

**PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AND  
COMBAT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN JOURNALISTS**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. On March 8, 2019 the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) published the report "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession" (hereinafter "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression"), developed in coordination with the IACHR Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women. The report reviews the situation of women journalists in the region and examines the obligations of States and the private sector in eliminating the main obstacles and special or additional risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their freedom of expression and which are related to inequality and discrimination against women based on their gender.

2. In particular, the document analyzes the patterns of discrimination that women journalists and media workers experience in the newsrooms and/or in the workplace, with emphasis on the underrepresentation and horizontal and vertical segregation of women in the media, the wage gaps between men and women, the absence of strategies to ensure that those who perform caregiving tasks are not affected in their career paths and/or job opportunities, and other practices of intersectional discrimination. Similarly, the report explores the different forms of gender-based violence within the media, including sexual violence and harassment. Recognizing its leading role in this area, the report offers guidelines on the actions that media companies should implement to eradicate and/or address these practices.

3. This report reviews some of the main advances and challenges registered in recent years in relation to these patterns of discrimination and violence against women journalists and media workers and analyzes the extent to which companies have adopted policies or other strategic actions in this area. Based on this analysis, the report presents a series of guidelines that aim to contribute to the strengthening of ongoing efforts and encourage companies to address pending challenges.

## II. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN THE MEDIA

4. As the Office of the Special Rapporteur noted in its report "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression," although the number of women journalists has increased in recent years,<sup>1</sup> entrenched patterns of gender-based discrimination still "represent an enormous challenge to women's ability to start and pursue a career in journalism on equal terms with men."<sup>2</sup> The experiences reported by women journalists themselves in recent years confirm this trend.

5. In Argentina, a research developed in 2018 determined that 43% of women journalists report situations of discrimination "for the fact of being women."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, 40% report situations of "discrimination for not entering the beauty patterns of today's society."<sup>4</sup>

6. In Brazil, women journalists and media workers denounce that "machismo, sexism and misogyny are still present in the mass media."<sup>5</sup> Out of a pool of more than 400 women

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<sup>1</sup> International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). [Gender Radiography: International Women's Day 2016](#). March 8, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations General Assembly. [The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. Report of the Secretary-General](#). A/72/290. 4 August 2017. Para. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective](#). November 7, 2020.

journalists from all over the country who participated in a research conducted in 2017, 87% reported having experienced at least one situation of gender discrimination.<sup>6</sup>

7. In Colombia, according to data collected in 2020, 62% of female journalists consider that they are treated worse than their male colleagues. Only 35% believe they are treated equally and 3% believe they are treated better.<sup>7</sup>

8. In Costa Rica, 92% of women journalists allege that there is gender-based discrimination in decisions related to job promotion.<sup>8</sup> In addition, 31% state that they have been discriminated against at some point.<sup>9</sup>

9. These patterns of discrimination limit women's access to the media, restrict the type of tasks and/or topics they are allowed to address, and demonstrate that decisions about women's access to job opportunities, promotions and/or salary increases are not based on objective criteria but reflect and perpetuate gender stereotypes towards them.<sup>10</sup>

### **a) Under-representation of women in the region's media**

10. Gender-based discrimination has a significant impact on women's access to the media. In 2015, 43% of people presenting or reporting news in Latin America were women. In the Caribbean, this representation reached 45%.<sup>11</sup> The most recent studies on the subject show that this trend continues in many States in the region, although some progress has been made.

11. According to reports from 2019, in Argentina, despite the fact that they are the majority among those who study communication and/or journalism,<sup>12</sup> women represent 30% of the people who work in journalistic companies.<sup>13</sup> In Colombia, similar figures are recorded: only 3 out of 10 journalists are women.<sup>14</sup>

12. In Brazil, in a survey conducted on 2018 a total universe of 26,000 journalists, "the predominance of men was observed, totaling 58.2%, while women represent only 41.8% of the total number of professionals"<sup>15</sup> in the media. However, there are significant differences between the different types of media: while the percentage of women working in television media is almost similar to the number of men, in radio and written media women journalists are three times less than their male counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

13. In this context, it has been pointed out that, in Brazil, "the journalistic market has changed significantly in recent decades, with the proportion of men and women in the newsrooms becoming numerically more balanced. However, salary and occupational inequalities are still registered".<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in El Salvador, "[there is] an increase in the participation of women in the media, especially in the work of reporters, in the technical area of photographs, cameras, which was not seen five years ago, but it does not mean that women have the same conditions as men."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 11.

<sup>7</sup> "No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Noguera Calderón, Yanancy. [Status of women journalists in the media in Costa Rica](#). 2015. P. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Noguera Calderón, Yanancy. [Status of women journalists in the media in Costa Rica](#). 2015. P. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 11.

<sup>11</sup> GMMP. [Gender Inequality in the News 1995-2015. Key Findings](#). Undated.

<sup>12</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report](#). 2019. P. 3.

<sup>13</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report](#). 2019. P. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Fundación Sentiado and Colombian Network of Journalists with Gender Vision. [Implementation of Chapter I of the Beijing Platform: women, media and communication in Colombia 2020](#). 2020. Information based on data from Fundación de la Libertad de Prensa, Cartografías de la Información, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective](#). November 7, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Apex Conteúdo Estratégico and Comunique-se. [Perfil do jornalista brasileiro](#). 2018. P. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 11.

<sup>18</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 4

14. The low representation of women is largely associated with the gender stereotypes that permeate the hiring decisions of many media outlets in the region. In Ecuador, journalists report that, on numerous occasions, the decision to hire or not to hire a journalist is associated with an evaluation of "the way she dresses,... marital status, reproductive plans, sexual orientation and nationality"<sup>19</sup> and/or an evaluation of her sexual and reproductive life.<sup>20</sup> In El Salvador, female communicators indicate that "beliefs [about] women being sensitive is a criterion they take into account when hiring in the media [and] being a pretty person [is a criterion considered relevant] more than anything else in television media."<sup>21</sup> Similarly, they indicate that they are "demanded more if [they are] delegated a task.... We demand ourselves to show that we are capable, because those in high places do not believe that we are."<sup>22</sup>

15. As described below, when they manage to overcome these barriers and gain access to the media, women journalists and media workers must face practices of horizontal and vertical segregation, wage inequalities, a high level of job insecurity and other forms of intersectional discrimination.

### ***b) Horizontal segregation***

16. Occupational segregation is a widespread phenomenon in the labor market worldwide. It manifests itself through patterns of division of labor whereby women and men are "concentrated in different types and at different levels of activity and employment"<sup>23</sup> that are assigned to them by virtue of gender biases and/or stereotypes. This segregation is "horizontal" when women are overrepresented in certain types of occupations and/or when "women and men are distributed differently among branches of economic activity and occupations at the same level"<sup>24</sup> on the basis of gender. This segregation constitutes a form of gender discrimination and results in "differences in power, qualifications, income and opportunities"<sup>25</sup> in the workplace.

17. Worldwide, preliminary findings from the Global Media Monitoring Project developed in 2020 reveal that "the last five years have seen small incremental shifts toward parity in issues and sources, particularly in radio news; at the same time, the pace of change is so slow that one could speak of stagnation."<sup>26</sup> According to the same report, "there has been significant progress toward balance in stories reported by women and men on television; currently 48% of television news is reported by women."<sup>27</sup>

18. At the regional level, women journalists and media workers are also exposed to this form of discrimination. In most of the countries of the region, women journalists "are responsible for the 'less relevant' issues for the media agenda and those linked to what is considered 'feminine' issues: culture, society, health, education, that is, work areas that would be extensions of the reproductive tasks that women have traditionally performed without pay in society. And, also, obviously, they are those who carry the 'gender agenda'."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 26

<sup>21</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 5.

<sup>22</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 5.

<sup>23</sup> ILO. [ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality](#). Second Edition. 2008. P. 158.

<sup>24</sup> ILO and UNDP. [Horizontal gender segregation in the labor markets of eight Latin American countries: implications for gender inequalities](#). 2019. P. 6.

<sup>25</sup> ILO. [ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality](#). Second Edition. 2008. P. 158.

<sup>26</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project, [What progress for gender equality in the news 25 years after Beijing?](#) March 3, 2021. Pg. 1

<sup>27</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project, [What progress for gender equality in the news 25 years after Beijing?](#) March 3, 2021. Pg. 1

<sup>28</sup> Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). [Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIO+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades](#). FUNDEPS and Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. P. 60.

19. In Argentina, men are in charge of covering topics related to politics, economy, energy and sports. On the contrary, women are assigned "soft" topics such as society, entertainment and general information.<sup>29</sup>

20. In Brazil, women are in the majority among those who cover economics. However, they are still a minority among those covering sports, technology and education.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, they are overrepresented in the coverage of tourism, fashion, gastronomy and lifestyle. In this context, the Brazilian journalists conclude that the assignment of topics is often based on gender stereotypes.<sup>31</sup>

21. In Colombia, only 2 out of 10 women journalists cover all the topics on the media's agenda or are in charge of sections such as politics and justice. As in other countries in the region, most women journalists are pigeonholed in social, cultural and advertising issues, considered as 'soft'.<sup>32</sup> In this context, "[only] 13% of the [media] have guidelines to avoid gender inequalities in the distribution of work."<sup>33</sup>

22. In Ecuador, although there have been advances in recent years, "politics is reserved for male journalists and even women who have expressed their willingness to cover these topics are relegated to coverage of environmental, social or entertainment issues."<sup>34</sup> Similarly, in El Salvador, "[there is] a certain stigmatization for women in some media and it is thought that they cannot cover some topics such as facts of violence, because they are supposed to be vulnerable."<sup>35</sup> In that country, "[there] has been an increase in the number of women as sports news anchors, but as long as they comply with the stereotype of young and pretty women...; there are few spaces for analysts or anchors in opinion and interview slots."<sup>36</sup>

23. Women journalists also face difficulties in covering issues related to gender equality and women's rights. In this regard, in Ecuador, women journalists say that when they try to address these issues or modify their media's coverage of cases of gender violence, they face "a dynamic of permanent struggle, and... an extra work of pedagogy towards their colleagues, editors and bosses. Although there are times when they manage to convince editors and colleagues, at other times they do not manage to do so either, generating an overexertion, an increase in work pressure, frustration, mental health problems or desertion from their workplaces".<sup>37</sup>

24. In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, preliminary findings from the Global Media Monitoring Project show that women journalists in the region are overrepresented in the coverage of topics associated with this phenomenon in digital media. Explaining the reasons behind this overrepresentation, the study notes that "non-COVID19 stories are more likely to challenge gender stereotypes than pandemic-related stories."<sup>38</sup>

### ***c) Wage gap and labor precariousness***

25. As pointed out in the report "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression" by the Office of the Special Rapporteur, the patterns of distribution of work within the media described above may contribute to the work of women journalists being less visible and less valued, which may translate into a wage gap with respect to their male colleagues and access

<sup>29</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report](#). 2019. P. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Foundation for Press Freedom. [Peace in the headlines, fear in the newsroom. Report on the state of press freedom in Colombia in 2015](#). February 8, 2016. P. 78.

<sup>33</sup> Foundation for Press Freedom. [Peace in the headlines, fear in the newsroom. Report on the state of press freedom in Colombia in 2015](#). February 8, 2016. P. 79.

<sup>34</sup> Cerosetenta. [8M: This is what it's like to be a journalist and a woman in Latin America](#). September 6, 2018.

<sup>35</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 4.

<sup>36</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 4.

<sup>37</sup> GAMAG. [Status of women in the media and ICTs](#). September 2019. P. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project, [What progress for gender equality in the news 25 years after Beijing?](#) March 3, 2021. P. 8.

to less contractual protections. The most recent studies on the working conditions of women journalists confirm this pattern.

26. Regarding the salary gap, in Argentina, a 2018 research conducted on a sample of 405 female journalists found that 77% of them consider that they do not receive equal remuneration as their male colleagues for the same work.<sup>39</sup> In Chile, in 2019, female journalists reported that women earn "30% less than men, a situation that is reproduced in the media where salaries are negotiated personally."<sup>40</sup>

27. In Ecuador, research released in 2020 revealed that "there is a salary gap between women - who earn \$938.44 - and men - who receive \$1,378.87."<sup>41</sup> This situation affects in a differentiated way those who are just starting out in the profession.<sup>42</sup>

28. Similarly, in Brazil, women journalists report that "white women have... lower salaries than their male and white colleagues, but more than black journalists, being the ones with the worst remuneration. Thus, the data show that journalism needs to address both gender and ethnic-racial inequalities"<sup>43</sup>. In that country, wage inequalities are often associated with a low valuation of the work of female journalists and the stereotype that, because of their gender, they are not the breadwinners and, therefore, do not need as high a salary as their male counterparts.<sup>44</sup>

29. In El Salvador, women journalists consider that "[there is] quite a lot of inequality in the workload."<sup>45</sup> This determines that, in some cases, the media "pay women more, but the work is greater, there is no compensation of work with salary."<sup>46</sup> In Colombia and Mexico, women journalists also denounce the existence of a gender pay gap.<sup>47</sup>

30. In relation to labor precariousness, available data indicate that, in Argentina, women are overrepresented among those who work part-time in media companies. On the contrary, "men are in the majority among those who work in a dependent relationship and with a full time workload."<sup>48</sup> In this context, women working in the media consider that "[these] inequalities exacerbate problems such as the wage gap and add to unpaid domestic work as a pillar of gender inequality."<sup>49</sup>

31. In Chile, women journalists have denounced that "many women for years [have] worked under fee contracts, without the possibility of having social security or health rights."<sup>50</sup> In particular, they demand "greater social protection for independent work and... the elimination of the outsourcing of [their] tasks as these are practices that promote job instability."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country.](#) November 2018. P. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Women in the media. [This 8M feminist journalists we join the strike.](#) March 8, 2019.

<sup>41</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador.](#) November 2020. Based on data from the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security corresponding to May 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador.](#) November 2020. P. 21.

<sup>43</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective.](#) November 7, 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. [Women and news media leadership in 2020: evidence from 10 markets.](#) March 8, 2020.

<sup>45</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media.](#) No date. Pág. 5.

<sup>46</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media.](#) No date. Pág. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Foundation for Press Freedom. [Silencioff, will the regions take the floor, Report on the situation for Press Freedom in Colombia in 2016.](#) 2017. P. 113. P. 9. IACHR/ OHCHR. [Special Report on the Situation of Freedom of Expression in Mexico. Joint Report of the IACHR Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression on their mission to Mexico.](#) June 2018. Para. 28.

<sup>48</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report.](#) 2019. P. 1.

<sup>49</sup> SiPreBA. [Survey of labor situation in the CABA media during 2018-2019.](#) June 10, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Women in the media. [This 8M feminist journalists we join the strike.](#) March 8, 2019.

<sup>51</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report.](#) 2019. P. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Women in the media. [This 8M feminist journalists we join the strike.](#) March 8, 2019.

<sup>51</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report.](#) 2019. P. 1.

32. In El Salvador, journalists report "a growing labor precariousness, due to several factors: now one person solves all the coverage, including multimedia, takes photos, uploads them to the networks, makes them for radio, this adds to labor precariousness. In some media it is done because of a financial difficulty, but not in others."<sup>52</sup> In this sense, they report that many times the media "take advantage of the alleged economic cuts to fire all the women."<sup>53</sup>

33. In Mexico, women journalists and media workers also face a high level of economic instability in the exercise of their profession. Many of them state that the income they receive for their journalistic work is not enough to cover their cost of living, which forces them to have other parallel jobs. This multiplicity of jobs, in addition to unpaid domestic work, generates an overload of tasks that impacts not only on the exercise of their profession but also on their health and other aspects of their personal lives.<sup>54</sup>

#### **d) Glass roof**

34. The term "glass ceiling" refers to obstacles based on gender biases that prevent or hinder women from accessing high decision-making and/or management positions in companies.<sup>55</sup> These obstacles represent a form of discrimination against women in the workplace<sup>56</sup> that also affects women journalists and media workers.

35. Based on statistics that demonstrate the "feminization of poverty", the persistence of the "glass ceiling" in journalism and the media is one of the consequences of the reproduction of the cycle of multidimensional poverty that has a differentiated impact on women and their ESCR. Women continue to be overrepresented in school dropout and illiteracy rates, while their labor rights remain precarious in the region. This context makes visible the multiple obstacles faced by women in accessing jobs related to journalism and the media.

36. Similarly, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression considers that since journalism is a work par excellence exposed to the public, its practices and improvement processes have the potential to impact other dimensions of community life. In this sense, overcoming the different obstacles in the media can be a catalyst so that other social dynamics where they also exist can be encouraged to change in order to guarantee women's rights.

37. Throughout the region, the presence of women both in hierarchical positions within newsrooms and in government and senior management positions in journalistic companies is scarce.<sup>57</sup> In 2016, the *International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)* reported that the representation of women in management positions in Latin American media companies was less than 25%.<sup>58</sup> Data surveyed in recent years suggest that this trend has not changed significantly.

38. In Argentina, 78% of the more than 400 journalists who participated in a study conducted in 2018 reported that most of the bosses in the media where they work are male.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, "only 12% of the women surveyed hold a decision-making position (direction, management or headship) within journalistic organizations."<sup>60</sup> In relation to promotion possibilities, only one third of them "think that they have possibilities of growth

<sup>52</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 5.

<sup>53</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. Pág. 5.

<sup>54</sup> The Coalition for Women in Journalism. [CFWIJ Annual Report 2020](#). December 23, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> ILO. [ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality](#). Second Edition. 2008. P. 173.

<sup>56</sup> ILO. [ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality](#). Second Edition. 2008. P. 173.

<sup>57</sup> International Women's Media Foundation. [Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media](#). In English. P. 9.

<sup>58</sup> International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). [Gender Radiography: International Women's Day 2016](#). March 8, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 23.

<sup>60</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 23.

in their current job"<sup>61</sup> and 72% consider that "they have less opportunity for growth than men"<sup>62</sup> in the media companies where they work. Along the same lines, 55% of the women who took part in the study indicated that they "always prefer men when there are promotion possibilities."<sup>63</sup>

39. Regarding governance positions in journalistic companies, "only 22% of media companies are led by women."<sup>64</sup> According to a report released in 2019, "[women] come to ownership of media companies in three situations: through family ties, by creating small (digital) companies of their own or as part of civil associations."<sup>65</sup>

40. In Brazil, although they are the majority of those who work in journalism,<sup>66</sup> women represent only 22% of the people who lead newsrooms.<sup>67</sup> In this context, women journalists perceive that men are overrepresented in leadership positions, such as editors, coordinators and directors, and that it is more difficult for them to achieve promotion.<sup>68</sup>

41. In Chile, according to information released in 2019, "there is only one woman who holds the position of media director, while the positions of editors continue to be mainly male spaces."<sup>69</sup> In the same country, it has been pointed out "[women] are reporters, producers, the people who manage everything, who manage interviews, who manage operational issues."<sup>70</sup> However, it is usually a male "who makes the decisions on how a news story is approached, what goes in the headline, what is going to go in the newscast." <sup>71</sup>

42. In Colombia, women "[have] an increasing presence in the newsrooms and even in managerial positions", to <sup>72</sup>the point that in 9 out of 26 media surveyed in a 2017 report the editors were women.<sup>73</sup> However, women still occupy a very marginal role in media ownership. There are even media outlets that do not have any women among their owners or shareholders.<sup>74</sup> At the regional level, in 2020, six women headed the most important regional newspapers in the country, a record number in Colombia. <sup>75</sup>

43. According to a 2020 report, in Ecuador, male journalists occupy "most of the positions related to editorial, production and design areas"<sup>76</sup> and are also overrepresented in hierarchical or managerial positions. In this context, women journalists denounce that they are "undervalued" and/or discriminated against because of their gender by media companies when making decisions on promotions and that in order to compete for hierarchical positions, more demanding and/or different requirements are imposed on them because of their gender. In particular, on many occasions, "she is expected to conform

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<sup>61</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country.](#) November 2018. P. 34.

<sup>62</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country.](#) November 2018. P. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country.](#) November 2018. P. 24.

<sup>64</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report.](#) 2019. P. 1.

<sup>65</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report.](#) 2019. P. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. [Women and news media leadership in 2020: evidence from 10 markets.](#) March 8, 2020.

<sup>67</sup> Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. [Women and news media leadership in 2020: evidence from 10 markets.](#) March 8, 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro.](#) 2017. P. 9 and ff.

<sup>69</sup> Women in the media. [This 8M feminist journalists we join the strike.](#) March 8, 2019.

<sup>70</sup> University of Chile. [Journalists reflected on the role of the media in perpetuating violence against women.](#) 29 November 2018.

<sup>71</sup> University of Chile. [Journalists reflected on the role of the media in perpetuating violence against women.](#) 29 November 2018.

<sup>72</sup> The Empty Chair. [The 410 owners of the main media \(including those in tax havens\).](#) October 30, 2017.

<sup>73</sup> The Empty Chair. [The 410 owners of the main media \(including those in tax havens\).](#) October 30, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> The Empty Chair. [The 410 owners of the main media \(including those in tax havens\).](#) October 30, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> Semana. [Female power: the women who run the most important regional newspapers in the country.](#) February 14, 2020.

<sup>76</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador.](#) November 2020. P. 27.



to certain characteristics such as being 'nice, soft, conciliatory, not having any infula and not being able to confront or argue forcefully'. If a woman does not meet these characteristics, she is considered a difficult person who is 'not suitable for this type of work'. "They are<sup>77</sup> also questioned about their reproductive plans when making promotion decisions.<sup>78</sup>

44. Once they achieve these positions, they face resistance from the people in charge of them, especially men, who distrust their ability to perform in the position. In this context, only 15% of Ecuadorian women journalists aspire to ascend to a leadership position in the media where they currently work, while 33% aspire to be independent.<sup>79</sup>

45. A similar pattern is reported by women journalists in Nicaragua. According to the testimony of one journalist, "when [the] small number of women within the media reach positions of power as producers or editors - positions where there are not many women - no matter how many merits we have, we are accused of sleeping with the boss to get the position or our authority is not respected."<sup>80</sup>

46. For its part, in Mexico, out of a sample of 392 journalists and media workers surveyed in a study conducted in 2019, 47% indicated that they did not have or had not had personnel in charge of them.<sup>81</sup> Likewise, out of a total of 22 print or digital media surveyed in 2020, only 4 had gender parity or a majority of women in "management or coordination positions". In two of them, there were no women hired in these positions. Furthermore, out of a total of 280 hierarchical positions surveyed, only 22% were held by women.<sup>82</sup>

47. In Venezuela, most of the people who occupy leadership roles or hierarchical positions within the media are men. On the other hand, "the bulk of reporters are mainly young women."<sup>83</sup> At the same time, it has been pointed out that "there is greater gender parity in the leadership of digital media and in radio there is the greatest inequality, with an appreciable predominance of men."<sup>84</sup>

48. Recent research has identified that, given this scenario, women journalists in the region are developing their own digital media, taking advantage of the low barriers to entry that these media present and as a strategy to circumvent the glass ceilings that characterize traditional media.<sup>85</sup> In this regard, a study conducted in 2017 found that women had been involved in the creation of 62% of the 100 digital native media surveyed in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. Of the total number of founders, 40% were women.<sup>86</sup> According to the same study, "[women] are also playing a significant role in the executive and management teams of these digital native media."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 28.

<sup>78</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 34.

<sup>79</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 31.

<sup>80</sup> Ceroseventa. [8M: This is what it's like to be a journalist and a woman in Latin America](#). September 6, 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 10.

<sup>82</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas - [Is it time for change? Gender disparity in media](#). March 12, 2020.

<sup>83</sup> Center for Citizen Information and Konrad-Adenauer Foundation. [Journalisms in Latin America: identities in the differences](#). 2016. P. 126.

<sup>84</sup> Center for Citizen Information and Konrad-Adenauer Foundation. [Journalisms in Latin America: identities in the differences](#). 2016. P. 126.

<sup>85</sup> SembraMedia. [Inflection Point. Impact, threats and sustainability: a study of Latin American digital media entrepreneurs](#). 2017. P. 41.

<sup>86</sup> SembraMedia. [Inflection Point. Impact, threats and sustainability: a study of Latin American digital media entrepreneurs](#). 2017. P. 41.

<sup>87</sup> SembraMedia. [Inflection Point. Impact, threats and sustainability: a study of Latin American digital media entrepreneurs](#). 2017. P. 41.

These patterns are not always replicated in the digital versions of traditional media. For example, in Ecuador, journalists report that "many media continue to try to make the transition to the digital world from a "savings" perspective. In this context, there have been situations in which the media reduce their staff and concentrate the tasks in a very small group of journalists, which generates a disproportionate increase in the workload and other impacts in terms of job insecurity. Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 22.

***e) Gender-based discrimination against women journalists in caregiving roles***

49. Due to entrenched patterns of gender-based division of labor, <sup>88</sup>"women devote a greater proportion and amount of time to caregiving tasks, even when they are employed in the labor market."<sup>89</sup> This generates that "many of them are excluded from it or are inserted in part-time jobs or whose exercise does not involve attending a fixed place of work, as a way to reconcile family responsibilities with the obligations of paid work." <sup>90</sup>

50. Along the same lines, as described by the Office of the Special Rapporteur in its report "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression," women journalists and media workers in the region are affected by "the lack of flexible work schedules, limited or no access to affordable and quality childcare services, deficient maternity and paternity leave policies, and social attitudes [whereby women are assigned unpaid care work], among many other factors. "<sup>91</sup>Added to this is the culture of long working hours inherent in the organization of many media outlets.<sup>92</sup> In this context, available information indicates that, in most of the countries of the region, women journalists still find it "very difficult to achieve a balance between home and work in the newsroom," <sup>93</sup>which has a significant impact on their professional careers and/or job opportunities.

51. In Argentina, 6 out of 10 women journalists consider that one of the main challenges they face in their professional life in a differentiated manner with respect to their male peers is "combining family life with professional development. "<sup>94</sup>34% say that in their work there are no options for balancing their work with their personal life.<sup>95</sup> Women who report that these options exist indicate that they have flexible work schedules, the possibility of working remotely and/or a reduced workday.<sup>96</sup>

52. However, it should be taken into account that, in most cases, "work-family reconciliation policies... are fundamentally focused on women, thus reinforcing women's responsibility for reproductive tasks. "<sup>97</sup>In this sense, they point out that "company policies make women responsible for caregiving tasks by creating specific programs to facilitate childrearing by women and limitations for men to make use of the right, for example, to childcare centers."<sup>98</sup> In addition, 3 out of 10 Argentine women journalists report discriminatory practices for "having children. "<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Luis Casanova and Carina Lupica (ILO). Care and labor market: opportunities and challenges of employment policies to generate and promote decent work. In ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, CIPPEC. [Care policies in Argentina: advances and challenges](#). 2018. P. 80.

<sup>89</sup> Luis Casanova and Carina Lupica (ILO). Care and labor market: opportunities and challenges of employment policies to generate and promote decent work. In ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, CIPPEC. [Care policies in Argentina: advances and challenges](#). 2018. P. 80.

<sup>90</sup> Luis Casanova and Carina Lupica (ILO). Care and labor market: opportunities and challenges of employment policies to generate and promote decent work. In ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, CIPPEC. [Care policies in Argentina: advances and challenges](#). 2018. P. 80.

<sup>91</sup> UN Women. Occupational Segregation. Undated. Available for consultation at: <http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/infographic/changingworldofwork/es/index.html>

<sup>92</sup> UNESCO. [Gender Indicators for Media](#). 2012; World Association for Christian Communication- WACC Indicators. [The Global Media Monitoring Project: Who's in the news?](#) 2015. P. 49; International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). [Gender X-ray: International Women's Day 2016](#). March 8, 2016.

<sup>93</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC. [The Global Media Monitoring Project: Who's in the news?](#) 2015. P. 49.

<sup>94</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 29.

<sup>95</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 29.

<sup>96</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 29.

<sup>97</sup> Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). [Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIO+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades](#). FUNDEPS and Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. P. 62.

<sup>98</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report](#). 2019. P. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. P. 29.

53. In Brazil, women journalists also report difficulties in reconciling family life with work responsibilities, due to the way work is organized and the long working hours.<sup>100</sup> These difficulties have been aggravated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>101</sup>

54. In addition, they report being harassed so that they do not become pregnant and/or do not take maternity leave.<sup>102</sup> In particular, during the hiring process, they are asked about their reproductive plans.<sup>103</sup>

55. In Ecuador, "women journalists comment on their difficulties in keeping their jobs in the media when they are mothers. They are considered to be less productive, and a hostile environment is generated that prevents them from continuing in their jobs."<sup>104</sup> In this regard, a study conducted in 2020 indicates that "[in] the media there are no clear policies for women who want to be or who are mothers... Women still have to choose between work and their family."<sup>105</sup> A few media outlets offer the option of telecommuting for women journalists who are mothers. However, "[the] reduced workday is not an option and the media do not have childcare spaces either."<sup>106</sup>

56. These data show that "the traditional assignment of reproductive work on women"<sup>107</sup> generates that women journalists and media workers are forced to "organize their daily lives between paid work and care tasks, which conditions both access to and the possibilities of choosing work, and with it their autonomy."<sup>108</sup> The absence of adequate regulatory frameworks and public policies on care tasks and other forms of unpaid domestic work contributes to perpetuating this situation.

57. In this sense, in Chile, women journalists consider that "as long as they do not share equal conditions of domestic work, then it will be more difficult for a reporter to accept a travel assignment, for a hostess to go abroad will also be more difficult, for a boss to accept being in a board of directors, and so it will be in the media, in companies and everywhere. As long as this does not change, as long as there is no mandatory male post-natal leave, the culture in the media will continue to be the same."<sup>109</sup> Along the same lines, in Colombia, women journalists say that "they have had to seek a balance between their work and private lives in order to excel in a profession that often requires sacrificing personal and family time. 'Society still expects us to be in charge of household responsibilities and that always generates tension with work'."<sup>110</sup>

### ***f) Patterns of intersectional discrimination***

58. As the Office of the Special Rapporteur has pointed out, "the intersection of multiple identities may increase the risk of certain women facing obstacles or difficulties in the full exercise of the right to freedom of expression or may have a differentiated effect on certain

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<sup>100</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 13.

<sup>101</sup> National Women's Commission of the National Federation of Day Laborers. [Women day laborers and the context of the pandemic](#). August 26, 2020

<sup>102</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 12.

<sup>103</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 12.

<sup>104</sup> GAMAG. [Status of women in the media and ICTs](#). September 2019. P. 2

<sup>105</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 34.

<sup>106</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 34.

<sup>107</sup> Pedraza, Virginia. Women in the media workplace. In [Argentina: media and gender: have we complied with the Beijing Platform for Action?](#) Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. P. 62.

<sup>108</sup> Pedraza, Virginia. Women in the media workplace. In [Argentina: media and gender: have we complied with the Beijing Platform for Action?](#) Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. P. 62.

<sup>109</sup> University of Chile. [Journalists reflected on the role of the media in perpetuating violence against women](#). 29 November 2018.

<sup>110</sup> Semana. [Female power: the women who run the most important regional newspapers in the country](#). February 14, 2020.

groups of women. Often, these factors also translate into particular forms of discrimination against those who make up these groups."<sup>111</sup>

59. The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression notes that gender-based discrimination in the media can be aggravated by the intersection of other factors such as age, ethno-racial origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, national origin, disability, or any other membership or identity of a historically discriminated population group.

60. Due to the prevalence of these patterns of intersectional discrimination, in several countries of the region, Afro-descendant women journalists tend to be disproportionately underrepresented in the traditional media and in decision-making positions in these media. In this regard, the Inter-American Commission has previously referred to the obstacles faced by Afro-descendant women in accessing jobs in satisfactory conditions due to the persistence of patterns of racial discrimination and stereotypes based on ethno-racial origin.

61. In this sense, in Colombia, discrimination against women journalists "is accentuated for Afro-Colombian and indigenous women due to the persistence of structural barriers to access to the media and negative stereotypes and prejudices towards them".<sup>112</sup>

62. Similarly, in Brazil, Afro-descendant journalists are underrepresented among those working in the media. When they gain access to media companies, they are assigned to low-level positions<sup>113</sup> and receive lower salaries than their white colleagues.<sup>114</sup> In this context, in 2020, GloboNews decided to hold "an edition of the #EnPauta program with only black and black journalists to respond to an increasingly latent social demand for the elimination of racism and for the expansion of spaces for black representation in the media."<sup>115</sup> The program had only one Afro-descendant male journalist. The remaining journalists were Afro-Brazilian women and two of them were appointed as permanent commentators in the program from that moment on.<sup>116</sup> According to information released by the *Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça*, the program's broadcast "was a response to Internet criticism in relation to what had happened at the station the day before: seven white journalists doing analysis on issues linked to the racial question, in the midst of the protests against racism that began in the United States after the death of George Floyd and took the world by storm."<sup>117</sup>

63. These patterns are replicated in Ecuador. Only 8% of those who work in the media identify themselves as "Afro-descendant" and 3.5% as "indigenous".<sup>118</sup> Those who manage to gain access to the media face situations of intersectional discrimination, for example in relation to the assignment of tasks. In this regard, they report that "there is a prejudice that 'black people should cover culture or sports'".<sup>119</sup>

64. In relation to indigenous people in the rest of the countries of the region, preliminary findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project developed in 2020 point out that "in Latin America, indigenous people constitute only 1% of the subjects and sources

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<sup>111</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 12.

<sup>112</sup> Fundación Sentiido and Colombian Network of Journalists with Gender Vision. [Implementation of Chapter I of the Beijing Platform: women, media and communication in Colombia 2020](#). 2020.

<sup>113</sup> Article 19. [Gender & Media. Aplicação dos indicadores de equidade de gênero para mídia da Unesco](#). Received by email on February 28, 2018. P. 12 and 14.

<sup>114</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective](#). November 7, 2020.

<sup>115</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective](#). November 7, 2020.

<sup>116</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective](#). November 7, 2020.

<sup>117</sup> Rede Brasileira de Jornalistas e Comunicadoras com Visão de Gênero e Raça. [Overview of the performance of women in Brazilian journalism and paths for the construction of a communication in gender perspective](#). November 7, 2020.

<sup>118</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 25, according to data from the Council for Regulation and Development of Information and Communication.

<sup>119</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 25.

(people seen, heard or talked about) in television news despite being 8% of the region's population." <sup>120</sup> Also, "of this meager proportion, only 3 out of ten are women." <sup>121</sup>

65. In relation to LGBTI persons, the IACHR has recognized that societies in the region "are dominated by entrenched ideas and cultural patterns of heteronormativity, cisnormativity, sexual hierarchy, sex and gender binaries, and misogyny."<sup>122</sup> In this framework, in the region and other parts of the world, "LGBTI people are subjected to invasive questions about their private lives at work, must conform to demands of binary concepts of femininity or masculinity to gain acceptance in this sphere and in many cases hide, deny or keep secret their sexual orientation and gender identity either to access employment, not to lose it or to avoid situations of harassment, ridicule or retaliation."<sup>123</sup>

66. In this context, in Argentina, the demand for the implementation of a labor quota for transgender people has begun to be part of the labor negotiations within the media.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, in Ecuador, journalists report that many media outlets include questions about a person's sexual orientation during the hiring process. <sup>125</sup>

67. However, there are still shortcomings in the production and dissemination of accurate and updated information on patterns of intersectional discrimination against women based on their sexual orientation and gender identity within the media. There are also gaps in the generation of statistics on discriminatory practices affecting other groups of women.

### III. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WITHIN THE MASS MEDIA

68. As the Office of the Special Rapporteur pointed out in its report "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression", violence against women journalists and media workers "manifests itself in different forms, from murder, sexual violence, including sexual harassment, to intimidation, abuse of power and gender-based threats"<sup>126</sup>. This form of violence - which also represents a form of gender-based discrimination and a violation of women's human rights - is not only exercised by state officials and information sources in the public sphere but, on numerous occasions, is perpetrated by colleagues and hierarchical superiors in the workplace.<sup>127</sup> In particular, a series of investigations and initiatives developed in recent years show that women journalists and media workers in the region are exposed to acts of sexual violence and/or sexual<sup>128</sup> harassment in the editorial offices and/or within the media.

<sup>120</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project, [What progress for gender equality in the news 25 years after Beijing?](#) March 3, 2021. Pg. 2

<sup>121</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project, [What progress for gender equality in the news 25 years after Beijing?](#) March 3, 2021. Pg. 2

<sup>122</sup> IACHR. [Business and Human Rights Report: Inter-American Standards](#). November 1, 2019. OEA/Ser.L/V/II IACHR/REDESCA/INF.1/19. Para. 380.

<sup>123</sup> IACHR. [Business and Human Rights Report: Inter-American Standards](#). November 1, 2019. OEA/Ser.L/V/II IACHR/REDESCA/INF.1/19. Para. 381, citing ILO. Discrimination at work on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity: Results of the ILO PRIDE project (Fact sheet).

<sup>124</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report](#). 2019. P. 2.

<sup>125</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 26.

<sup>126</sup> IACHR. [Annual Report 2013. Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression](#). Chapter III (Violence against journalists and media workers: inter-American standards and national practices on prevention, protection and prosecution). OEA/Ser.L/V/II.149. Doc. 50. 31 December 2013. Para. 251.

<sup>127</sup> IACHR. [Annual Report 2013. Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression](#). Chapter III (Violence against journalists and media workers: inter-American standards and national practices on prevention, protection and prosecution). OEA/Ser.L/V/II.149. Doc. 50. 31 December 2013. Para. 251. RELE cites different sources, including: CIMAC. Informe diagnóstico. [Violence against women journalists. Mexico 2010-2011](#). September 7, 2012. P. 11; Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). June 7, 2011. [The Silenced Crime: Sexual Violence and Journalists](#).

<sup>128</sup> The term sexual harassment includes sexual harassment that "takes place when a worker is required to perform a sexual service, the acceptance or rejection of which will determine whether the person demanding the service will make a favorable decision or, on the contrary, will be detrimental to the employment situation of the person being harassed" and "all

69. In Argentina, out of a total of 405 women journalists who participated in a research conducted in 2019, 24% indicated that there had been cases of sexual abuse in their current workplace.<sup>129</sup> Twenty-eight percent indicated that sexual harassment is one of the main challenges faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession.<sup>130</sup>

70. In Brazil, 7 out of 10 journalists have heard comments or jokes of a sexual nature about women in the workplace and 9 out of 10 have heard jokes or comments with sexist content.<sup>131</sup> Seventy-seven percent of female journalists have received comments about their body or physical appearance from male colleagues (in 56% of cases) or from hierarchical superiors (in 36% of situations).<sup>132</sup>

71. Brazilian female journalists also report situations of sexual harassment by their bosses, coworkers or sources. In fact, 70% state that they are aware of situations of sexual harassment against colleagues in the workplace by male colleagues or hierarchical superiors.<sup>133</sup> In some cases, these situations are part of the usual way of interacting within the newsrooms, which contributes to their naturalization, creates a climate of tolerance and complicity, and prevents women from finding a safe environment to report them.<sup>134</sup>

72. In addition, out of a pool of more than 400 women journalists across the country who participated in a 2017 survey, 17% reported having been victims of physical violence. Eighteen percent of them were assaulted by a hierarchical superior and 15% by a co-worker.<sup>135</sup>

73. In Chile, women journalists report that sexual harassment "is a normalized and invisible practice"<sup>136</sup> exercised in various settings, including newsrooms, by their own colleagues, editors and bosses, among other actors. Gender-based violence is also manifested through "annulment, *mansplaning*, men who disqualify or disapprove of their colleagues' comments or work."<sup>137</sup>

74. In Colombia, 60% of women journalists report having been victims of gender-based violence in the workplace.<sup>138</sup> Seventy-nine percent of them reported that the aggressor had been a person with a higher position than theirs and 56% indicated that the violence had been perpetrated by co-workers.<sup>139</sup> At the same time, 78% of Colombian women journalists know of situations of gender violence against a colleague.<sup>140</sup> Taken together, these figures show that, in Colombia, "gender violence is a widely recognized phenomenon in newsrooms, even if they have not personally been victims."<sup>141</sup>

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conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating work environment". Ending [violence and harassment against women and men in the world](#) of work. First edition 2017. P. 11.

<sup>129</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. Pág. 31.

<sup>130</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. Pág. 24.

<sup>131</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 14.

<sup>132</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 18.

<sup>133</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 17.

<sup>134</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 16.

<sup>135</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 18.

<sup>136</sup> LATFEM. [Chile: journalists organized against sexual harassment in media](#). September 25, 2019.

<sup>137</sup> LATFEM. [Chile: journalists organized against sexual harassment in media](#). September 25, 2019.

<sup>138</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 9.

<sup>139</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 9.

<sup>140</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 9.

<sup>141</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 10.

75. Likewise, 23% of Colombian women journalists report having been victims of sexual violence in their workplaces.<sup>142</sup> In line with the figures presented above, the most frequent perpetrators are people in a higher position than the victim and co-workers.<sup>143</sup>

76. In this context, in 2017, the Colombian Network of Journalists with Gender Vision of Colombia launched the campaign *#PeriodistasSinAcoso*. Among other objectives, the campaign sought to "carry out pedagogical work with women and men journalists so that they recognize early on behaviors of harassment in the journalistic exercise and prevent situations of gender-based violence. In addition, [it aspired to] enable people who recognize themselves as victims to denounce."<sup>144</sup>

77. In Ecuador, 25% of women journalists report having experienced situations of harassment at work by a male journalist who held a higher position.<sup>145</sup> Harassment situations are more frequent among women who have less professional experience or are less recognized.<sup>146</sup>

78. In the United States, during 2017, the media publicized a set of complaints about acts of sexual harassment and violence allegedly committed by well-known journalists and media managers, inside and outside the workplace.<sup>147</sup> In that country, the *#MeToo* movement contributed to generate the conditions for journalists and media workers, and other groups of women from different countries, to make visible the situations of gender-based violence they experience in different areas of their professional, work or academic<sup>148</sup> life.

79. In this sense, in 2019, Mexican female journalists used social networks to make known their testimonies about the experiences of sexual harassment they had experienced within the media through the hashtag *#MetooPeriodistasMexicanos*. A survey on the scope and use of the hashtag reveals that the acts denounced are perpetrated by "reporters who take advantage of the spaces of coexistence with their female colleagues, inside or outside the newsrooms, to grope them, try to kiss them or convince them to have sexual relations. In other cases, the men take advantage of the spaces of trust to try to corner their colleagues to go out together, and in still other cases it is a matter of reporters who have been in the media for a longer period of time offering to help the younger women in exchange for sexual relations or erotic games. Testimonies have also denounced practices of workplace violence, disregard for the work of female reporters and practices that make female journalists uncomfortable, such as their colleagues watching pornography in the workplace, greeting them by trying to kiss them on the lips or sending them text messages with sexual content, among others."<sup>149</sup>

80. In line with these testimonies, a study conducted in 2019 on a sample of 392 women journalists revealed that 72% of them had experienced or were experiencing a situation of sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>150</sup> These aggressions are exercised by "their colleagues, both immediate bosses and co-workers of the medium where they work, as well

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<sup>142</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 13.

<sup>143</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 14.

<sup>144</sup> Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Perspective. [Journalists without harassment](#). February 9, 2018.

<sup>145</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 36.

<sup>146</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 36.

<sup>147</sup> The New York Times. April 19, 2017. [Bill O'Reilly Is Forced Out at Fox News](#); El País. April 20, 2017. [Fox fires star anchor Bill O'Reilly after multiple sexual harassment allegations](#); CBS. Undated. [CBS News suspends Charlie Rose over sexual misconduct allegations \(VIDEO\)](#); CNN. November 21, 2017. [CBS fires reporter Charlie Rose after 8 sexual harassment allegations](#).

<sup>148</sup> UN Women. [Timeline: gender equality. 2017 year](#) in review; New York Times. 16 April 2018. [New York Times and New Yorker Share Pulitzer for Public Service](#).

<sup>149</sup> CIMAC. [Mexican women journalists break silence in the face of sexual harassment in the media](#). March 25, 2019.

<sup>150</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 5.

as from other media."<sup>151</sup> This generates that, for many women, "[the] newsroom [is] the first area from which risks, vulnerability and the feeling of abandonment arise."<sup>152</sup>

81. Similarly, in Nicaragua women journalists point out: "sexual harassment by bosses, colleagues and sources makes our work more difficult; when you reject them, they take offense and try to sabotage you."<sup>153</sup> In Honduras, journalists have reported similar situations of sexual harassment in the workplace and passivity and/or aggressive and disqualifying responses to complaints.<sup>154</sup>

82. As a consequence of the high prevalence of gender-based violence within the media - and, in particular, of acts that constitute violence and/or sexual harassment - many women journalists decide to leave their place of work or are forced to make decisions that result in an involuntary transformation of their professional trajectory.

83. In Colombia, 3 out of 10 women journalists who took part in a thematic study conducted in 2020 revealed that "they have had to leave their workplaces due to situations of gender-based violence."<sup>155</sup> In Mexico, out of a total of 284 journalists whose experiences were surveyed in 2019, 61% indicated that violence had an impact on their work performance. In describing this impact they noted: "I had to quit my job because I felt very uncomfortable", 'It has made me rethink continuing to work in that place, not being able to feel calm', 'You stop acting freely, you seek not to draw attention 'inappropriately', 'It has led me to think about whether I am really good at my job', 'I have inevitably thought that if I don't dress or look or be in a different way, more like those bosses or colleagues have 'suggested', I will not continue advancing in my career'. "<sup>156</sup>

84. Thus, gender-based violence in the workplace not only impacts the right of women journalists and media workers to carry out their work free from all forms of violence and discrimination. As they themselves point out, "discrimination, harassment and other manifestations of gender-based violence against women in the media are also attacks on freedom of expression, particularly serious for those who incorporate a gender and rights-based approach in their work."<sup>157</sup>

#### IV. THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN ERADICATING AND ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND/OR DISCRIMINATION IN THE NEWSROOM: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

85. As the Office of the Special Rapporteur has pointed out, "although the obligations to prevent, protect and investigate are an international responsibility of the States, it is undeniable that there are other actors of utmost relevance in the protection of journalists at risk, especially in those areas where the risk is greater due to the characteristics of the context, as is the case of the silenced areas"<sup>158</sup>. In this sense, the media play a decisive role in guaranteeing the protection of journalists and other workers.<sup>159</sup> In particular, the report

<sup>151</sup> Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia. [Report Freedom of Expression in Mexico 2020](#). July 2020. P. 19.

<sup>152</sup> Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia. [Report Freedom of Expression in Mexico 2020](#). July 2020. P. 24.

<sup>153</sup> Cerosententa. [8M: This is what it's like to be a journalist and a woman in Latin America](#). September 6, 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Plano Informativo. March 8, 2018. [Journalists face gender violence and labor inequality](#).

<sup>155</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 28.

<sup>156</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 16.

<sup>157</sup> LATFEM. [Chile: journalists organized against sexual harassment in media](#). September 25, 2019.

<sup>158</sup> IACHR. [Annual Report 2016. Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression](#). Chapter IV ("Zonas Silenciadas: Regiones de alta peligrosidad para ejercer la libertad de expresión"). OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc. 22/17. March 15, 2017. P. 319.

<sup>159</sup> IACHR. [Annual Report 2016. Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression](#). Chapter IV ("Zonas Silenciadas: Regiones de alta peligrosidad para ejercer la libertad de expresión"). OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc. 22/17. March 15, 2017. P. 319. See also UN. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). International Programme for the Development of Communication. [United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#). 2012. Points 5.16, 5.17, 5.22. UN. General Assembly. [The safety of journalists and the question of impunity](#). Resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1. 13 November 2017. UN. [United Nations Plan of Action on the safety of journalists and the question of impunity](#). 2012.



"Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression" highlights that "the media should adopt measures to guarantee the safety of women journalists from gender-based risks."<sup>160</sup>

86. In this context, in the aforementioned report, this Office expressed its concern over the failure of many media companies to adopt internal protocols or rules that adequately guarantee the rights of women journalists and media workers who experience situations of gender-based violence in the workplace.<sup>161</sup> In this regard, the Office of the Special Rapporteur described that "in the Americas, internal 'mediation' mechanisms continue to prevail instead of effective remedies that allow for the protection of the victim and the establishment of responsibilities for the perpetrator. Sexual harassment from a source is generally trivialized. This lack of victim protection generates impunity, sends a negative message to women journalists that can incite further violence against them, and induces silence."<sup>162</sup>

87. In order to contribute to eradicating these practices, the Special Rapporteurship considered that the media should "[establish] internal policies with specific provisions on gender-based violence and discrimination, with emphasis on workplace and sexual harassment."<sup>163</sup> It also noted that "there should be internal procedures and independent complaint and accountability mechanisms that guarantee the rights of women journalists and all parties involved."<sup>164</sup>

88. The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression recognizes and positively values the leadership of the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) in addressing these challenges within the media. In particular, it highlights the resolution on "violence against women journalists" adopted at the mid-year meeting held virtually in April 2021. There, the IAPA indicates that: i) it condemns cases of violence against women journalists: ii) requests journalistic companies to eliminate all types of differentiation by gender in terms of benefits and rights, encouraging to improve protocols against sexual harassment at work ensuring an environment free of harassment, so as to ensure the safety of women journalists also through self-protection guides and specialized training, and iii) urge the States, the journalistic guild and the media of the continent to take action under the dimension of the current debate that is opening a new agenda for the respect of women's rights in all fields.

89. In line with these recommendations, at least thirteen media groups in Latin America and the Caribbean and twenty-one media outlets in North America have <sup>165</sup>already signed on to UN Women's "Step It Up for Gender Equality Media Compact". The Pact encourages the media to advance "[gender-sensitive] decision-making that enables equality in the newsroom by ensuring that women journalists have the same opportunities as their male colleagues and can cover diverse topics, from politics to business, science, sports and technology, while encouraging journalists to also cover diverse topics, including stories on women's rights and gender equality" and "[the] provision of guidance and mentoring to women journalists to support their career advancement," <sup>166</sup>among other measures.

90. Despite these advances, the information reviewed in the preceding sections suggests that many media companies have not yet adopted and/or implemented effective actions to address the gender-based violence and discrimination that women journalists

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<sup>160</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 135.

<sup>161</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 136.

<sup>162</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 136.

<sup>163</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 (c).

<sup>164</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 137, citing UN Women and UN Global Compact Office. [Women's Empowerment Principles](#). 2011.

<sup>165</sup> UN Women. [Media partners of the UN Women Media Compact](#). No date.

<sup>166</sup> UN Women. [UN Women Media Compact](#). Undated.

and media workers face in the newsrooms. Recent research on the subject and the testimonies of women journalists and media workers themselves confirm this trend.

91. In Argentina, it has been pointed out that "[regardless] of the clear situation of inequality between men and women in the media, companies do not seem to notice the need to take measures to prevent and eradicate these discriminatory and violent logics."<sup>167</sup> In particular, "most companies do not have a Gender Office or Area; nor a specific sector for the resolution of problems of gender violence and/or labor and sexual harassment and abuse. Only large companies (listed on the stock exchange and under pressure from shareholders) and media belonging to civil society organizations have areas for addressing gender issues and concern for this labor dimension."<sup>168</sup>

92. A study conducted in 2018 on a sample of more than 400 women journalists confirms this trend. Only 10% of the participants reported that in their workplace there is an area oriented to address situations of sexual harassment or gender discrimination. In most cases it is the Human Resources area of the company, with no specific gender area.<sup>169</sup>

93. The results of this study were outlined in the "Protocol for the Prevention of Gender Violence"<sup>170</sup> of the Tripartite Commission of Communication of the province of Córdoba, which is made up of the Ministry of Labor, employers and the press union of that province. The protocol, adopted in 2018, was developed in order to "establish common procedures for the prevention, assistance and protection for women in the media throughout the province of Córdoba." <sup>171</sup>

94. The document provides that women in a situation of gender-based violence "shall have the right to request a leave of absence due to gender-based violence. "They will <sup>172</sup>also "have the alternative of being able to go to an office separate from their place of work in order to preserve their identity and privacy. There they will receive the necessary containment and primary care."<sup>173</sup>

95. Regarding the approach to reports of violence, the protocol establishes that "the companies will have the obligation to open internal administrative inquiries with the intervention of the [Press and Communication Trade Union Circle of Cordoba], if so requested by the victim" <sup>174</sup>and to apply direct sanctions to the aggressors. As regards the nature of the sanctions, the following are mentioned: compensation to the victim, the imposition of suspensions and/or the removal of the aggressor from his position.

96. The Protocol also establishes that the press union, together with the companies, shall elect a gender delegate in each of the media outlets. The gender delegate will be in charge of "observing that the protocol is complied with, collaborating with the Company in the corresponding investigations and [being] the first contact that anyone who considers herself harmed by some of the types of violence will have."<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Virginia Pedraza, Las mujeres en el ámbito laboral de los medios de comunicación, in [Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ;hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?](#), compiled by Sandra Chaheer, Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones, 2018, P. 68.

<sup>168</sup> World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Comunicación, FUNDEPS, Comunicación para la Igualdad. [Argentina National Report](#). 2019. P. 1.

<sup>169</sup> Argentine Journalism Forum. [Women journalists in Argentina. Labor situation and professional role of women communicators in the country](#). November 2018. Pág. 31.

<sup>170</sup> Other protocols in force in Argentina are: the "[Protocol of Action in Cases of Labor Violence for Women Media Workers](#)", adopted by the Tucumán Press Association in 2019; the [Protocol of Action in Cases of Gender Violence against Women and Dissidents](#) of the Santa Fe Press Association.

<sup>171</sup> Press and Communication Trade Union Circle of Córdoba. [Prevention protocol for journalistic companies](#). September 13, 2019.

<sup>172</sup> Press and Communication Trade Union Circle of Córdoba. [Prevention protocol for journalistic companies](#). September 13, 2019. A similar measure was adopted in 2018 by Diario La Mañana of the province of Formosa. ADEPA. [La Mañana de Formosa implements policies against gender violence](#). August 14, 2018.

<sup>173</sup> Press and Communication Trade Union Circle of Córdoba. [Prevention protocol for journalistic companies](#). September 13, 2019.

<sup>174</sup> Press and Communication Trade Union Circle of Córdoba. [Prevention protocol for journalistic companies](#). September 13, 2019.

<sup>175</sup> Press and Communication Trade Union Circle of Córdoba. [Prevention protocol for journalistic companies](#). September 13, 2019.

97. Regarding the progress recorded and challenges pending in other countries, in Brazil, 55% of the 477 journalists who participated in a study conducted in 2017 reported that the media where they worked had some policy on gender issues. These policies or actions included awareness campaigns on sexual harassment, equal employment opportunities for men and women, breastfeeding room, day care centers and extended maternity leave, among others.<sup>176</sup>

98. In relation to addressing situations of gender-based violence, 50% indicated that their company had not adopted adequate measures to protect the safety of female journalists and only 30% reported that the company where they worked had implemented mechanisms for reporting situations of gender-based violence or discrimination. Among the latter, only a minority of them defined these channels as "adequate and effective."<sup>177</sup>

99. In this context, when addressed, harassment situations are resolved through "informal channels and personal relationships."<sup>178</sup> However, as a rule, these forms of violence are minimized and covered up and women are required to "review their own behavior"<sup>179</sup> or learn to cope with these situations. This translates into very low levels (15%) of formal reporting of harassment in the workplace.<sup>180</sup>

100. In Chile, the women journalists also point out that "there is still a lot of resistance within the newsrooms regarding the need for training on gender issues".<sup>181</sup> In particular, they denounce that "misinformation persists about the existence or not of equality policies within the media and journalistic companies, as well as protocols for reporting discrimination, harassment, sexual abuse and gender violence against women."<sup>182</sup> In this context, Chilean women journalists point out: "sometimes harassment is confronted, other times it is evaded and there are times when uncomfortable smiles are sustained."<sup>183</sup>

101. In Colombia, according to a research conducted in 2020, "only 23.8% of the journalists surveyed believe that their work space has spaces to receive support in situations of gender violence."<sup>184</sup> 29% believe that the media has spaces for denouncing. In addition, only 4 out of 10 journalists believe that "the medium in which they work encourages the reporting of sexual harassment or abuse."<sup>185</sup> In this framework, the generalized conclusion reached by Colombian journalists is that "the media do not have, for the most part, adequate spaces for denunciation and support."<sup>186</sup>

102. In Ecuador, women journalists report that gender-based violence is normalized by the media as part of the job. In particular, in many media companies, when faced with a report of situations of gender-based violence exercised by a boss, a colleague or a source, "instead of supporting the victim and taking measures to curb these situations, at most calls for attention are made, the woman is required to continue with her work alongside her aggressor, and she is even asked to exploit the situation in her favor and thus obtain some information that is required."<sup>187</sup> As a result, many women journalists feel that they could be harmed or put their careers at risk if they report harassment or violence.

<sup>176</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 20.

<sup>177</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. Pp. 18 and 20.

<sup>178</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 19.

<sup>179</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 19.

<sup>180</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 20.

<sup>181</sup> Women in the media. [This 8M feminist journalists we join the strike](#). March 8, 2019.

<sup>182</sup> González Díaz, Nataly. [#DíaInternacional Periodista: Periodismo Feminista Para Erradicar las Desigualdades de Género \(International Journalist Day: Feminist Journalism to Eradicate Gender Inequalities\)](#). September 8, 2020.

<sup>183</sup> LATFEM. [Chile: journalists organized against sexual harassment in media](#). September 25, 2019.

<sup>184</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 25.

<sup>185</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 25.

<sup>186</sup> No Es Hora De Callar" Campaign and Democracy Observatory of the Universidad de los Andes. [Violence against women journalists in Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. P. 26.

<sup>187</sup> GAMAG. [Status of women in the media and ICTs](#). September 2019. P. 2.

103. In Mexico, 76% of the 392 women journalists who participated in a survey conducted in 2019 indicated that "in their companies there is no type of campaign, course or action to raise awareness among staff about harassment and sexual harassment"<sup>188</sup> and 56% reported that "in their media there are no specialized mechanisms or protocols to file complaints in cases of harassment, bullying or sexual assault."<sup>189</sup> This situation discourages reporting, to the point that "[only] 18% of women who have experienced a situation of harassment, bullying or sexual aggression in their media have made a complaint within their companies."<sup>190</sup>

104. When they manage to overcome these institutional barriers and report the acts of violence, women journalists and media workers find that their complaints are not effectively addressed. On the contrary, according to the aforementioned study, "of the total number of women who said they had filed a complaint for this type of situation, 64% indicated that the company did nothing or that the measures it took were insufficient or did not work."<sup>191</sup>

105. On the other hand, the IACHR has highlighted the role that the media can play in the dissemination of campaigns and, in general, of communication strategies aimed at transforming social perceptions and gender stereotypes,<sup>192</sup> thus helping to combat discrimination against women.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEEPENING EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND/OR DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE MEDIA

106. The information reviewed in this report reveals that, although progress has been made, a significant number of women continue to face barriers based on gender bias in gaining access to the media. When they do, they find that many newsrooms are hostile spaces where they cannot practice journalism on equal terms with their male counterparts, due to widespread patterns of vertical and horizontal segregation, wage gaps, job insecurity, discrimination against women in care-giving roles and other forms of intersectional discrimination.

107. In many newsrooms there is also a high prevalence of violence and/or sexual harassment, among other forms of gender-based violence. Far from being addressed with a gender perspective, these practices are often naturalized, which leads to an organizational culture that discourages reporting and encourages the repetition of these acts.

108. The fact that many media outlets have not yet made substantial progress in the development of policies and/or strategies to address these patterns of violence and discrimination contributes to their perpetuation and/or prevents them from being properly addressed. Within this framework, the following guidelines -which compile many of the recommendations put forward by women journalists and media workers themselves- are intended to contribute to deepening the progress achieved and to effectively address the challenges that still persist to ensure that women journalists and media workers can work in newsrooms free from all forms of violence and discrimination.

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<sup>188</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 6.

<sup>189</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 6.

<sup>190</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 6.

<sup>191</sup> Colectiva Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas. [AcosoDATA. Survey on harassment, bullying and sexual violence against women working in journalistic media in Mexico](#). March 2019. P. 6.

<sup>192</sup> IACHR. Violence and discrimination against women, girls and adolescents. [Standards and Recommendations, Annex 1](#). OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 233 14 November 2019, para. 55.

***a) Recommendations in relation to the adoption of internal policies to promote gender equity and address gender-based violence and discrimination***

109. As noted above, in its report "Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression," the Office of the Special Rapporteur encouraged the media to "[establish] internal policies with specific provisions on gender-based violence and discrimination, with emphasis on workplace and sexual harassment."<sup>193</sup> These policies should be designed with the active participation of the women working in each of the companies.<sup>194</sup>

110. *Transversality of the commitment to gender equality:* several recent researches on the subject highlight that the policies implemented by the media should be developed in such a way as to convey the message that gender equality is a key strategic objective and transversal to the entire organization.<sup>195</sup> To this end, its adoption should be accompanied by measures that guarantee equal representation of men and women in the company's management bodies and an explicit positioning of those who occupy these roles in relation to their commitment to the issue.<sup>196</sup>

111. *Minimum content of internal policies on gender equality:* it has been pointed out that the strategies and/or institutional policies adopted by the media to promote gender equality must contemplate specific goals, a precise description of the actions through which they seek to achieve them and the time frame in which they aim to do so.<sup>197</sup> In particular, it has been recommended that the policy should define the time frame within which the company seeks to eliminate gender pay gaps, achieve gender parity in the editorial staff, eliminate the underrepresentation of women in the coverage of certain topics, achieve equal representation in hierarchical positions and ensure equal hiring conditions for men and women.<sup>198</sup>

112. It is also essential that the content of the policies adopted by companies on gender equality have an intersectional perspective. In particular, these policies should address the patterns of discrimination that LGBTI people, Afro-descendant women and indigenous women, women with disabilities, among other groups, face within the media.<sup>199</sup>

113. *Strategies to promote the effective implementation of gender equality policies:* it has been pointed out that companies should designate a person directly responsible for the implementation of these policies and that this designation should be made by someone in a hierarchical role within the organization. In addition, there should be participatory mechanisms that allow for continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress and pending challenges in meeting the goals set.<sup>200</sup>

114. In this regard, women journalists and media workers have pointed out that "newsrooms should organize groups to monitor gender diversity in the newsroom; this

<sup>193</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 (c).

<sup>194</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 137.

<sup>195</sup> Padovani, Claudia. Media gender equality regimes. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. Pg. 13.

<sup>196</sup> Kassova, Luba. [The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#). International Women's Media Foundation. November 2020. P. 81.

<sup>197</sup> Kassova, Luba. [The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#). International Women's Media Foundation. November 2020. P. 29.

<sup>198</sup> Kassova, Luba. [The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#). International Women's Media Foundation. November 2020. Pg. 80.

<sup>199</sup> In this sense, the *Principles of Conduct for Business to Combat Discrimination against LGBTI people*, promoted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights "highlight the permanent responsibility of companies to respect the human rights of these people, the responsibility to eliminate discrimination, to provide support to their LGBTI personnel in the workplace, to pay attention to the impacts and affectations that their business relationships or their products or services generate on LGBTI people, as well as to contribute to the elimination of such abuses from their role within the company, provide support to their LGBTI personnel in the workplace, pay attention to the impacts and affectations that their business relationships or their products or services generate on LGBTI people, as well as contribute to eliminating such abuses from their role within the community by acting publicly in support of these people." IACHR. [Report Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards](#). November 1, 2019. OEA/Ser.L/V/II IACHR/REDESCA/INF.1/19. Para. 385.

<sup>200</sup> Kassova, Luba. [The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#). International Women's Media Foundation. November 2020. P. 29.

group should have a direct channel of communication with the management of the media and the mission of preparing periodic reports with analyses... of the composition of the newsroom, to guide possible new hires".<sup>201</sup> This is so because they believe "it is important that there are discussions in the media, that figures are gathered, that the figures are known and measures can be taken."<sup>202</sup>

115. The formation of these monitoring groups and/or spaces for participation should be carried out with an intersectional perspective, so that they adequately represent the diversity of women who are - or should be - present in the newsrooms. In particular, it has been emphasized that "the media should promote the formation of diverse teams without limiting the participation of women and people of sexual dissidence or racialized people."<sup>203</sup>

116. *Training actions:* as pointed out by the Office of the Special Rapporteur in the report "Women journalists and freedom of expression", while adopting gender equality policies within media companies, "systematic training actions should be developed for all personnel working in the media on the content and scope of its provisions, in order to promote full respect for this policy".<sup>204</sup> In this sense, journalists and media workers consider that training programs on diversity and gender equality should reach all personnel working in companies, including those persons holding managerial positions.<sup>205</sup> They also point out that these programs should be especially aimed at "[training] and fostering a comprehensive and self-critical view among editorial staff, reporting, middle management, bosses and owners of the media." <sup>206</sup>

### ***b) Recommendations for addressing patterns of gender-based discrimination***

117. In relation to the gender-based discriminatory practices described above, the Office of the Special Rapporteur has encouraged the media to "consider the voluntary adoption of professional codes of conduct aimed at guaranteeing full respect for women's rights and incorporating a gender perspective in journalistic activity."<sup>207</sup> These codes of conduct should place special emphasis on "promoting equality in newsrooms by ensuring that women journalists receive equal pay for equal work and have the same opportunities as their male colleagues and are able to cover diverse topics."<sup>208</sup>

118. *Strategies to address gender-based discrimination practices within the media:* recent research has emphasized that there must be a clear personnel hiring policy that includes objective selection criteria and mechanisms and/or measures aimed at preventing hiring

<sup>201</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 25. Own translation.

<sup>202</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 41.

<sup>203</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 41.

<sup>204</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 137.

<sup>205</sup> Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). [Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIO+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades](#). FUNDEPS and Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. P. 166. See also Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017.

<sup>206</sup> GAMAG. [Gender perspective in Salvadoran media](#). No date. P. 6.

In order to "catalyze critical reflection on the intersections between gender issues and journalistic ethics" by those responsible for creating media content, *Who Makes the News* developed a questionnaire ("Gender Ethics Compass") of 10 questions that seeks to be "used as a tool to initiate conversations about gender issues in the media, based on each journalist's professional perspective." *Who Makes the News*, [Gender Ethics Compass](#), undated.

<sup>207</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 (f).

<sup>208</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 (f).

decisions from being based on gender bias.<sup>209</sup> In the same sense, in April 2021, the Commission resolved to "[request] newspaper companies to eliminate any type of differentiation based on gender in terms of benefits and rights".<sup>210</sup>

119. Among the measures proposed by the organizations of women journalists and media workers are "quotas [for women] in leading positions, incorporation [of a greater number of women] in areas and topics restricted or forbidden to women workers, personnel selection strategies that promote women's capabilities".<sup>211</sup> In addition, the importance of establishing gender quotas in areas where women are underrepresented has been highlighted.<sup>212</sup>

120. In addition, in order to break the glass ceiling that affects women in the media, it has been suggested that when appointing a person to a hierarchical position, when faced with a female candidate and a male candidate with equal qualifications, priority should be given to the female candidate.<sup>213</sup> There should also be leadership training programs specifically oriented to women working in the media.<sup>214</sup>

121. In addition, committees involved in selecting personnel or determining promotions should have a diverse composition and their members should be trained in gender equality. This is to prevent their decisions from being based on gender stereotypes or reflecting and/or perpetuating patterns of discrimination against women.<sup>215</sup>

122. In relation to the above-mentioned patterns of gender-based discrimination against women journalists who perform caregiving roles, women journalists and media workers consider necessary the "[generation] of policies regarding the care of dependents."<sup>216</sup> These policies should involve the "creation of breastfeeding centers; the provision of childcare services in accordance with market values -resolved within the company or the provision of economic resources-; extended maternity/paternity leave; part-time work methodologies for mothers/fathers",<sup>217</sup> flexible working<sup>218</sup> hours and the promotion of teleworking.<sup>219</sup>

123. *Monitoring and evaluation of the measures adopted:* it has been pointed out that it is essential for the media to monitor the effectiveness of these measures, through the implementation of "regular gender audits to promote fair and transparent recruitment and promotion policies."<sup>220</sup> In cases where spaces where women are underrepresented are

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<sup>209</sup> Kassova, Luba. [The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#). International Women's Media Foundation. November 2020. P. 80.

<sup>210</sup> Inter American Press Association, Resolution on Violence against Women Journalists, adopted at the mid-year meeting of the Inter American Press Association, April 21-23, 2021.

<sup>211</sup> Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). [Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIO+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades](#). FUNDEPS and Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. Pág. 166.

<sup>212</sup> Kassova, Luba. [The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#). International Women's Media Foundation. November 2020. P. 29.

<sup>213</sup> Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. P. 18.

<sup>214</sup> Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). [Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIO+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades](#). FUNDEPS and Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. P. 166.

<sup>215</sup> Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. P. 18.

<sup>216</sup> Frydman, Sabrina. Global Alliance of Media and Gender. In [Argentina: media and gender: have we complied with the Beijing Platform for Action?](#) Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. Pág. 11.

<sup>217</sup> Frydman, Sabrina. Global Alliance of Media and Gender. In [Argentina: media and gender: have we complied with the Beijing Platform for Action?](#) Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. Pág. 11.

<sup>218</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 41.

<sup>219</sup> Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. [This is how we do journalism. Working conditions of women in the media in Ecuador](#). November 2020. P. 41.

<sup>220</sup> Frydman, Sabrina. Global Alliance of Media and Gender. In [Argentina: media and gender: have we complied with the Beijing Platform for Action?](#) Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. Pág. 11.

identified, corrective measures should be implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policies are based on objective and transparent criteria.<sup>221</sup>

124. Finally, it has also been recommended that the media develop "equity and diversity surveys directed at all personnel, in order to understand the culture of the workplace".<sup>222</sup> The implementation of this type of survey serves to determine whether, in the opinion of staff, there are situations of gender-based discrimination that require action to be taken to address.<sup>223</sup>

***c) Recommendations for addressing patterns of gender-based violence within the media***

125. In its report, the Office of the Special Rapporteur recommended that the media adopt "internal procedures and independent complaint and accountability mechanisms" for situations of gender-based violence and, in particular, for cases of violence and/or sexual harassment.<sup>224</sup> In line with this recommendation, women journalists and media workers consider that companies should adopt a policy of "zero tolerance for workplace and sexual harassment by colleagues, bosses and sources",<sup>225</sup> which should be designed through participatory and transparent processes.<sup>226</sup> Similarly, the Inter American Press Association has urged newspaper companies to "ensure an environment free of harassment".<sup>227</sup>

126. *Explicit commitment to preventing and addressing gender-based violence:* the adoption of this policy must be accompanied by an explicit positioning of those who exercise leadership and/or management roles in the company regarding their commitment to creating a work environment free of all forms of gender-based violence. In this regard, the ILO has emphasized that when people in leadership positions adequately and seriously address sexual harassment and give high priority to preventing its occurrence, they contribute to creating an organizational culture that rejects these practices and encourages women to report them.<sup>228</sup>

127. *Minimum contents of the internal policy for preventing and addressing gender-based violence:* policies implemented by companies should define what is meant by gender-based violence in the workplace and provide examples of the different forms that such violence can take. Adequate and effective sanctions should be foreseen for those who engage in these acts<sup>229</sup> and adequate prevention and assistance measures should be provided for those who experience them, including psychological assistance and counseling on the options available to them in terms of reporting and/or whistleblowing.<sup>230</sup>

128. The ILO has pointed out that internal procedures for reporting, investigating and sanctioning acts of gender-based violence, including acts of violence and/or sexual harassment, should be clearly defined and known by all personnel. In the same vein, women journalists and media workers emphasize that "[newsrooms] should create an internal communication channel for victims of abuse and harassment to file a formal complaint."<sup>231</sup>

<sup>221</sup> Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. Pg. 17.

<sup>222</sup> Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. P. 18.

<sup>223</sup> Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. P. 18.

<sup>224</sup> IACHR. [Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence against women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#). OAS/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 (c).

<sup>225</sup><sup>225</sup> Fundación Sentiido and Colombian Network of Journalists with Gender Vision. [Implementation of Chapter I of the Beijing Platform: women, media and communication in Colombia 2020](#). 2020.

<sup>226</sup> ILO. [Empowering Women at Work - Company Policies and Practices for Gender Equality](#). 2020. P. 34.

<sup>227</sup> Inter American Press Association, Resolution on Violence against Women Journalists, adopted at the mid-year meeting of the Inter American Press Association, April 21-23, 2021.

<sup>228</sup> ILO. [Empowering Women at Work - Company Policies and Practices for Gender Equality](#). 2020. P. 34.

<sup>229</sup> Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, [Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media-A holistic agenda](#). 2018. P. 18.

<sup>230</sup> ILO. [Empowering Women at Work - Company Policies and Practices for Gender Equality](#). 2020. P. 34.

<sup>231</sup> Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro](#). 2017. P. 25.



129. Mechanisms should be in place to ensure that complaints are dealt with impartially, with a gender<sup>232</sup> perspective and in a transparent manner. Similarly, strategies should be developed to ensure the privacy of the person filing the complaint and to protect him or her from retaliation.

130. *Space responsible for addressing complaints of gender-based violence and discrimination:* women working in the media believe that complaints should be addressed by gender offices and other areas specifically dedicated to preventing and addressing gender-based violence.<sup>233</sup> They also believe that the work of these offices should be governed by protocols and/or guidelines that provide predictability and transparency to their work.<sup>234</sup> In the same vein, the Inter-American Press Association has urged newspaper companies to "improve protocols against sexual harassment in the workplace."<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> "The IACHR has understood the gender perspective as a concept that makes visible the position of inequality and structural subordination of women and girls to men, due to their gender, and as a key tool to combat discrimination and violence against women, as well as against people with sexual and gender diversity." IACHR. [Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls and Adolescents: Good practices and challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 233. 14 November 2019. Para. 8.

<sup>233</sup> Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). [Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIO+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades](#). FUNDEPS and Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. Pág. 166.

<sup>234</sup> Uchile Newspaper. [Journalists demonstrate in rejection of sexual harassment suffered by reporter](#). September 23, 2019.

<sup>235</sup> Inter American Press Association, Resolution on Violence against Women Journalists, adopted at the mid-year meeting of the Inter American Press Association, April 21-23, 2021.