

INSI

INTERNATIONAL  
NEWS SAFETY  
INSTITUTE



# KILLING THE MESSENGER 2018

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



# Foreword from our Director

2018 marked a worrying watershed for our journalism community. It was a year when media colleagues were murdered in countries usually regarded as safe, underscoring the length to which some people will go to kill the messenger.

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The rise in verbal and virtual attacks on the media – particularly in the United States – spilled over into the physical world. News organisations and individuals were specifically targeted and the murder of five of our colleagues at the Capital Gazette in Maryland marked the first mass targeted killing of media workers on US soil.

There seems little doubt that the Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi was also targeted because of his profession. His death became the most publicised of 2018 and generated global outrage. The Saudi Arabian journalist was a prominent critic of his country's government, and had been living in self-imposed exile in the United States from where he wrote columns for the Washington Post. Khashoggi was killed after entering the Saudi embassy in Istanbul in October.

Europe was not spared either. After the murders in 2017 of Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta and Kim Wall in Denmark, the Slovak journalist Ján Kuciak was killed along with his fiancée. He had been investigating organised crime links to his country's government. Later in the year, the Bulgarian investigative journalist Viktoria Marinova was raped and murdered in an attack that the country's interior minister called "exceptionally brutal". Although she is not included in our list of casualties because her death has not been linked to her work, some in the media community believe she was killed for her journalism.

Afghanistan was the most dangerous country to be a journalist in 2018 – a depressing record that it has held for the past three years.

April 30 became the deadliest day for journalists in the country since the fall of the Taliban. Nine journalists were killed in a double suicide attack in the capital Kabul. The BBC reporter Ahmad Shah was also shot dead that day in the eastern province of Khost. In all, INSI recorded the deaths of 13 news media professionals in Afghanistan in 2018, ahead of Mexico where nine journalists died and the United States where seven died.

Every time a journalist is killed it is a tragedy. For 15 years, INSI has been working to raise awareness and help mitigate the risks taken by our brave colleagues. Without a guarantee of press safety, there can be no real guarantee of press freedom and without that democracy and public discourse suffers. If 2018 brought a shocking level of violence, it also ensured that the sacrifices of journalists became part of the public conversation.

Time magazine named as its Person of the Year Khashoggi and a group of murdered and oppressed journalists including the Capital Gazette victims, as well as Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, two Reuters journalists jailed in Myanmar, and Maria Ressa, editor of the social news network Rappler in the Philippines. And as 2018 turned to 2019, a sign perhaps of the future: the role of journalists and press freedom was celebrated in New York on New Year's Eve, with reporters the guests of honour at the city's Times Square party.

We hope this year will bring some respite to our brave and beleaguered colleagues and that this really is the beginning of sustained solidarity and the beginning of a fight back.

– Hannah Storm is INSI's director

## Country of Death



## Citizen Journalists




1 killed in Yemen




3 killed in Syria

## Country of origin

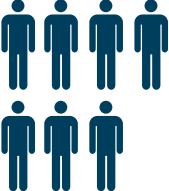
 **1 killed from** Nicaragua, Zambia, Libya, Slovakia and Saudi Arabia

 **2 killed from** Israel/Occupied Territories and Pakistan

 **3 killed from** Brazil, Ecuador, Philippines and Russia

 **5 killed from** Syria

 **6 killed from** India, Somalia and Yemen

 **7 killed from** US

 **9 killed from** Mexico


 **13 killed from** Afghanistan

Image below: Relatives of Mexican journalist Juan Carlos Huerta, who was shot dead on May 15, mourn during his funeral. ©AFP



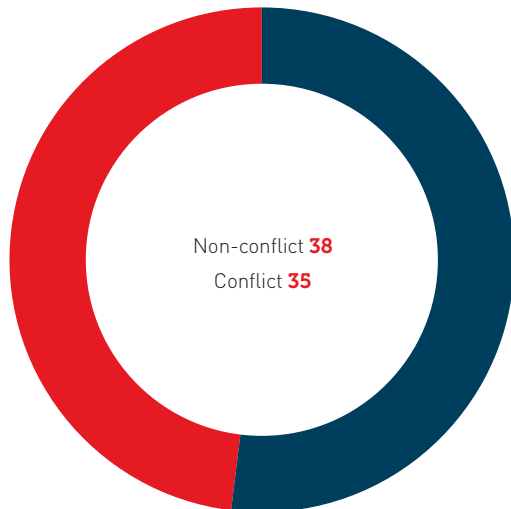
"This seems to have been a year in which our profession has been under attack in a more worrying way than I have seen since joining INSI in 2010. Without a guarantee of press safety, there can be no real guarantee of press freedom and without that democracy and public discourse suffer."

– **Hannah Storm, INSI Director**

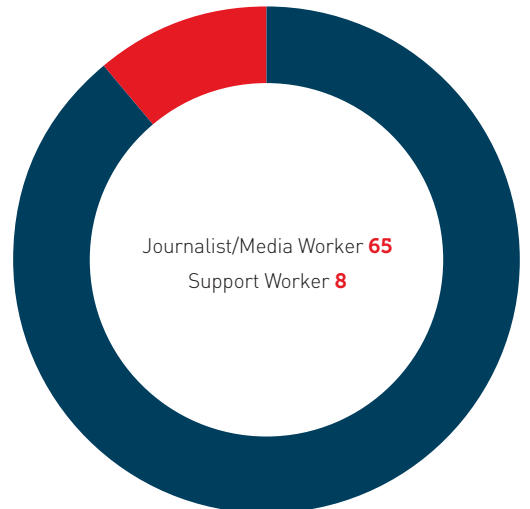


Image: Afghan journalists take cover during a fight between gunmen and the security forces in Kabul ©AFP

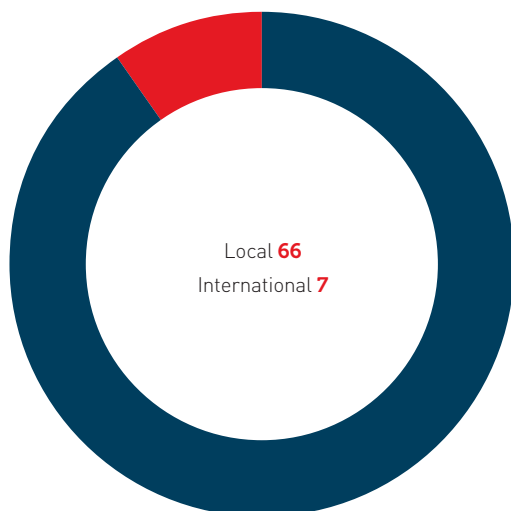
Context of death



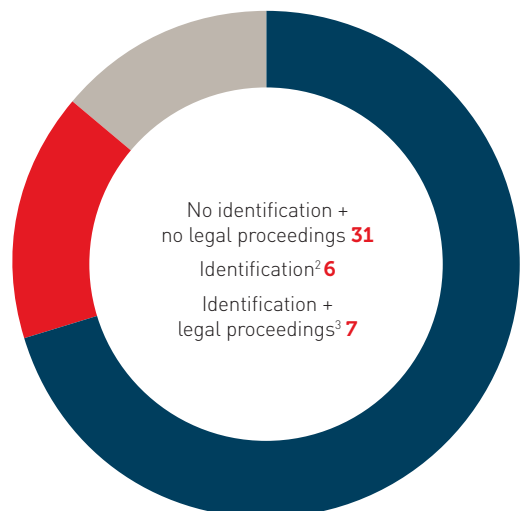
Professional position



Status in country of death



Legal outcome<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> This does not include accidents, crossfire, indiscriminate bombings, or suicide bombings.

<sup>2</sup> Suspects have been identified or arrests made.

<sup>3</sup> Suspect identified, arrested, and imprisoned.

## Cause of death



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– **Hannah Storm, INSI Director**

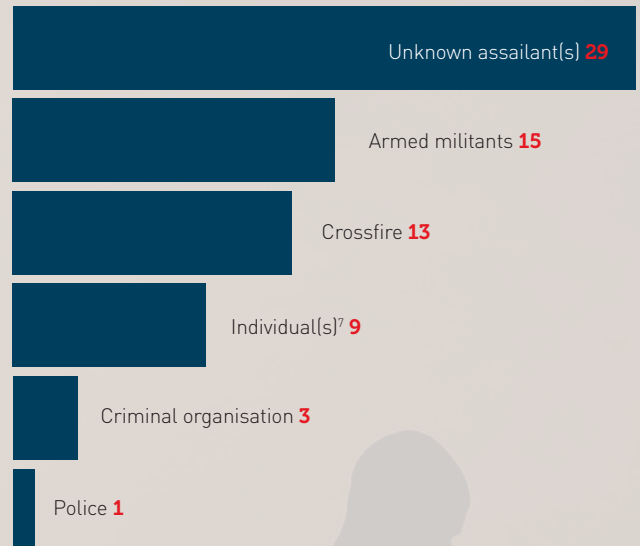
<sup>4</sup> Three journalists run over in India.

<sup>5</sup> Two American journalists killed by falling tree.

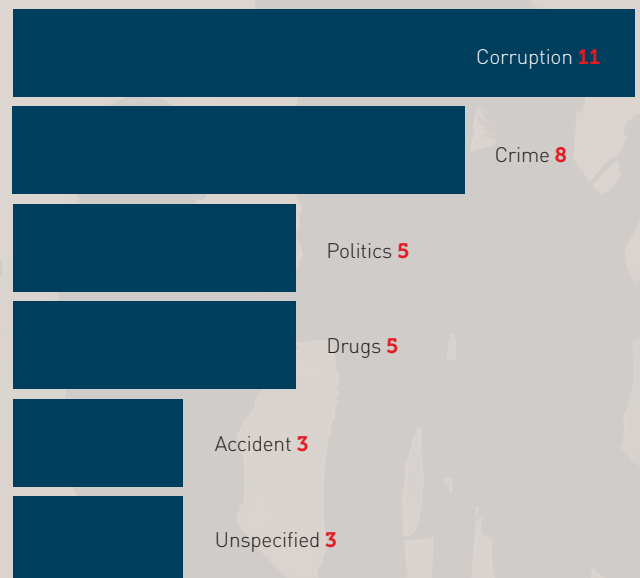
<sup>6</sup> Accidents are not included here.

<sup>7</sup> Suspects identified or arrests made.

## Perpetrator<sup>6</sup>



## Deaths unrelated to war reporting



Background image ©AFP

Image right: Protestors light candles during a silent march paying tribute to Slovak journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová ©AFP

Back cover: Palestinian journalists protest against the killing of fellow journalist Yasser Murtaja in Gaza ©AFP







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