safety, I balance by doing 'propaganda shit', that's why sometimes, I am the first to get the information or get an invitation. It's not just one-sided ... I have more access in other areas, because I treat them all the same.' Some journalists say that the only way to avoid being involved in a conflict is to 'report the facts', and not take a stand. One journalist explains that 'when you stay factual, you don't fan the fire. This becomes your safety net. No one will get angry at you. But if you're a fool, don't expect to come out alive.' Being factual is emphasised as a safety measure rather than a way of complying with the – perhaps old-fashioned or culturally conditioned – journalistic norm of objectivity.

Routines for well-being and psychological health

Many editors are not happy with their company's or institution's own routines for handling psychological pressure on journalists or precautionary safety measures. As an editor said, describing debriefing: 'It's largely informal. Office setting. Very casual. One-on-one.

Sometimes by chance, say when the reporter comes, we sit and let him share his experiences. That's it. Isn't it pathetic?'

Some, but not most, of the journalists have been offered a psychologist from time to time, an offer that some accept and some reject. Norway is the only country in which psychological treatment is always offered and is even mandatory after experiencing threats or a threatening situation. Nevertheless, many journalists across national contexts prefer sitting with colleagues and exchanging experiences over drinks and friendship as the best way to deal with their emotional reactions.

One of the editors echoes this, adding that it is company policy for journalists to report to an in-house psychiatrist.

Yes, there are routines for incidents. Reporters should report to the desk and report to our psychiatrist. However, journalists respond more to informal settings rather than sitting down with a psychiatrist. *Inman* [a Filipino word for meeting over drinks] or 'drinking session' is initiated by the leadership of the desk. This is also to augment the session with the psychiatrist. Reporters are much more comfortable when talking to colleagues.

On the one hand, a journalist explains that as their relief lies in 'exchanging stories' – something that a psychologist or therapist cannot offer – they are not being able to 'connect' as well with a psychologist as with fellow reporters in the field. On the other hand, some of those who do not have access to a psychologist seem to feel that their emotional reactions are being neglected. We can however interpret answers to see that routines to handle psychological pressure are attaining increasing attention from reporters and leaders in some countries such as Norway and the Philippines.

Programmes arranged by international organisations such as the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, and also the labour union in some countries, have played an important role in caring for journalists' psychological health and personal wellbeing. However, the response mechanisms implemented so far seem to be focused on dealing with trauma from witnessing or experiencing violence and/or death through war and natural disasters – uncovering harassment among journalists and giving assistance to those targeted by it is a rather neglected issue.

vi. Conclusions

The most noticeable trend in the findings of this study is that editors and journalists in seven countries on four different continents experience that their safety is threatened when reporting on conflict – and to a greater extent today than five years ago. As a result, both journalists and editors are increasingly reluctant to access the hotspots of conflict to report first-hand from the ground. Journalists are threatened directly or through harassment, in personal attacks and in phone calls, emails and SMSs. Many suffer the after-effects of such attacks, and some are reluctant to report these reactions – for fear of appearing fragile or vulnerable to colleagues and management. The competition for assignments related to war and conflict is tough, and journalists may wish to appear ‘strong’ and ‘suited’ for the physical and psychological challenges.

The study detected some possible gender issues related to risk and conflict reporting and work in conflict zones. The clearest results in this regard are that female and male reporters experience different threats – threats towards women are more sexualised. Moreover, women journalists from most countries included in this study expressed a concern for women’s issues although they were not questioned about this – an indication of the importance of women’s participation in conflict reporting. Lastly, editors’ attitudes towards protecting their employees depend to some extent on whether the employee is a man or a woman; many editors have said that they are reluctant to send women employees to a site where there is a specific risk of rape. At the same time, however, neither editors nor journalists mentioned that a situation could be more dangerous for men than women – and only one raised the possibility that certain situations may be less dangerous to women than to men. This indicates that adaptation strategies may rely upon constructed ideas of stereotypical gender roles.

These issues, however, arose because some of the interviewees and informants brought them up on their own initiative in the interviews – and not because they were initially a focus of the survey. The limited number of informants discussing these issues, and the limited focus on them by the survey, makes it difficult to claim any trends in this regard. Although a gender focus was brought up by many women informants, most of those who discussed these issues in depth were from the same three countries, and thus the different contexts of each country makes it impossible to claim the implication of these issues on a geographical scale. This study does not consider the historical and cultural context of each country to any significant degree. It is therefore difficult to interpret these issues beyond what is provided in the country reports themselves.

The last main finding in this survey points to the potential impact of impunity. That perpetrators walk free is not only a threat to the journalists who fear for their lives – it is also a threat to press freedom on a much larger scale. Editors explain that the motivation to publish a story which jeopardises the lives of their journalists is reduced by every journalist killing or attack that remains unsolved when there is clear evidence pointing to the same perpetrators over and over again. It signals that they are immune to justice and that any action against them is merely a waste of lives and effort. Thus, impunity becomes a psychological weapon attacking the core principles of journalism's social responsibility.

V. Recommendations for further research

The information retrieved in this study reveals issues that would benefit from further clarification and closer scrutiny. Citizen journalism is a key part of today's journalism and is also becoming much more important in conflict coverage (a development that this study fails to feature specifically).

There are many clear indicators of differences between journalists working in metropolitan areas and those covering the districts, especially with regard to conflict coverage. This also, if understood better, could be of value to the development of safety courses or so-called 'hostile environment' training.

Gender considerations and macho culture in the newsroom or the journalists' social environment, and its impact on career liability and the competition for assignments are other issues that could benefit from more research. This study shows that women journalists face different threats than men – something that affects their risk assessment and preparation to work in conflict zones. The study recommends that gender perspectives of risk are taken into consideration for the development of security training, although the details remain to be better understood. Furthermore, the gender categorizing of individuals and the challenges it poses in the field of conflict reporting have so far not received substantial attention. Closer analysis of these perspectives will be an asset to security courses and may enhance a broader gender representation in this part of the journalist occupation.

Impunity and self-censorship, having already gained a greater focus over the last decade – and especially by UNESCO – comes forward as one of the most pressing elements for the safety of journalists and future coverage from conflict zones. As was simply put by one of the journalists in the documentary film about the Maguindanao massacre in the Philippines: 'Most of the journalists killed were crusading journalists. They spoke against contentious social issues like illegal gambling, corruption, drugs, illegal logging ... So, you can guess who are the perpetrators' (Roque and Zahorsky, 2011). Scrutiny of the unpublished stories may offer useful insights to the issue of impunity.

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