

INSI

INTERNATIONAL NEWS SAFETY INSTITUTE



KILLING THE MESSENGER

JANUARY – JUNE
2016

An analysis of news media casualties carried out for the International News Safety Institute by Cardiff School of Journalism

The killing of journalists knows no limits. That much is clear from INSI's list of journalism casualties for the first six months of 2016. They span the globe from Afghanistan to Guatemala, Somalia to Georgia, an insidious response from those who feel threatened by the work done by our colleagues shining a light in dark places.

With 49 deaths from January to June, the list is not as long as it was at this time last year when it stood at 60, but that isn't a cause for celebration and doesn't mean the situation is improving for journalists around the world. Far from it. One reason for this slight decline in media casualties is likely to be a decrease in the number of journalists reporting from bloody conflicts like Syria where in the past dozens have died – 28 were lost in 2012 for example. Certain countries have become no-go zones, particularly for international media outlets, leaving bloggers and citizen journalists to bravely monitor and publicise the abuses of groups like ISIS and the Taliban, often with fatal consequences.

For this reason, in future, INSI will for the first time include the bloggers who are doing the work of journalists in a separate casualty count. We have long struggled with whether or not to include the deaths of citizen journalists, but in some places in the world, they are the only people who are sharing the news.

The growing prevalence of censorship is another possible factor in the decrease in journalist deaths in the first six months of this year. In countries like Mexico, Guatemala and the Philippines, where powerful political and business interests often combine to violently silence the news media, the stakes are too high for some to continue reporting.

We're often asked how we compile our statistics and how we decide who to include. It isn't an exact science. One thing I've learned in more than six years of working at INSI is the motives behind the murders of journalists are often not that clear cut. Sometimes it isn't possible to determine if someone has been killed because they were a journalist or because of other activities they may have been involved in. In countries where journalists do other work outside of the media, this can be particularly difficult to resolve.

At every international conference I attend, I hear the word impunity, but little has changed. The murderers of journalists are almost never punished. In only two killings this year were suspects identified or arrested. Instead of waving the word around, the international community would do well to put its money, and its might, where its mouth is and pressure governments to investigate journalist murders. Donor money should depend on this. Impunity will remain and journalists will continue to die while ineffective authorities allow their killers to get away with murder.

– Hannah Storm, INSI Director

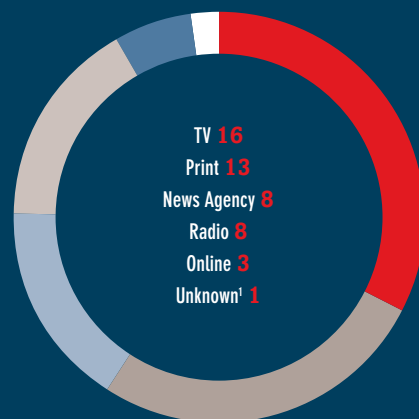


Relatives and friends gather around the coffin of Afghan reporter Zabihullah Tamanna, who was killed alongside US journalist David Gilkey during a Taliban ambush.

Country of journalists' death



Employer/commissioner



¹Freelance photographer killed in Yemen.

Country of journalists' origin



TOTAL KILLED

49

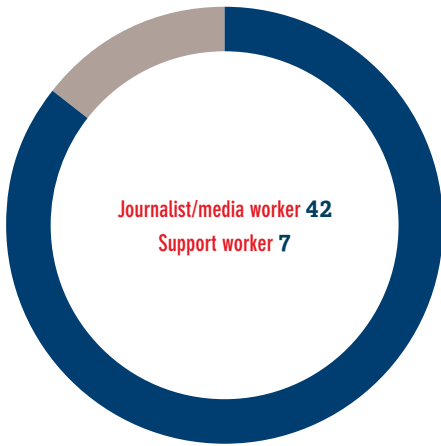


A Tunisian gendarme stands guard as a journalist leaves a house where two suspected jihadists were killed during a security operation just outside Tunis.

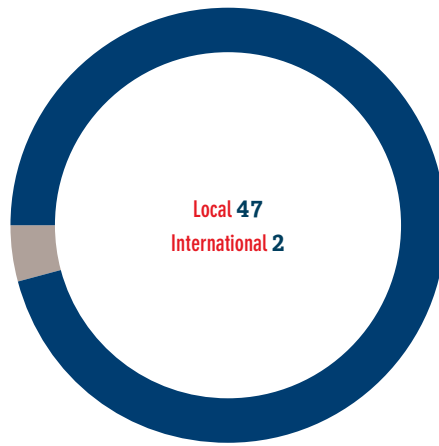


L-R: Yemeni mourners carry the coffin of Yemeni freelance journalist Almgiddad Mojalli, who was killed in an air raid by the Saudi-led coalition; and Palestinian journalists run for cover from tear gas canisters fired by Israeli forces during a demonstration in support of Palestinian journalists.

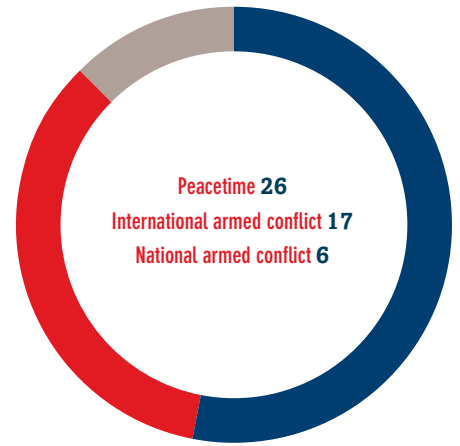
Professional position



Status of journalist in country



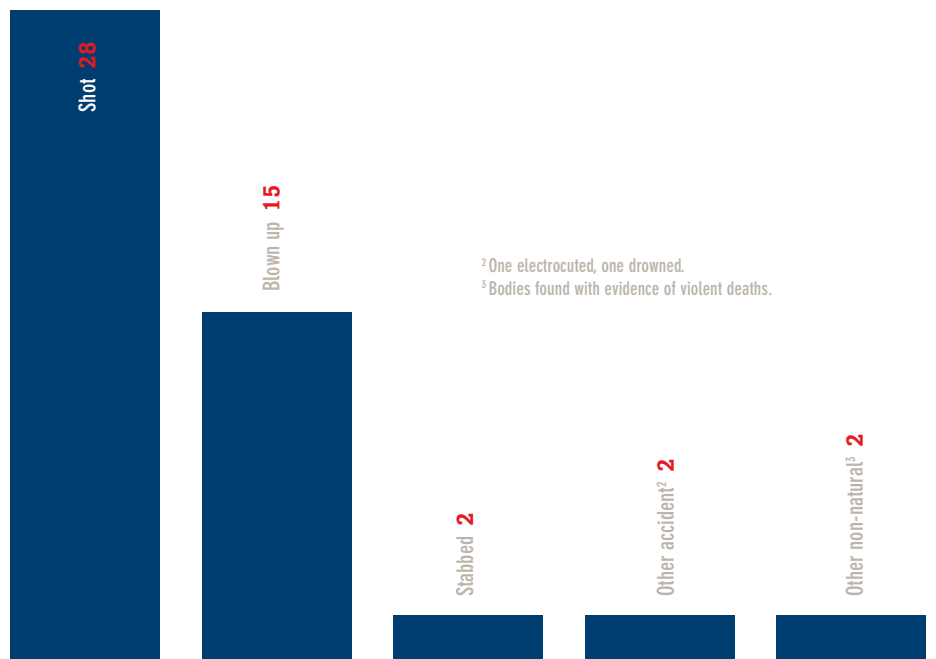
Context of death



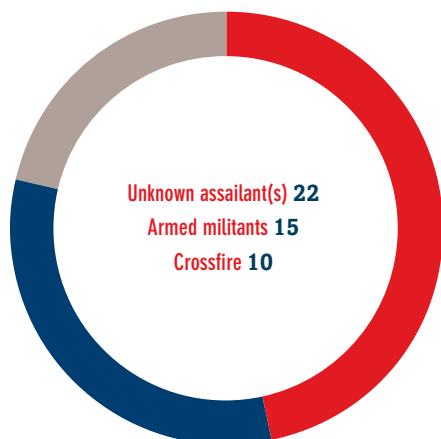
“In countries like Mexico, Guatemala and the Philippines, where powerful political and business interests often combine to violently silence the news media, the stakes are simply too high for some to continue reporting.”

– Hannah Storm, INSI Director

Cause of death



Perpetrator⁴



TOTAL KILLED

49

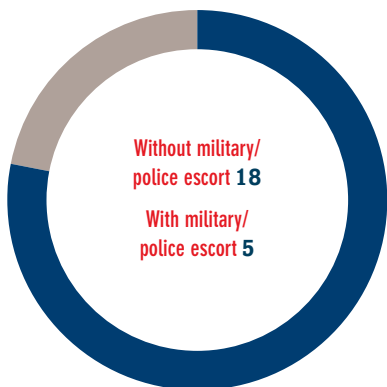
⁴Accidents are not included here.

JOURNALISTS KILLED: THE NUMBERS

Deaths unrelated to war reporting



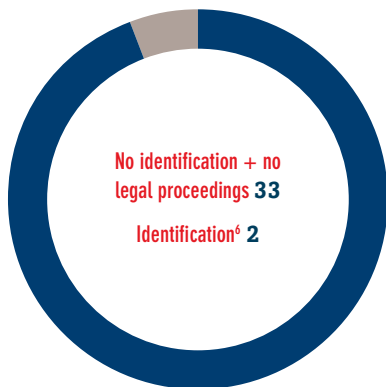
War/conflict zone reporting



TOTAL KILLED IN CONFLICT
23

Legal outcome⁵

TOTAL
35




⁵ This does not include accidents, crossfire, aerial bombardments, or an attack on a convoy that journalists were part of.

⁶ Suspects have been identified or arrests made.

Journalists duck for cover while covering heavy shelling between pro-Russian forces and the Ukrainian army.





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