Journalists remain at real risk the world over. From kidnappings and killings in Syria, to drug killings in Mexico, the war in Ukraine, and a clamping down on free reporting in countries like Egypt, Turkey and beyond.

INSI exists to try to prevent harm coming to those reporting from dangerous locations – of any kind. We work through our members and through third party funding to provide the best training and share best-practise and critical information in real-time. This year we have undertaken major training projects in Brazil, Jordan and Tunisia, have published groundbreaking research with Under Threat, and continued to attract new members to our organisation to share their experience and expertise and join our collective effort to safeguard free reporting. We have also made our voice heard along with partners in new projects aimed at safeguarding journalists and protecting the freedom to report.

The risks to journalists are as high as they have ever been - but from the United Nations down, the importance of journalist safety is being more clearly recognised and there are more initiatives to co-ordinate action across the sector. INSI has continued to play a full part and ensured its members views are clearly represented as well as acting as the only journalist-led, on-the-ground safety organisation working to protect colleagues lives. This review gives a small flavour of the work undertaken this year.

– Chairman of INSI, Richard Sambrook
INSI TRAINING

» Brazil: We conducted an intensive three-day safety training programme in Brazil, attended by 15 media security advisors from three regions of the country. It was part of a long-term partnership between INSI and Globo TV that began in 2006 and has resulted in the safety training of more than 600 local media professionals.

“This was a big learning experience for me…Everything we’ve learned here will be important for keeping journalists safer and therefore contributing to press freedom.”

– Erika Stockler, Globo producer

» Tunisia: We trained 15 local and international journalists on how to adapt to the changing safety landscape in a region becoming increasingly unsafe for media workers. Journalists told us their fears about being threatened, having their homes broken into or being arrested as a result of their investigative reporting.

“A worthwhile two-day course, which emphasised the need for preparation. It also helped me realise how tragedies can be prevented. Every field journalist should take a course like this.”

– Reporter with Al Jazeera English
Jordan: Our four-day safety training in Jordan was attended by 15 journalists from Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen. The course focused on how to more safely carry out investigative reporting in some of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists. Our trainees told us about the dangers of working under a regime, being kidnapped, imprisoned and regularly threatened.

“The situation in Syria is very difficult as you don’t always know which side is threatening you; you think you are going to cover one story and you end up covering another. It’s been really important learning about first aid, surveillance, how to behave during kidnapping and how to prepare properly and not just rush in to cover the story.”

– Journalist from Syria

News Xchange 2014: We ran a crisis management workshop that was attended by more than 100 news executives and focused on what to do if your newsroom comes under attack or finds itself at the centre of the news story.

Journalism Schools: We trained 16 international postgraduate journalism students at Cardiff University. The course was tailored for those near the start of their careers – and we are now looking at what more we can offer those entering journalism.

“Before this training I had no experience of what to do if things went wrong.”

– Justice Baidoo, freelancer in Ghana

World Press Freedom Day: We conducted a joint safety training workshop with Internews as part of the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day event, which was attended by around 30 journalists, media workers and human rights defenders working in a range of challenging countries around the world.

“It’s been really useful to learn about safety protocols for this kind of situation as we don’t have basic measures. We need to make journalists more aware of their own security when covering protests.”

– Elia Baltazar, Periodistas de a Pie, Mexico
INSI RESEARCH

Under Threat: the Changing State of Media Safety was our multimedia online publication presenting original research into the changing nature of threats to journalists over the past decade. Based on a wide range of interviews and statistical data it concluded that the risks are higher than ever and journalists have never felt more unsafe undertaking their work.

INSI is currently one of five key researchers in a Council of Europe research study into journalists at risk in the 47 member states.

We continued to publish our bi-annual Killing The Messenger report into journalist and media worker casualties around the world. It provided hard evidence of the threats faced by media workers and tracked casualties over the first six months of 2015. The report showed the increasing risks of political and criminal kidnapping and risks associated with the perceived loss of journalist neutrality in conflict areas.

Kidnapping of Journalists: Responding to Abductions is the title of a new book co-written by INSI Director Hannah Storm and Dr Robert Picard of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism – being published later this year. It looks at the factors behind the rise in journalist kidnappings and outlines how news organisations can better prepare for abductions and what to do when they happen.

INSI EVENTS

INSI actively and openly seeks to partner with a wide range of other organisations working across the sector to improve safety for journalists.

» We partnered with the International Press Institute and Al Jazeera to run an expert meeting in London as part of a series of roundtable events that led to the launch of the International Declaration and Best Practices to promote journalists’ safety.

» INSI is on the steering committee to develop a set of industry-wide global safety guidelines for freelancers. The collaboration, which involves other media support groups, journalists and news outlets, was born out of a journalist safety meeting held by the US State Department.

» We participated in OSCE events about media freedom and countering violent extremism, digital threats to female journalists and journalists’ safety, media freedom and pluralism in times of conflict.

» We attended a Freedom of Expression conference held by the Council of Europe, which explored whether free speech is still a precondition for democracy.

» We spoke about the threat of kidnapping for journalists at a Hostage UK event in London.
NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to have two significant new members who have joined in the last quarter – BuzzFeed and News Corporation. Both have international reach and are interested in sharing safety intelligence at a regional as well as a global level.

We were pleased to welcome back the AFP and conducted a crisis management training day for them to help keep their staff and journalists safe.

We also welcome Cilla Benkö, Director General of Swedish Radio, as a new trustee. She has been a very active proponent of journalism safety and will bring much experience and expertise to our board.

DEVELOPING INSI

We have placed more emphasis on social media this year, developing content for the website, including podcasts and infographics, and have seen a doubling of new followers as a consequence.

We are now looking at how to best develop the website with a “members-only” area for real-time discussion and sharing of information.

During our AGM we discussed how to strengthen fundraising, improve our profile and take forward the charity based on views from our first ever survey of members.