KILLING THE MESSENGER

2022

An analysis of news media casualties carried out for the International News Safety Institute by Cardiff School of Journalism
From Honduras to Colombia, from Ecuador to Paraguay, our colleagues have been targeted and killed for their work on corruption, organised crime and environmental abuses. Governments have been largely powerless, or totally unwilling, to break the cycle of impunity for these crimes...

-- Elena Cosentino, INSI director

INSI’s calculations are sometimes higher than those of other organisations as we also include work-related accidents, but this ugly spike is undeniable. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and resulting war was obviously one of the reasons for the increase. At least 14 journalists, both local and foreign, died in Ukraine in 2022, many in the first few weeks of the conflict. There were no accidents here. Russian fire is believed to have been responsible for most, if not all, of the deaths and life changing injuries. The majority were experienced journalists who believed, along with hundreds of other news teams, that it was necessary to cover the frontlines in order to bear witness to the largest mobilisation of military forces in Europe since World War Two.

As the fighting rages on in Ukraine, there is sombre comfort to be found in the knowledge that war is an aberration and not the norm, and that learnings from those difficult experiences will help make training, risk assessments and mitigation plans more effective in protecting journalists in the future. Sadly, the same cannot be said for most of the other deaths in 2022, as the relentless murder of journalists in some countries is now the norm, and another key reason for the spiralling death toll.

For the fourth year in a row, Mexico, a nation at peace, has earned the title of the world’s deadliest country for journalists. Again, there were no accidental deaths. Mexico saw 16 of its journalists targeted and killed, up from nine in 2021. For news safety practitioners who are always looking for lessons to be learned and passed on to protect journalists, this is mind boggling. No equipment, training protocols or mitigation will ever be enough to protect journalists, if their murderers regularly get off scot-free. Nor is the situation likely to improve as long as Mexico’s president publicly berates, slanders and attacks the profession itself and any journalists whose coverage he dislikes.

Mexico’s not a unique case. As a whole, Latin America was the region that fared the worst in our 2022 report. Even without Mexico, Latin America saw a more than three-fold increase in journalists’ deaths compared to 2021. It is impossible not to see a connection, for instance, between the Amazon murders of British journalist Dom Phillips and Brazilian expert Bruno Pereira, and the deranged rhetoric of former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro who, for years, fomented hostility and quite possibly violence towards journalists and conservationists.

From Honduras to Colombia, from Ecuador to Paraguay, our colleagues have been targeted and killed for their work on corruption, organised crime and environmental abuses. Governments have been largely powerless, or totally unwilling, to break the cycle of impunity for these crimes.

In a similar vein, the political vacuum in Haiti, following the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, is behind the lawlessness that led to the violent deaths of seven journalists. A country with a population larger than Paris, is now the world’s third deadliest country for journalists, with no one to answer for it.

Asia was the only continent to witness a drop in journalist deaths, with just eight deaths. At least 50 of our colleagues were shot, and the rest were killed by car bombs, missiles, stabbings or beatings.

With 85 journalists killed, 2022 saw a grim jump in the number of journalist and media worker casualties. That represents a startling rise: over 50 per cent more journalists died than during the previous year. Of those deaths, only eight were accidents. At least 50 of our colleagues were targeted and killed for their work.

Foreword from our Director

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Elena Cosentino is INSI’s director.
Country of death

JOURNALISTS KILLED THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Syria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>Kazakhstan</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Yemen</td>
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<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>Chile</td>
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<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL KILLED 85
Country of origin

16 Mexico
9 Ukraine
7 Haiti
6 Tanzania
5 Philippines
4 Colombia
3 Honduras and Pakistan
2 Ecuador, India, Somalia, Turkey, USA, Yemen, Chile, Syria, Myanmar and Chad
1 Bangladesh, Brazil, France, Guatemala, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Russia, UK, Paraguay, Palestine and Lithuania
JOURNALISTS KILLED THE NUMBERS

Professional position

Journalist/Media worker 83
Support worker 2

Status in country of death

Local 78
International 7

Context of death

Non-conflict 61
Conflict 24

Journalists call for help near the body of Romelo Vilsaint who was hit by a teargas canister at a protest demanding the release of a colleague who was detained while covering a protest in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. ©RICHARD PIERRIN / AFP
Cause of death

1. Bodies found, cause of death not known.
2. One died in custody and one was struck by tear gas cannister.
3. Accidents are not included.
4. Suspects identified and/or arrests made.
5. No clear link to specific story type or area of operations.

Perpetrator

1. Unknown assailant(s)
2. Individual(s)
3. Military/armed forces
4. Police
5. Criminal organisation
6. Armed militants

Deaths unrelated to war reporting

1. Politics
2. Investigating crime
3. Corruption
4. Accident
5. Civil unrest
6. Unclear
7. Investigating drugs

International News Safety Institute

Candles are lit for the late journalist Francisca Sandoval in Santiago, Chile who was shot while covering a confrontation on May Day. © MARTIN BERNETTI / AFP
War/conflict zone reporting

| Identification + legal proceedings | 3 |
| No identification + no legal proceedings | 45 |
| Identification⁷ | 12 |

* This does not include accidents, indiscriminate bombings, suicide bombings or crossfire.
⁷ Suspects have been identified or arrests made.
* Suspects have been charged or convicted.

Legal outcome⁶

| Non-embedded | 22 |
| Embedded | 2 |

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6

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* Suspects have been charged or convicted.
A Sudanese demonstrator carries a poster of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot dead on May 11, while covering a raid in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, during an anti-coup demonstration in the capital Khartoum on May 12, 2022. © AFP