

INSI

INTERNATIONAL NEWS SAFETY INSTITUTE



KILLING THE MESSENGER 2017

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

2017 may well be remembered as the year when brave women across our industry threw off the shackles of silence and intimidation to speak out against the abuse and harassment they have experienced at the hands of sexual predators.

But it should also be remembered as the year in which some women working in the news media continued to face insurmountable insecurity, threats and intimidation, which at their very worst silenced these invaluable voices.

Out of the 68 journalists and media workers killed in connection with their work this year, nine were women. That is 13 percent of the total. Last year, the figures were three women out of 112 killed, or nearly three percent. In 2015 there were 10 women out of 101 casualties, or 10 percent.

This is the highest proportion of women killed in comparison with their male colleagues in the eight years since I joined the International News Safety Institute (INSI), and it is a particularly egregious finding in the current climate. It has been more than five years since we paved the way for discussions around safety issues faced by women journalists with the publication of INSI's *No Woman's Land – On the Frontlines with Female Reporters*, but sadly it seems that the safety concerns of today are even more serious than they were back in 2012.

Statistically speaking, the overall number of journalists killed is thankfully lower than in recent years. But the threats and harassment are no longer limited to traditional war zones. They are online and offline, physical, psychological and digital. Journalists of both genders are faced with individuals and groups who are determined to silence the messenger in whatever way they deem fit. But this year, the threats seem to have come with an added gender dimension.

Of course, sometimes insecurity doesn't discriminate on the basis of gender. Kurdish journalist Shifa Gardi was a pioneer in her field, recognised by her employer for breaking down the stereotypes of male-dominated journalism. But the roadside bomb that killed her in Mosul did not detonate because she was a woman. Nor was the death of Véronique Robert related to the fact that she was a female war correspondent. In June, she died along with two male colleagues – Stephan Villeneuve and Bakhtiyar Haddad – from injuries sustained in another mine blast in Mosul. Faridah Mustakhdim, an employee of Afghanistan's parliamentary television channel, was killed along with her colleague in a bomb attack outside Kabul's parliament building in January.

We remember the other brave women who were killed in 2017: Gauri Lankesh, who became the most high-profile journalist killed in India in recent years. Radio reporter Efigenia Vásquez Astudillo from Colombia was shot while covering clashes between the police and indigenous activists. Miroslava Breach spent the days before her murder in March documenting the murders of others in Mexico's drug war. Earlier the same month, another Kurdish journalist, Tuba Akyilmaz, died from her injuries after being shot during fighting between rival forces in Sinjar, northern Iraq.

Kim Wall wasn't reporting from a country in conflict when she was killed. She had been missing for almost two weeks when her headless torso was discovered in the sea near Copenhagen, just a few miles from where she was born in Sweden.

If the killing of one of our colleagues really changed the tone of the safety discussions this year, it was that of Malta's most prominent investigative journalist, Daphne Caruana Galizia, who led the Panama Papers investigation into corruption in her home country.

She had reportedly filed a police report saying she was being threatened a couple of weeks before she was killed by a car bomb. Her murder sent shock waves across Europe, with several major news organisations, among them INSI members, writing an open letter to the European Commission urging a full investigation into Daphne's death.

It took the murder in broad daylight of a journalist in Europe to wake westerners to the desperate situation for media around the world.

Like Daphne, each of these women were telling stories that they believed would make a difference. We salute every one of them for their bravery, for having the courage to keep on reporting, despite ultimately insurmountable odds.

Of course, their male colleagues take risks too, and at INSI we pay tribute to every journalist killed doing their work, whatever their gender, ethnicity or religion. The 68 men and women killed this year have paid the ultimate price for their work and every single one leaves a legacy of loss. But they also remind us that we need journalists to continue to report from these places, to continue to shine a light, to hold a mirror up to society, to smash stereotypes, to tackle taboos, to ensure that we hear diverse voices.

We all must work harder to ensure that the safety of all journalists – but particularly the safety of women journalists – is taken seriously. The consequences of not doing so will affect us all.

– Hannah Storm is INSI's director



Cover image: Police and forensic experts inspect the wreckage of a car bomb believed to have killed Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia; Above photo: A protester holds-up a sign as thousands gather for a national rally to demand justice for Caruana Galizia. ©AFP

Country of journalists' death



Country of journalists' origin

 1 killed from Bangladesh, Colombia, Malta, Myanmar, Sweden and United States

 2 killed from Dominican Republic, France, Nigeria and Yemen

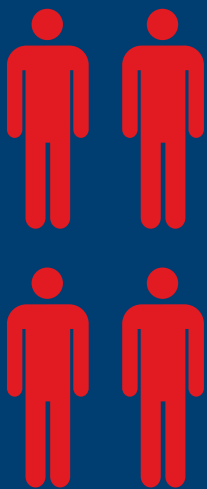
 3 killed from India, Pakistan, Russia and Somalia

 4 killed from Honduras, Philippines and Syria

 8 killed from Iraq

 10 killed from Mexico

 12 killed from Afghanistan



Citizen journalists killed

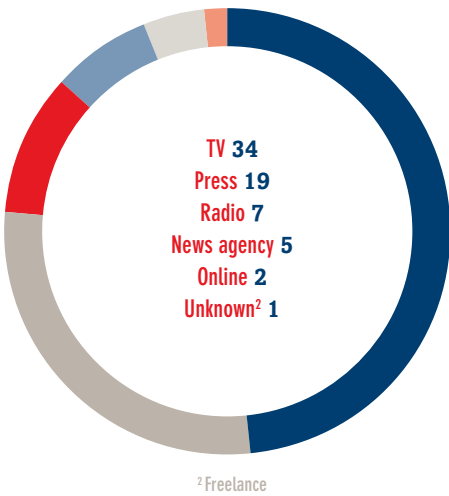
TOTAL KILLED

68



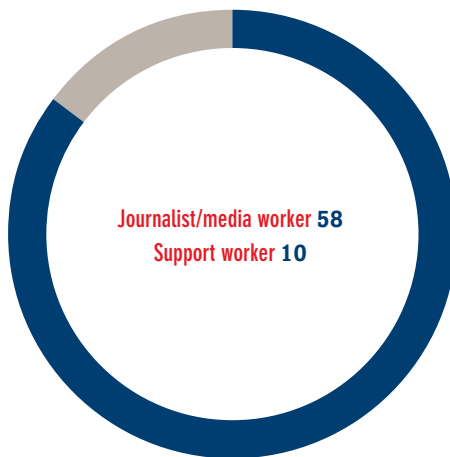
From top of the page: A video journalist works during a protest of opposition activists against President Nicolás Maduro's government in Caracas, Venezuela; An AFP photographer walks towards an ambulance after being injured by a rubber bullet fired by Israeli troops in the West Bank village of Bilin; A portrait of Shifa Gardi, an Iraqi journalist for Kurdish network Rudaw, who was killed while covering the Mosul offensive; An AFP photojournalist lies injured on the ground after being beaten by Israeli border police during a demonstration against Israel's separation barrier; Indian journalists shout slogans during a protest to condemn an assault on fellow media workers. All photos ©AFP

Employer/commissioner

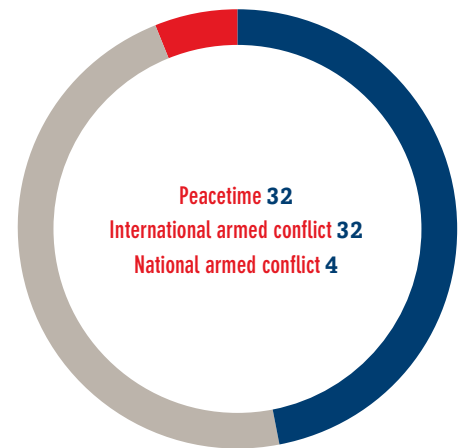


²Freelance

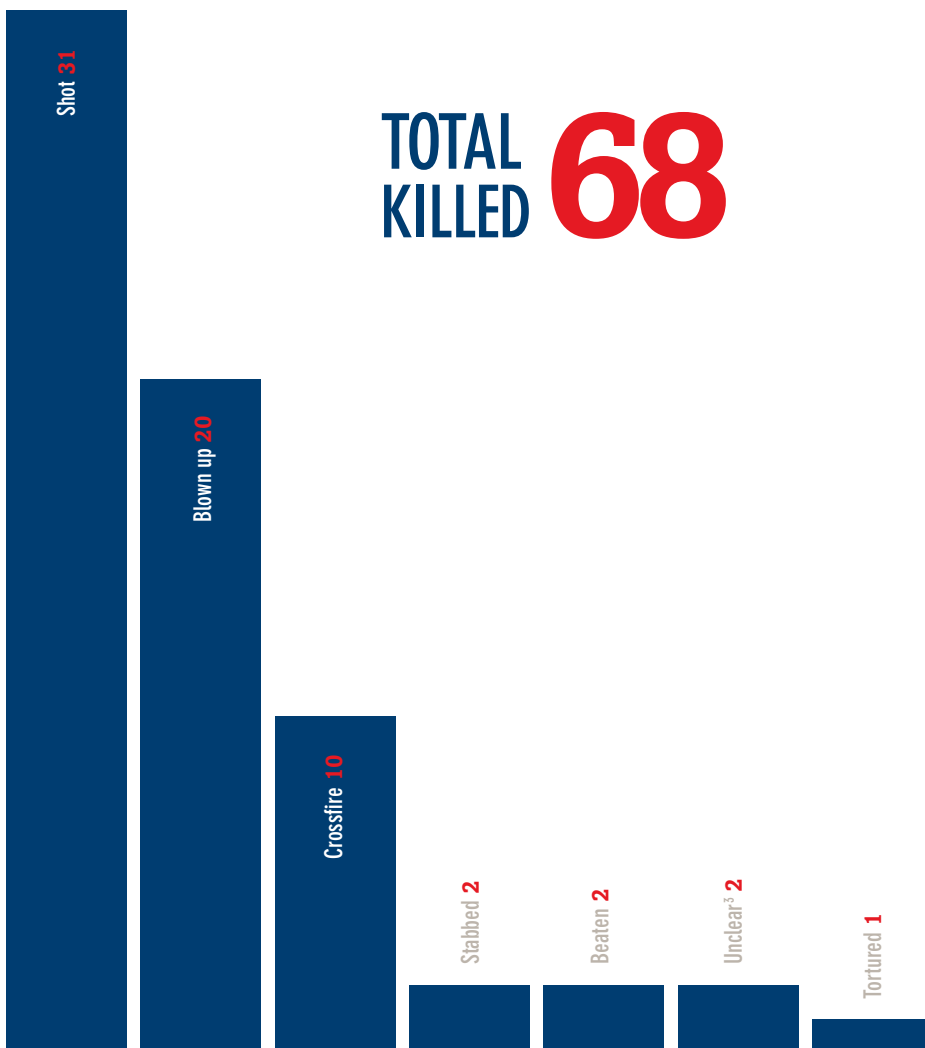
Professional position



Context of death



Cause of death



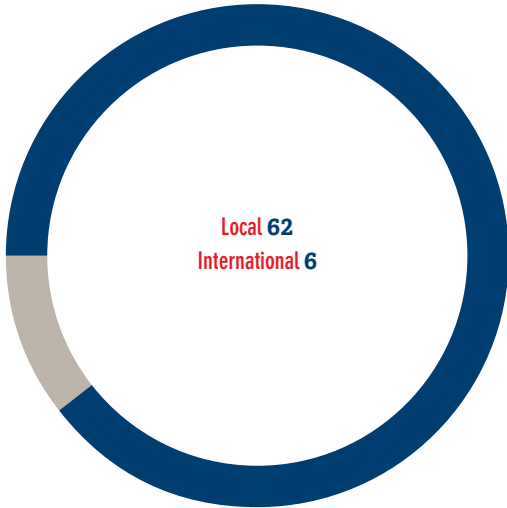
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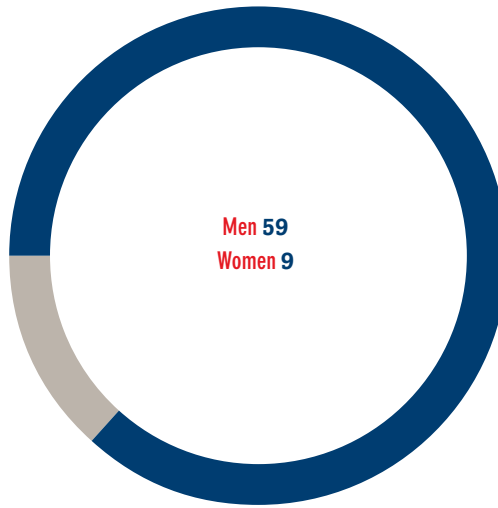
– Hannah Storm, INSI Director

³Bodies found

Status of journalist in country of death



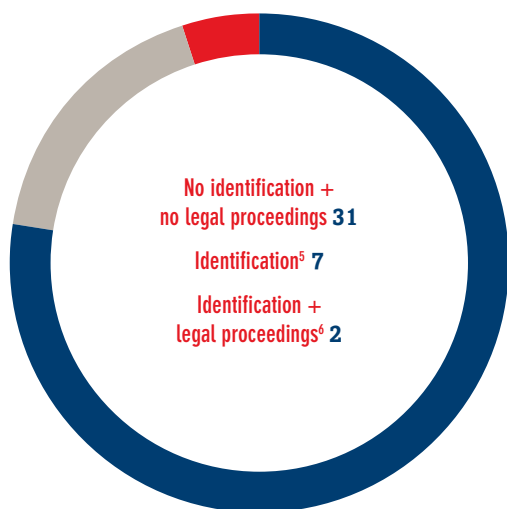
Gender



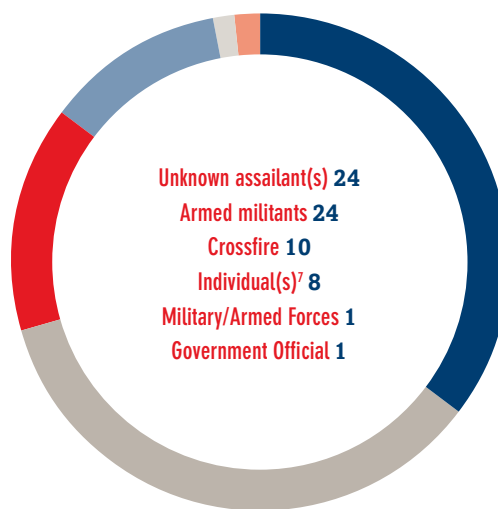
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Legal outcome⁴



Perpetrator



⁴ This does not include crossfire, indiscriminate bombings, or suicide bombings.

⁵ Suspects have been identified or arrests made.

⁶ Peter Madsen has been charged with the murder of Kim Wall. Three suspects have been arraigned on potential murder charges for the death of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

⁷ Suspects identified or arrests made.



Mexican journalists protest against the murder of Miroslava Breach. ©AFP

A PARA LAS PERIODISTAS
OSLAVA BREACH



#¡Alto a los asesinatos de
periodistas!
MIROSLAVA BREACH





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