



INSI

INTERNATIONAL NEWS SAFETY INSTITUTE

KILLING THE MESSENGER 2015

One thing is startlingly clear from the 2015 list of journalist casualties – journalists are now primary targets as extremists wage a war on freedom of expression.

From the brutal attack on Charlie Hebdo at the start of the year to the murder of citizen journalists in Syria and beyond its borders, ISIS and associated groups have made it clear that they see the killing of journalists as a means of spreading their message, spreading fear and seeking to control the news from within Syria. And national borders are no barrier to where they will take their violence.

This is a trend which has been growing over past years – but not as starkly as we saw it in the last 12 months. As UNESCO and others gather in Paris in February to debate the safety of journalists, this trend places the gathering toll firmly at the heart of international concern about free expression and international development. Although the numbers remain shocking, and impunity for the killers of journalists remains the norm, the international community is taking the issue more seriously than ever.

But we should also note that most of those killed are not involved in major civil wars or international conflicts – they are local journalists going about their normal work of seeking to hold power to account and to shine light on crime and corruption. And the figures illustrate how the risk is global – touching on most continents around the world. The killing of journalists outside of the international spotlight is as serious as the murders in Paris, which prompted global horror and response. Anywhere journalists are targeted and killed for doing their job undermines free speech and civil society.

It is essential that those concerned about these figures continue to draw them to the attention of governments, courts and NGOs to maintain attention and build the case for seeking international action to end impunity and protect the freedoms which underpin civil society. This is not just an issue for those in the media – it is an issue which touches on everyone who wishes to live openly and freely, wherever they may be.

– Richard Sambrook, INSI Chair

All photographs © AFP.

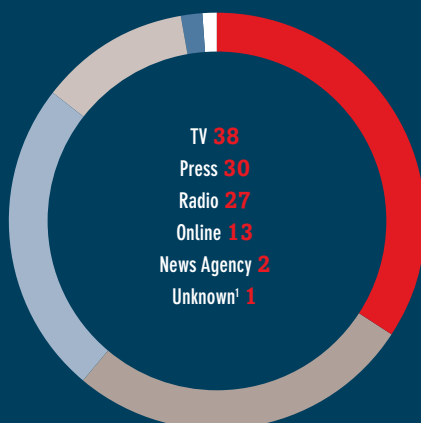


JOURNALISTS KILLED: THE NUMBERS

Country of journalists' death



Employer/commissioner



¹ Body of a freelancer found after being abducted two weeks before.

TOTAL KILLED

111

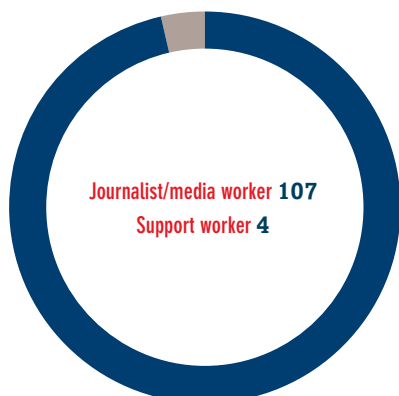
Country of journalists' origin





Aftab Alam was murdered by gunmen in Karachi. Four media workers were killed in Pakistan in 2015.

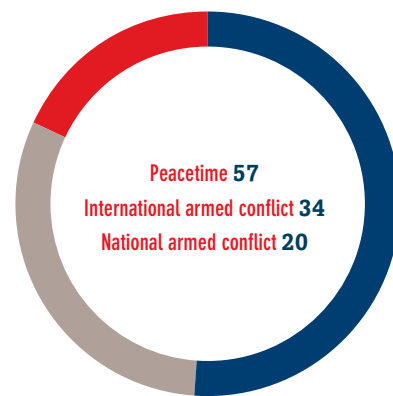
Professional position



Status of journalist in country



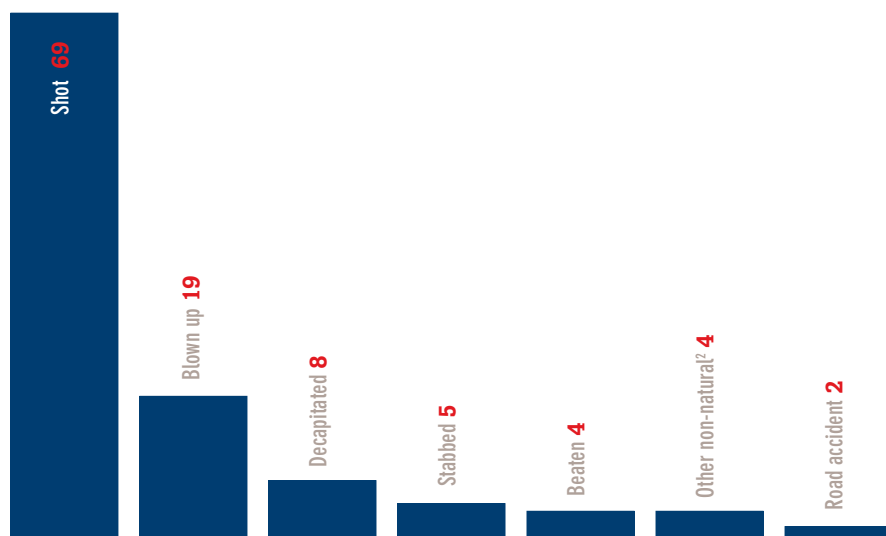
Context of death



“Although the numbers remain shocking, and impunity for the killers of journalists remains the norm, the international community is taking the issue more seriously than ever.”

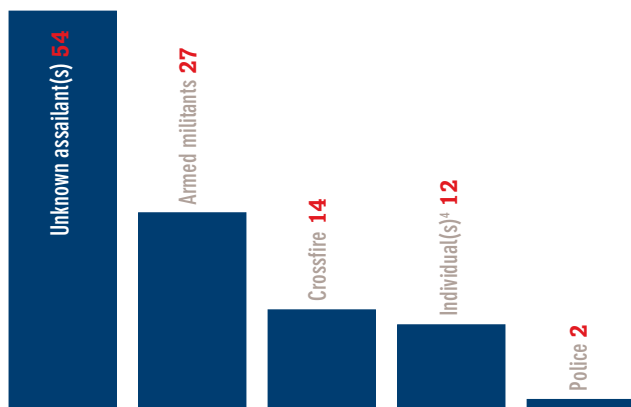
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Cause of death



² Three “bodies found”, one other burned to death.

Perpetrator³



³ Accidents are not included here.

⁴ Individuals identified as suspects.

TOTAL KILLED

111

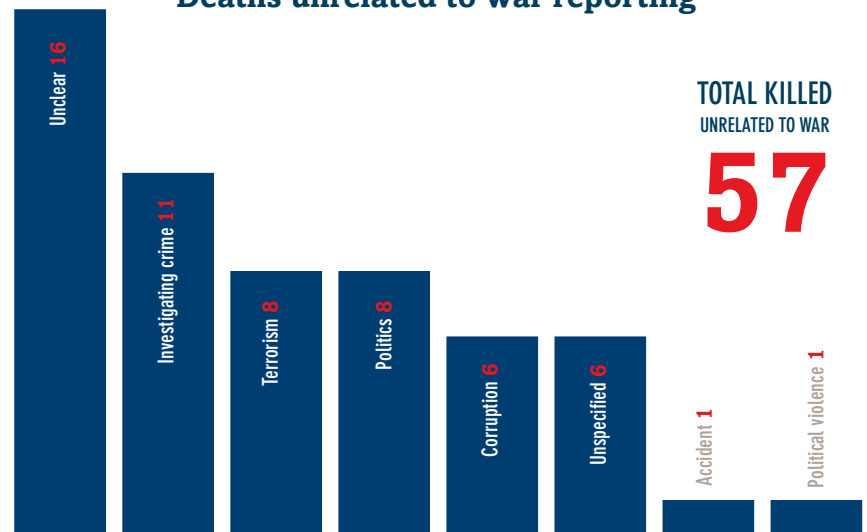
A full-page photograph showing a group of journalists running through a street. In the foreground, a man in a green shirt and grey trousers runs towards the left, carrying a large black backpack and holding a professional video camera. Behind him, another man in a white shirt is also running. To the right, a man in a blue and white checkered shirt runs towards the camera, holding a video camera. Next to him, a woman in a red and white plaid shirt runs in the same direction. The background is filled with thick white smoke, likely from tear gas, and several people are visible in the distance. The scene is set on a paved street with trees and buildings in the background.

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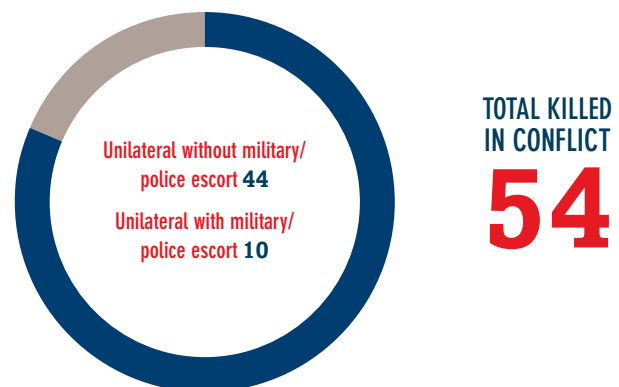
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JOURNALISTS KILLED: THE NUMBERS

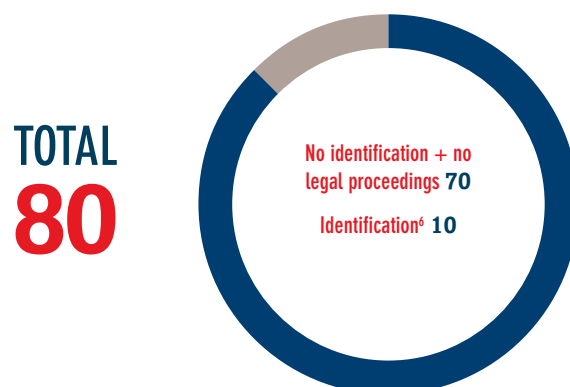
Deaths unrelated to war reporting



War/conflict zone reporting



Legal outcome⁵



⁵ This does not include accidents, crossfire, aerial bombardments, suicide bombings, suspects who killed themselves after the event, and the Paris shootings where suspects were killed by police.

⁶ Suspects have been identified or arrests made.



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