

INSI



ANNUAL REVIEW **2018**

**INTERNATIONAL
NEWS SAFETY
INSTITUTE**

JOURNALISM SAFETY RESPONSIBILITY ACCOUNTABILITY





In the 15 years since the International News Safety Institute (INSI) was founded, we have been dedicated to supporting journalists wherever and whenever they work.

Back in 2003, the threats to journalists who belonged to our member organisations were predominantly physical – killings and kidnappings in hostile environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

It used to be the case that wearing a flak jacket and a press or TV sign would afford some degree of immunity from attack on the frontline. But in the decade and a half since INSI's launch, things have changed radically and irreversibly.

Today, the mere sign that someone is a journalist may well make them more of a target. Immunity from attack is something that cannot be assumed, impunity is rife.

The hostile environments have come knocking on our doors and in many instances barged their way into our newsrooms and front rooms. Today the frontlines of journalism safety have changed. Countries once regarded as bastions of press freedom, are places where journalists are increasingly exposed to attack.

While it's true that conflict zones still pose grave risks to those who report from them, hostile environments are now closer to home and hostile actors threaten larger numbers of the news media.

One of the most insidious threats to the safety of our colleagues today is online abuse and is one that we have focused on with much greater effort over the past 12 months. The threat of virtual violence is one that we take extremely seriously at INSI. In 2018 we became the first organisation to set up a comprehensive dialogue between the world's leading news outlets and the social media platforms. This was designed to help both sides better understand the scale of the harassment and what can be done to mitigate against it and support those who experience it. The stakes are high. Online harassment can and is having an impact on people's abilities to keep doing their important work. At its worst it crosses into the physical world and in multiple other ways it threatens to silence journalists. We rarely see an issue affecting such a wide constituency of our global colleagues and we are taking this seriously, as we believe should all our members.

At INSI, we know that 15 years have brought many changes to the safety issues that journalists face. However, it has not dampened our commitment to support our colleagues and, faced with the changing frontlines that we see today, we know our work at INSI is needed more than ever.

INSI Director Hannah Storm

MEMBERS' SERVICES

The landmark online harassment meetings we've organised and coordinated between our members and **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Google** have been among the best received in INSI's history. This groundbreaking collaboration has allowed the news industry and social media platforms to share experiences and discuss practical solutions to reduce and combat one of the most insidious threats to our industry. These meetings have already brought practical respite to a number of our members and we look forward to driving forward these conversations and helping bring about real change in this field next year.

This year saw the staging of the **FIFA World Cup**, which was another focal point for INSI. Ahead of the tournament, we organised a series of webinars, advisories and meetings with experts, aimed at discussing potential threats, including cybersecurity, and practical measures to keep journalists safe on the ground in Russia. The virtual network we set up during the competition enabled INSI members to share safety concerns and incidents in-country.

Expanding our regional News Safety Group meetings to **Montreal**, **New York**, **Stockholm** and **Oslo** meant we increased our international reach and offered tailored support to our members around the world. The meetings in New York and Montreal, hosted by our members VICE News and CBC Radio-Canada, were our first regional safety meetings





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outside Europe. Members discussed a range of subjects relating to their physical, emotional and online safety, including coverage of extremist groups and the impact that Donald Trump's presidency is having on the security of our US-based colleagues.

We also increased the frequency of our **News Safety Group** meetings in London so they are now held bi-monthly. Our members tell us they find these meetings extremely valuable for sharing good practices and providing networking opportunities.

Elections were a key theme for our **webinars**, with experts giving advice to those covering the polls in Mexico and Afghanistan, both in the top five most dangerous countries for journalists.

We doubled the number of **exclusive advisories** we sent to our members, and covered topics ranging from PyeongChang's Winter Olympics to working in Yemen, and from reporting on the protests in Nicaragua to preparing for the G7 summit in Canada.



NEW MEMBERS

We were pleased to welcome the New York-based digital media and broadcasting company **VICE News** to INSI. Sharbil Nammour, VICE's Global Head of Security and Risk, said VICE News is proud to support INSI's vital work at a time when journalists around the world are facing unprecedented threats to their safety.



RESEARCH

Our biannual **Killing the Messenger** report found that the first half of 2018 was marked by mass attacks against journalists in Afghanistan and the U.S. Nine Afghan media workers were killed in Kabul when a suicide bomber disguised as a journalist blew himself up. Five media workers were killed in a mass shooting at The Capital Gazette in the U.S. state of Maryland in June.

EVENTS

We continued to expand work on combating **online harassment** at a number of events around the world, including at News Xchange 2017, when Director Hannah Storm moderated one of the conference's best received panels: a hard-hitting discussion about the scale of the abuse faced by women journalists online.

INSI Assistant Director Anna Bevan was invited to speak at the **Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union's Global News Forum** in Vietnam. In partnership with our member NHK, she interviewed Maria Ressa, CEO of the media organisation Rappler, who shared her account of the abuse she has received for her work in the Philippines, and discussed the abuse that journalists encounter online in Asia.

Storm took part in a panel about staying safe online at the International Journalism Festival in Perugia, where she also moderated sessions on the **emotional impact on journalists** of covering disasters and **sexual harassment in the newsroom**.

Tackling harassment in the newsroom was also the topic of a panel Storm moderated at the Frontline Club in London. The **changing perceptions of journalists** – including the way they are regarded online – was part of the discussion at a panel event she took part in, which was organised by the **Canadian Commission for UNESCO** in Montreal.

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