



WOMEN JOURNALISTS and newsrooms



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progress, challenges, and recommendations to prevent violence and to fight
against discrimination

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Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression

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Introduction

By **Julissa Mantilla** ✨

Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)

Since its creation, the SRFOE, in collaboration with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women, has paid special attention to the right of women to freedom of expression, promoting the development of inter-American standards on the matter. From its annual report in 1999, where it first analyzed the relationship between discrimination against women and its impact on the right to freedom of expression and access to information¹, to its thematic report on “Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression” (2018)², which precedes this report.

In this context, the case of Jineth Bedoya Lima, journalist and human rights defender, marked an important milestone in the development and consolidation of jurisprudence on freedom of expression for women journalists. In its merits report, the IACHR recognized that women journalists face dual attacks for exercising freedom of expression but also for their gender. In this sense, by challenging sexist stereotypes that disapprove of their participation in public life, they face gender-based discrimination, as well as differentiated forms of violence by state and non-state actors³. Likewise, in light of the Convention of Belém do Pará, the Commission highlighted the reinforced obligation of States to prevent, protect, and prosecute gender-based violence against women journalists, as well as the importance of integrating a gender perspective in compliance with these obligations to guarantee their protection and ensure that they can exercise their right to freedom of expression without undue restrictions⁴.

For its part, the Inter-American Court highlighted in its ruling on this case that a consequence of violence against women journalists is that the public loses the voices and points of view of women, which in turn has repercussions on the increase in gender gap in the journalistic profession and attacks pluralism as an essential element of freedom of expression and democracy⁵. Along the same lines, the SRFOE recently issued, in conjunction with various international organizations from various regions of the world, the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Gender Justice (2022)⁶, in which it is recognized that discrimination and gender-based violence not only prevent women from enjoying freedom of expression on equal terms, but also diminish pluralism and diversity in the media, both essential characteristics in a democratic society.

This report, in addition to making visible the underrepresentation of women in the region’s media, it addresses the patterns of gender-based discrimination that limit their access to the media and the possibility of professional development under equal conditions. The persistent machismo, sexism, gender stereotypes, and misogyny materialize in the wage gap and precariousness of women’s working conditions; in its displacement towards the coverage of issues that are considered of less relevance, and the difficulty in covering issues associated with gender equality; in their limited access to high decision-making and management positions in media companies and; in their self-exclusion from the journalistic field

¹IACHR. Annual Report 1999. **Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. Chapter C. (Women and freedom of expression)**. OEA/Ser.L/V/II.106. Doc. 3. April 13, 2000.

²IACHR/RELE. **Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression. Discrimination and gender-based violence faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession**. OEA/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18 October 31, 2018.

³IACHR. **Report No. 150/18, Case 12.954. Merits. Jineth Bedoya Lima and other. Colombia**. December 7, 2018, para. 78-80.

⁴IACHR. **Report No. 150/18, Case 12.954. Merits. Jineth Bedoya Lima and other. Colombia**. December 7, 2018, para. 83-84.

⁵I/A Court H.R., **Case of Bedoya Lima et al. v. Colombia**. Merits, Reparations and Costs. Judgment of August 26, 2021, Para. 113.

⁶**Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Gender Justice**. May 3, 2022. The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information.

as a result of the exclusive burden of care tasks and domestic work that falls them, in addition to the absence of policies within the newsrooms that allow reconciling family responsibilities with work.

Likewise, the report addresses patterns of intersectional discrimination that result in the disproportionate underrepresentation of Afro-descendant and indigenous women in the media; mistreatment and contempt for young women; the invisibility of older women; the use of stigmatizing language and the sexualization of the bodies of journalists and communicators with non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations, and the lack of concrete and updated information on patterns of discrimination against other groups historically discriminated against within the media.

Undoubtedly, gender-based violence constitutes another obstacle in the access, permanence, and possibilities of professional development of women journalists and workers in the media. The report reveals that violence against them is part of the daily interactions within newsrooms, characterized by their normalization and tolerance. Likewise, it finds that violence manifests itself in different ways, especially through sexual violence and workplace and sexual harassment, but also through the annulment, mansplaining, and disqualification of women's work, which occurs both in analog and

digital spaces; and it is exercised by State officials, by sources of information in the public space, and by colleagues and hierarchical superiors in the workplace.

On the other hand, the report highlights the key role of the media in addressing and eradicating discrimination and gender-based violence against women in newsrooms, as well as in catalyzing changes in social dynamics towards guaranteeing their rights. In this regard, the report highlights good practices that condemn violence and seek to advance towards gender equality in newsrooms. However, many media and communication companies still fail to establish effective mechanisms and resources to report cases of violence and/or gender-based discrimination in the workplace which guarantee the protection of the victim and the imposition of sanctions on the person responsible.

Likewise, the report includes a series of recommendations addressed to the media to address the situation of discrimination and violence that women face within the media, as well as to promote gender equality. Compliance with these recommendations becomes especially relevant in the current context of the Americas, marked by the increase of gender-based discrimination after the COVID-19 pandemic, and the alarming figures of violence against women in all spaces.

Finally, it should be noted that this document is the annotated version of the thematic report "Women Journalists and Newsrooms", recently published by the Office of the Special Rapporteur in October 2022. On that occasion, RELE has convened a group of women experts, who by their trajectory, experience and example constitute a relevant voice within the conversation to make their comments and encourage critical discussion of the report and its subsequent implementation. This annotated version of the report reaffirms that decisive progress towards the eradication of discrimination and violence against women requires the commitment and collaboration of all sectors of society. To this end, the media play a key role.



Discrimination against women journalists in the media

Comments to Chapter I.

By **Alma Espino**



Coordinator of the Development and Gender Area, Interdisciplinary Center for Development Studies (Ciedur).

The Report “Women Journalists and Newsrooms” presents clearly and in a well-founded manner, the progress and challenges for women journalists, women workers in the media, and media companies from a gender perspective, as well as some guidelines that can contribute to addressing the pending challenges.

The gender gaps in the labor markets reflected in different indicators (employment, unemployment, income, among others) are of a structural nature, and correlate to the system of gender relations in each society. Inequalities between men and women and intersectional are part of the functioning of labor markets, configured according to the characteristics of the prevailing gender relations in each society. In the segment of employment and the different types of occupation of journalists, the Report that is being commented allows us to confirm that the gender traits of said markets are reproduced.

In particular, the occupational segregation reported in the Report, that is, the disproportionate concentration of women in certain types of occupation and/or subject areas, is frequently based on stereotypes about the female labor force. These stereotypes –“negative” and “positive” about women and men¹– are built from the prevailing concepts and values in societies, and justify various forms of discrimination on both the demand and supply sides.

On the demand side, hiring decisions, such as professional promotion and assignment of

responsibilities and subject areas, reflect the existence of such stereotypes and the prevailing values, beliefs, and prejudices. In addition to conditioning this type of decision, the resulting job segregation contributes to explaining part of the gender wage gap, as shown by various empirical studies (Amarante and Espino, 2004²; Espino, 2013³) and is, in itself, a form of discrimination.

It is interesting to highlight, following (Kabeer 2006:73⁴), how the existence of norms and rules (written or not, explicit or implicit; codified in laws, ordered by politics, religious, maintained by conventions or rooted in the way of thinking family, community, and society) govern human behavior, rather than the result of individual preferences. This contributes to explain, at least in part, what is considered discrimination on the supply side in the labor market. That is, women’s choices are also conditioned by these values and social norms, not only out of conviction but also because certain options can make their career path easier, both in terms of relationships between colleagues, with the public, and in what has to do with the reconciliation between care and domestic work.

The low participation of women in political journalism or in the area of economy, for example, is compatible with or reflects features of daily life and the participation of women in national politics and in governments. Men are the ones who talk about politics, that is, about serious issues, about issues of power. The construction of the feminine based on the fact that “... hardness is a valuable advantage, associated with masculinity, and softness is

¹Stereotypes about the female labor force are related to their prevalence as responsible for domestic tasks and care in their homes and the prevailing conceptions and values that justify discrimination against the female labor force; these are “negative” stereotypes about their work commitment and productivity. There are also “positive” stereotypes, when it is pointed out that women are more “judicious”, “prolix”, “detailers”, sociable to deal with the public”; both contribute to job segregation.

²Amarante, V., and A. Espino (2004). La segregación ocupacional de género y las diferencias en las remuneraciones de los asalariados privados. Uruguay, 1990-2000. *Desarrollo Económico*, 44(173)

³Espino, A. (2013). “Brechas salariales en Uruguay: género, segregación y desajustes por calificación”. *Problemas del Desarrollo. Revista Latinoamericana de Economía*, 174 (44). July-September.

⁴Lugar preponderante del género en la erradicación de la pobreza y las metas de desarrollo del milenio / N. Kabeer. January 2006

associated with weakness, inferior and feminine”⁵ (Nelson 1995) is evidenced in the responses of the surveys recorded in the Report.

“In Argentina, men are in charge of covering topics related to politics, economics, energy and sports. On the contrary, women are assigned topic considered “soft” such as society, shows, and general information.”²⁹

“In Colombia, **only 2 out of 10 women journalists** cover all the issues on the media’s agenda or are in charge of sections such as politics and justice. As in other countries in the region, the majority of women journalists are pigeonholed in social, cultural, and publicity topics considered as ‘soft.’”³²

The preferences of women once they enter the labor market, conditioned or determined by the gender order, are also expressed in the choices of academic education and training prior to entering the labor market. In the case of journalism, how many and how many choose, for example, to specialize in sports journalism or in other thematic areas such as economic or political journalism. Taking into account from a theoretical point of view these aspects, related to women’s options, is relevant to think about global strategies to overcome the barriers that women face to overcome gender inequalities in this occupational segment. Strategies that must be thought for the different stages of life and for which different institutional actors need to be articulated.

According to the Report, the existence of hegemonic patterns of female beauty means that women have a greater presence in television media, because

this presence works in part as a “decoration” factor within the framework of those patterns. However, these jobs offer women the possibility of working for pay and pursuing a career that allows them certain margins of economic autonomy. The challenge is to remove the “success of beauty”, especially if it is anchored in a hegemonic pattern, in all the actors: the expectations and aspirations of women in the media, colleagues, the public, and the of company hierarchies.

Horizontal or vertical gender segregation, especially the so-called “glass ceiling” highlighted in the Report, is especially serious in this labor segment due to its direct relationship with democracy and citizenship. Indeed, this underrepresentation of women makes half the population invisible and conditions the expectations of women in general, that is, it contributes to determining the aspirations that young women may have in terms of jobs, subject areas, participation in making decisions. The images that are transmitted are essential to promote one or another form of women’s participation, and to change ideas about femininity. This can also extend to what happens with discrimination based on ethnicity or race, or against the LGBTI population.

It should be added that female underrepresentation in decision-making positions also makes it difficult to combat sexual and labor harassment and abuse, adding a certain vulnerability to women, to the extent that men take advantage of the positions of power they hold.

For their part, the difficulties that female journalists face in covering issues associated with gender equality and women’s rights may also be diminishing or better addressed if business policies contribute to a greater female presence in different occupations. The role of media companies is very important to contribute to solving the problems that women face in all aspects of journalism, through, for example, the elaboration of protocols between workers and the business. These, within the framework of social dialogue, can propose measures, such as quotas for women in leading roles, incorporation of a greater

⁵ Feminism and Economy. Julie A. Nelson. Published in the Journal of Economic Perspectives--Volume 9 Number 2--Spring 1995. Copyright 1995, American Economic Association; Distributed by the author in accordance with the policies of the Journal of Economic Perspectives.

number of women in areas and issues in which women are underrepresented, appointments to hierarchical positions based on more objective measurements on skills and abilities, leadership training programs specifically aimed at women, among other actions that the Report indicates.

Finally, it is a sector that has in its hands a very relevant part of the construction of discourse and values; the demonstration effect that it can produce in the case of women's rights if progress is made in gender equality can be determinant of cultural changes and values, regarding gender equality, as it has been to some extent historically. The presence of women contributes to democracy. More women

can make political, economic or police issues approached from a gender perspective.

It is obvious that the problem of labor discrimination in this segment of employment and in the labor markets also requires co-responsibility on the part of the States and public policies. The actions of the State, which can undoubtedly be of a regulatory nature and in some cases of control can be expressed through communication campaigns that promote the participation of young women in areas of interest that until now have been monopolized by men, contribute to valuing women and their progress in educational and professional terms.

1. As the Office of the Special Rapporteur pointed out in its report “Women journalists and freedom of expression,” although the number of women who work as journalists has increased in recent years,⁶ entrenched patterns of gender-based discrimination still “represent an enormous challenge for the ability of women to start and develop a career in the field of journalism on equal terms with men.”⁷ The experiences reported by women journalists themselves in recent years confirm this trend, which seems to have worsened in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸
2. In Argentina, a survey carried out in 2018 determined that 43% of women journalists report situations of discrimination “for the fact of being women.”⁹ Similarly, 40% denounce situations of “discrimination for not fitting with the beauty standards of today’s society.”¹⁰
3. In Brazil, women journalists and media workers denounce that “machismo, sexism, and misogyny are still present in the mass media.”¹¹ Of a group of more than 400 women journalists from all over
4. the country who participated in a survey carried out in 2017, 87% reported having experienced at least one situation of gender-based discrimination.¹²
5. In Colombia, according to data collected in 2020, 62% of women journalists consider that they receive worse treatment than that received by their male colleagues. Only 35% consider that they are treated the same and 3% believe that they receive better treatment.¹³
6. In Costa Rica, 92% of women journalists allege that there is gender-based discrimination in decisions related to job promotion.¹⁴ In addition, 31% state that they have been discriminated against at some point.¹⁵
7. 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 or salary increases are not based on objective criteria but reflect and perpetuate gender stereotypes towards them.¹⁶

⁶International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). **Radiografía De Género: Día Internacional De La Mujer 2016**. March 8, 2016.

⁷ United Nations General Assembly. **The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. Report of the Secretary General**. A/72/290. August 4, 2017. Para. 6.

⁸ More than half of the 550 women journalists from 52 countries who participated in a global survey carried out by the International Federation of Journalists in June 2020 reported “an increase in gender inequalities in companies, with devastating consequences in their reconciliation of work and private life (62%), work responsibilities (46%) and salaries (27%).” Likewise, more than 75% of them “saw their level of stress increase” due to “working in isolation, harassment by bosses, caring for the family and education at home, domestic tensions, increased workload and frequent short deadlines, long working hours, psychological impact of COVID coverage, fear of job loss.” International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). COVID-19 has increased gender inequalities in the media, according to an IFJ survey. July 2020.

⁹ Argentine Journalism Forum. **Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país**. November 2018. Page 24.

¹⁰ Argentine Journalism Forum. **Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país**. November 2018. Page 24.

¹¹ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. **Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género**. November 7, 2020.

¹² Brazilian Association of Investigative

¹³Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. **Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia**. November 11, 2020. Page 22.

¹⁴ Noguera Calderón, Yanancy. **Estatus de mujeres periodistas en medios de comunicación en Costa Rica**. 2015. Page 39.

¹⁵ Noguera Calderón, Yanancy. **Estatus de mujeres periodistas en medios de comunicación en Costa Rica**. 2015. Page 39.

¹⁶ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. **Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro**. 2017. Page 11.

a. Underrepresentation of Women in the Media of the Region

8. 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%.¹⁷ The most recent studies on the matter show that this trend continues in many States of the region, although some progress has been made.
9. According to 2019 reports, in Argentina, despite the fact that they are the majority among those who study communication and/or journalism,¹⁸ women represent 30% of the people who work in journalistic companies.¹⁹ Similar figures are recorded in Colombia: only 3 out of 10 journalists are women.²⁰
10. In Brazil, in a survey carried out in 2018 on a total universe of 26,000 journalists, "the predominance of men was observed, totaling 58.2%, while women represent only 41.8% of all professionals"²¹ 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 print media, woman journalists are three times less than their male peers.²²
11. In this framework, it has been noted that, in Brazil, "the journalistic market has changed significantly in recent decades, with the proportion of men and women in newsrooms becoming numerically more balanced. However, salary and occupational inequalities are still recorded."²³ Similarly, in El Salvador, "[there is] an increase in the participation of women in the media, especially in reporting, in the technical area of photography, cameras, which was not seen five years ago, but it does not mean that women have the same conditions as men."²⁴
12. The low representation of women is largely associated with the gender stereotypes that permeate the hiring decisions of numerous media outlets in the region. In Ecuador, journalists report that, on numerous occasions, the decision to hire or not hire a journalist is associated with an evaluation of "their way of dressing, marital status, reproductive plans, sexual orientation, and nationality"²⁵ and/or an evaluation of their sexual and reproductive life.²⁶ In El Salvador, women communicators point out that "beliefs [about] women being sensitive is a criterion they take into consideration when hiring in the media [and] being a pretty person

Colombia 2020. 2020. **Information based on data from the Press Freedom Foundation, Information Cartographies**, 2019.

¹⁷ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. **Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género**. November 7, 2020.

¹⁸ Apex Strategic Content and Communication. **Perfil do jornalista brasileiro**. 2018. Page 6.

¹⁹ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. **Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro**. 2017. Page 11.

²⁰ GAMAG. **Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños**. No date. Page 4

²⁵ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. **Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador**. November 2020. Page 26.

²⁶ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. **Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador**. November 2020. Page 26.

[is a criterion considered relevant] more than anything in the television media.”²⁷ In the same way, they indicate that “more is demanded of them if a task is delegated to [them].... We become more demanding of ourselves to show that we are capable, because those in high positions do not believe that we are.”²⁸

13. 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, salary inequalities, a high level of job insecurity, and other forms of intersectional discrimination.

b. Horizontal Segregation

14. Occupational segregation is a widespread phenomenon in the labor market throughout the world. It is manifested through patterns of division of tasks by virtue of which women and men are “concentrated in different types and at different levels of activity and employment”²⁹ that are assigned to them by virtue of gender prejudices and/or stereotypes³⁰. This segregation is “horizontal” when women are overrepresented in certain types of occupations and/or when “women and men are distributed differently between branches of economic activity and occupations at the same level” based on gender. This segregation constitutes a form of gender-based discrimination and results in “differences in power, qualifications, income and opportunities”³¹ in the workplace.

The findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project developed in 2020 reveal that worldwide “the last five years have seen small incremental shifts towards parity in topics and sources, particularly in radio news, at the same time, the pace of change is so slow that one could speak of a stagnation.”³² According to the same report, “there has been significant progress towards balancing stories reported by women and men on television; currently 48% of televised news is reported by women.”³³

15. 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

²⁷ GAMAG. *Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños*. No date. Page 5.

²⁸ GAMAG. *Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños*. No date. Page 5.

²⁹ ILO. *ABC de los derechos de las trabajadoras y la igualdad de género*. Second Edition. 2008. Page 158.

³⁰ ILO and UNDP. *La segregación horizontal de género en los mercados laborales de ocho países de América Latina: implicancias para las desigualdades de género*. 2019. Page 6.

³¹ ILO. *ABC de los derechos de las trabajadoras y la igualdad de género*. Second Edition. 2008. Page 158.

³² Global Media Monitoring Project, *¿Qué avances hay para la igualdad de género en las noticias 25 años después de Beijing?*, March 3, 2021. Pg. 1

³³ Global Media Monitoring Project, *¿Qué avances hay para la igualdad de género en las noticias 25 años después de Beijing?*, March 3, 2021. Pg. 1

what is considered the ‘feminine’ issue: culture, society, health, education, etc. 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 the ones who carry the ‘gender agenda.’³⁴

16. In Argentina, men are in charge of covering topics related to politics, economics, energy and sports. On the contrary, women are assigned topics considered “soft” such as society, shows, and general information.³⁵
17. In Brazil, women are the majority among those who cover economics. However, they are still a minority among those who cover sports, technology, and education.³⁶ At the same time, they are overrepresented in coverage of tourism, fashion, food, and lifestyle issues. In this framework, Brazilian journalists conclude that topics are often assigned based on gender stereotypes.³⁷
18. In Colombia, only 2 out of 10 women journalists cover all the issues on the media’s agenda or are in charge of sections such as politics and justice. As in other countries in the region, the majority of women journalists are pigeonholed in social, cultural, and publicity topics considered as ‘soft.’³⁸ Those women who challenge these patterns of horizontal segregation and seek access to cover politics, justice, corruption, armed conflict, sports, among other topics, face a greater risk of experiencing situations of genderbased violence, while also experiencing attitudes and practices linked to “the sexualization of their body,... the underestimation of their intellectual capacity, [the questioning] of their intimate life and [other actions that seek] to subdue them emotionality.”³⁹
19. In Ecuador, although progress has been made in recent years, “politics is reserved for men; women journalists who have expressed their desire to cover these issues are relegated to covering environmental, social, or entertainment issues.”⁴⁰ Similarly, in El Salvador, “[there is] a certain stigmatization of women in some media and it is thought that they cannot cover some issues such as acts of violence, because they are supposed to be vulnerable.”⁴¹ In said country, “[the] number of women as sports news anchors has increased, but as long as they meet the stereotype of a pretty young woman; there are few spaces for analysts or presenters in opinion slots and interviews.”⁴²
20. Women journalists also face difficulties in covering issues related to gender equality and women’s rights. In this sense, in Ecuador, journalists point out that, when they try to address these issues or modify the coverage that their media carries out in cases of gender-based violence, they face “a dynamic of permanent struggle,

³⁴Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIQ+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades. **FUNDEPS and Civil Partnership Communication for Equality**. 2018. Page 60.

³⁵ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. **Informe Nacional Argentina**. 2019. Page 1.

³⁶ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. **Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro**. 2017. Page 9.

³⁷ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. **Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro**. 2017. Page 23.

³⁸ Foundation for the Freedom of the Press. Paz en los titulares, miedo en la redacción. **Informe sobre el estado de la libertad de prensa en Colombia en 2015**. February 8, 2016. Page 78.

³⁹ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras. **Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation**. March 2021. Page 23. CeroSetenta. 8M: Esto es ser periodista y mujer en Latinoamérica. September 6, 2018.

⁴¹ GAMAG. **Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños**. No date. Page 4.

⁴² GAMAG. **Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños**. No date. Page 4.

21. and an added work of pedagogy towards their colleagues and companions, editors, and bosses. Although there are times when it is possible to convince editors and colleagues, in others it is not achieved, generating an overexertion, an increase in work pressure, frustration, mental health problems, or the desertion of their workspaces.”⁴³
22. In Colombia, the Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and the Karisma Foundation have emphasized that “the freedom of expression of people who practice journalism is attacked when they are prevented from covering and talking about issues such as sexual and reproductive rights or the claims of people of diverse gender identity and sexual orientation. These questions, in the XXI century, seem to be taboo in many journalistic media and forbidden topics for public conversation. This situation also affects society, which is prevented from receiving information that allows a better understanding of these issues coming from journalism.”⁴⁴
23. In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the preliminary findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project show that women journalists in the region are overrepresented in coverage of issues associated with this phenomenon in digital media. Explaining the reasons behind this overrepresentation, the study notes that “non-COVID-19 stories are more likely to challenge gender stereotypes than pandemic-related stories.”⁴⁵

c. Wage Gap and Job Insecurity

24. As the report “Women journalists and freedom of expression” of the Office of the Special Rapporteur points out, the patterns of distribution of work within the media outlets outlined above can contribute to making the work of women journalists less visible and less valued, which can translate into a salary gap with respect to their male colleagues and access to fewer contractual protections. The most recent studies on the working conditions of journalists confirm this pattern.
25. Regarding the salary gap, in Argentina, a survey carried out in 2018 on a sample of 405 women journalists found that 77% of them consider that they do not receive the same remuneration as their male colleagues for the same work.⁴⁶ In Chile, in 2019, journalists reported that women earn “30% less than men, a situation that is reproduced in the media where salaries are negotiated personally.”⁴⁷
26. In Ecuador, a report released in 2020 revealed that “there is a salary gap between women –who earn \$938.44– and men –who receive \$1,378.87.”⁴⁸ This situation has a differentiated effect on those who are just starting out in the

⁴³ GAMAG. Situación de las mujeres en los medios de comunicación y en las TICs. September 2019. Page 2.

⁴⁴ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 20.

⁴⁵ Global Media Monitoring Project. [¿Qué avances hay para la igualdad de género en las noticias 25 años después de Beijing?](#), March 3, 2021. Page 8.

⁴⁶ Argentine Journalism Forum. [Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país](#). November 2018. Page 21.

⁴⁷ Women in the media. [Este 8M periodistas feministas nos sumamos a la huelga](#). March 8, 2019.

⁴⁸ Powerful Girls Ecuador. [Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 2

27. profession.⁴⁹salarial entre las mujeres — que ganan \$938,44— y los hombres — que reciben \$1.378,87.”⁴⁸ Esta situación afecta en forma diferenciada a quienes recién comienzan en la profesión.⁴⁹
28. Similarly, in Brazil, women journalists report that “white women have lower salaries than male and white colleagues, however more than black women journalists, as they are the ones with the worst remuneration. In this way, the data indicates that journalism needs to face both gender inequalities and those of ethnic-racial origin.”⁵⁰ In said country, salary inequalities are usually associated with a low appreciation of the work of women journalists and the stereotype that, due to their gender, they are not the breadwinner of their household therefore, they do not need as high a salary as their male peers.⁵¹
29. In El Salvador, women journalists consider that “[there is] a lot of inequality in the workload.”⁵² This determines that, in some cases, the media “pay women more, but the work is greater, there is no work compensation with salary.”⁵³ In Colombia and Mexico, women journalists also report the existence of a gender pay gap.⁵⁴
30. In relation to job insecurity, the available data indicates that, in Argentina, women are overrepresented among those who work part-time in media companies. On the contrary, “men are the majority among those who work in a dependency relationship and with a full-time workload.”⁵⁵ In this context, women who work 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.”⁵⁶
31. In Chile, journalists have denounced that “many women for years [have] worked with fee contracts, without the possibility of having social security or health rights.”⁵⁷ In particular, they demand “greater social protection for independent work and the elimination of outsourcing of [their] tasks, since those practices promote job instability.”⁵⁸
32. In El Salvador, women journalists report “a growing job insecurity, due to several factors: now one person carries all the coverage, including multimedia, taking photos, uploading them to social networks, and for radio, which contributes to job insecurity. In some media it is done due to financial difficulties, but in others it is not.”⁵⁹ In this sense, they report that many times the media “take advantage of the supposed economic cuts to fire all women.”⁶⁰

⁴⁹ Powerful Girls Ecuador. *Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. November 2020. Page 21.

⁵⁰ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. *Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género*. November 7, 2020.

⁵¹ Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. *Mujeres y liderazgo en los medios informativos en 2020: evidencias de 10 mercados*. March 8, 2020.

⁵² GAMAG. *Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños*. No date. Page 5.

⁵³ GAMAG. *Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños*. No date. Page 5.

⁵⁴ Foundation for the Freedom of the Press. *Silencioff, ¿las regiones tomarán la palabra?, Informe sobre la situación para la Libertad de Prensa en Colombia en 2016. 2017. P. 113. P. 9. IACHR/ OHCHR. Special Report on the Situation of Freedom of Expression in Mexico. Joint Report of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of IACHR, Edison Lanza, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, on their mission to Mexico*. June 2018. Para. 28.

⁵⁵ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. *Informe Nacional Argentina*. 2019. Page 1.

⁵⁶ SiPreBA. *Relevamiento de situación laboral en los medios de CABA durante 2018-2019*. June 10, 2019.

⁵⁷ Women in the media. *Este 8M periodistas feministas nos sumamos a la huelga*. March 8, 2019.

⁵⁸ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. *Informe Nacional Argentina*. 2019. Page 1.

⁵⁹ Women in the media. *Este 8M periodistas feministas nos sumamos a la huelga*. March 8, 2019.

⁶⁰ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. *Informe Nacional Argentina*. 2019. Page 1.

⁵⁹ GAMAG. *Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños*. No date. Page 5.

⁶⁰ GAMAG. *Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños*. No date. Page 5.

33. In Mexico, women journalists and media workers also face a high level of economic instability in the exercise of the profession. Many of them declare 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, to which unpaid domestic work is added, generates an overload of tasks that impacts not only the exercise of their profession but also their health and other aspects of their personal life.⁶¹

d. Glass Ceiling

34. The term “glass ceiling” refers to obstacles based on gender bias that prevent or hinder women from accessing senior decision-making and/or management positions in companies.⁶² These obstacles represent a form of discrimination against women in the workplace⁶³ that also affects women journalists and media workers.

37. community life. In this sense, overcoming the different obstacles in the media can be a catalyst so that other social dynamics where these obstacles also exist can be encouraged to transform and guarantee women’s rights.

35. Based on statistics that demonstrate the “feminization of poverty”, the persistence of the “glass ceiling” in the exercise of journalism and the media is one of the consequences of the reproduction of the cycle of multidimensional poverty that has a differential impact on women and their ESCER. Women continue to be overrepresented in school dropout and illiteracy rates; and in turn, the precariousness of their labor rights in the region continues. This context makes it possible to make visible the multiple obstacles that women face in accessing workspaces related to journalism and the media.

38. Throughout the region, the presence of women both in hierarchical positions within newsrooms and in government and senior management positions in news companies is scarce.⁶⁴ In 2016, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) reported that the representation of women in management positions in media companies in Latin America was less than 25%.⁶⁵ The data surveyed in recent years suggest that this trend has not changed significantly.

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

39. In Argentina, 78% of the more than 400 journalists who participated in a study carried out in 2018 reported that the majority of the bosses in the medium where they work were men.⁶⁶ Similarly, “only 12% of those surveyed hold a decision-making position (direction, management, or leadership)

⁶¹ The Coalition for Women in Journalism. *CFWIJ Annual Report 2020*. December 23, 2020.

⁶² ILO. *ABC de los derechos de las trabajadoras y la igualdad de género. Second edition*. 2008. Page 173.

⁶³ ILO. *ABC de los derechos de las trabajadoras y la igualdad de género. Second edition*. 2008. Page 173.

⁶⁴ International Women’s Media Foundation. *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*. In English. Page 9.

⁶⁵ International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). *Radiografía De Género: Día Internacional De La Mujer 2016*. March 8, 2016.

⁶⁶ Argentine Journalism Forum. *Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país*. November 2018. Page 23.

40. within journalistic organizations.”⁶⁷ In relation to the possibilities of promotion, only a third of them “think that they have possibilities for growth in their current job”⁶⁸ and 72% consider that “they have less opportunity for growth than men”⁶⁹ in the media companies in which they work. Along the same lines, 55% of the women who were part of the study stated that companies “always prefer men when there are opportunities for promotion.”⁷⁰
41. Regarding ownership positions of journalistic companies, “only 22% of media companies are run by women.”⁷¹ According to a report released in 2019, “women become owners of media companies in three situations: by family ties, creating their own small (digital) companies or as part of civil associations.”⁷²
42. In Brazil, although women are the majority among those who practice journalism,⁷³ they represent only 22% of the people who lead newsrooms.⁷⁴ 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 a promotion.⁷⁵
43. 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 dominated spaces.”⁷⁶ In the same country, it has been pointed out that “women are reporters, producers, the people who manage everything, who manage interviews, who manage operational issues.”⁷⁷ However, it is usually a man “who makes the decisions about how a story is approached, what is going to be in the headline, what is going to be on the news.”⁷⁸
44. In Colombia, women “[have] an increasing presence in newsrooms and even in managerial positions”,⁷⁹ to the point that in 9 of 26 media outlets surveyed in a 2017 report the directors were women.⁸⁰ However, women continue to occupy a very marginal role in media ownership. There are even media that do not have any women among their owners or shareholders.⁸¹ At the regional level, in 2020, six women directed the most important regional newspapers in the country, a record number in Colombia.⁸²

⁶⁷ Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. *Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país*. November 2018. Page 23.

⁶⁸ Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. *Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país*. November 2018. Page 34.

⁶⁹ Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. *Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país*. November 2018. Page 21.

⁷⁰ Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. *Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país*. November 2018. Page 24.

⁷¹ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. *Informe Nacional Argentina*. 2019. Page 1.

⁷² World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. *Informe Nacional Argentina*. 2019. Page 1.

⁷³ Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. *Mujeres y liderazgo en los medios informativos en 2020: evidencias de 10 mercados*. March 8, 2020.

⁷⁴ Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. *Mujeres y liderazgo en los medios informativos en 2020: evidencias de 10 mercados*. March 8, 2020.

⁷⁵ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 9 et seq.

⁷⁶ Women in the media. *Este 8M periodistas feministas nos sumamos a la huelga*. March 8, 2019.

⁷⁷ University of Chile. *Periodistas reflexionaron sobre el rol de los medios de comunicación en la perpetuación de la violencia contra las mujeres*. November 29, 2018.

⁷⁸ University of Chile. *Periodistas reflexionaron sobre el rol de los medios de comunicación en la perpetuación de la violencia contra las mujeres*. November 29, 2018.

⁷⁹ The Empty Chair. *Los 410 dueños de los principales medios (incluyendo los de paraísos fiscales)*. October 30, 2017.

⁸⁰ The Empty Chair. *Los 410 dueños de los principales medios (incluyendo los de paraísos fiscales)*. October 30, 2017.

⁸¹ The Empty Chair. *Los 410 dueños de los principales medios (incluyendo los de paraísos fiscales)*. October 30, 2017.

⁸² Semana. *El poder femenino: las mujeres que dirigen los diarios regionales más importantes del país*. February 14, 2020.

45. According to a 2020 report, in Ecuador, male journalists occupy “the majority of positions related to the areas of writing, production, and design”⁸³ and are also overrepresented in hierarchical or management positions. That same year, a survey carried out by the Communication Council of Ecuador revealed that “of eleven programs broadcasted on seven national television media, the total number of people who participate daily through an important role within them, are mostly of the male gender (25) compared to the female gender (13). According to the weighting of data, for every 100 people who participate daily in some important role in the media, 66 are men and 34 are women.”⁸⁴ The same entity has identified that “the production of content from women has currently decreased, if the reality of women in the monitored media is compared with the exposed situation of this population group in 2017.”⁸⁵
46. In this context, women journalists in Ecuador denounce that they are “undervalued” and/or discriminated against on the basis of their gender by media companies when making decisions about 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, “a woman is expected to conform to certain characteristics such as being ‘nice, soft, conciliatory, not having any pretensions and not being able to confront or argue aggressively. If a woman does not meet these characteristics, she is considered a difficult person who is ‘not fit for this type of work.’”⁸⁶ They are also questioned about their reproductive plans when making decisions related to promotions.⁸⁷
47. Once they gain access to these positions, they face resistance from employees under them, especially men, who distrust their ability to perform in the position. In this framework, only 15% of Ecuadorian women journalists aspire to ascend to a leadership position in the medium where they currently work, while 33% aspire to be independent.⁸⁸
48. A similar pattern is reported by women journalists in Nicaragua. According to the testimony of a journalist, “when [the] small number of women in 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.”⁸⁹

⁸³ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. [Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 27.

⁸⁴ Council for the Regulation, Development, and Promotion of Information and Communication of Ecuador. [Herramientas Guías para el Tratamiento Periodístico y Comunicacional en Materia de Género](#). September 30, 2020. Page 11.

⁸⁵ Council for the Regulation, Development, and Promotion of Information and Communication of Ecuador. [Herramientas Guías para el Tratamiento Periodístico y Comunicacional en Materia de Género](#). September 30, 2020. Page 11.

⁸⁶ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. [Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 28.

⁸⁷ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. [Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 34.

⁸⁸ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. [Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 31.

⁸⁹ CeroSetenta. [8M: Esto es ser periodista y mujer en Latinoamérica](#). September 6, 2018.

49. For its part, in Mexico, on a sample of 392 journalists and media workers surveyed in a study carried out in 2019, 47% indicated that they did not have or had had staff under their charge.⁹⁰ Likewise, 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. In addition, of a total of 280 hierarchical positions relieved, only 22% were held by women.⁹¹
50. In Venezuela, the majority of people who occupy leadership roles or hierarchical positions within the media are men. On the other hand, “the bulk of reporting is done mainly by young women.”⁹² At the same time, it has been pointed out that “there is greater gender parity in the heads of digital media and the greatest inequality is found in radio, with an appreciable predominance of men.”⁹³
51. Recent research has identified that, given this scenario, women journalists in the region are developing their own digital media, taking advantage of the low entry barriers that these media present, and as a strategy to overcome the glass ceilings that characterize the traditional media.⁹⁴ In this sense, a study carried out in 2017 found that women had been involved in the creation of 62% of the 100 native digital media surveyed in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. Of the total number of founders, 40% were women.⁹⁵ According to the same study, “[women] are also playing a significant role in the executive and management teams of these native digital media.”⁹⁶

e. Gender-Based Discrimination against Journalists with Caregiving Roles

52. Due to entrenched patterns of gender-based division of labor,⁹⁷ “women spend a greater proportion and amount of time on caregiving tasks, even when they are engaged in the labor market.”⁹⁸ This leads to “many of them being excluded from the labor market or being inserted in part-time jobs or work that does not imply attending a fixed place of work, as a way to reconcile family responsibilities with the obligations of paid work.”⁹⁹

⁹⁰ United Mexican Journalists Collective. AcosoDATA. *Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México*. March 2019. Page 10.

⁹¹ United Mexican Journalists Collective. *¿Es tiempo de cambio? La disparidad de género en medios*. March 12, 2020.

⁹² Center for citizen information and Konrad-Adenauer Foundation. *Los periodismos de Latinoamérica: identidades en las diferencias*. 2016. Page 126.

⁹³ Center for citizen information and Konrad-Adenauer Foundation. *Los periodismos de Latinoamérica: identidades en las diferencias*. 2016. Page 126.

⁹⁴ SembraMedia. Punto de Inflexión. *Impacto, amenazas y sustentabilidad: estudio de emprendedores de medios digitales latinoamericanos*. 2017. Page 41.

⁹⁵ SembraMedia. Punto de Inflexión. *Impacto, amenazas y sustentabilidad: estudio de emprendedores de medios digitales latinoamericanos*. 2017. Page 41.

⁹⁶ SembraMedia. Punto de Inflexión. *Impacto, amenazas y sustentabilidad: estudio de emprendedores de medios digitales latinoamericanos*. 2017. Page 41. These patterns are not always replicated in digital versions of traditional media. For example, in Ecuador, journalists denounce that “many media continue to try to make the transition to the digital world from a “savings” perspective. In this framework, there have been situations in which the media reduce their staff and concentrate the tasks in a very small group of journalists, which generates an excessive increase in the workload and other impacts in terms of job insecurity. Powerful Girls Ecuador. *Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. November 2020. Page 22

⁹⁷ Luis Casanova y Carina Lupica (ILO). Care and labor market: opportunities and challenges of employment policies to generate and promote decent work. In ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, CIPPEC. *Las políticas de cuidado en Argentina: avances y desafíos*. 2018. Page 80.

⁹⁸ Luis Casanova y Carina Lupica (ILO). Care and labor market: opportunities and challenges of employment policies to generate and promote decent work. In ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, CIPPEC. *Las políticas de cuidado en Argentina: avances y desafíos*. 2018. Page 80.

⁹⁹ Luis Casanova y Carina Lupica (ILO). Care and labor market: opportunities and challenges of employment policies to generate and promote decent work. In ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, CIPPEC. *Las políticas de cuidado en Argentina: avances y desafíos*. 2018. Page 80.

53. 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 flexibility of the working hours, the limited or complete lack of access to quality and affordable childcare, poor maternity and paternity leave policies, and social attitudes [whereby women are assigned unpaid caregiving jobs], among many other factors.”¹⁰⁰ To this is added the culture of long working hours typical of many media outlets.¹⁰¹ In this context, the available information indicates that, in a large part of the countries of the region, it is still “very difficult for women journalists to achieve a balance between home and work in the newsrooms”,¹⁰² which has a significant impact in their professional career and/or in their job opportunities.
54. In Argentina, 6 out of 10 female journalists consider that one of the main challenges they face in their professional lives, differently from their male peers, is “combining family life with professional development.”¹⁰³ 34% indicate that in their work there
- are no options to balance their work with their personal life.¹⁰⁴ The women who report that these options exist indicate that they have flexible work schedules, the possibility of working remotely and/or a reduced working day.¹⁰⁵
55. However, it must be taken into account that, in most cases, “work-family reconciliation policies are fundamentally focused on women, thus reinforcing their ascription to the responsibility of reproductive tasks.”¹⁰⁶ In this sense, it is noted that “company policies make women responsible for caregiving tasks through the creation of specific programs to facilitate childrearing by women and limitations for men to make use of the right, for example, to child care centers.”¹⁰⁷ In addition, 3 out of 10 Argentine women journalists report discriminatory practices for “having children.”¹⁰⁸
56. In Brazil, women journalists also report difficulties reconciling family life with work responsibilities, due to the way work is organized and long working hours.¹⁰⁹ These difficulties have been aggravated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁰ UN Women. **Occupational Segregation**. No date. Available for consultation at: <http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/infographic/changingworldofwork/es/index.html>

¹⁰¹ UNESCO. **Indicadores de Género para Medios de Comunicación**. 2012; **Indicators World Association for Christian Communication - WACC. El Proyecto de Monitoreo Global de Medios. ¿Quién figura en las noticias?** 2015. Page 49; International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). **Radiografía De Género: Día Internacional De La Mujer** 2016. March 8, 2016.

¹⁰² World Association for Christian Communication – WACC. **El Proyecto de Monitoreo Global de Medios. ¿Quién figura en las noticias?** 2015. Page 49.

¹⁰³ Argentine Journalism Forum. **Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país**. November 2018. Page 29.

¹⁰⁴ Argentine Journalism Forum. **Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país**. November 2018. Page 29.

¹⁰⁵ Argentine Journalism Forum. **Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país**. November 2018. Page 29.

¹⁰⁶ Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). **Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIQ+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades. FUNDEPS and Communication Civil Association for Equality**. 2018. Page 62.

¹⁰⁷ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. **Informe Nacional Argentina**. 2019. Page 1.

¹⁰⁸ Argentine Journalism Forum. **Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país**. November 2018. Page 29.

¹⁰⁹ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. **Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro**. 2017. Page 13.

¹¹⁰ National Commission of Women of the National Federation of Journalists. **Mães jornalistas e o contexto da pandemia**. August 26, 2020

57. In addition, they report being harassed so that they do not get pregnant and/or do not take maternity leave.¹¹¹ In particular, during the hiring processes they are consulted about their reproductive plans.¹¹²
58. In Ecuador, “women journalists comment on their difficulties in keeping their jobs in the media when they are mothers. They are considered less productive, and a hostile environment is created that prevents them from continuing in their jobs.”¹¹³ In this sense, a study carried out 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.”¹¹⁴ A few outlets offer the option of telecommuting for women journalists who are mothers. However, “[the] reduced working day is not an option and the media do not have childcare spaces either.”¹¹⁵
59. These data show that “the traditional assignment of reproductive work to women”¹¹⁶ means that women journalists and media workers are forced to “organize their daily lives between paid work and caregiving tasks, which conditions both access and the possibilities of employment choice, and with it their autonomy.”¹¹⁷ The absence of regulatory frameworks and adequate public policies regarding caregiving tasks and other forms of unpaid domestic work contribute to perpetuate this situation.
60. 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 female reporter to accept a travel mission, for a female driver to go abroad it will also be more difficult. It will be more difficult for a female boss to accept being on a board of directors, and that is how it will be in the media, in companies and everywhere. As long as that doesn’t change, as long as there isn’t a mandatory male postnatal leave, then it’s going to happen that the culture in the media will continue to be the same.”¹¹⁸ Along the same lines, in Colombia, women journalists point out that “they have had to find a balance between their work and private lives to stand out 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 creates tension with work.’”¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 12.

¹¹² Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 12.

¹¹³ GAMAG. *Situación de las mujeres en los medios de comunicación y en las TICs*. September 2019. Page 2

¹¹⁴ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. *Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. November 2020. Page 34.

¹¹⁵ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. *Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. November 2020. Page 34.

¹¹⁶ Pedraza, Virginia. Women in the workplace of the media. In *Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ¿hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?*. Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Communication for Equality Editions. 2018. Page 62.

¹¹⁷ Pedraza, Virginia. Women in the workplace of the media. In *Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ¿hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?*. Compiled by Chaher, Sandra. Communication for Equality Editions. 2018. Page 62.

¹¹⁸ University of Chile. *Periodistas reflexionaron sobre el rol de los medios de comunicación en la perpetuación de la violencia contra las mujeres*. November 29, 2018.

¹¹⁹ Semana. *El poder femenino: las mujeres que dirigen los diarios regionales más importantes del país*. February 14, 2020.

f. Patterns of Intersectional Discrimination

61. 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 generate a differentiated effect on certain groups of women. Many times, these factors also translate into particular forms of discrimination against those who make up these groups.”¹²⁰
62. The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression observes that events of gender-based discrimination in the media can be aggravated by the intersection of other factors such as age, ethnic-racial origin, sexual orientation, expression of gender, national origin, disability, or any other belonging or identity to a population group historically discriminated against.
63. 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.”¹²³ As reported by the women journalists and communicators who participated in an investigation carried out by the Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and the Karisma Foundation in 2020, “being a woman already poses some challenges for us, but being a black woman in the exercise of journalism supposes other additional challenges. It is not contemplated to dignify the role of black or indigenous men and women through the exercise of journalism.”¹²⁴ In particular, they pointed out that they usually “are called as presenters, either due to positive discrimination or so that there is greater diversity in the audiovisual media or as a way to increase television audiences with an exotic and attractive image, with an undeclared intention of objectifying and sexualizing their bodies.”¹²⁵

Due to the prevalence of intersecting patterns of discrimination, in several countries of the region, Afro descendant journalists tend to be disproportionately underrepresented in traditional media outlets and in decision-making positions in these media. In this regard, the Inter American Commission has previously referred to the obstacles faced by women of African descent in accessing jobs in satisfactory conditions due to the persistence of patterns of racial discrimination and stereotypes based on ethnic-racial origin.^{121 122}

¹²⁰ IACHR. **Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession.** OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 12.

¹²¹ Information received in the framework of the consultation meeting with experts held by the Office of the Special Rapporteur on February 20, 2018, in Bogotá.

¹²² IACHR, **Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights of Persons of African Descent**, OEA/Ser.L/V/II., March 16, 2021, p. 54 et seq.

¹²³ Sentiido Foundation and Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision. **Implementación del Cap. J de la Plataforma de Beijing: mujeres, medios y comunicación en Colombia 2020.** 2020.

¹²⁴ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras.** **Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation.** March 2021. Page 19.

¹²⁵ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras.** Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation. March 2021. Page 19.

64. Similarly, in Brazil, Afro-descendant journalists are underrepresented among those who work in the media. When they do gain access to media companies, they are assigned lower-ranking positions¹²⁶ and receive lower salaries than their white colleagues.¹²⁷ In this context, in 2020, GloboNews decided to carry out “an edition of the #EnPauta program only with black journalists to respond to an increasingly latent social demand for the elimination of racism and for the expansion of spaces for representation of the black population in the media.”¹²⁸ The program featured only one Afrodescendant male journalist. The remaining journalists were Afro-Brazilian women and two of them were designated as permanent commentators on the program from that moment on.¹²⁹ According to information released by the Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision., the broadcast of the program “was a response to internet criticism regarding what had happened on the station the day before: seven white journalists doing analysis on topics related to racial issues, in the midst of the protests against racism that began in the United States after the death of George Floyd and that took over the world.”¹³⁰
65. 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”.¹³¹ Those who manage to access the media face situations of intersectional discrimination, for example in relation to the assignment of tasks. In this sense, they report that “there is a prejudice that ‘black people should cover issues of culture or sports’”.¹³²
66. Regarding indigenous people in the rest of the countries of the region, the preliminary findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project developed in 2020 indicate that “in Latin America, indigenous people constitute only 1% of the subjects and sources (people seen, heard, or talked about) in television news despite being 8% of the region’s population”.¹³³ Also, “of this small proportion, only 3 out of ten are women.”¹³⁴
67. Concerning discrimination against women journalists based on their gender and age, Colombian journalists report that “in [the] first stage of exercising the profession, interns and recent graduates are usually treated as young girls. It is also common that due to their youth it is assumed that they know nothing, so

¹²⁶ Article 19. Género & Mídia. [Aplicação dos indicadores de equidade de gênero para mídia da Unesco](#). Received by email on February 28, 2018. Pages 12 and 14.

¹²⁷ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. [Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género](#). November 7, 2020.

¹²⁸ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. [Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género](#). November 7, 2020.

¹²⁹ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. [Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género](#). November 7, 2020.

¹³⁰ Brazilian Network of Journalists and Communicators with a Gender and Race Vision. [Panorama de la actuación de las mujeres en el periodismo brasileño y caminos para la construcción de una comunicación en la perspectiva de género](#). November 7, 2020.

¹³¹ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. [Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 25, according to data from the Council for the Regulation and Development of Information and Communication.

¹³² Powerful Girls Ecuador Así hacemos periodismo. [Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador](#). November 2020. Page 25.

¹³³ Global Media Monitoring Project, [¿Qué avances hay para la igualdad de género en las noticias 25 años después de Beijing?](#), March 3, 2021. Page 2

¹³⁴ Global Media Monitoring Project, [¿Qué avances hay para la igualdad de género en las noticias 25 años después de Beijing?](#), March 3, 2021. Page 2

they receive condescending treatment, their intellectual and work capacity is underestimated, and they are even questioned about their way of dressing, which does not happen with men of the same age.”¹³⁵

68. However, it should be noted that these patterns of discrimination “are not unusual, nor do they decrease with the passing of time.”¹³⁶
69. At the same time, the 2020 World Media Monitoring Project identified that among women who work as television presenters or reporters in Latin America, “85% and 59%, respectively, are in the age range between 19 and 49 years.”¹³⁷ According to the organizations in charge of the investigation, this situation “could account for an invisibility of women in older age ranges, and even more so in ranges of people over 65 years of age, where women in the news begin to disappear. This fact may reflect incidences in the absence of public gender policies for older adult women, as well as the pressure of the Western stereotype of beauty related to eternal youth as a parameter for women.”¹³⁸
70. In relation to LGBTI persons, the IACHR has recognized that societies of the region “are dominated by entrenched ideas and cultural patterns of heteronormativity, cisnormativity, sexual hierarchy, sex and gender binaries, and misogyny.”¹³⁹ In this context, in the region and other parts of the world, “LGBTI people are subject to invasive questions about their private lives at work, they must adjust to demands of binary concepts of femininity or masculinity to achieve acceptance in this area and in many cases hide, deny or keep secret their sexual orientation and gender identity either to access a job, not lose it or avoid situations of harassment, ridicule, or retaliation.”¹⁴⁰
71. In Colombia, “journalists and communicators with gender identities and sexual orientation different from heteronormative ones, although they are exposed to the same psychological and sexual violence on and off the internet as cisgender and heterosexual women, [face] an additional burden related to the expression of their identity or sexuality.”¹⁴¹ In particular, “it is common that their professional ability to deal with the hard issues of journalism is questioned; in addition, control is exercised over the

¹³⁵ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras.** Red Colombiana de Periodistas con Visión de Género y Fundación Karisma. Marzo 2021. Pág. 17.

¹³⁶ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras.** Red Colombiana de Periodistas con Visión de Género y Fundación Karisma. Marzo 2021. Pág. 17.

¹³⁷ GMMP. Proyecto de Monitoreo Mundial de Medios 2020. **¿Quién figura en las noticias? Informe Regional. América Latina. Sin fecha.** Pág. 23.

GMMP. Proyecto de Monitoreo Mundial de Medios 2020. **¿Quién figura en las noticias? Informe Regional. América Latina. Sin fecha.** Pág. 30.

¹³⁹ CIDH. **Informe Empresas y Derechos Humanos: Estándares Interamericanos.** 1 de noviembre de 2019. OEA/Ser.L/V/II CIDH/REDESCA/INF.1/19. Párr. 380.

¹⁴⁰ CIDH. **Informe Empresas y Derechos Humanos: Estándares Interamericanos.** 1 de noviembre de 2019. OEA/Ser.L/V/II CIDH/REDESCA/INF.1/19. Párr. 381, con cita a OIT. La discriminación en el trabajo por motivos de orientación sexual e identidad de género: Resultados del proyecto PRIDE de la OIT (Fact sheet).

¹⁴¹ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras.** Red Colombiana de Periodistas con Visión de Género y Fundación Karisma. Marzo 2021. Pág. 20.

expression of their femininity, a stigmatizing language is used with and about them, and their body is sexualized.”¹⁴²

72. In Argentina, the demand for the implementation of a job quota for trans people has begun to form part of labor negotiations within the media.¹⁴³ Similarly, in Ecuador, journalists report that many media outlets include questions about a person’s sexual orientation during hiring processes.¹⁴⁴
73. However, there are still shortcomings in the production and dissemination of accurate and up-to-date 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 in relation to discriminatory practices that affect other groups of women.

¹⁴² Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras**. Red Colombiana de Periodistas con Visión de Género y Fundación Karisma. Marzo 2021. Pág. 20.

¹⁴³ World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. **Informe Nacional Argentina**. 2019. Page 2.

¹⁴⁴ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. **Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador**. November 2020. Page 26.



II

Gender-Based violence within the media

Comments to Chapter II.

By **Mariela Belski**



Executive Director Amnesty International Argentina

Violence against women journalists and workers in the media is a phenomenon that has been taking place worldwide. In line with the report prepared by the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (hereinafter, SRFOE), the United Nations Human Rights Council has ruled to condemn the specific attacks against journalists in the exercise of their work, including discrimination and violence based on sex and gender, intimidation and harassment on the Internet or in other mediums, and highlighted the need to address the threats that journalists face due to their gender.¹

Women journalists are exposed to the same risks as their male colleagues when investigating and reporting on human rights violations, but they also run specific risks stemming from their gender, being women and being at the intersection of other identities, such as ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression², among others.

This is aggravated by gender-based violence in the newsrooms and/or within the media, as shown in chapter II of the report that is the subject of this comment: *“Women Journalists and Newsrooms: Progress, challenges, and recommendations to prevent violence and to fight against discrimination”*. The report consolidates the different ways in which gender-based violence is manifested towards women journalists and media workers in their workplaces based on surveys carried out in various countries of the region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, the United States, Mexico, Nicaragua) that show a structural pattern of gender-based violence that has a negative impact on the right to carry out

their work and exercise freedom of expression in conditions of equality and without 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 approach into their work”.³

As the report states, “as a consequence of the high prevalence of acts of gender-based violence within the media - and, in particular, of acts that constitute violence and/or sexual harassment, many women journalists decide to abandon their workplace or are forced to make decisions that result in an involuntary transformation of their career path”.⁴ Many opt for self-censorship and avoid reporting for fear of losing their job and putting their safety at risk given the level of normalization of violence they experience within the environment in which they work. Despite this scenario, many media organizations do not have formal policies or protocols to protect their employees.

a. The role of the mass media

As the SRFOE has highlighted, it is undeniable that the mass media are extremely important actors in the protection of journalists against gender-based risks and must adopt measures to guarantee the safety of women journalists.⁵ On the other hand, they play a key role in public debate by informing

¹The Human Rights Council unanimously approved resolution 33/2 in 2016 on the safety of journalists. In A/HRC/44/52, May 6, 2020, p. 70.

²UN. A/HRC/44/52, May 6, 2020: “Assaults and abuses specifically directed against lesbian and transgender journalists often go unreported and are inadequately documented and/or condemned. They range from threatening comments from readers to sexual harassment and violence and even murder. They can also include retaliation for reporting on issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.”

³ IACHR. Women Journalists and Newsrooms: Progress, challenges, and recommendations to prevent violence and to fight against discrimination, IACHR/RELE/INF.24/22 October, para. 97.

⁴IACHR. Women Journalists and Newsrooms: Progress, challenges, and recommendations to prevent violence and to fight against discrimination, IACHR/RELE/INF.24/22 October, para. 95.

⁵IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression, Discrimination and gender-based violence faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 135.

and raising awareness about discrimination, stereotypes, prejudice, and gender-based violence. In this sense, they can generate positive change by fostering the development of narratives that value diversity and combat arbitrary discrimination, counteracting hate speech.

In Argentina, after the rise of #NiUnaMenos since 2015, as a result of criticism of media coverage of femicides, sexual harassment, and reproductive violence, and of the Green Tide during the debate over legal abortion in 2018, numerous mass media assumed the commitment to incorporate a gender perspective in their coverage, and some of them took a substantive step, creating the role of gender editors. This was key to the construction of a media agenda that echoes social demands, makes visible the various manifestations of gender-based violence, and contributes to distorting and combating it.

The fact that the media report on these issues contributes to changing public opinion and generates pressure on governments to introduce changes in legislation and public policies for the exercise of sexual, reproductive, and non-reproductive rights.

By virtue of the key role that journalists specialized in gender play in advancing coverage that does not reproduce violence and that promotes respect for the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people, on November 24, 2021, the first Network of Editors of Gender of Argentina was created -with the support of UNFPA-⁶ which was established as a key space to address the challenges that those who perform this job face today, in order to promote journalism with a gender and human rights perspective.

However, it is worth drawing attention to the potential risk that the mere designation of gender editors will become **gender washing** if it is not accompanied by measures that seek to banish the

generalized patterns of gender-based discrimination within the newsrooms that do not reverse wage gaps, job insecurity, discrimination against women who perform care roles, or to the extent that the violence and harassment they experience within the environment in which they perform continues to be naturalized.

Likewise, various strategies are noted that seek to discredit the work of women journalist and the agendas they cover. Some media only publish the notes of the gender editors in virtual format -excluding their coverage of the publications in printed format-, as a way of limiting their reach. Other gender editors report the level of reviews and conditioning on the news they cover, in order to discourage them from reporting on certain topics.

Added to this is the lack of protocols to address gender-based violence within the newsroom, the absence of adequate prevention and assistance measures for women media workers who experience gender-based violence, the lack of spaces for effective reporting, as well as the lack of accompaniment and support for women journalists by the mass media when they are the target of massive and coordinated attacks on social networks due to their gender or due to the visibility of agendas related to the defense of the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people.

Since the Internet came to mediate almost all of our communication channels, the digital world functions as an extension of private life, in which many of the social patterns of behavior that we experience in the offline world are reproduced, including gender-based violence. Virtual reality has even profoundly transformed the dimensions of violence, since the digital world has opened a new space for violent content and behavior never seen before, which ultimately has repercussions to the detriment of the participation of journalists specialized in gender in the public sphere. The normalization of these facts gives rise to an organizational culture that discourages reporting and encourages the repetition of violence.

⁶ UNFPA. creation of the Argentine Gender Editors Network, November 24, 2021. The members of the gender network are: Marina Abiuso (TN/Artear), Carmen Amador (El Tribuno de Jujuy), Ingrid Beck (Letra P); Mariana Iglesias (Clarín); Laura Loncopán Berti (Río Negro newspaper); Julia López (Media System of the National University of Cuyo); Silvina Molina (Telam); Gabriela Pellegrini (Chaco TV and Radio Provincia); Clarise Sánchez Soloaga (República of Corrientes) and Gabriela Weller (Radio and Television Multimedia of the National University of Córdoba). Available for consultation at <https://argentina.unfpa.org/es/news/con-el-apoyo-de-unfpa-crean-la-primera-red-de-editoras-de-g%C3%A9nero>

Faced with this scenario of increased violence against women journalists and media workers who cover gender and diversity agendas, with the intention of delegitimizing feminist conquests and their spokespersons, in 2022 Amnesty International launched the first edition of *Voices that Transform*⁷ with the purpose of recognizing the crucial role that women journalists have in asserting the rights of women and LGBTI+ people, while it is noted that it is essential to support and support their work to guarantee the plurality of voices in the public debate.

b. Role of the State

The State has the duty to guarantee conditions of equality and non-discrimination in public debate, promote plurality of voices in the media and adopt public policies in accordance with international human rights law to combat the different manifestations of gender-based violence that journalists go through both inside and outside newsrooms, with the aim of silencing or dissuading them from reporting on certain topics.

On the other hand, it is essential that media companies be encouraged to develop protocols to deal with gender-based violence within the newsroom and that measures be adopted for assistance and legal advice for women media workers who experience gender-based violence.

Likewise, the State must produce disaggregated data and statistics that allow knowing the nature and dimension of gender-based violence against women journalists, both inside and outside the newsrooms, as well the violence committed, assisted and/or aggravated by the use of information and communication technologies, to guarantee greater efficiency in the design and implementation of action plans and policies for the prevention and eradication of violence.

On the other hand, it is essential to make progress in the development of study plans that include the

development of skills for the critical understanding of information and guidance on how to act and denounce speeches that incite hate and gender-based violence. Likewise, it is essential to have an education that promotes digital autonomy⁸, through digital and media literacy, and training in digital security, privacy, and online self-care tools.

Conclusion

Women journalists are crucial to raise awareness about the different forms of manifestation of gender-based violence, denormalize it, and combat it. This has been demonstrated by the involvement of women journalists in 2015 with the historic #NiUnaMenos mobilization, which marked a turning point in the demand for the rights of women and LGBTI+ people. It is they who, with their coverage, over the years have given a voice to thousands of women who put their health and lives at risk as a result of clandestine abortions. The work of women journalist was decisive for the consecration of the right to abortion in Argentina. But it is not possible to sustain the plurality of voices in the mass media and coverage with a gender perspective if measures are not adopted to combat the violence that women journalists suffer both inside and outside the newsroom.

The mass media, as key actors in the dissemination of information that allows positive social transformations in terms of gender equality and non-discrimination, have the responsibility to identify, prevent, combat, and be accountable of abuses against human rights, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In this sense, it is essential to develop protocols to address gender-based violence in newsrooms and adopt measures that help journalists to report gender-based violence without fear of reprisals.

When spaces that should be safe for freedom of expression become spaces in which gender-based violence against journalists and media workers is

⁷ Amnesty International Argentina. Launch of *Voices that Transform*. October 18, 2022. Available for consultation at: <https://amnistia.org.ar/vocesquetransforman-discurso-de-mariela-belski-directora-de-amnistia-internacional/>

⁸ UN. Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry, Repercussions of the digitization of education on the right to education, A/HRC/50/32. April 19, 2022.

exercised and naturalized, the degradation of our democracies is inevitable. Therefore, the State has the responsibility to promote adequate laws, action

plans, and policies for comprehensive protection and eradication of violence against women journalists both inside and outside the media.

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 ways, from murder, sexual violence, including sexual harassment to intimidation, abuse of power, and threats based on gender”¹⁴⁵. 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 sources of information in the public space but, on numerous occasions, it is perpetrated by colleagues and hierarchical superiors in the workplace.¹⁴⁶ In particular, a set 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 harassment¹⁴⁷ in newsrooms and/or inside the media.

In Argentina, of a total of 405 women journalists who participated in a survey carried out in 2019, 24% indicated that there had been cases of sexual abuse in their current workplace.¹⁴⁸ 28% indicated that sexual harassment is one of the main challenges faced by women jour-

nalists in the exercise of their profession.¹⁴⁹

In Brazil, 7 out of 10 journalists have heard comments or jokes of a sexual nature about women in their workplace and 9 out of 10 have heard jokes or comments with sexist content.¹⁵⁰ 77% of women 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).¹⁵¹

Brazilian women journalists also report situations of sexual harassment by their bosses, co-workers, or sources. In fact, 70% claim to be aware of situations of sexual harassment against female colleagues in the workplace by male colleagues or hierarchical superiors.¹⁵² 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.¹⁵³

In addition, of a group of more than 400 women journalists from all over the

¹⁴⁵ 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. December 31, 2013. Para. 251.

¹⁴⁶ 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. December 31, 2013. Para. 251. The RFOE cites different sources, including: CIMAC. Diagnostic report. Violencia contra mujeres periodistas. México 2010-2011. September 7, 2012. Page 11; Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). June 7, 2011. [El Crimen Silenciado: Violencia Sexual y Periodistas](#).

¹⁴⁷ The term sexual harassment includes sexual harassment that “occurs when a male or female worker is required to provide a sexual service, the acceptance or rejection of which will be decisive for the person who demands it to make a decision that is favorable or, on the contrary, detrimental to the employment status of the harassed person” and “all conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating work environment.” ILO. [Ending violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work](#). First edition 2017. Page 11.

¹⁴⁸ Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. [Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país](#). November 2018. Page 31.

¹⁴⁹ Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. [Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país](#). November 2018. Page 24.

¹⁵⁰ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro. 2017](#). Page 14.

¹⁵¹ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro. 2017](#). Page 18.

¹⁵² Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro. 2017](#). Page 17.

¹⁵³ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. [Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro. 2017](#). Page 16.

country who participated in survey carried out in 2017, 17% reported having been victims of acts of physical violence. 18% of them were assaulted by a hierarchical superior and 15% by a co-worker.¹⁵⁴

In Chile, women journalists point out that sexual harassment “is a normalized and invisible practice”¹⁵⁵ exercised in various areas, including newsrooms, by their own colleagues, editors and bosses, among other actors. Gender-based violence is also manifested through “nullification, mansplaining, men who disqualify or disapprove of the comments or work of their female colleagues.”¹⁵⁶

In Colombia, 60% of the 160 women journalists who participated in a study carried out by “No Es Hora De Callar” and the Democracy Observatory of the University of Los Andes in 2020 report having been victims of gender-based violence in workplace.¹⁵⁷ 79% of them reported that the aggressor had been a person with a higher position than theirs and 56% indicated that the violence had been carried out by male co-workers.¹⁵⁸ At the same time, 78% of Colombian women journalists are aware of situations

of gender violence against a female colleague.¹⁵⁹

Likewise, 23% of Colombian women journalists reported having been victims of sexual violence in their workplaces.¹⁶⁰ People in a higher position than the victim and male co-workers are the most frequent perpetrators.¹⁶¹

For their part, 67.1% of the 346 women journalists and communicators who participated in an online survey published in 2020 by the Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and the Karisma Foundation reported situations of sexual harassment¹⁶² and “a marked and recurrent tendency to sexualize women’s bodies”¹⁶³ at all times and in diverse physical and virtual spaces, including work groups in instant messaging applications.^v These practices are frequently exercised, validated and/or legitimized by people in leadership roles.¹⁶⁵

In the same sense, 73.4% of women who completed the same online survey reported having experienced one or more manifestations of psychological violence.¹⁶⁶ Based on these figures, the organizations conclude that “[the] psycholo-

¹⁵⁴ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 18.

¹⁵⁵ LATFEM. Chile: [periodistas organizadas contra el acoso sexual en medios](#). September 25, 2019.

¹⁵⁶ LATFEM. Chile: [periodistas organizadas contra el acoso sexual en medios](#). September 25, 2019.

¹⁵⁷ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. [Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. Page 9.

¹⁵⁸ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. [Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. Page 9.

¹⁵⁹ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. [Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. Page 9.

¹⁶⁰ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. [Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. Page 13.

¹⁶¹ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. [Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia](#). November 11, 2020. Page 14.

¹⁶² Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. *Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras*. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 21. 21.2% of the men who answered the survey reported this same type of violence. Id.

¹⁶³ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. *Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras*. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 21.

¹⁶⁴ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. *Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras*. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 21.

¹⁶⁵ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. *Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras*. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 21.

¹⁶⁶ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. *Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras*. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 18.

gical violence that is experienced in the exercise of journalism has a gender burden directly connected to the fact of being a woman. Control over what is said (or cannot be said) and the female body is the preferential reason for exercising violence.¹⁶⁷

In this context, in 2017, the Colombian Network of Journalists with a 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 harassment behaviors in the journalistic exercise early and prevent situations of gender violence. In addition, [it hoped] that people who recognize themselves as victims could file complaints.”¹⁶⁸

In Ecuador, 25% of women journalist report having experienced situations of workplace harassment by a male journalist who held a position of superior.¹⁶⁹ Situations of harassment are more frequent among women who have less professional experience or are less recognized.¹⁷⁰

In the United States, during 2017, the media disclosed a series of complaints about acts of sexual harassment and violence allegedly committed by renowned journalists and media executives,

inside and outside the workplace.¹⁷¹ In said country, the #MeToo movement contributed to creating the conditions for journalists and media workers, and other groups of women from different countries, to make visible the situations of gender-based violence that they experience in different areas of their professional, work, or academic life.¹⁷²

In this sense, in 2019, Mexican journalists used social networks to publicize 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 denounced acts are perpetrated by “male reporters who take advantage of the spaces of coexistence with their female colleagues, inside or outside the newsroom, to touch them, try to kiss them, or convince them to have sexual relations. In other cases, men take advantage of spaces of trust to try to corner their female colleagues to go out together, and in other cases, male reporters who have been in the business longer and offer to help younger women in exchange for sexual relations or erotic games.

The testimonies have also denounced practices of workplace violence, con-

¹⁶⁷ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. *Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras*. Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation. March 2021. Page 19.

¹⁶⁸ Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision. *Periodistas sin acoso*. February 9, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Powerful Girls Ecuador. *Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. November 2020. Page 36.

¹⁷⁰ Powerful Girls Ecuador. *Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. November 2020. Page 36.

¹⁷¹ The New York Times. April 19, 2017. *Bill O'Reilly Is Forced Out at Fox News*; El País. April 20, 2017. *La Fox despide a su presentador estrella, Bill O'Reilly, tras varias denuncias por acoso sexual*; CBS. No date. *CBS News suspends Charlie Rose over sexual misconduct allegations (VIDEO)*; CNN. November 21, 2017. *CBS despide a periodista Charlie Rose tras 8 denuncias de acoso sexual*.

¹⁷² UN Women. *Cronograma: igualdad de género. Resumen del año 2017*; New York Times. April 16, 2018. *New York Times and New Yorker Share Pulitzer for Public Service*.

¹⁷³ CIMAC. *Periodistas mexicanas rompen silencio ante acoso sexual en medios*. March 25, 2019.

tempt for the work of female reporters and practices that make women journalists uncomfortable, such as their colleagues viewing pornography in the workplace, greeting them by trying to kiss them on the lips, or sending them messages of texts with sexual content, among others.”¹⁷³

In line with these testimonies, a study carried out 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.¹⁷⁴ These attacks are carried out by “their male colleagues, both immediate bosses and co-workers from the media where they work, as well as from other media.”¹⁷⁵ This means that, for many women, “[the] newsroom [is] the first area from which risks, vulnerability, and the feeling of abandonment arise.”¹⁷⁶

Similarly, in Nicaragua, journalists point out: “sexual harassment by bosses, colleagues and sources makes our work more difficult; when they are rejected, they take offense and try to sabotage you.”¹⁷⁷ In Honduras, journalists have reported similar situations of sexual harassment in the workplace and passive and/or aggressive and disqualifying responses to complaints.¹⁷⁸

In relation to online violence against women,¹⁷⁹ a study carried out by the Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and the Karisma Foundation in Colombia “confirmed that sexist violence in the exercise of the profession occurs in a continuum between analog and digital spaces.”¹⁸⁰ According to these organizations, the various forms and manifestations of violence that were reported by the women journalists and communicators who participated in the investigation “continually cross the borders of analog and digital, often without even being able to be distinguished. For example, many female journalists and communicators frequently cited WhatsApp as one of the most common means for male supervisors, colleagues, sources, and advertisers to harass them.”¹⁸¹

Women journalists and communicators from other countries in the region have reported similar patterns of violence or harassment by people with whom they share newsrooms or workspaces. In this sense, they emphasize “how frustrating it is to see that the violence comes from the very newsrooms of the media for which one works and from the same colleagues; It is such a normalized form of

¹⁷³ CIMAC. [Periodistas mexicanas rompen silencio ante acoso sexual en medios](#). March 25, 2019.

¹⁷⁴ United Mexican Journalists Collective. [AcosoDATA. Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México](#). March 2019. Page 5.

¹⁷⁵ Collective of Security Analysis with Democracy. [Informe Libertad de Expresión en México 2020](#). July 2020. Page 19.

¹⁷⁶ Collective of Security Analysis with Democracy. [Informe Libertad de Expresión en México 2020](#). July 2020. Page 24.

¹⁷⁷ Ceroseenta. [8M: Esto es ser periodista y mujer en Latinoamérica](#). September 6, 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Informative Plane. March 8, 2018. [Periodistas enfrentan violencia de género y desigualdad laboral](#).

¹⁷⁹ Online violence against women has been understood as “any act of gender-based violence against women committed, assisted, or aggravated in part or in whole by the use of ICT communications technologies, such as mobile phones and smartphones, the Internet and social networks, platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately” UN. Human Rights Council. A/HRC/38/47: [Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective](#). A/HRC/38/47. June 18, 2018. Para. 23.

¹⁸⁰ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. [Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras. Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 26.

¹⁸¹ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. [Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras. R Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 26.

violence that it is subtle and that is why it happens without much surprise.”¹⁸² It has been pointed out that “this type of violence has the same intentions of silencing and diverting the work of the people attacked. In addition, it puts the victims [and survivors] in the position of knowing that if they report they could lose their job and put their safety at risk due to the level of normalization of violence they experience within the medium.”¹⁸³

As a consequence of the high prevalence of acts 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 workplace, or they are forced to make decisions that result in an involuntary transformation of their professional career.

In Colombia, 3 out of 10 women journalists who were part of a thematic study carried out in 2020 revealed that “they have had to leave work spaces due to situations of gender-based violence.”¹⁸⁴ In Mexico, of a total of 284 journalists whose experiences were surveyed in

2019, 61% indicated that violence had an impact on their job performance. When describing this impact they pointed out: “I had to quit my job because I felt very uncomfortable’, ‘It has made me rethink continuing to work in that place, since I couldn’t feel calm’, ‘You stop acting freely, you try not to call for attention ‘inappropriately’, you have low profile so that they let you work and they don’t harass you’, ‘It has led me to think if I am really good at doing my job’, ‘I have inevitably thought that if I don’t see myself or act more like those bosses or colleagues have ‘suggested’, I will not continue advancing in my career’.”¹⁸⁵

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 human rights approach into their work.”¹⁸⁶

In order to help “mitigate exhaustion and trauma and, consequently, self-censorship”¹⁸⁷ in the exercise of journalistic activity and other “high-risk work fields,”¹⁸⁸ the Guardian Project and ARTICLE 19 developed *Círculo*, a secure digital network that “provides a safe way for people to communicate with each other in their networks and communities when facing and challenging harassment and violence.”¹⁸⁹ According to the organizations involved in its development, this tool was built in a participatory manner, collecting the experience, needs, and concerns of women and journalists and communicators, and it is hoped that they “become part of the comprehensive security protocols and tools that allow women journalists to reduce the risks related to their work.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² Sandra Chaher, Lina Cuellar. Ser periodista en Twitter : violencia de género digital en América Latina. *Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones, Sentido, UNESCO. 2020*. Page 50.

¹⁸³ Sandra Chaher, Lina Cuellar. Ser periodista en Twitter : violencia de género digital en América Latina. *Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones, Sentido, UNESCO. 2020*. Page 50.

¹⁸⁴ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. *Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia*. November 11, 2020. Page 28.

¹⁸⁵ United Mexican Journalists Collective. *AcosoDATA. Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México*. March 2019. Page 16.

¹⁸⁶ LATFEM. Chile: *periodistas organizadas contra el acoso sexual en medios*. September 25, 2019.

¹⁸⁷ Information available at <https://encirculo.org/es/>

¹⁸⁸ Information available at <https://encirculo.org/es/>

¹⁸⁹ Information available at <https://encirculo.org/es/>

¹⁹⁰ Information provided by the Guardian Project and ARTICLE 19 in the framework of the consultation for the preparation of the RFOE reference document on progress, challenges, and recommendations for the prevention of violence and the fight against discrimination against women journalists.



The role of the media in eradicating and addressing gender-based violence and/or discrimination in the newsroom: progress and challenges

Comments to Chapter III.

By Luba Kassova ✨

Co-founder and director of Addy Kassova Audience Strategy Ltd.

Chapter III of the Progress, Challenges and Recommendations to Prevent Violence and Combat Discrimination against Women Journalists report uncovers the extraordinary level of ineffectiveness, complacency and at times complicity, that news media in the Americas exhibits when it comes to protecting women journalists against violence directed at them. Moreover, the chapter strongly conveys “a concern over the failure of many media companies to adopt internal protocols or rules that adequately guarantee the rights of women journalists...” We may ask ourselves whether this significant challenge is confined to the region, or whether it is global in nature. In this commentary I have taken a step back to examine the prevalence and trends of violence against women journalists globally; the root causes of this; and how effectively the news industry as a whole and news organizations individually mitigate it. To learn about existing trailblazing and effective mitigation interventions against some forms of violence, I spoke with two experts and a global newsroom leader.

Violence against women journalists is a global, pervasive, growing, and unresolved problem. The figures are daunting: just under three in ten women globally have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime; four in ten women journalists have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace; and seven in ten women journalists have been subjected to online violence in the course of their work.

Being female significantly exacerbates the threat of violence, particularly for those from a racial, ethnic, or religious minority (although worryingly the news industry does not measure the impact of intersecting identities systematically). Filipino Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa, Indian Rana Ayyub¹, and British Carole Cadwalladr are examples of three high profile investigative journalists who have been subject to vicious organized online campaigns of violence, with not only their journalistic credibility, but also their gender, sexuality and/or religion coming under attack. “If you look at the example of Rana Ayyub in India, a man would have never been subjected to the level of trolling that she is... The level of misogyny that comes out in the attack on women journalists, the threats, the violence - it’s always rape, it’s always sexual violence that’s being threatened - the trolling and the abuse of journalists is definitely gendered,” commented a senior editor in India whom I interviewed for the forthcoming sequel to The Missing Perspectives of Women in News report. This new report will highlight the safety gap between women and men as one of the most important gender gaps that adversely affects women journalists, with online and offline threats and acts of violence converging to form a destructive force that rampages through every aspect of their lives, constraining their ability to endorse democracy through their work. In the words of Xanthe Scharff, CEO and co-founder of The Fuller Project, a global women-led newsroom dedicated to reporting on women’s issues: “Attacks on women journalists are attacks on women, and an effort to silence their voices, perspectives, and power.”

¹Rana Ayyub is a prominent Indian Muslim journalist who has been subject to a sustained ongoing and brutal campaign of personal intimidation and abuse on account of her work in publicizing allegedly state-sponsored mistreatment of the Muslim community in India and corruption in the Modi administration

Though rarely examined through multiple lenses simultaneously, the issue of violence against women journalists is enabled on three levels: the societal/industry-wide, organizational and individual.

Consequently, a short-to-medium term reduction, and the long-term eradication of this violence demands action on all three levels. As emphasized in Chapter III of the SRFOE report, the efforts of society (e.g. governments and state institutions) are falling significantly short, as are those of the journalism industry and news leaders. At the heart of the issue lie male-favoring social norms which permeate every level of society. At a societal level they reside in structures, institutions, and laws, or the lack thereof. At an industry level, they manifest in journalistic standards and values that implicitly favor men. At an organizational level, male-favoring norms are endemic in newsroom culture, company policies, processes, and leadership values. And at an individual level, they crystallize in the form of unconscious bias, gender blindness, overt or covert sexism, lack of confidence to report violence, victim blaming, internalized shame and self-blame. Kiran Nazish, Founding Director of the Coalition for Women in Journalism, argues that “Structural issues call for a structural response” but observes a real deficit of action in this area. The evidence I examine suggests that inadequate efforts are also being made at organizational and individual levels. The result is women suffering extraordinarily high and lasting mental and/or physical damage, that frequently drives them out of journalism altogether.

The research that AKAS conducted for The Missing Perspectives of Women in News sequel report revealed a close relationship between the strength of male-favoring norms in a country and the level of violence against women in that country. This was corroborated in a conversation with Julie Posetti – Global Director of Research at ICFJ – who revealed that the strength of news organizations’ preventative or reactive response to combatting

violence against women journalists is also dependent on the strength of the male-favoring social norms in a country. In other words, **women journalists in more male-revering/female-repressing cultures are experiencing double jeopardy: they are more likely to experience violence and less likely to get support for it.**

The problem of violence against women journalists has been growing in recent years.

Almost all journalists (between 82% and 99%) in South Africa, the UK, Kenya, the US, and India believe that the influence of social media has grown progressively stronger.² The evidence that social media is an amplifier of online violence is irrefutable. Social media platforms enable violence at scale through allowing organized trolling groups to weaponize them against women journalists.³ This has impacted the rapidly declining feeling of safety among women journalists, with most women journalists (85% in a recent survey in the US and Canada) feeling less safe now than five years ago. Furthermore, CPJ, who conducted the survey, and ICFJ, a thought leader in the space, whose research I have also quoted here, in 2019 had assessed the response of journalism organizations as deficient, a judgement echoed by the SRFOE in this report.

Despite the increase in violence against women journalists, the problem remains unresolved because of insufficient action at a structural, organizational, and individual level.

Chapter III of the report concludes that many media organizations in the Americas have not yet adopted, let alone implemented, actions to combat violence and discrimination against women journalists. For example, the report noted that in Argentina most news organizations do not recognize the need to put in place measures, such as a Gender Office, to prevent or mitigate violence against women journalists. As part of my recent research for the third Missing Perspectives report, I asked 23 senior

²Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Ramaprasad, J., & de Beer, A. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Worlds of journalism: Journalistic cultures around the globe*. Columbia University Press.

³Posetti, J., Simon, F., Shabbir, N. (2019). *What if Scale Breaks Community? Rebooting Audience Engagement When Journalism is Under Fire*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism with the support of the Facebook Journalism Project.

news leaders from four countries in the global south and two in the global north about the most common stories of exclusion they had heard from women news leaders. 1 in 5 highlighted the burden that women bear due to the misogyny and harassment that exist inside and outside the newsroom. Posetti argues that in “many, if not most newsrooms, even recognizing violence against women journalists as a serious, structural issue, and as a workplace safety issue, still lags”. This can be attributed in part to the existing cultural norms in society as well as to those in newsrooms: a lower likelihood of putting emphasis on gender-based harm exists across both, which explains the significant gap of 48 percentage points between women journalists who experience online violence (73%) and those who report it (25%). Various research studies quoted in Chapter III, as well as other global ones, have shone a light on the different barriers that deter women from reporting violence. As evidenced in Chapter III, news organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico, often simply do not provide the necessary support, whether in the form of internal policies, rules, awareness campaigns, dedicated staff mentors or safe spaces. It is a common belief in news organizations that it is for the individual rather than the organization to resolve the problem. Or worse, violence against women is “normalized”, as in the case reported in Ecuador, where women journalists who have been subjected to violence, are being asked to work alongside the perpetrators or are used as an instrument for extracting more information from them. Personal experience leads women journalists to fear that organizations would

A UNESCO-ICFJ global survey revealed that only 14% of journalists knew of their employer issuing guidelines or having a policy in place on how to handle online violence. According to Nazish, between 80% and 90% of reported cases of violence in newsrooms globally receive no response from their newsroom “in terms of support and at times even acknowledgement”. As reported in Chapter III, survey findings from countries in South America confirm this trend. In Argentina only 10% of the surveyed women journalists identified the existence

of a designated area for addressing sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination in their workplace. Similarly, in Brazil and Colombia only 30% and 24% reported being aware of any formal mechanisms for the protection of women journalists in their organization. In Mexico, a substantial majority of the surveyed women journalists (76%) reported there being no protective measures in place in their companies.

not support them, which acts as a further deterrent to reporting violence. In addition, the prevalent social norm of victim-blaming attaches a career-threatening stigma to an experience of violence, compounding feelings of shame, as has been reported in Ecuador. Finally, journalists are taught not to be the story, which inhibits their inclination to report any incidents that make them the story protagonist. Furthermore, the headline-centric rather than human-centric values prevalent in newsrooms, which often manifest in competition rather than compassion, demand that journalists keep going in the face of any challenges. And keep going they do. As a senior female political editor from the global south explained in a recent interview: “The advice that we had was: ‘Grin and bear it’ or just: ‘It is what it is.’”

Making progress requires tackling systems, norms, the industry, news organizations, and individual behaviors. There are success stories, but a lot more needs to be done.

I asked Posetti and Nazish for their recommendations for eradicating violence against journalists. Posetti saw slow improvement, noting that “women-led newsrooms tend to be among those doing more, and reacting more quickly, than those that are still heavily dominated by male executives”. Having studied Rappler’s response to the organized and ongoing online violence campaign against Maria Ressa, she observed the organization’s ad hoc but nimble response: “They set up convergent responses such as psychological support, social care, digital security improvements and workflow changes.” The Editor-in-Chief of the all-women

newsroom Khabar Lahariya in India emphasized the importance of preparation and planning in keeping reporters and sources safe. Scharff also shared The Fuller Project's approach to protecting its female-dominated newsroom: "Our team has undergone Duty of Care training, which looks holistically across physical safety, digital security, legal, and emotional wellbeing of our reporters and team. This program was specifically developed by Global Press. Ahead of assignments, our security assessment process is geared to surface risks to our reporters, prompt discussion and mitigation strategies, and consider whether or not we are the right news organization to report the story given the known risks."

Collaboration is the key to systemic change at an industry level. Canada is making strides.

Nazish emphasizes that collaboration between newsrooms across countries is "compulsory" in advocating for the protection of women journalists. "This is something we have experimented within our advocacy work in Turkey, Bangladesh, Ireland, Pakistan by signing on multiple international news organizations in our campaign to protect journalists in these countries, and it has always led to improved circumstances for the journalists. This collaborative effort would almost definitely result in a stronger ecosystem of support for women journalists." Posetti singled out Canada as a country where the industry is making strides in tackling violence against women journalists. Commercial and public media networks across all media platforms have developed an industry-wide response to this problem, which Posetti assesses as significant. They have combined research, activism, and learning, through conferences, training and facilitated conversations. Industry awards for women journalists are proving an unexpected way of mitigating to some degree the threats contained in the online abuse of journalists by raising their professional and personal profile and helping them raise funds.

Bringing about change at an organizational level requires formal recording and support systems. Reach in the UK are trailblazing at an organizational level.

UK's Reach has hired Rebecca Whittington as online safety editor - the first such role - to tackle the problem of online violence at an organizational and structural level, working with social media platforms. Her efforts include a change in culture to reassure journalists that they should not accept violent threats as part of their job; a new reporting system allowing systematic recording and clustering of all reported cases by type; a support network for affected journalists; and a program of collaboration with Meta and Twitter to reduce online violence and train journalists how to navigate the platforms. Nazish also emphasized the importance of introducing a formal system to document attacks and an internal newsroom stand-by support group to improve its effectiveness in combatting violence against women journalists.

Violence against women and women journalists is so endemic that news organizations must tackle it at structural, industry and organizational levels in partnership with governments, other news organizations, international organizations and the third sector. As identified in the forthcoming Missing Perspectives report, it is necessary that news organizations introduce both industry-wide and company-specific initiatives that support individual women's psychological and physical safety and wellbeing to mitigate the profound damage that online threats or physical violence is causing women. Action-oriented reports such as the SRFOE and IACHR's Progress, Challenges and Recommendations to Prevent Violence and Combat Discrimination Against Women Journalists report provide an important platform for learning and collaboration, as well as solutions for combatting the unbearably high levels of violence against women in journalism.

As the Office of the Special Rapporteur has pointed out, “although the obligations to prevent, protect, and investigate are an international responsibility for States, it is undeniable that there are other actors of great relevance in the protection of journalists at risk, especially in those areas in which the risk is greater due to the characteristics of the context, as is the case of silenced areas”¹⁹¹. In this sense, the media have a decisive role in guaranteeing the protection of journalists and other workers.¹⁹² In particular, the report “Women journalists and freedom of expression” highlights that “the media should adopt measures to guarantee the safety of women journalists against gender-based risks.”¹⁹³

In this context, in the aforementioned report, this Office expressed its concern at the omission of many communication companies to adopt protocols or internal rules that adequately guarantee the rights of women journalists and media workers who experience situations of gender-based violence in their workplace.¹⁹⁴ In this sense, the Office of the Special Rapporteur described that “in the Americas, internal ‘mediation’ mechanisms continue to prevail instead of effective remedies that allow the protection of the victim and establishing

responsibilities for the perpetrator. Sexual harassment from a source is generally trivialized. This lack of protection for the victim generates impunity, sends a negative message to women journalists that can incite more violence against them and leads to silencing.”¹⁹⁵

In order to contribute in eradicating these practices, the Office of the Special Rapporteur considered that the media should “[establish] internal policies with specific provisions on gender-based violence and discrimination, with emphasis on workplace and sexual harassment.”¹⁹⁶ It also pointed out that “there should be internal procedures and independent reporting and accountability mechanisms that guarantee the rights of women journalists and all parties involved.”¹⁹⁷

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, the resolution on “violence against women journalists” adopted at the mid-year meeting held virtually in April 2021 stands out. There, the IAPA indicates that: i) it condemns cases of violence against women

¹⁹¹ IACHR. Annual Report 2016. Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. Chapter IV (“Silenced Zones: highly dangerous areas for the exercise freedom of expression”). OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc. 22/17. March 15, 2017. Page 319.

¹⁹² IACHR. Annual Report 2016. Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. Chapter IV (“Silenced Zones: highly dangerous areas for the exercise freedom of expression”). OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc. 22/17. March 15, 2017. Page 319. See also UN. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). International Program for the Development of Communication. UN 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 issue of impunity. Resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1. November 13, 2017. UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. 2012.

¹⁹³ IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 135.

¹⁹⁴ IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 136.

¹⁹⁵ IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 136.

¹⁹⁶ IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 subparagraph c).

¹⁹⁷ IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 137, citing UN Women and United Nations Global Compact Office. Women’s Empowerment Principles. 2011.

journalists: ii) it requests journalistic companies to eliminate all types of gender differentiation in terms of benefits and rights, encouraging them to improve protocols against workplace sexual harassment, ensuring an environment free of harassment, in such a way that the safety of women journalists is also guaranteed through self-protection guides and specialized training, and iii) exhort the States, the journalistic union, and the media of the continent to undertake actions under the dimension of the current debate that is opening a new agenda for the respect of the rights of women in all fields.

In line with these recommendations, at least thirteen media groups from Latin America and the Caribbean and twenty-one media from North America¹⁹⁸ have already adhered to UN Women's "UN Women Media Compact". The Pact encourages the media to make progress so that "[t]hrough gender-responsive decision-making, it can enable equality in the newsrooms by ensuring women journalists are given similar opportunities as their male colleagues and can cover diverse subjects from politics to business, science, sports, and technology, while encouraging male journalists to also cover diverse issues, including women's rights and gender equality stories" and "[to] ensure women journalists are provided mentors and guidance for career advancement",¹⁹⁹ among other measures.¹⁰⁴ Despite this progress, the information outlined in the preceding sections

suggests that many media companies have not yet adopted and/or implemented effective actions to address gender-based violence and discrimination that women journalists and media workers must face in the newsrooms. Recent research on the subject and the testimonies of women journalists and media workers themselves confirm this trend.

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 realize the need to take measures to prevent and eradicate these discriminatory and violent logics."²⁰⁰ In particular, "most companies do not have a Gender Office or Area; nor of a specific sector for the resolution of problems of gender-based violence and/or workplace and sexual harassment and abuse. Only large companies (listed on the stock exchange and due to pressure from shareholders) and the media belonging to civil society organizations have areas to address gender-based issues and concerns about this workspace dimension."²⁰¹

A study carried out 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 aimed at dealing with situations of gender-based sexual harassment or discrimination. In most cases, this is dealt from the Human Resources area of the company, without there being a specific gender area.²⁰²

198 UN Women. [UN Women Media Compact partners](#). No date.

199 UN Women. UN Women Media Compact. No date. 200 Virginia Pedraza, Women in the workplace of the media, in Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ¿hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?, compiled by Sandra Chaher, Communication for Equality Editions, 2018, page 68.

201 World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, ALC Communication, FUNDEPS, Communication for Equality. [Informe Nacional Argentina](#). 2019. Page 1.

202 Argentine Journalism Forum. Mujeres periodistas en la Argentina. [Situación laboral y rol profesional de las comunicadoras en el país](#). November 2018. Page 31.

The results of this study were summarized in the “Protocol for the Prevention of gender violence”²⁰³ of the Tripartite Communication Commission of the province of Córdoba, which is made up of the Ministry of Labor, employers, and the press union of the province of Córdoba. The protocol, adopted in 2018, was developed in order to “establish common procedures for prevention, assistance, and protection for women in the media throughout the province of Córdoba.”²⁰⁴

The document provides that women in situations of gender-based violence “will have the right to request a license for gender-based violence.”²⁰⁵ They will also “have the alternative of being able to attend an office separate from their places of work to make their inquiries to preserve their identity and privacy. There they will receive the necessary attention and primary care.”²⁰⁶

Regarding the approach to reports of violence, the protocol establishes that “companies will have the obligation to open internal administrative proceedings with the intervention of the [Trade Union Circle of the Press and Communication of Córdoba], if so ordered by the victim”²⁰⁷ and to apply direct sanctions to the aggressors. Regarding 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 their post.

The Protocol also establishes that the press union, together with the companies, must elect a gender delegate in each of the communication media. 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 for those who consider themselves harmed by some of the types of violence.”²⁰⁸

Regarding the progress made and the pending challenges in other countries, in Brazil, 55% of the 477 journalists who participated in a study carried out in 2017 reported that the media outlet where they worked had a gender policy. These policies or actions included awareness campaigns on sexual harassment, equal employment opportunities for men and women, a lactation room, daycare centers, and extended maternity leave, among others.²⁰⁹

Concerning the approach to situations of gender-based violence, 50% indicated that their company had not adopted adequate measures to protect the safety of journalists and only 30% reported that the company where they worked had implemented complaint mechanisms for situations of gender-based violence or discrimination. Among the latter, only a minority of them defined these channels as “adequate and effective.”²¹⁰

²⁰³ Other protocols in force in Argentina are: the “Protocolo de Acción en casos de Violencia Laboral para Trabajadoras de Medios de Comunicación”, adopted by the Tucumán Press Association in 2019; the Protocolo de actuación ante casos de violencia de género hacia las mujeres y disidencias of the Santa Fe Press Association.

²⁰⁴ Trade Union Circle of the Press and Communication of Córdoba. [Protocolo de prevención para empresas periodísticas](#). September 13, 2019.

²⁰⁵ Trade Union Circle of the Press and Communication of Córdoba. [Protocolo de prevención para empresas periodísticas](#). September 13, 2019. A similar measure was adopted in 2018 by the newspaper La Mañana of the province of Formosa. ADEPA. [La Mañana de Formosa implementa políticas contra la violencia de género](#). August 14, 2018.

²⁰⁶ Trade Union Circle of the Press and Communication of Córdoba. [Protocolo de prevención para empresas periodísticas](#). September 13, 2019.

²⁰⁷ Trade Union Circle of the Press and Communication of Córdoba. [Protocolo de prevención para empresas periodísticas](#). September 13, 2019.

²⁰⁸ Trade Union Circle of the Press and Communication of Córdoba. [Protocolo de prevención para empresas periodísticas](#). September 13, 2019.

²⁰⁹ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 20.

In this context, when addressed, situations of harassment are resolved through “informal channels and personal relationships.”²¹¹ However, as a rule, these forms of violence are minimized and covered up and women are required to “review their own behaviour”²¹² or learn to deal with these situations. This translates into very low levels (15%) of formal reporting of situations of harassment in the workplace.²¹³

In Chile, women journalists also point out that “there is still a lot of resistance within newsrooms regarding the need to train on gender issues.”²¹⁴ In particular, they denounce that “disinformation persists regarding 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-based violence against women.”²¹⁵ In this context, the Chilean journalists point out: “sometimes the harassment is confronted, other times it is evaded and there are times when uncomfortable smiles are held.”²¹⁶

In Colombia, according to an investigation carried out in 2020, “only 23.8% of the journalists surveyed believe that their workspace has spaces to receive support in situations of gender-based violence.”²¹⁷ 29% believe that

the medium has spaces for reporting. In addition, only 4 out of 10 journalists believe that “the medium in which they work encourages reporting sexual harassment or abuse.”²¹⁸ In this context, the general conclusion reached by Colombian journalists is that “the media do not have, for the most part, adequate reporting and support spaces.”²¹⁹

In Ecuador, women journalists point out 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 perpetrated by a boss, a colleague, or a source, “instead of supporting the victim and taking measures to stop these situations, at most they issue a warning, the woman is required to continue her work with her aggressor, and is even asked to exploit the situation in her favor and thus obtain any information that is required.”²²⁰ Consequently, many women journalists feel that they could be harmed or put their careers at risk if they make a complaint about situations of harassment or violence.

In Mexico, although progress has been reported,²²¹ 76% of the 392 Mexican women journalists who participated in a survey carried out in 2019 indicated that “in their companies there is no type of campaign, course or

²¹¹ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 19.

²¹² Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 19.

²¹³ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. *Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. 2017. Page 20.

²¹⁴ Women in the media. *Este 8M periodistas feministas nos sumamos a la huelga*. March 8, 2019.

²¹⁵ González Díaz, Nataly. *#DíaInternacional Periodista: Periodismo Feminista Para Erradicar las Desigualdades de Género*. September 8, 2020.

²¹⁶ LATFEM. *Chile: periodistas organizadas contra el acoso sexual en medios*. September 25, 2019.

²¹⁷ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. *Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia*. November 11, 2020. Page 25.

²¹⁸ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. *Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia*. November 11, 2020. Page 25.

²¹⁹ Campaign “No Es Hora De Callar” and Observatory of Democracy of the University of Los Andes. *Violencia en contra de las mujeres periodistas en Colombia*. November 11, 2020. Page 26.

action to raise staff awareness about harassment and sexual harassment”²²² and 56% reported that “in their media there are no specialized mechanisms or protocols to file complaints for cases of harassment or sexual assault”.²²³ This situation discourages reporting, to the point that “[only] 18% of women who have experienced a situation of bullying, harassment, or sexual assault in their media have made a complaint within their companies.”²²⁴

When they manage to overcome these institutional barriers and report acts of violence, women journalists and media workers find that their complaints are not addressed effectively. 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 not

On the other hand, the IACHR has highlighted the role that the media can play in disseminating campaigns and, in general, communication strategies, aimed at transforming social perceptions and gender stereotypes,²²⁶ thus contributing to combat discrimination against women.

²²⁰ GAMAG. *Situación de las mujeres en los medios de comunicación y en las TICs*. September 2019. Page 2.

²²¹ For example, TV Azteca has established a Gender Unit dedicated to “receiving and reviewing cases in which practices of violence, harassment, and discrimination are reported within the company, with the aim of strengthening an environment free of violence through sensitization of all collaborators. Among the services provided by the Gender Unit, the following are listed: attention to complaints of workplace violence, awareness of issues of workplace violence, prevention strategies for workplace violence, development of communication and dissemination campaigns against workplace violence, emotional support for those who work here.” Grupo Salinas. Primer aniversario de la Unidad de Género de TV Azteca. No date.

²²² United Mexican Journalists Collective. AcosoDATA. *Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México*. March 2019. Page 6.

²²³ United Mexican Journalists Collective. AcosoDATA. *Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México*. March 2019. Page 6.

²²⁴ United Mexican Journalists Collective. AcosoDATA. *Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México*. March 2019. Page 6.

²²⁵ United Mexican Journalists Collective. AcosoDATA. *Sondeo sobre acoso, hostigamiento y violencia sexual contra las mujeres que trabajan en medios periodísticos en México*. March 2019. Page 6.

²²⁶ IACHR. Violence and discrimination against women and girls. *Standards and recommendations*, Annex 1. OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 233 November 14, 2019, Para. 55



IV

conclusion and recommendations

The information outlined in this report reveals that, although progress has been made, a significant number of women continue to face barriers in accessing the media based on gender bias. When they succeed, they find that many newsrooms are a hostile space in which they cannot practice journalism on equal terms with their male peers due to generalized patterns of vertical and horizontal segregation, salary gaps, job insecurity, discrimination against women who perform caregiving roles, and other forms of intersectional discrimination.

In many newsrooms, there is also a high prevalence of situations of violence and/or sexual harassment, among other forms of gender-based violence. Far from being addressed from a gender perspective, these practices are frequently normalized, which gives rise to an organizational

culture that discourages reporting and encourages the repetition of these acts.

The fact that many media outlets have not yet made substantial progress in developing policies and/or strategies to address these patterns of violence and discrimination contributes to their perpetuation and/or prevents their correct approach. In this framework, a set of guidelines are developed below -which compile many of the recommendations raised by women journalists and media workers themselves- that aspire to contribute to deepening the progress achieved and effectively address the challenges that still persist to guarantee that women journalists and media workers can carry out their work in newsrooms free from all forms of violence and discrimination.

a. Recommendations for the adoption of internal policies to promote gender equity and address gender-based violence and discrimination

As already noted, 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 in workplace and sexual Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression | RFOE 60 | Women journalists and newsrooms. Progress, challenges, and recommendations to prevent violence

and to fight against discrimination| harassment.”²²⁷ These policies must be designed with the active participation of women who work in each of the companies.²²⁸

Transversality of the commitment to gender equality: several recent investigations on the subject highlight that the policies implemented by the media must be developed in such a way as to transmit the message that gender

IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: **Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession.** OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 176 subparagraph c).
228 IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: **Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession.** OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 137.

equality is a key and transversal strategic objective for the entire organization.²²⁹ To this end, its adoption must be accompanied by measures that guarantee the equal representation of men and women in the management bodies of the company and an explicit stance of those who occupy these roles regarding their commitment to the issue.²³⁰

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 is sought to achieve them and the term in which it is aspired to do so.²³¹ In particular, it has been recommended that the policy define the period in which the company seeks to eliminate gender pay gaps, achieve gender parity in newsrooms, eliminate the underrepresentation of women in the coverage of certain topics, achieve equal representation in hierarchical positions, and ensure equal hiring conditions between men and women.²³²

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 persons, Afro-descendant women and indigenous women, women with disabilities, among other groups, face within the media.²³³ Strategies to promote the effective implementation of policies on gender equality: it has been highlighted that companies must designate a person directly responsible for the implementation of these policies and that this designation must fall on someone who plays a hierarchy role within the organization. In addition, there must be participatory mechanisms that allow continuous monitoring and evaluation of the progress and pending challenges in meeting the planned goals.²³⁴

In this sense, women journalists and media workers have pointed out that “newsrooms must organize groups to monitor gender diversity in the newsroom; this group must have a direct communication channel with the management of the media outlet and the duty of preparing periodic reports with analysis of the composition of the newsroom, to guide possible new hires.”²³⁵ This is so because they consider “it is important that there be discussions in the media, that figures be raised, that the figures be known, and that measures can be taken.”²³⁶

²²⁹ Padovani, Claudia. Media gender equality regimes. In World Association for Christian Communication- WACC, Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media—A holistic agenda. 2018. Page 13.

²³⁰ Kassova, Luba. The Missing Perspectives of Women in News. International Women’s Media Foundation. November 2020. Page 81.

²³¹ Kassova, Luba. The Missing Perspectives of Women in News. International Women’s Media Foundation. November 2020. Page 29.

²³² Kassova, Luba. The Missing Perspectives of Women in News. International Women’s Media Foundation. November 2020. Page 80.

²³³ In this sense, the UN Standards of Conduct for Business to tackle LGBTI discrimination, promoted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights “highlight the permanent responsibility of companies to respect human rights of these people, the responsibility to eliminate discrimination, provide support to their LGBTI staff in the workplace, pay attention to the impacts and effects that their business relationships or their products or services generate on LGBTI people, as well as to contribute to eliminating such abuses from their role within the community acting publicly in support of these people.” IACHR. Business and Human Rights Report: Inter-American Standards. November 1, 2019.

OEA/Ser.L/V/II IACHR/REDESCA/INF.1/19. Para. 385.

²³⁴ Kassova, Luba. The Missing Perspectives of Women in News. International Women’s Media Foundation. November 2020. Page 29.

²³⁵ Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro. 2017. Page 25. Our translation.

²³⁶ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador. November 2020. Page 41.

The conformation of these follow-up groups and/or spaces for participation must 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 must promote the conformation of diverse teams without limiting the participation of women and sexually diverse people, or people of color.”²³⁷

Capacity-building: As the Office of the Special Rapporteur pointed out in the report “Women journalists and freedom of expression”, at the same time as policies on gender equality are adopted within media companies, it is also important to develop “systematic capacity-building

actions for all personnel working in the media regarding the content and scope of these provisions, in order to promote full respect for these policies.”²³⁸ In this sense, women journalists and media workers consider that training programs on diversity and gender equality should reach all personnel who work in companies, including those who hold management positions.²³⁹ They also point out that these programs should be especially aimed at “[training] and fostering a comprehensive and self-critical view among the editorial staff, reporting staff, middle managers, leadership, and owners of the media.”²⁴⁰ They should also “promote training processes on gender-based violence on and off the internet”²⁴¹ and “develop and implement ongoing training processes in digital security with a gender focus.”²⁴²

²³⁷ Powerful Girls Ecuador. Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador. November 2020. Page 41. 238 IACHR. Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession. OEA/SER.L/V/II IACHR/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Para. 137.

²³⁹ Chaheer, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIQ+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades. FUNDEPS and Communication Civil Association for Equality. 2018. P. 166. See also Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and Gender and Number. Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro. 2017.

²⁴⁰ GAMAG. Perspectiva de género en medios de comunicación salvadoreños. No date. Page 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 start conversations about gender issues in the media, based on the professional perspective of each journalist.” Who Makes the News, Gender Ethics Compass, no date.

²⁴¹ Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 7.

²⁴² Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras. [Colombian Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision and Karisma Foundation](#). March 2021. Page 7.

b. Recommendations for addressing patterns of gender-based discrimination

In relation to the gender-based discrimination practices outlined 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 the rights of women and incorporate the gender perspective in journalistic activity”.²⁴³ 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

Strategies to address gender-based discrimination practices within the media: recent research has emphasized that there must be a clear staff hiring policy that includes objective selection criteria and mechanisms and/or measures aimed at preventing hiring decisions from being based on gender bias.²⁴⁵ In the same vein, in April 2021, the Inter American Press Association resolved to “[request] journalistic companies to eliminate all types of gender differentiation in terms of benefits and rights”.²⁴⁶

Among the measures proposed by the organizations of women journalists and media workers, the following are included: “quotas [for women] in leading spaces, incorporation [of a greater number of women] in areas and topics that are restricted or prohibited for female workers, and personnel selection strategies that promote female capacities”.²⁴⁷ Additionally, the importance of establishing gender quotas in spaces where women are underrepresented has been highlighted.²⁴⁸

Moreover, in order to break the glass ceiling that affects women in the media, it has been suggested that, when appointing a person in a hierarchical position, when there is a female candidate and a male candidate with equal qualifications, priority should be given to the designation of the female candidate.²⁴⁹ There should also be leadership training programs specifically geared towards women who work in the media.²⁵⁰

In addition, the committees dedicated to the selection of personnel, or the determination of promotions must have a diverse composition and the people

²⁴³ CIDH. *Mujeres Periodistas y Libertad de Expresión: Discriminación y violencia basada en el género contra las mujeres periodistas por el ejercicio de su profesión*. OEA/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Párr. 176 inciso f).

²⁴⁴ CIDH. *Mujeres Periodistas y Libertad de Expresión: Discriminación y violencia basada en el género contra las mujeres periodistas por el ejercicio de su profesión*. OEA/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Párr. 176 inciso f).

²⁴⁵ Kassova, Luba. *The Missing Perspectives of Women in News*. International Women’s Media Foundation. Noviembre de 2020. Pág. 80.

²⁴⁶ Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, Resolución sobre Violencia contra mujeres periodistas, adoptada en el marco de la reunión de medio año de la Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, 21 al 23 de abril de 2021.

²⁴⁷ Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). *Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIQ+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades*. FUNDEPS y Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. Pág. 166.

²⁴⁸ Kassova, Luba. *The Missing Perspectives of Women in News*. International Women’s Media Foundation. Noviembre de 2020. Pág. 29.

En el mismo sentido, se ha enfatizado la necesidad de que los sindicatos, colegios y asociaciones de periodistas garanticen un porcentaje mínimo de participación de mujeres en puestos de liderazgo. Información recibida en el marco de la consulta para la elaboración de documento de referencia de la RELE sobre avances, desafíos y recomendaciones para la prevención de la violencia y lucha contra la discriminación de mujeres periodistas.

²⁴⁹ Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. En Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación Cristiana- *WACC, Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media*—A holistic agenda. 2018. Pág. 18.

²⁵⁰ Chaher, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). *Organizaciones de medios y género : igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIQ+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades*. FUNDEPS y Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. Pág. 166.

who integrate them should be trained in gender equality. This, in order to prevent their decisions from being based on gender stereotypes or reflecting and/or perpetuating patterns of discrimination against women.²⁵¹

In relation to the patterns of gender-based discrimination against journalists who exercise caregiving roles outlined above, women journalists and media workers consider it necessary to “[generate] policies around care of dependent persons.”²⁵² These policies must involve the “creation of lactation centers; granting of daycare services according to market values - resolved within the company or the granting of economic resources to that end-; extended maternity/paternity leave; part-time work methodologies for mothers/fathers,”²⁵³ flexible working hours²⁵⁴ and the promotion of teleworking.²⁵⁵

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.”²⁵⁶ In cases where spaces are identified where women are underrepresented, corrective measures should be implemented to ensure that hiring and promotion policies are based

Finally, the media have also been recommended to develop “equity and diversity surveys aimed at all staff, in order to understand the culture of the workplace.”²⁵⁸ The implementation of this type of survey serves to determine if, in the opinion of the staff, there are situations of gender-based

²⁵¹ Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. En Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación Cristiana- WACC, *Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media—A holistic agenda*. 2018. Pág. 18.

²⁵² Frydman, Sabrina. Alianza Global de Medios y Género. *En Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ¿hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?*. Compilado por Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. Pág. 11.

²⁵³ Frydman, Sabrina. Alianza Global de Medios y Género. *En Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ¿hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?*. Compilado por Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. Pág. 11.

²⁵⁴ Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. *Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. Noviembre de 2020. Pág. 41.

²⁵⁵ Chicas Poderosas Ecuador. *Así hacemos periodismo. Condiciones laborales de mujeres en medios de comunicación en Ecuador*. Noviembre de 2020. Pág. 41.

²⁵⁶ Frydman, Sabrina. Alianza Global de Medios y Género. *En Argentina: medios de comunicación y género ¿hemos cumplido con la plataforma de acción de Beijing?*. Compilado por Chaher, Sandra. Comunicación para la Igualdad Ediciones. 2018. Pág. 11.

²⁵⁷ Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. En Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación Cristiana- WACC, *Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media—A holistic agenda*. 2018. Pág. 17

²⁵⁸ Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. En Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación Cristiana- WACC, *Media Development 1/2018. Gender and Media—A holistic agenda*. 2018. Pág. 18.

C. Recommendations for addressing patterns of gender-based violence within the media

In its report, the Office of the Special Rapporteur recommended that the media adopt “internal procedures and independent reporting and accountability mechanisms” in situations of gender-based violence and, in particular, in cases of violence and/or sexual harassment.²⁶⁰

In line with this recommendation, women journalists and media workers consider that companies should adopt a policy of “zero tolerance for workplace harassment and sexual harassment by colleagues, bosses and sources”,²⁶¹

which should be designed through participatory and transparent processes.²⁶² Similarly, the Inter-American Press Association has urged news companies to “ensure an environment free of harassment”.²⁶³

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 in relation to their commitment to creating of a work environment free from all forms of gender-based violence. In this

regard, the ILO has highlighted that when people in leadership positions adequately and seriously address sexual harassment and assign high priority to preventing its occurrence, they contribute to creating an organizational culture that rejects these

practices and encourages women to denounce them.²⁶⁴

Minimum contents of the internal policy for the prevention and approach of gender-based violence: the policies implemented by the companies must define what is meant by gender-based violence in the workplace and provide examples of the different modalities of this violence. Appropriate and effective sanctions must be provided for people who commit these acts²⁶⁵ and adequate prevention and assistance measures must be contemplated for people who experience them, including psychological assistance, and counseling on the options available to them in terms of reporting.²⁶⁶

The ILO has indicated that the internal procedures for reporting, investigating and punishing acts of gender-based

²⁵⁹ Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. En Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación Cristiana- WACC, *Media Development 1/2018*. Gender and Media—A holistic agenda. 2018. Pág. 18.

²⁶⁰ CIDH. *Mujeres Periodistas y Libertad de Expresión: Discriminación y violencia basada en el género contra las mujeres periodistas por el ejercicio de su profesión*. OEA/SER.L/V/II CIDH/RELE/INF.20/18. 2018. Párr. 176 inciso c).

²⁶¹ Fundación Sentiido y Red Colombiana de Periodistas con Visión de Género. *Implementación del Cap. J de la Plataforma de Beijing: mujeres, medios y comunicación en Colombia 2020*. 2020.

²⁶² OIT. *Empowering Women at Work – Company Policies and Practices for Gender Equality*. 2020. Pág. 34.

²⁶³ Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, Resolución sobre Violencia contra mujeres periodistas, adoptada en el marco de la reunión de medio año de la Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, 21 al 23 de abril de 2021.

²⁶⁴ OIT. *Empowering Women at Work – Company Policies and Practices for Gender Equality*. 2020. Pág. 34.

²⁶⁵ Ross, Karen. A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries. En Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación Cristiana- WACC, *Media Development 1/2018*. Gender and Media—A holistic agenda. 2018. Pág. 18.

²⁶⁶ OIT. *Empowering Women at Work – Company Policies and Practices for Gender Equality*. 2020. Pág. 34.

violence, including acts of violence and/or sexual harassment, must be clearly defined and must be known by all personnel. In the same vein, women journalists and media workers emphasize that “[the] newsrooms must create an internal communication channel so that victims of abuse and harassment can file a formal complaint”.²⁶⁷

Mechanisms must be provided to ensure that complaints are dealt with impartially, with a gender perspective²⁶⁸ and in a transparent manner. Similarly, strategies should be developed to ensure the privacy of the person making the complaint and protect them from retaliation.

Space responsible for dealing with complaints of acts of gender-based violence and discrimination: women who work in the media consider that the handling of complaints should be in charge of gender offices and other areas

specifically devoted to the prevention and handling of gender-based violence.²⁶⁹ They also understand that the work of these offices must be governed by protocols and/or action guides that provide predictability and transparency to their work.²⁷⁰ In the same vein, the Inter-American Press Association has urged journalistic companies to “improve protocols against workplace sexual harassment”.²⁷¹

Monitoring and evaluation: the need for the media to carry out “periodic diagnoses of gender-based violence that occurs within the media and in the journalistic exercise on and off the Internet” has been emphasized. In the same way, it is fundamental to permanently and participatively monitor the effectiveness of the internal policy for the prevention and approach of gender-based violence.²⁷²

²⁶⁷ Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo e Gênero e Número. **Mulheres no Jornalismo Brasileiro**. 2017. Pág. 25.

²⁶⁸ “La CIDH ha entendido la perspectiva de género como un concepto que visibiliza la posición de desigualdad y subordinación estructural de las mujeres y niñas a los hombres, debido a su género, y como una herramienta clave para combatir la discriminación y la violencia contra las mujeres, así como contra las personas con diversidad sexual y de género”. CIDH. **Violencia y discriminación contra mujeres, niñas y adolescentes: Buenas prácticas y desafíos en América Latina y en el Caribe**. OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 233. 14 noviembre 2019. Párr. 8.

²⁶⁹ Chaheer, Sandra; Pedraza, Virginia (Coord.). **Organizaciones de medios y género: igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y personas LGTTBIQ+ en empresas, sindicatos y universidades**. FUNDEPS y Asociación Civil Comunicación para la Igualdad. 2018. Pág. 166.

²⁷⁰ Diario Uchile. **Periodistas se manifiestan en rechazo a acoso sexual sufrido por reportera**. 23 de septiembre 2019.

²⁷¹ Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, Resolución sobre Violencia contra mujeres periodistas, adoptada en el marco de la reunión de medio año de la Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, 21 al 23 de abril de 2021.

²⁷² Fabiola Calvo Ocampo, Amalia Toledo Hernández, Grace Montserrat Torrente Rodríguez. **Periodistas sin acoso: Violencias machistas contra periodistas y comunicadoras**. Red Colombiana de Periodistas con Visión de Género y Fundación Karisma. Marzo 2021. Pág. 7.