

# JOURNALISTS UNDER PRESSURE

Unwarranted interference, fear  
and self-censorship in Europe



**Marilyn CLARK**  
**Anna GRECH**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# JOURNALISTS UNDER PRESSURE Unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship in Europe

## Authors

Marilyn CLARK  
Anna GRECH

## Working Group members

Anna BEVAN  
Ricardo GUTIÉRREZ  
William HORSLEY  
Melody PATRY

## Contributors

Liberato CAMILLERI  
Jamie BONNICI

## Council of Europe Secretariat

Onur ANDREOTTI  
Urška UMEK  
Shahin ABBASOV

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## Foreword

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**T**he last decade has seen a significant increase in different forms of violence and abuse against journalists, as well as against whistle-blowers and public watchdogs. From physical attacks to intimidation and harassment, targeted surveillance and cyberbullying, across Europe we now see a range of tactics deployed to silence critical voices and stifle free speech.

This study sheds new light on the impact on journalists' behaviour. Many in the profession are deeply committed to reporting in the public interest, in spite of constraints on their work. It is clear, however, that many equally feel fearful for their own welfare, including, in some cases, their personal safety and that of their families and friends. Out of almost 1 000 journalists and other news providers questioned for the survey, over a third believe that there are no effective means by which they can report threats or interference.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the survey found high levels of self-censorship among journalists. A high proportion of respondents say that they feel pressured to present their reports in ways which are more amenable to their employers, withholding information when necessary. Many are compelled to tone down controversial stories, or abandon them altogether. Such constraints clearly conflict with the desire to report fully and factually, a desire which motivates many in the profession.

Despite the negative trends uncovered by this report, however, a significant number of respondents told us of their determination to resist censorship, whether it be from outside forces or self-imposed. Their resolve is laudable. The ability of the media to scrutinise elites and hold power to account is essential for the healthy functioning of any democracy. Freedom of expression, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, guarantees that everyone has the right "to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers".

The obligation to create an environment in which journalists can work free from fear of violence and intimidation rests primarily with national authorities. They alone have the power to enact journalist-friendly legislation, to establish the conditions for a pluralist media landscape and to investigate and prosecute instances of unwarranted interference.

This study therefore calls on Council of Europe member states to fully implement Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors, which proposes a range of concrete measures to protect them from attacks and to create a climate of open debate and free speech. Furthermore, it calls for a more regular and in-depth stocktaking of the state of freedom of expression across Europe, along with greater awareness raising of these vital issues. It is an important study with meaningful recommendations and I hope that all member states will give it their full support.

Thorbjørn Jagland  
*Secretary General of the Council of Europe*

# Executive summary

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## **BACKGROUND**

**F**reedom of expression is one of the basic conditions for the progress of society. Without safeguards for the safety of journalists there can be no free media. The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity are among the top priorities of the work of the Council of Europe. In the 2015 annual report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (hereinafter “the Convention”) is discussed. Article 10 touches various aspects of freedom of expression and imposes upon member states an obligation to protect individuals’ rights to freely express themselves without interference, either from state actors or private individuals. The reality, however, is that journalism can be a dangerous profession and journalists may experience unwarranted interference from a number of sources. This report presents data on the prevalence of unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship among a sample of 940 journalists reporting from 47 Council of Europe member states and Belarus.<sup>1</sup>

## **WORKING DEFINITIONS**

The following working definitions were adopted for the study.

**Journalist** – A person who is regularly engaged in collecting or disseminating information to the public with a journalistic (public interest) purpose.

**Unwarranted interference** – Acts and/or threats to a journalist’s physical and/or moral integrity that interfere with journalistic activities. These may take the form of actual violence or any form of undue pressure (physical, psychological, economic or legal) and may emanate from state or public officials, other powerful figures, advertisers, owners, editors or others.

**Fear** – The perception of likelihood or anticipation of unwarranted interference including the emotional response to possible unwarranted interference.

**Self-censorship** – The control of what one says or does in order to avoid annoying or offending others but without being told officially that such control is necessary.

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1. All reference in this publication to the sample of journalists surveyed from Council of Europe member states should also assume the inclusion of responses from journalists in Belarus, not currently one of the 47 member states of the Organisation.

## **PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESIGN**

The study had the following key objectives.

- ▶ To measure the prevalence of unwarranted interference among a sample of active journalists in Council of Europe member states.
- ▶ To document the perceptions of likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference among active journalists in Council of Europe member states.
- ▶ To investigate the relationship between experiences of unwarranted interference, perceptions of likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference and self-censorship among journalists in Council of Europe member states.
- ▶ To explore how unwarranted interference and perceptions of likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference are influenced by occupational contingencies (for example, the length of journalistic career), specific media platforms (for example, print, digital or broadcast media), the type of contract (if any), employment conditions, professional affiliations and/or several structural variables such as gender and the region where journalistic work is being carried out.

The study used an anonymous self-reporting questionnaire available in five languages: English, French, Russian, Serbian and Turkish.

## **THE SAMPLE**

The sample consisted of a non-probability sample (convenience sample) of journalists reporting from Council of Europe member states recruited mainly from members of the following five major journalists' and freedom of expression organisations.

- ▶ Association of European Journalists
- ▶ European Federation of Journalists
- ▶ Index on Censorship
- ▶ International News Safety Institute
- ▶ Reporters without Borders

## **RESULTS**

The results of the study show how the work of journalists may indeed be dangerous and that experiences and fear of unwarranted interference may affect freedom of expression.

### **Experiences of unwarranted interference**

With reference to the last three years, a number of different experiences of unwarranted interference were reported, with 40% of respondents claiming that the interference was bad enough to affect their personal lives. The most common type of unwarranted interference was psychological violence – such as humiliation, belittlement, intimidation, various threats, slandering and smear campaigning

– reported by 69% of the sample. The second most reported experience of unwarranted interference was cyberbullying – in the form of accusations of being partisan, personal attacks, public defamation and smear campaigns – reported by 53% of the sample. In order of the frequency in which they were experienced, other types of unwarranted interference reported included: intimidation by interest groups (50%); threats with force (46%); intimidation by political groups (43%); targeted surveillance (39%); intimidation by the police (35%); physical assault (31%); robbery, confiscation or destruction of property (21%); non-contact personal theft (19%); and sexual harassment or violence (13%). Twenty-three per cent of survey respondents claimed to have experienced arrest, investigation, threat of prosecution and actual prosecution under a number of laws.

Male journalists were more likely to be threatened with force, intimidated by police and experience physical assault, whereas female journalists were more likely to experience sexual harassment or violence.

In terms of regional differences, experiences of physical assault were highest in the South Caucasus region, closely followed by Turkey, but presented high prevalence in the other regions as well, including in EU and non-EU Western European countries (25.1%). The experience of threats with force was highest in Turkey (69.2%), very closely followed by South Caucasus (66%) and Eastern Europe (60%). The experience of sexual harassment was highest in Turkey (18.3%) and in EU and non-EU Western European countries (15.2%). The experience of robbery and/or confiscation or destruction of property was highest in the Eastern European countries and South-East European countries. Non-contact personal thefts were lowest in Turkey (12.6%) and highest in South-East European countries (26.6%).

The experience of psychological violence was high in all regions. Journalists in Turkey reported the highest percentages in relation to being subjected to targeted surveillance (86.7%) but this was generally high across all five regions with the lowest in EU and non-EU Western European countries at 47.4%. Cyberbullying was highest in Turkey (71%), followed by South-East Europe (59%) and EU and non-EU Western European countries (56.1%). The experiences of intimidation (from various sources) were also quite high, with Turkey reporting a percentage of 64.5 in relation to intimidation by political groups. The lowest was in the South Caucasus with 34.8% of journalists in the sample from that region reporting such occurrences. Interference from interest groups was highest in the South-East European region (63%) and lowest in the South Caucasus.

Despite this high rate of unwarranted interference, 35% of respondents did not feel that they had mechanisms at their disposal for reporting such interference. Of those who had experienced unwarranted interference, 28% did not report the unwarranted interference to the company for which they worked. Fifty-seven per cent did not report it to the police and of those who did report it, 23% were not satisfied with the police's response.

Among those who belonged to a union, 40% did not report it to their union. Some 48% felt that their ability to protect their sources was currently compromised and 28% did not feel that they were adequately supported.

## **Perceived likelihood/fear of victimisation**

The fear of becoming a victim of unwarranted interference in the future was reasonably high, especially with regard to psychological violence, cyberbullying and intimidation by individuals and interest groups. A third of respondents reported concern about their personal safety and the safety of their significant others. The perceived fear of future victimisation was significantly positively correlated with having experienced unwarranted interference during the last three years.

## **Consequences of unwarranted interference**

The psychological impact of unwarranted interference was high and included increased stress and anxiety levels, paranoia, changes in sleeping patterns and feelings of depression and helplessness. On an interpersonal level the impact included increased preoccupation about significant others, neglect of private-life duties, conflicts with partners and family members and termination of romantic relationships. The impact of the unwarranted interference in the way journalists went about their work was also notable. Significant percentages reported toning down or abandoning sensitive, critical stories, reporting content in a less controversial manner, being selective about what items to report, framing content as acceptable discussion, withholding information and shaping stories to suit company's/editor's interests. However, 36% also stated that the experience made them more committed to not engage in self-censorship.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings above lend themselves to further research, most notably a qualitative study allowing for an in-depth understanding of unwarranted interference by identifying the strategies journalists use to negotiate such interference, as well as the impact on their personal and work activities.

# Introduction

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## JOURNALISM AS A PREREQUISITE FOR DEMOCRACY

“Journalism informs society about itself” (Harcup 2009:3)

**A**t the centre of the supreme value of democracy and human rights is the right of everyone to receive and impart information. Freedom of expression is one of the basic conditions for the progress of society and for the development of every person (European Court of Human Rights in *Handyside v. the United Kingdom*). That applies in particular to the practice of imparting information and ideas of general interest. Journalism provides that information in its most essential sense. Accordingly, the public is entitled to receive that information.

Journalists enable public debate, act as public watchdogs, inform on matters of public interest and consequently hold those high in the power structures to account, thus ensuring citizens' access to the process of governance. In order for journalists to be able to fulfil these functions, they must be able to exercise their task of examining the power structures in society without being interfered with or intimidated, and without fearing violence, being threatened, being detained without due reason and being imprisoned. In short, without safeguards for the safety of journalists there is no free media.

The Council of Europe provides for the protection of media freedom and journalists' rights through the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention), the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) and its standard setting by the Committee of Ministers. In all their activities, the organs of the Council of Europe aim to pay the utmost attention to the importance of removing the fear of sanctions and not discouraging the media, as well as the general public, from participating in the public debate on issues of general interest and voicing their opinions.

The 2016 annual report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, “State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law: a security imperative for Europe” (the third annual report of the Secretary General), stresses that:

Without genuine freedom of expression and without genuinely free and independent media, there can be no effective safeguards against incompetence and misuse or abuse of power (p. 33)



Furthermore, the right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 10 of the Convention is described as being:

not only a fundamental right on its own, but is also necessary for the realisation of other human rights, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to freedom of assembly and association, the right to vote and the right to education. It is a central means by which power is held to account and a necessary condition for tolerance, cultural diversity and living together (p. 33).

As such, Article 10 of the Convention has a vast scope and touches on various aspects of freedom of expression. Among other things, it imposes upon the member states an obligation to protect individuals' right to freely express themselves against attack, either by state actors or private individuals. This entails but is not limited to providing a robust legal framework for that purpose, ensuring effective investigation and prosecution of crimes committed to silence free expression, and, in certain cases, taking concrete protective measures.

The reality is that journalism can be a dangerous profession and journalists may experience unwarranted interference from a number of sources. Consequently, they may have high levels of fear (Chappell and Di Martino, 2006). Their working conditions and the issues they are compelled to deal with may expose them to physical, economic, judicial and psychological intimidation. This worrying element is referred to in the preamble to Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of 13 April 2016 (Council of Europe 2016a) on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors, which states bluntly that:

It is alarming and unacceptable that journalists and other media actors in Europe are increasingly being threatened, harassed, subjected to surveillance, intimidated, arbitrarily deprived of their liberty, physically attacked, tortured and even killed because of their investigative work, opinions or reporting, particularly when their work focuses on the misuse of power, corruption, human rights violations, criminal activities, terrorism and fundamentalism.

The importance of ensuring a free and safe environment for the work of journalists and other media actors is also reflected in the activities of other international organisations. In this regard, the United Nations (UN) Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity provides for a number of concrete measures aimed at improving the safety of journalists and combating impunity. Likewise, the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is based on the recognition of the crucial role that journalists play in any democratic society and the dangers faced by journalists today (OSCE 2015).

## **THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S WORK AND STANDARDS ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS**

The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity are among the priorities of the work of the Council of Europe. For many years, the Council of Europe has been

regularly providing its 47 member states with recommendations, guidelines and other instruments regarding various aspects of the protection of journalists and other media actors.

This collection has made important contributions to the public debate and is intended to enable people to make effective use of their right to information. The standard-setting activities of the Council of Europe relating to media freedom are inspired by the Convention, as interpreted in the case law of the Court. Deciding on individual cases, the latter has, over decades, developed a number of principles, norms and standards related to freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. In turn, the soft-law instruments of the Council of Europe are incorporated into the case law of the Court, providing it with a more detailed policy framework or guidelines for its decision making. Among many Committee of Ministers' documents on this topic, the following can be mentioned as providing the most relevant guidelines regarding reinforcing and safeguarding the role of journalists, their rights and freedoms.

- ▶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors
- ▶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)7 on the protection of whistleblowers
- ▶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media
- ▶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 on a new notion of media
- ▶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)15 on measures concerning media coverage of election campaigns
- ▶ Recommendation Rec(2004)16 on the right of reply in the new media environment
- ▶ Recommendation Rec(2003)13 on the provision of information through the media in relation to criminal proceedings
- ▶ Recommendation Rec(2002)2 on access to official documents
- ▶ Recommendation No. R (2000) 7 on the right of journalists not to disclose their sources of information
- ▶ Recommendation No. R (97) 19 on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media
- ▶ Recommendation No. R (96) 10 on the guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting
- ▶ Recommendation No. R (96) 4 on the protection of journalists in situations of conflict and tension
- ▶ Recommendation No. R (94) 13 on measures to promote media transparency
- ▶ Declaration on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors
- ▶ Declaration on the desirability of international standards dealing with forum shopping in respect of defamation, "libel tourism", to ensure freedom of expression
- ▶ Declaration Decl-26.09.2007 by the Committee of Ministers on the protection and promotion of investigative journalism
- ▶ Declaration Decl-27.09.2006 of the Committee of Ministers on the guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting in the member states

- ▶ Declaration on freedom of expression and information in the media in the context of the fight against terrorism
- ▶ Declaration on the protection of journalists in situations of conflict and tension
- ▶ Guidelines on eradicating impunity for serious human rights violations (30 March 2011)
- ▶ Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on protecting freedom of expression and information in times of crisis (26 September 2007).

The recommendation on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors reflects the most recent case law of the Court, in accordance with the Court's contention that the Convention is a living instrument which is to be interpreted in light of present-day conditions. It is focused on the protection of journalists and other media actors (including political bloggers and whistle-blowers), whereby those actors are understood in a broad and inclusive manner. According to the recommendation, the principle of freedom of expression, as well as the concept of media and journalism, should be understood in the light of current modes of communication. New developments in communication technologies have enabled a broad and diverse range of people and organisations to participate in public debate. Individuals, civil society organisations, whistle-blowers and academics, in addition to professional journalists, can all make valuable contributions to the public debate, thereby playing a role similar or equivalent to that traditionally played by the institutionalised media and professional journalists. This consideration was upheld as the general concept of the recommendation.<sup>2</sup>

The recommendation provides the most comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list of principles related to the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists, as well as guidance concerning measures for states to fulfil their obligations. Strong wording is used to condemn the increasing trend for journalists and other media actors in Europe to be subjected to various threats and interference, including physical violence, intimidation, arbitrary deprivation of their liberty, torture and killings because of their investigative work, opinions or reporting, particularly when their work focuses on the misuse of power, corruption, human rights violations, criminal activities, terrorism and fundamentalism. However, the scope of the recommendation is not limited to physical harm, threats or deprivation of liberty but extends to a full range of positive obligations, reinforcements and remedies.

The recommendation recalls the principles developed by the Court's case law, in particular the positive obligations of states in this regard. The principles are gathered under the following themes:

- ▶ freedom of expression (general principles);
- ▶ enabling environment (principles regarding the diverse set of factors contributing to creating conditions in which freedom of expression and information can thrive, including, *inter alia*, measures needed to deal with gender-related dangers faced by female journalists and other female media actors);

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2. When adopting the recommendation, the Government of the Russian Federation reserved the right to comply or not with the recommendation, in so far as it referred to other media actors.

- ▶ safety, security, protection (rules regarding safety and security of journalists and other media actors, including the obligation to carry out effective, independent and prompt investigations into alleged killings or ill treatment by state or non-state actors, with a view to prosecuting the perpetrators of such crimes and bringing them to justice);
- ▶ contribution to public debate (regarding the freedoms having operational or functional relevance to the pursuit of journalistic activities, such as protection of confidential sources, protection against searches of professional workplaces and private domiciles and the seizure of materials, protection of news and information-gathering processes, and editorial and presentational autonomy);
- ▶ the chilling effect on the freedom of expression (referring to factors causing fear, leading to self-censorship and the impoverishment of the public debate, that can be connected with abuse of laws on defamation, anti-terrorism, national security, public order, hate speech or blasphemy).

On the basis of the respective principles, the recommendation establishes a number of guidelines on how to implement them in order to meet the challenge of ensuring effective protection of journalists and other media actors. The guidelines are organised in four pillars:

- ▶ prevention
- ▶ protection
- ▶ prosecution
- ▶ promotion of information, education and awareness raising.

Member states are urged to put in place legislative frameworks that enable journalists and other media actors to contribute to public debate effectively and without fear.

Arguably the most urgent practical recommendation for action to be taken by states, and the one with the potential to have the greatest impact, is the guideline urging member states to carry out an independent review of all the state's relevant laws and practices, including those on terrorism, extremism, national security and defamation, to verify whether the safeguards for the exercise of the right to freedom of expression in a given state are robust and effective, and whether their legislation is backed by effective enforcement machinery. The recommendation also provides that after an initial, expeditious review, further regular reviews should be carried out by an independent body or bodies which have an authoritative mandate and are supported by sufficient resources, such as human rights commissions or ombudspersons. The Committee of Ministers also calls on the member states to promote the translation of the recommendation into national and minority languages of their respective countries and to ensure its widest possible dissemination, as well as to raise awareness about its content in a variety of publicity materials.

Effective co-operation with other international organisations, in particular the UN and its Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, should be recognised as an important element for the recommendation's implementation. The implementation process is also facilitated and supported by other initiatives conducted by the Council of Europe, including co-operation activities with individual member states and the online Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists ([www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/the-platform](http://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/the-platform)). The

platform, launched in April 2015, constitutes an important tool for facilitating the effective protection of journalists and other media actors, and thus contributes to making the aims of the recommendation applicable in practice. The platform works as an early-warning and rapid-response mechanism for attacks on media freedom and journalists' safety, leading to an intensified "upstream" (prompt) dialogue with the member states. The platform is being developed into a database recording the extent and type of serious threats to media freedom, as reported by the eight journalists' and freedom of expression organisations which are designated as partners of the Council of Europe in operating the platform. Alerts are divided into five categories: attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists; detention and imprisonment of journalists; harassment and intimidation of journalists; impunity; and other acts that have a chilling effect on media freedom. Since the platform was launched in 2015 there have been 205 alerts in 27 countries, of which 90 alerts were responded to by the member state concerned. So far, 21 cases are recorded as having been resolved. Sixteen journalists have been reported killed since April 2015.

## **THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS**

Threats take a number of forms. They may be physical but can also be generated by legal, political, cultural and economic pressures. Fear and experience of prosecution through the arbitrary use of different types of legislation can also be risk factors for the exercise of journalistic activities. This phenomenon is commonly called "judicial intimidation" or "judicial harassment". Market politics and oligarch ownership of media outlets also play a role. The press may be reluctant to offend advertisers or other influential parties. Self-censorship is often the result. According to the third annual report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe:

Over the last year, there has been a decline in media freedom in some member states ... Almost half of member states are failing to guarantee the safety of journalists from violence and threats, an enabling legal environment for their work and access to information held by public authorities. (Council of Europe 2016b: 33)

The report claims an increase in violence against journalists that includes fatal violence and assaults and destruction of property. It also highlights that:

A rising problem in a number of European countries is the pressure on journalistic sources, both directly and as a result of targeted surveillance of journalists. (ibid.: 33)

The silencing of journalists as a result of unwarranted interference has existed for years, but generally attracts more attention when a Western journalist is killed. The particularly brutal killing of 12 people at the office of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and of several journalists abducted and held in Syria by the group known as Islamic State may have contributed to a heightened awareness of a problem that has existed for a long time. Political groups and state agents or their surrogates are also often implicated in acts of violence and abuse against journalists; that is, state actors such as public officials and non-state actors, including armed, insurgent or terrorist groups. Unwarranted interference also happens in more subtle ways; for example, restrictive laws within Europe are making it harder for journalists to do their job.

Such laws include Turkey's anti-terrorism laws and laws against insulting the country's president and other public officials, and Russia's laws on extremism and on limiting foreign ownership shares in media, as well as several laws with regard to the internet which raise concerns for the protection of online freedom of expression and privacy. Journalists in many European states complain that intrusive government powers allowing mass surveillance of electronic communications have led to many complaints about unwarranted snooping on media workers, violating the confidentiality of journalistic sources. Revelations about such misuse of law-enforcement powers has led the UK government, for example, to reform the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA), but some political groups and journalists have also registered protests against provisions in the Investigatory Powers Bill, which is expected to replace the RIPA (UK Press Gazette article, March 2016). In France, the prime minister has the power to extensively monitor the French population without judicial control, which compromises the protection of journalists' sources and has a potential chilling effect on whistle-blowers. Poland's new surveillance law passed in 2016 expands the enforcement agencies' access to citizens' internet and telecommunication usage data without prior judicial review or approval. Poland has also adopted a new anti-terrorism law and a law on public-service media, both of which curtail freedom of expression. And Switzerland's new Intelligence Service Act allowing the Swiss intelligence service to monitor private communications has passed a referendum. The Spanish Parliament, likewise, adopted a public security law which allows the government to sanction journalists for taking pictures or filming police forces in the exercise of their duties. The European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, in their study on investigative journalism, concluded that while the countries analysed in the study protect the freedom of expression on the constitutional, statutory and self-regulatory level, restrictive rules on the freedom of the press and media also exist.

In addition, there are many other laws restricting various aspects of journalists' freedom of expression, such as the Romanian law which eliminates the TV licence fee and thus divests the public-service media of an important source of funding, or the Albanian anti-corruption law whose wording can potentially limit media freedom and impose censorship.

While threats to journalists may emanate from a number of sources, intimidation is particularly worrying when governments engage in oppressive acts to silence critical journalists for political purposes. The silencing of journalists is compounded by a culture of impunity. Impunity for crimes against journalists is one of the main factors fuelling the cycle of violent crime against the exercise of freedom of expression and human rights more broadly.

When journalists are harassed, attacked, murdered or imprisoned, our fundamental right to access information, to engage in open public debate and consequently participate as active citizens is compromised. However, despite the purported high risk of unwarranted interference, the actual extent and frequency of such interference, the different types of interference and when and where they are likely to occur, as well as the sense of fear that they cause and the consequent possibility of self-censorship among journalists, have so far not been systematically investigated, and few analytical studies exploring the diverse manifestations of unwarranted interference exist.

Discussions about journalists' experiences of unwarranted interference have focused largely on a relatively small number of highly visible incidents targeting journalists or experiences in war zones. A great deal of evidence exists (as documented in reports by the media, NGOs and human rights organisations) of attacks against journalists but no comprehensive study on the prevalence of unwarranted interference, fear and the consequences of fear has yet been made public that could provide a clear evidence base for the scope of the problem.

Moreover, intimidation may not be openly acknowledged, reported or addressed. Journalists may themselves be unwilling or unable to speak out when they experience routine intimidation or restrictions on their journalistic independence and integrity. The monitoring of the extent of this day-to-day intimidation, its impact on self-censorship and the societal reaction to it is still, at best, embryonic.

In 2015 the International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) jointly published a report that provided a comprehensive picture of the different kinds of violence and threats experienced by female journalists and the consequent impact on their work. The study explored violence and harassment, as well as physical, sexual and digital threats, the location of such incidents and the characteristics of the perpetrators. The study used a convenience sample of almost 1 000 women from around the world. It found that almost two thirds of survey respondents reported some kind of interference in their journalistic activities. INSI and IWMF reported how much of the intimidation occurred in the women's workplace and emanated mainly from employers, supervisors and colleagues. This, however, often went unreported, even though many of the women claimed that they were psychologically affected. Less than one third of women participating in this study reported being provided with any form of emotional support or counselling following the intimidation.

Kodellas et al. (2014) examined the prevalence of workplace victimisation experiences and the associated fear among journalists in a convenience sample of 635 active professional journalists in Greece and Cyprus. This study showed a relatively high prevalence of physical victimisation, an exceptionally high prevalence of psychological abuse and an average level of prevalence of property victimisation. Journalists, however, experienced relatively low levels of fear and those with lower educational attainment had higher levels of fear of intimidation. Those journalists working mainly in electronic media, freelance journalists and those with a temporary, or without a contract, expressed higher levels of fear. Journalists working in the news sector expressed higher levels of fear than those working in other areas.

A research project titled "Online hatred and journalists' freedom of speech", documented in a text by Hagen (2015), found that close to half of Norwegian journalists and editors surveyed reported having experienced harassment, threats or violence in the past five years (48%). Both males and females reported having experienced online harassment, and there was little difference between males and females in how often they experienced this. Twenty-five per cent of journalists reported that they had experienced threats during the past five years. Slightly more men than women reported having received threats. A fifth of respondents felt silenced because of harassments or threats, highlighting the possibility of self-censorship.

The gender differences appear when the numbers are analysed in relation to age: almost twice as many young female journalists in the age range of 26 to 35 reported harassment compared to their male colleagues of the same age. One in four female (24%) and one in 20 (5%) male journalists and editors reported experiencing sexual harassment. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) found that a proportion of journalists all over the globe had experienced sexual violence. While women often find it hard to report such experiences they are more likely to do so than men, who are more likely to remain silent for fear of stigmatisation. In 2016, the OSCE published a research project addressing the challenge of online abuse of female journalists (OSCE 2015). The publication highlighted the complex nature of such abuse and provided guidelines for action to counter the abuse and create a safer internet environment.

## **SELF-CENSORSHIP**

Censorship in journalism may take two main forms.

1. Censorship which is coerced or directly imposed by either authorities or private parties.
2. Self-censorship which is effected by the individuals doing the newsgathering and reporting to avoid reprisals, censure or penalties.

It is well established that self-censorship – which is widely recognised as a serious threat to freedom of expression and to journalism – is commonplace in journalism and may occur as a result of the experience of unwarranted interference and/or the experience of fear. However, self-censorship is not always the result of fear of sanctions for the content of one's reporting; it may also be a result of an attempt to avoid creating disputes, upsetting a particular audience, instigating legal action or other undesirable repercussions. In some countries, the state may be the major player coercing journalists to censor their news stories. In liberal democracies, the coercion may be even more subtle with privately owned companies using advertising as a weapon to put pressure on journalists. A study by Skjerdal (2010) concluded that self-censorship is often motivated by commercial and economic pressures in addition to political reasons. It is also well known how advertising can pose a threat to independent media. At other times, journalists may self-censor as a result of cultural expectations as well as gender, racial and religious issues. In some countries, organised criminal groups may exert pressure on journalists to prevent them from covering stories about their illicit activities.

Journalists may hide the facts, censor information and fail to research sensitive issues. In a survey of nearly 300 journalists and news executives in the United States undertaken by the Pew Research Center and the Columbia Journalism Review (2000), some 25% of the journalists reported having "purposely avoided newsworthy stories", while nearly as many admit having "softened the tone of stories to benefit the interests of their news organisations". The research identifies commercial and/or competitive forces as reasons for self-censorship. The study also shows how conflict with organisational interests was an important motivator for self-censorship, with 35% reporting that stories that might damage the economic interests of the media



entity are often or sometimes unreported. Twenty-nine per cent claimed the same about stories that would damage the interests of advertisers.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

A number of key terms used in this study are defined as follows.

**Journalist** – A person who is regularly engaged in collecting or disseminating information to the public with a journalistic (public interest) purpose. The Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers in 2000 defined a journalist as “any natural or legal person who is regularly or professionally engaged in the collection and dissemination of information to the public via any means of mass communication” (Appendix to Recommendation No. R (2000) 7 on the right of journalists not to disclose their sources of information). Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 on a new notion of media recognised that the new media created by both technological and social change has seen the entry onto the scene of a new breed of reporters: bloggers, citizen journalists and others who create user-generated content. The adoption of this new notion of media necessitates the recognition that “the scope of media actors has enlarged as a result of new forms of media in the digital age” (Council of Europe 2014).

**Unwarranted interference** – Acts and/or threats to a journalist’s physical and/or moral integrity in the exercise of journalistic activities. This may take the form of actual violence or any form of undue pressure (physical, psychological, economic or legal) on journalists. Unwarranted interference may emanate from state or public officials, other powerful figures, advertisers, owners, editors or others.

**Fear** – The perception of likelihood or anticipation of unwarranted interference including the emotional response to possible unwarranted interference.

**Self-censorship** – The controlling of what one says or does in order to avoid annoying or offending others but without being told officially that such control is necessary.<sup>3</sup>

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3. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/self-censorship>.

## Chapter 1

# Methodology

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**T**he previous section of the report presented the background to the study, documented existing evidence on unwarranted interference on journalists and located gaps in the field. This chapter explores the research design and other methodological issues.

### **1.1. RESEARCH AGENDA**

The study is an attempt to investigate the prevalence of unwarranted interference among journalists in the 47 Council of Europe member states and Belarus.<sup>4</sup> The study has the following main objectives.

1. To measure the prevalence of unwarranted interference in a sample of active journalists in Council of Europe member states.
2. To document the perceptions of likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference among active journalists in Council of Europe member states.
3. To investigate the relationship between experiences of unwarranted interference, perceptions of likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference and self-censorship among journalists in Council of Europe member states.
4. To explore how unwarranted interference and perceptions of likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference is influenced by occupational contingencies – for example, the length of journalistic career, specific media platform (print, digital or broadcast media), type of contract (if any), employment conditions, professional affiliations – and/or structural variables such as gender and the region where journalistic work is being carried out.

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4. All reference in this publication to the sample of journalists surveyed from Council of Europe member states should also assume the inclusion of responses from journalists in Belarus, not currently one of the 47 member states of the Organisation.

## **1.2. RESEARCH TOOL**

The study used an anonymous self-report questionnaire exploring survey respondents' perceptions of unwarranted interference encountered in their engagement in journalistic activities. Official statistics on victimisation are particularly unreliable because they do not uncover the "dark figure" of crime. Many instances of unwarranted interference of journalists will go unreported and consequently will not make their way into official data. On the other hand, self-report surveys can bring to light those unreported and consequently undocumented experiences of unwarranted interference and constitute an irreplaceable tool for measuring the reality of the intimidation experienced by journalists. However, because self-report surveys measure people's perceptions of victimisation, it can never be ascertained that such victimisation has occurred. In this study, however, perception of having been interfered with is evidence enough in the sense that this same perception will have important implications for one's work as a journalist generally and more specifically will influence self-censorship.

The research tool consisted of 44 questions organised into seven sections: background of the study, definitions and instructions; personal information; experience of unwarranted interference; responses to unwarranted interference; threats to journalists' sources; fear; the chilling effect. A copy of the research tool may be found in Appendix B.

The questionnaire was available in five languages: English, French, Russian, Serbian and Turkish. The questionnaire was comprised of a series of closed questions, some Likert scale questions and a small number of open-ended questions. It took approximately 10 minutes to complete and reached the potential respondent by e-mail. The research tool was uniquely tied to the recipient's IP address, thus ensuring the journalists could complete the survey only once.

## **1.3. SAMPLING METHODOLOGY**

The sample consisted of a non-probability sample (convenience sample) of journalists recruited mainly from members of the following five major journalists' and freedom of expression organisations.

- ▶ Association of European Journalists
- ▶ European Federation of Journalists
- ▶ Index on Censorship
- ▶ International News Safety Institute
- ▶ Reporters without Borders

The Association of European Journalists (AEJ) was set up in 1962 to promote critical journalism in the European integration process and to defend the freedom of information and freedom of the press in Europe. Through its activities, the AEJ contributes to advancing the ethical and material status of the journalism profession and deepening understanding of European affairs. The AEJ was represented on the

Council of Europe's Committee of Experts that drafted the 2016 recommendation on the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists.

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) is the largest organisation of journalists in Europe, representing over 320 000 journalists across 39 countries. The EFJ was created in 1994 within the framework of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) constitution to represent the interests and defend social and professional rights of journalists working in all sectors of the media across Europe.

Index on Censorship (Index) was founded in 1972 to publish the untold stories of dissidents behind the Iron Curtain. It is an international organisation that promotes and defends the right to freedom of expression. To do so, Index uses a unique combination of journalism, campaigning and advocacy. It reports and monitors from around the world to expose and raise awareness of attacks on free speech, with the promotion of events and debate on complex and controversial issues, and direct advocacy and campaigning to drive real change in laws and policies.

The International News Safety Institute (INSI) is the news industry's safety body and its members represent some of the biggest names in media. The INSI advises its members on how to keep their journalists safe and facilitates information exchanges within the industry; it conducts research into journalists' safety and provides safety training to local journalists working in developing countries and conflict zones.

Reporters without Borders (RSF) is an international non-governmental organisation established in 1985 to promote and defend freedom of information and freedom of the press. Through its worldwide network of around 150 correspondents, RSF gathers information and conducts investigations of press freedom violations and works with governments to fight against censorship. RSF also provides material, financial and psychological assistance to journalists assigned to dangerous areas or who are being prosecuted.

A number of other entities, contacted through the partners on the online Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists ([www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/the-platform](http://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/the-platform)), were involved in the recruitment of the sample. Since it is not certain how many journalists received the call to participate, a response rate cannot be calculated.

The main bias in convenience sampling is that representation of the entire population is not ensured because the sample is not chosen at random. This can lead to the under-representation or over-representation of particular groups. We also do not know why some journalists agreed to take part in the survey, while others did not. Was it because some journalists were simply too busy? Perhaps they did not trust the intentions of the survey? Did others take part out of kindness or because they had a particular grievance? This undermines the ability to make generalisations. The results, however, can be considered indicative if not definitive.

## **1.4. PROCEDURE**

The study was organised into two main phases.

### **1.4.1. Pre-testing procedure**

The first phase saw the conceptualisation, development and translation of the research tool by a working group created specifically for this purpose. The working group was comprised of experts from the following entities: the EFJ, Index on Censorship, the INSI, the AEJ and Reporters Without Borders. The working group was led by an associate professor from the Department of Psychology at the University of Malta. In January 2016, following an initial completion of the drafting of the research tool, a pilot study to test the efficacy of the research tool was conducted. The questionnaire was sent to 30 selected journalists and 15 valid questionnaires were sent back. The 44 questions on the research tool were considered to be relevant by the respondents – as indicated by one response: “Perfectly valid. Especially appreciated concern for trauma” – and the ease of comprehension was emphasised. The logic of the tool was also highlighted: “[The] last three years’ experience makes it current and relevant. Easy to follow”. The respondents who participated in the pilot study stressed the importance of exploring the issues dealt with in the survey:

It would be great if journalists would start talking about these experiences more openly, as these are more common than one would think. I am struggling myself with (mostly) psychological pressure, and I believe this can severely affect the long-term performance and life quality of a journalist.

They highlighted the importance of examining self-censorship – “We need more information about self-censorship and why we are not reporting the issues that were discussed in the survey” – and gave some interesting consequences of unwarranted interference: “I stopped working as a correspondent, I do work which does not satisfy me any longer but is safer” and “I became more suspicious and paid more attention to personal safety.”

Following the pilot study the working group engaged in some further editing of the research tool. The research tool was then translated from English into Serbian, Turkish, Russian and French by official translators at the Council of Europe and translated back into English by members of the working group.

### **1.4.2. Survey procedure**

Phase two of the research project saw the final research tool in five languages being disseminated via Survey Monkey in April 2016 by e-mail to a non-probability sample (convenience sample) of journalists (as per sampling strategy above). The data collection time frame was extended to 15 July 2016 and a number of reminders were sent out by the entities in question after which the questionnaire was closed.

The data was exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22 (SPSS 22.0) and was subjected to both descriptive and inferential analysis. The data from open-ended questions was subjected to a thematic analysis using NVivo 11.

## **1.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In research, safeguarding participants' rights is of the utmost importance. This research deals with personal information about unwarranted interference, therefore confidentiality and anonymity were considered a priority. In the introductory section of the questionnaire, the participants were assured that all information would be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity, and that it could not be traced back to them. Participants were not deceived throughout the questionnaire. Participants were free to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time. Since this was an online survey, it was easier to reassure the participants of their anonymity. Raw data was not available to unauthorised persons.

The study went through a thorough and comprehensive review process prior to being conducted and received ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Malta (UREC).



## Chapter 2

# Results

### INTRODUCTION

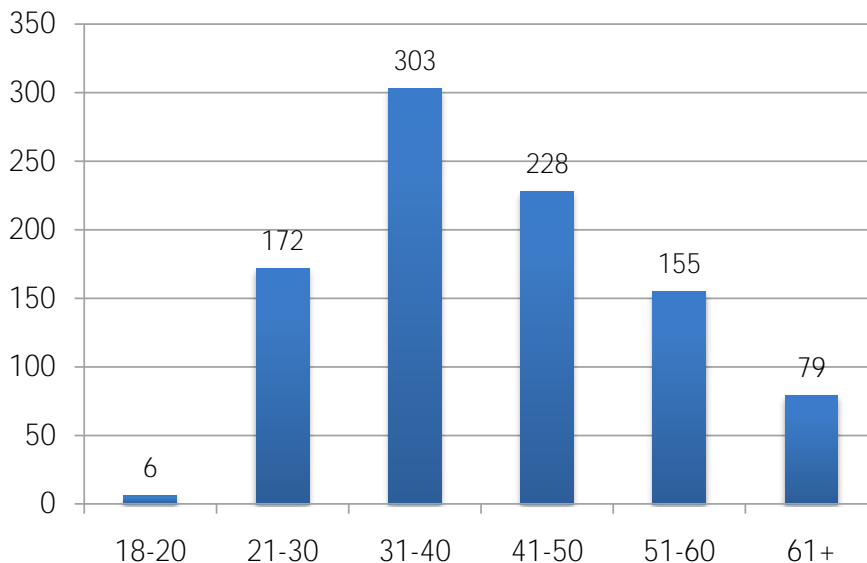
**T**his chapter presents the results from the survey questionnaire on experiences of unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship among active journalists, developed for the purpose of this study. Part 1 of the chapter presents the descriptive statistics for the sample and the prevalence of unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship among the entire sample, while Part 2 engages with the data in a deeper manner, presenting relationships between these three phenomena and a number of variables, most notably gender and regional distribution.

### 2.1. PART 1 – DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

#### 2.1.1. Sample characteristics

A total of 940 journalists aged between 18 and 61+ participated in the study. Of these, 509 (54%) were male and 431 (46%) were female. The majority of respondents (74%) were aged between 21 and 50. Figure 1 shows the age range of respondents.

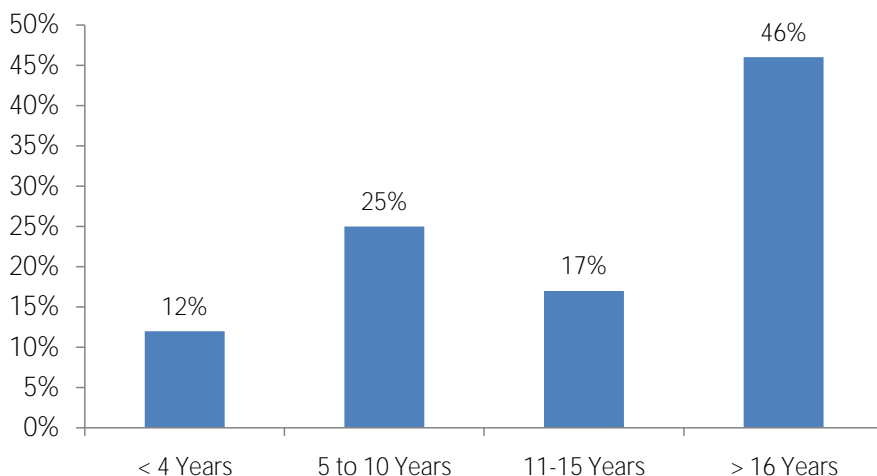
**Figure 1: Age range of respondents**





Almost half (46%) of the respondents had a journalistic career spanning over 16 years (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Length of journalistic career**



The most common medium used for reporting was newspapers (32%), closely followed by the internet (31%) and TV (17%) (Table 1).

**Table 1: Medium used for reporting**

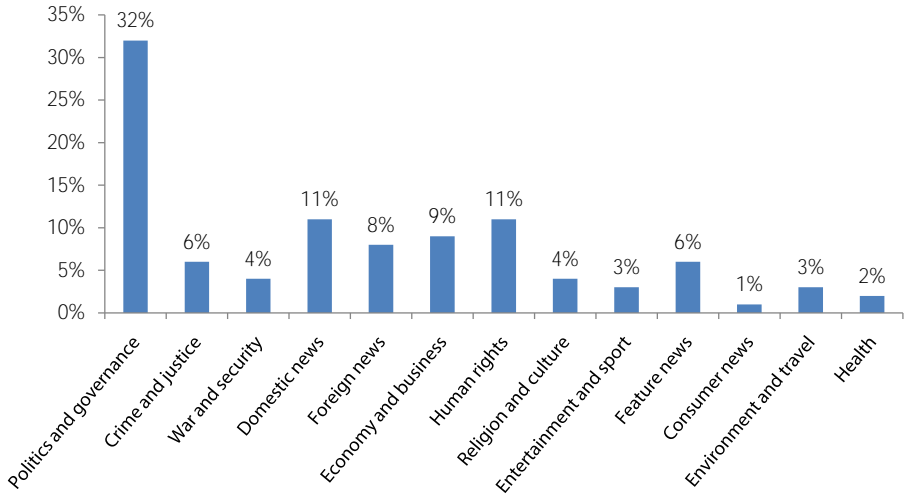
Journalistic medium	Frequency	Percentage
TV	148	17%
Web TV	23	3%
Radio	75	8%
Newspaper	281	32%
Internet	274	31%
Magazine/journal	84	9%

The most common topic reported on was “Politics and governance” (32%), followed by “Domestic news” (11%) and “Human rights” (11%) (Figure 3).

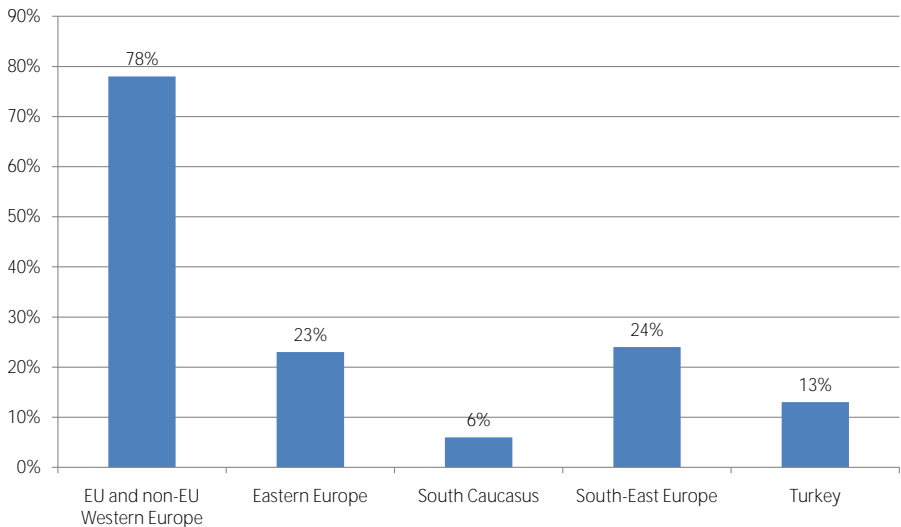
The majority of respondents (69%) worked as full-time journalists and the same amount (69%) reported that they were members of a journalistic union or association. The majority (62%) also stated that they were employed on a contract basis; 29% were self-employed or freelance journalists and the remaining 9% did not specify their terms of employment. The journalists were of diverse nationalities and in the last three years were engaged in journalistic activities in various Council of Europe member states. After the results of the survey questionnaire were received, the members of the working group (experts from the European Federation of Journalists, Index on Censorship, International News Safety Institute, Association of European Journalists and Reporters Without Borders), in co-ordination with the

Council of Europe Secretariat, divided the data for “Region reported from” into five geographical areas: EU and non-EU Western Europe, South-East Europe, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Turkey. In addition to the geographical location of individual states, the logic of this division was based on historical, cultural and social considerations (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: Most commonly reported topics**



**Figure 4: Region reported from<sup>5</sup>**

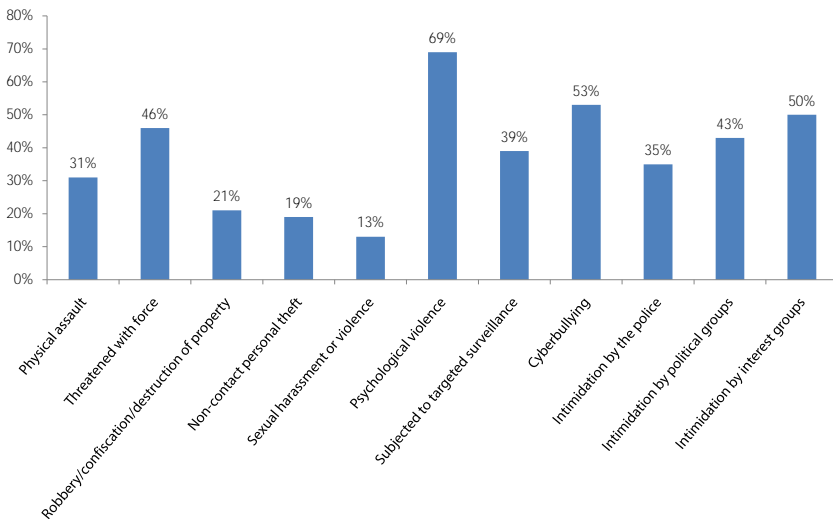


5. Respondents were able to choose up to three countries they had reported from in the last year, therefore values do not add up to a 100%.

## 2.1.2. Experiences of unwarranted interference in the last three years

Respondents reported being subjected to significant levels of unwarranted interference.<sup>6</sup> Using a three-year time frame and in relation to their pursuit of journalistic endeavours, 31% claimed that they had experienced physical assault, 46% had been threatened with force, 20% had experienced robbery/confiscation/destruction of their property and 19% non-contact personal theft. Thirteen per cent reported experiencing sexual harassment and/or violence and 69% reported experiencing psychological violence, mainly at the hands of public authorities. The experiences of psychological violence primarily included belittlement and humiliation by public authorities (48%), intimidation by public authorities (56%), threats of being hurt by public authorities (41%) and slandering or smear campaigning by public authorities (43%) and by other journalists (28%). Smaller, yet nonetheless significant percentages reported belittlement and humiliation by their management (24%), intimidation by their management (19%), threats of being hurt by interviewees (19%) and also by other parties not otherwise specified (42%). Over a third of respondents (39%) reported being subjected to targeted surveillance and 76% did not feel sufficiently protected against such surveillance. Some 53% reported experiencing cyberbullying in the last three years, with the nature of the abuse most commonly related to the content of the article (63%). Again, within the time frame of three years, 35% reported having experienced intimidation at the hands of the police, 43% by political groups and 50% by interest groups (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Experiences of unwarranted interference in the last three years



### 2.1.2.1. Frequency of experiences of unwarranted interference

Respondents were asked to state how frequently they experienced the different types of unwarranted interference during the last three years. Table 2 highlights the

6. The journalists reported on their personal perception of unwarranted interference and therefore the study does not measure instances of interferences reported to the authorities or proven by courts.

frequency of these different experiences. The most frequently encountered types of unwarranted interference were psychological violence, followed by being threatened with force and being intimidated by various groups, including the police (Table 2).

**Table 2: Frequency of experiences of unwarranted interference**

Types of unwarranted interference	Over the last three years				
	NEVER	ONCE	2 TO 5 TIMES	6 TO 10 TIMES	> 11 TIMES
Physical assault	69%	12%	13%	3%	3%
Threatened with force	54%	16%	20%	6%	4%
Sexual harassment	87%	7%	5%	1%	0%
Robbery/confiscation/ destruction of property	80%	14%	6%	0%	0%
Non-contact personal theft	81%	13%	5%	1%	0%
Psychological violence	31%	13%	30%	11%	15%
Cyberbullying	47%	16%	22%	5%	10%
Intimidation by police	65%	14%	14%	3%	4%
Intimidation by political groups	57%	15%	18%	4%	6%
Intimidation by interest groups	50%	16%	24%	4%	6%

Cyberbullying or online harassment of journalists, including threats of violence, may have a serious psychological impact and consequently result in self-censorship. When journalists were asked to expand about the nature of the cyberbullying they experienced, these included the following.

- ▶ Accusations “by a party of being subjective”<sup>7</sup> and of being “partisan”.
- ▶ Personal attacks including negative comments about journalists’ appearance and presentation”, as well as personal insults. Journalists received messages that they should kill themselves, and others stated that they “have been hacked repeatedly”.
- ▶ Cyberbullying also consisted of journalists receiving “aggressive” abuse and, in extreme cases, being “threatened with violent rape, online, in a public forum”. In one act of “public defamation”, images of a journalist were reported to have been digitally manipulated into embarrassing photos, which were then “published and circulated on the Internet”.

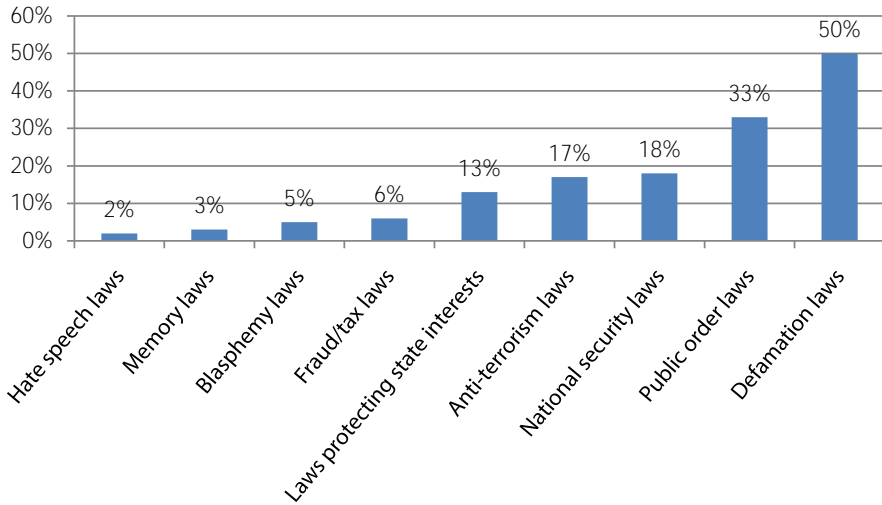
This study highlights major challenges to journalists, which have included online smear campaigns and “belittlement at a professional level” with the aim of damaging credibility.

### 2.1.3. Judicial intimidation

Twenty-three per cent of survey respondents claimed to have experienced arrest, investigation, threat of prosecution and actual prosecution under a number of laws.

<sup>7</sup> Quotes are actual written comments by respondents in text boxes provided in the questionnaire.

**Figure 6: Arrests, investigations, threatened with prosecution or prosecuted under laws**



Of those who had experienced judicial intimidation, the most common intimidation was under defamation laws. The Council of Europe has recently published a text on defamation which examines the voluminous case law of the European Court of Human Rights relating to freedom of expression and defamation. It clarifies:

how defamation laws that are overly protective of reputational interests and that provide for far-reaching remedies or sanctions can have a chilling effect on freedom of expression and public debate. The principle of proportionality in respect of defamation laws and their application is therefore very important when it comes to preventing such a chilling effect. (McGonagle et al., 2016, p. 7)

The data also indicates that the use of public order laws, as well as anti-terrorism and national security laws, are being used to silence journalists in their role as public watchdogs (Figure 6, above).

### **2.1.4. Responses to unwarranted interference**

Despite this high rate of unwarranted interference, which 40% of respondents claimed was bad enough to affect their personal lives, 35% did not feel that they had mechanisms at their disposal for reporting such interference. Of those who had experienced unwarranted interference, 28% did not report the unwarranted interference to the company for which they worked. Fifty-seven per cent did not report it to the police and of those who did report it, 23% were not satisfied with the police's response. Among those who belonged to a union, 40% did not report it to their union. Almost half, 48%, felt that their ability to protect their sources was currently compromised and 28% did not feel that they were adequately supported.

Not being aware of any mechanisms in place was the main reason cited by journalists for not reporting experiences of unwarranted interference. Journalists asserted that

there was no “specific mechanism or office to report [experiences of unwarranted interference]”, “no system of protection”, or “no effective integrated process”. One respondent added that their only option was to have their “voice heard through social media and NGOs”. Others noted their inability to report their experiences because “there was nothing I could define as direct pressure”, highlighting the subjective nature of unwarranted interference. For example, one journalist expressed that “it is a difficult thing to initiate a legal process concerning people who are insulting you, usually under an alias, over Twitter, known as trolls”.

A lack of awareness regarding adequate mechanisms for reporting unwarranted interference was compounded by the fact that journalists lacked trust in the mechanisms that did exist. Respondents cited reasons such as “I wouldn’t know who to talk to or if they are trustworthy mechanisms” or “I didn’t think that reporting the incident would bring any result”, and felt that if they were to speak up, they would lose their job. Other respondents had little faith in any mechanisms in place, stating that “no one really cares”, “they do not take what I say seriously” and that “the authorities do not take threats against journalists seriously”. A lack of trust in the mechanisms in place was also attributed to unsuccessful attempts at reporting unwarranted interference in the past: one journalist’s “request for close protection in response to threats was rejected”, and another stated that they “used to turn to the police for help” but gave up because this proved futile.

Linked with a lack of trust in the mechanisms in place is the fact that journalists fear the consequences of reporting unwarranted interference. One respondent stated that they did not report the interference “because it is done by the management and owners themselves”, while another said that if they spoke up then they “could be fired by [the] media owner”, highlighting a conflict of interest. Journalists also revealed that, in some cases, the unwarranted interference was not reported “because the state and government do this business”. This stresses the fact that, for such mechanisms to be effective, they need to be transparent and appear trustworthy to the journalists.

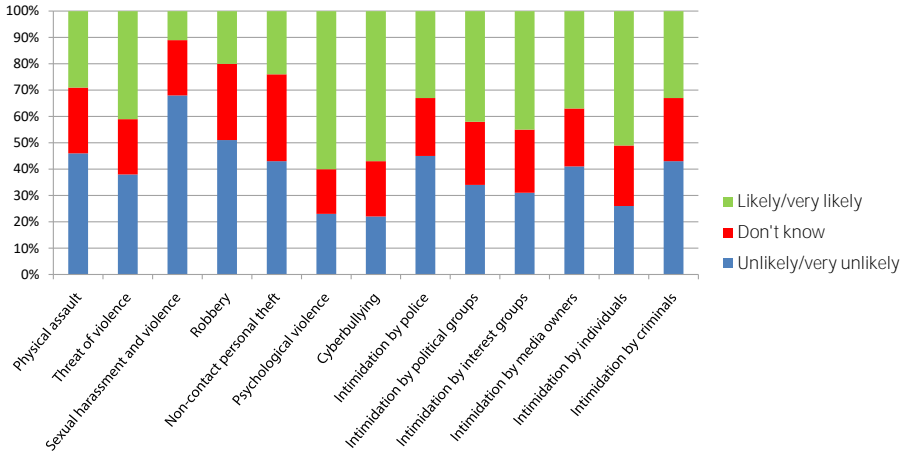
Respondents cited several reasons for not reporting unwarranted interference to their employer. They expressed fear of repercussions from doing so and some respondents noted that a conflict of interest may exist with their respective employers. Some self-employed freelancers said they had no resources to turn to for help. Others noted that a “lack of [an] enabling environment for complaints” prevented them from reporting interference. The process for lodging a complaint was deemed “too complicated” and legal procedures were considered “long and bureaucratic”. One respondent stated that they “don’t believe the management cares”, again indicating a lack of trust in their employers to help them deal with such situations. Journalists also lack trust in the mechanisms in place because “the violence experienced is viewed as normal” and “in the end it’s only an exercise in futility”. Journalists also thought that reporting unwarranted interference would put them in danger of losing their job.

### **2.1.5. Perceived likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference**

Significant proportions reported it would be likely or highly likely that they would become victims of unwarranted interference, indicating reasonably high levels of

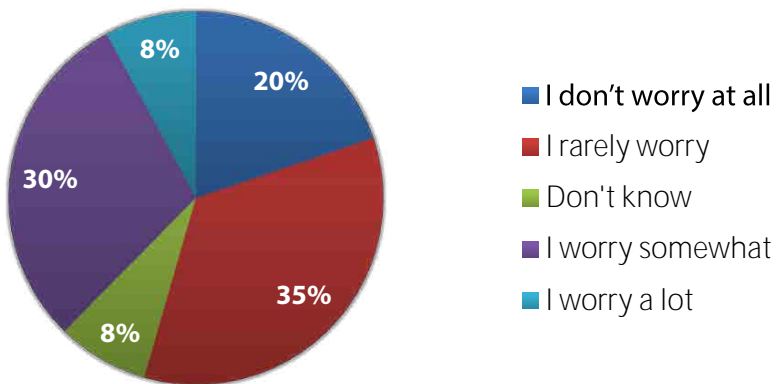
fear. Respondents feared that they would become victims of both physical (41%) and psychological (60%) violence. Some 57% feared that they would become victims of cyberbullying. The fear of intimidation from various sources was also experienced by a large number of respondents: 33% feared intimidation by police; 45% by interest groups; 42% by political groups; 37% by media owners; 51% by individuals; and 33% by criminals/delinquents (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Perceived likelihood of victimisation**

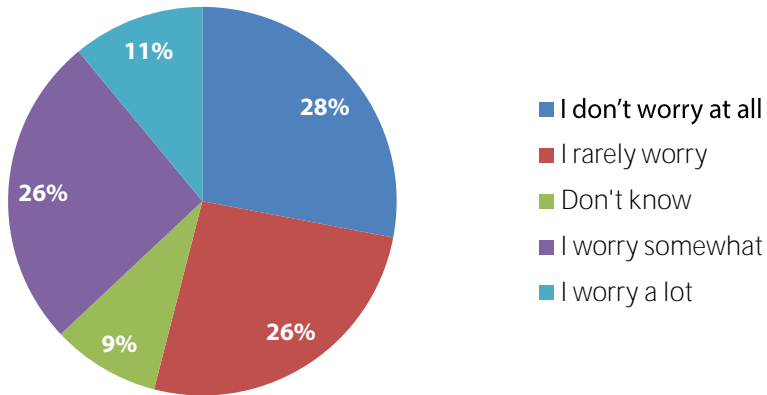


A significant proportion reported concerns about personal safety (38%) and safety of friends/family (37%) (see Figures 8 and 9).

**Figure 8: To what extent do you worry about your personal safety?**



**Figure 9: To what extent do you worry about your friends' and family's safety?**



Fear for personal safety can be seen in descriptions of how one journalist felt compelled to change his family's accommodation, as a result of living in a non-EU country with a state-wide intimidation campaign against journalists and activists. However, government protection did not mitigate fears for personal safety, with one respondent stating: "I must be careful when I leave my house despite the fact that the [country's] authorities placed me under protection after a number of threats that I would be lynched". Another respondent explained that unwarranted interference made them fear for the safety of their child and unable to relax. Others expressed a "fear of being arrested while covering news" which made them "feel frightened of writing news".

The survey also addressed the issue of protection of sources. Forty-eight per cent of respondents feared that the ability to protect their source may be compromised while 25% had actually experienced a compromising of their sources in the past.

### **2.1.6. Personal consequences of unwarranted interference**

A significant percentage of respondents (67%) reported that unwarranted interference or fear of it affected them psychologically in different ways. Large percentages of respondents reported experiencing an increase in stress and anxiety and changes in sleeping patterns (Figure 10). Smaller but significant percentages reported feelings of depression and low self-esteem.

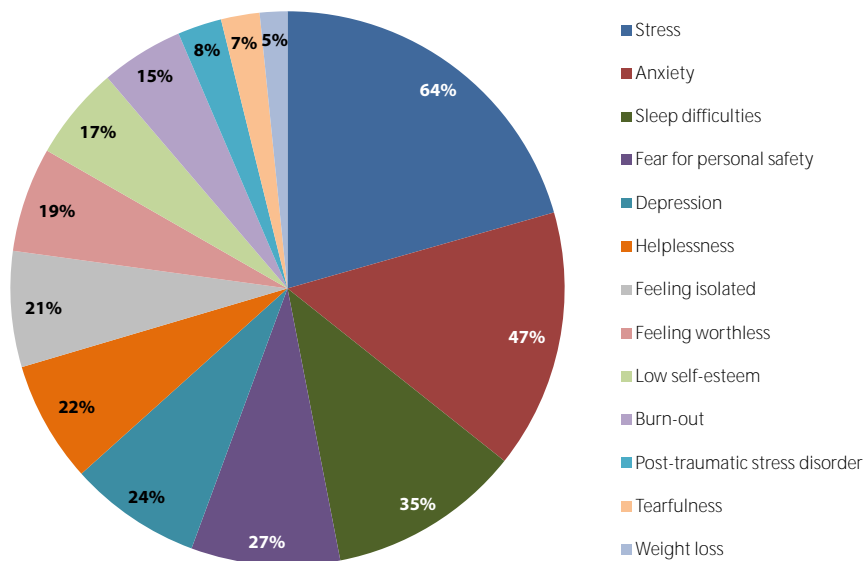
The respondents who felt that their personal life or private activities had been affected by unwarranted interference (or fear of unwarranted interference) provided explanations of how this had occurred. These explanations have been grouped into the following themes.

- ▶ Negative impact on personal relationships
- ▶ Paranoia and fear
- ▶ Stress



- ▶ Reduction of social activities
- ▶ Self-censorship
- ▶ Emotional effects

**Figure 10: Psychological impact of unwarranted interference**



### Negative impact on personal relationships

Some journalists' partners and families experienced anxiety and stress as a result of the unwarranted interference. One respondent stated that their partner "has been more engaged with ensuring [their] personal safety". Many responses showed that journalists' personal relationships suffered as a direct result of unwarranted interference. For example, one journalist stated that "you bring the problems home, to your partner and kid(s)". Another wrote that "it is becoming difficult to have normal relationships with people, especially those close to me". Others noted how they became obsessed with being treated unjustly in their profession, which was transmitted to their family life. Being preoccupied with unwarranted interference also resulted in journalists "not [being] concentrated on [their] family". Dealing with unwarranted interference also leads to "conflicts among and with my beloved ones and family". Some journalists also fear for the safety of their family as a result of unwarranted interference, because they believe that their "family could be at risk". It was noted by many respondents that the stress caused by unwarranted interference affected their family relationships in several ways: "feeling concern about members of the family", limiting time spent with family, "neglect of private-life duties" and "termination of romantic relationship [or] divorce", as well as having restrictions imposed on where and when they can travel with their family. These consequences made one journalist wonder "if there's any sense in being a journalist."

## Paranoia and fear

Many participants cited fear or paranoia as reasons for the unwarranted interference affecting their personal or private life. “Fear”, “nervousness”, “feeling followed or watched”, and “a persistent state of over-cautiousness” are some of the phrases used to describe the effect on journalists’ personal or private lives. One journalist stated that they “avoid being alone/stay in public”, indicating the level of paranoia due to unwarranted interference. Several journalists also experienced fear due to the fact that “police can raid your house at any time”. This “permanent fear of sudden attack” was deemed to be causing exhaustion in some journalists’ personal lives. One journalist noted that their obsessive thoughts, caused by unwarranted interference, meant that they could not think of anything else, even in their free time. This fearful paranoia also infiltrated journalists’ personal relationships, since they would be careful about whom they associate with and “keep people at arm’s length”. Journalists also had “difficulties in communicating with [their] immediate circle” as a result of their experiences of unwarranted interference. In one extreme case, a respondent stated: “I do not leave my home other than in special circumstances”.

## Stress

Stress was another result of unwarranted interference on journalists. Feeling “overwhelmed” and having “accumulated stress affect a lot of [their] private activities” are instances of this happening. One respondent stated that “after being assaulted by an extremist group during a protest march, my private and working life were affected by major stress”. The stress experienced by journalists as a result of unwarranted interference also had physical manifestations; a journalist responding to this survey reported that they “got into hospital in 2013 because of pressure”. Other physical manifestations included “sexual dysfunction”, “problem with marital infertility”, taking “long sick leave” and being “hospitalised several times” because of their fear of “being under surveillance by the state”. Others reported “abuse of alcohol”, “chronic fatigue” and “long-term use of antidepressants” as results of the interference.

## Reduction of social activities

This was another consequence of unwarranted interference. Participants described how they felt isolated, “unable to socialise or to trust”, and many said that they were not able to go to the places they used to, while their “capacity to take pleasure in things diminished”. This social isolation was a direct result of journalists “being careful” following unwarranted interference. One respondent summed this up thus: “because it was known that my telephones were tapped, I was left with hardly any friends. After I wrote the news item about [a national intelligence organisation], people avoided talking to me by phone, or meeting me face to face”.

## Emotional effects

Some respondents also disclosed that they became “really sad” and “depressed”, that dealing with unwarranted interference “turned [them] into a very aggressive person” and left them feeling “insecure”. At one extreme, one journalist stated that

they are “on anti-anxiety and anti-paranoia medication as a result of working in a region filled with fear, violence and the threat of personal attacks from members of the public and government and state authorities”, which highlights the serious personal consequences of dealing with unwarranted interference in their work. Given the severe, negative impact unwarranted interference has on the daily life and personal relationships of journalists, it is reasonable to assume that this will spill over into their journalistic activities. This issue is further documented below.

### **2.1.7. Self-censorship**

Thirty-seven per cent of survey respondents (Figure 11) claimed that unwarranted interference affected the way they went about their work, with self-censorship a highly prevalent theme when journalists explained what impact unwarranted interference had on their work. For instance, one respondent stated that they experienced “nervousness about doing more reporting on the same theme”. Another respondent admitted that they had “changed the lead and focus of a story from an individual within the organisation to the organisation itself”, while adding that “both had equal merits as stories”. Other examples of self-censorship can be seen in responses such as “I double checked my science and left some data out”, being a “little bit reserved with other ‘powerful’ stories”, and “not being able to report all the facts at hand”. It is therefore evident that unwarranted interference or fear of unwarranted interference has a significant effect on a journalist’s ability to effectively carry out their work. One respondent explained how they were now “abstaining from contacting certain sources” as a result of unwarranted interference. Another pointed out that, following the interference, they now feel that they “can’t suggest some ideas because they are politically against the TV’s political position. Even if the ideas are true facts”.

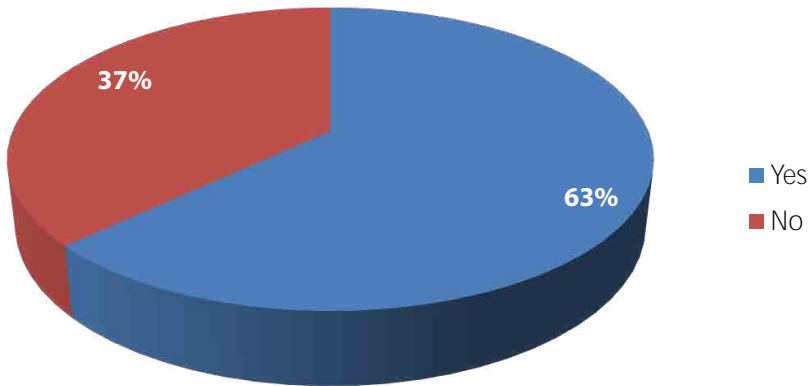
Some journalists reacted to unwarranted interference by “avoiding writing news stories, deciding that items are not newsworthy, without giving the matter sufficient thought”. These comments clearly indicate that journalistic freedom is being compromised because of unwarranted interference, which in many cases originates in their own organisation. The fact that journalists reported being “more afraid of covering protest marches” and felt that they “cannot tell the truth in published news stories” reveals the far-reaching repercussions of unwarranted interference. Some of the respondents suffered extreme consequences, leading them to be fired from their jobs. Others who remained in employment were dissatisfied with their jobs after the interference; expressing that they felt “resentment towards those people who caused [them] stress”. Finally, some respondents were so dissatisfied with their work situation that they quit their job and started a project of their own, while others “gave up producing news stories”. One journalist also expressed how their job dissatisfaction meant that they “work with less enthusiasm”, with another stating: “not being able to do my job affects me psychologically”. Journalists also reported impaired functioning in their work due to the unwarranted interference they had experienced. In some cases, this was extreme – one respondent received a “medical prescription not to go to work for four weeks”.

Other cases were also significant, such as journalists finding it “very difficult to function, concentrate, [and the] loss of necessary resources” and “missing deadlines”.

Journalists also experienced poor functioning on the job in the form of “confusing dates, poor speech and writing, lateness” and a “reduction in the extent and quality of journalistic work”. Some expressed that they had no option but to resign due to unwarranted interference: “I asked to be relieved from my duties because I was unable to perform”; and “I had to give up editorship of the newspaper I founded because of the pressure and professional losses imposed by repeated detentions, arrests, fines and prison sentences, [and] innumerable investigations”. This impaired functioning at work was summarised by one journalist as: “When your self-confidence is diminished by constantly being belittled, you experience a lot of problems such as checking work repeatedly, paranoia, and self-doubt. This stops you doing your job properly.”

A number of respondents demonstrated increased resilience as a result of their experience of unwarranted interference. One said that they became “tougher”, while another said that the interference made them “more determined to resist pressure”. A journalist summarised this reinterpretation of a negative situation by saying, “I needed to rethink how much exposure I was ready to have. I learned to appreciate a reasonable amount of hateful comments: they only mean that my writing has relevance!” However, this same journalist also noted that they felt it “would cross the line” if they were to receive death threats. This indicates that some journalists can tolerate a reasonable amount of criticism, yet this might not be the case if it escalates to threats to their physical safety or journalistic integrity.

**Figure 11: Did the unwarranted interference affect any aspect of how you went about your work?**



With regard to self-censorship, Table 3 highlights the significant impact of fear of unwarranted interference and the subsequent challenges faced by journalists in their roles as public watchdogs. Significant percentages reported toning down sensitive, critical stories, abandoning sensitive, critical stories, reporting content in a less controversial manner, being selective about what items to report, framing content as acceptable discussion, withholding information and shaping stories to

suit a company's/editor's interests. However, 36% also stated that the experience made them more committed to not engaging in self-censorship.

**Table 3: Impact of fear of unwarranted interference on self-censorship<sup>8</sup>**

<b>Did the unwarranted interference or fear of unwarranted interference encourage you to do any of the following?</b>	<b>%</b>
Tone down sensitive, critical stories	31%
Abandon sensitive, critical stories	15%
Report content in a less controversial manner	30%
Be selective about what items to report	33%
Frame content as acceptable discussion	20%
Withhold information	23%
Shape story to suit your company's/editor's interests	19%
Become even more committed to non-self-censorship	36%

## **2.2. PART 2 – STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN**

### **2.2.1. Regional distribution and experiences of unwarranted interference**

The different types of unwarranted interference were further analysed by looking at the percentages of those who said that they had such experiences and the regions that respondents had been reporting from (Figure 12). After results of the survey questionnaire were received, the members of the working group (experts from the European Federation of Journalists, Index on Censorship, International News Safety Institute, Association of European Journalists and Reporters Without Borders), in co-ordination with the Council of Europe Secretariat, have decided to analyse the results by five geographical areas – EU and non-EU Western European countries, South-East European countries, Eastern European countries, South Caucasus countries and Turkey. In addition to the geographical location of individual states, the logic of this division was based on historical, cultural and social considerations (see Appendix A).

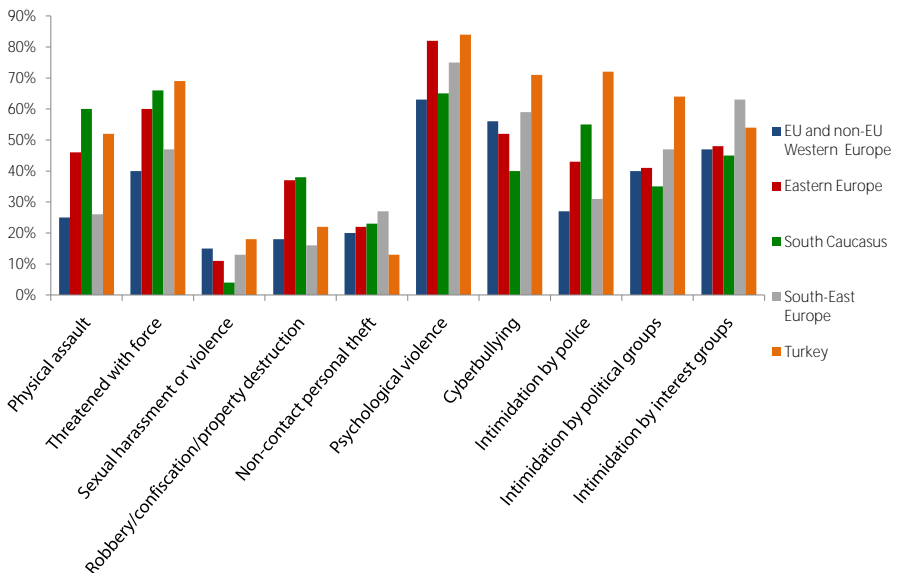
With regard to experiences of physical assault, these were highest in the South Caucasus region, closely followed by Turkey, but presented high prevalence in the other regions as well, including EU and non-EU Western Europe (25.1%). The experience of threats with force was highest in Turkey (69.2%) but very closely followed by South Caucasus (66%) and Eastern Europe (60%). Although notably lower in South-East European countries (47.2%) and EU and non-EU Western Europe (39.9%), prevalence rates for this form of interference are still high. The experience of sexual harassment was highest in Turkey (18.3%) and in EU and non-EU Western Europe (15.2%). The experience of robbery and/or confiscation or destruction of

<sup>8</sup>. Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could choose more than one option.

property was highest in Eastern European countries and South-East European countries. Non-contact personal thefts were lowest in Turkey (12.6%) and highest in South-East European countries (26.6%). The other regions were not very far behind, with 20.4% in EU and non-EU Western Europe, 22.2% in Eastern Europe and 23.4% in South Caucasus.

The experience of psychological violence was high in all regions with each region reporting percentages over the 60 percentile. The lowest was 63% in the EU and non-EU Western European region. The lowest was 63% in the EU and non-EU Western European region. Journalists in Turkey reported the highest percentages in relation to being subjected to targeted surveillance (86.7%) but this was generally high across all five regions with the lowest in EU and non-EU Western Europe at 47.4%. Cyberbullying was highest in Turkey (71%) followed by South-East Europe (59%) and EU and non-EU Western Europe (56.1%). Experience of intimidation from political groups was also quite high in Turkey (64.4%) and the lowest was in South Caucasus with 34.8% of journalists in the sample from that region reporting it. Interference from interest groups was highest in the South-East European region (63%) and lowest in the South Caucasus. While those reporting from EU and non-EU Western European countries had the lowest percentages of experiences of unwarranted interference, significant percentages of journalists from this region reported such experiences. In EU and non-EU Western European countries 25% of journalists reported physical assault, 40% were threatened with force, 15% experienced sexual harassment and 63% experienced psychological violence.

**Figure 12: Unwarranted interference by region**



The tables below (Table 4 to 14) show the detailed differences in the experiences of the various types of unwarranted interference by region.

**Table 4: Experience of physical assault by region**

		Experienced physical assault	
		No	Yes
<b>EU and non-EU Western European countries</b>	Count	451	151
	Percentage	74.9%	25.1%
<b>Eastern European countries</b>	Count	109	91
	Percentage	54.5%	45.5%
<b>South Caucasus</b>	Count	19	29
	Percentage	39.6%	60.4%
<b>South-East European countries</b>	Count	144	50
	Percentage	74.2%	25.8%
<b>Turkey</b>	Count	50	54
	Percentage	48.1%	51.9%

**Table 5: Experience of threats of force by region**

		Threatened with force	
		No	Yes
<b>EU and non-EU Western European countries</b>	Count	365	242
	Percentage	60.1%	39.9%
<b>Eastern European countries</b>	Count	80	120
	Percentage	40.0%	60.0%
<b>South Caucasus</b>	Count	16	31
	Percentage	34.0%	66.0%
<b>South-East European countries</b>	Count	103	92
	Percentage	52.8%	47.2%
<b>Turkey</b>	Count	32	72
	Percentage	30.8%	69.2%

**Table 6: Experience of sexual harassment or violence by region**

		Experienced sexual harassment or violence	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	513	92
	Percentage	84.8%	15.2%
Eastern European countries	Count	179	22
	Percentage	89.1%	10.9%
South Caucasus	Count	44	2
	Percentage	95.7%	4.3%
South-East European countries	Count	170	25
	Percentage	87.2%	12.8%
Turkey	Count	85	19
	Percentage	81.7%	18.3%

**Table 7: Experience of robbery and/or confiscation or destruction of property by region**

		Experienced robbery and/or confiscation or destruction of property	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	496	111
	Percentage	81.7%	18.3%
Eastern European countries	Count	127	73
	Percentage	63.5%	36.5%
South Caucasus	Count	30	18
	Percentage	62.5%	37.5%
South-East European countries	Count	163	31
	Percentage	84.0%	16.0%
Turkey	Count	80	23
	Percentage	77.7%	22.3%



**Table 8: Experience of non-contact personal thefts by region**

		Experienced non-contact personal thefts	
		No	Yes
<b>EU and non-EU Western European countries</b>	Count	476	122
	Percentage	79.6%	20.4%
<b>Eastern European countries</b>	Count	154	44
	Percentage	77.8%	22.2%
<b>South Caucasus</b>	Count	36	11
	Percentage	76.6%	23.4%
<b>South-East European countries</b>	Count	141	51
	Percentage	73.4%	26.6%
<b>Turkey</b>	Count	90	13
	Percentage	87.4%	12.6%

**Table 9: Experience of psychological violence by region**

		Experienced psychological violence	
		No	Yes
<b>EU and non-EU Western European countries</b>	Count	223	379
	Percentage	37.0%	63.0%
<b>Eastern European countries</b>	Count	35	163
	Percentage	17.7%	82.3%
<b>South Caucasus</b>	Count	17	31
	Percentage	35.4%	64.6%
<b>South-East European countries</b>	Count	49	145
	Percentage	25.3%	74.7%
<b>Turkey</b>	Count	17	86
	Percentage	16.5%	83.5%

**Table 10: Subjected to targeted surveillance by region**

		Subjected to targeted surveillance	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	221	199
	Percentage	52.60%	47.40%
Eastern European countries	Count	48	97
	Percentage	33.10%	66.90%
South Caucasus	Count	12	18
	Percentage	40.00%	60.00%
South-East European countries	Count	29	92
	Percentage	24.00%	76.00%
Turkey	Count	10	65
	Percentage	13.30%	86.70%

**Table 11: Experience of cyberbullying by region**

		Experienced cyberbullying	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	261	334
	Percentage	43.9%	56.1%
Eastern European countries	Count	95	101
	Percentage	48.5%	51.5%
South Caucasus	Count	28	19
	Percentage	59.6%	40.4%
South-East European countries	Count	77	111
	Percentage	41.0%	59.0%
Turkey	Count	29	71
	Percentage	29.0%	71.0%

**Table 12: Experience of intimidation by the police by region**

		Experienced intimidation by the police	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	428	158
	Percentage	73.0%	27.0%
Eastern European countries	Count	113	86
	Percentage	56.8%	43.2%
South Caucasus	Count	21	26
	Percentage	44.7%	55.3%
South-East European countries	Count	132	59
	Percentage	69.1%	30.9%
Turkey	Count	29	73
	Percentage	28.4%	71.6%

**Table 13: Experience of intimidation by political groups by region**

		Experienced intimidation by political groups	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	360	237
	Percentage	60.3%	39.7%
Eastern European countries	Count	116	80
	Percentage	59.2%	40.8%
South Caucasus	Count	30	16
	Percentage	65.2%	34.8%
South-East European countries	Count	102	90
	Percentage	53.1%	46.9%
Turkey	Count	36	65
	Percentage	35.6%	64.4%

**Table 14: Experience of intimidation by interest groups by region**

		Experienced intimidation by interest groups (lobbyists, economic companies, private investors, media owners, advertisers, editors)	
		No	Yes
EU and non-EU Western European countries	Count	316	281
	Percentage	52.9%	47.1%
Eastern European countries	Count	100	92
	Percentage	52.1%	47.9%
South Caucasus	Count	26	21
	Percentage	55.3%	44.7%
South-East European countries	Count	71	121
	Percentage	37.0%	63.0%
Turkey	Count	47	54
	Percentage	46.5%	53.5%

**2.2.2. Regional differences in fear/likelihood of experiences of unwarranted interference**

Journalists in those regions reporting heightened experiences of unwarranted interference were more likely to report that they feared encountering such experiences again in the future (Table 15). This is particularly the case in Turkey, which registered the highest levels of reported fear of experiencing future threats of violence, sexual harassment, psychological violence, cyberbullying and intimidation by police and political groups, and also the highest reports of actually having had such experiences in the last three years. Similarly, the Eastern European region also reported relatively high levels of fear, especially with regard to threats of violence, robbery and psychological violence (Table 15). The lowest levels of fear were reported by EU and non-EU Western European countries.

**Table 15: Fear of unwarranted interference by region**

Type of interference	Region	Likely/very likely
Physical assault	EU and non-EU Western Europe	20%
	Eastern Europe	39%
	South Caucasus	45%
	South-East Europe	30%
	Turkey	64%
Threats of violence	EU and non-EU Western Europe	32%
	Eastern Europe	51%
	South Caucasus	50%
	South-East Europe	47%
	Turkey	56%
Sexual harassment	EU and non-EU Western Europe	12%
	Eastern Europe	7%
	South Caucasus	4%
	South-East Europe	6%
	Turkey	22%
Robbery	EU and non-EU Western Europe	14%
	Eastern Europe	41%
	South Caucasus	28%
	South-East Europe	20%
	Turkey	24%
Non-contact personal theft	EU and non-EU Western Europe	18%
	Eastern Europe	39%
	South Caucasus	41%
	South-East Europe	23%
	Turkey	40%
Psychological violence	EU and non-EU Western Europe	49%
	Eastern Europe	73%
	South Caucasus	68%
	South-East Europe	68%
	Turkey	91%

Type of interference	Region	Likely/very likely
Cyberbullying	EU and non-EU Western Europe	50%
	Eastern Europe	63%
	South Caucasus	59%
	South-East Europe	64%
	Turkey	83%
Intimidation by the police	EU and non-EU Western Europe	20%
	Eastern Europe	40%
	South Caucasus	62%
	South-East Europe	28%
	Turkey	85%
Intimidation by political groups	EU and non-EU Western Europe	36%
	Eastern Europe	38%
	South Caucasus	32%
	South-East Europe	49%
	Turkey	74%
Intimidation by interest groups	EU and non-EU Western Europe	41%
	Eastern Europe	49%
	South Caucasus	43%
	South-East Europe	53%
	Turkey	62%

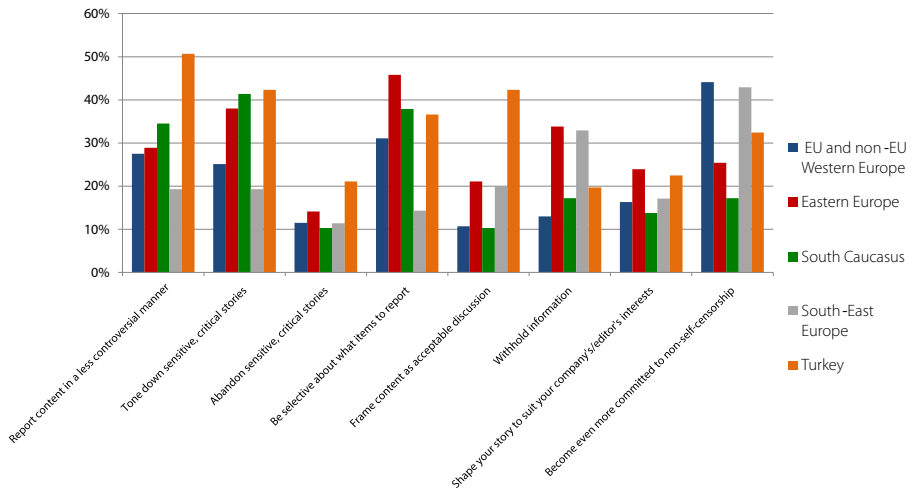
### 2.2.3. Regional differences in self-censorship

The issue of self-censorship was most evident in Turkey (Figure 13), which was the country that had the highest percentage of participants reporting that they would do one of the following.

- ▶ Report content in a less controversial manner (51%)
- ▶ Tone down sensitive, critical stories (42%)
- ▶ Frame content as acceptable discussion (42%)

Respondents from Eastern Europe were more likely to be selective about what items to report on (46%), to withhold information (34%) and to shape stories to suit the company's needs (24%). Those from EU and non-EU Western European countries (44%) and South-East Europe (43%) had the greatest percentages of respondents reporting that these experiences made them even more committed to not engage in self-censorship.

**Figure 13: Regional differences in self-censorship**



### 2.2.4. Regional differences in judicial intimidation

A total of 221 survey respondents claimed that they have experienced arrest, investigation, threat of prosecution or actual prosecution under various laws. Of these, according to the data, journalists reporting in EU and non-EU Western Europe and South-East Europe most commonly experienced prosecution under defamation laws, journalists reporting in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus under public order laws and those reporting in Turkey under anti-terrorism laws, national security laws and laws protecting state interests (Table 16).

**Table 16: Regional differences in judicial intimidation**

	EU and non-EU Western Europe	Eastern Europe	South Caucasus	South-East Europe	Turkey
Defamation laws	50%	21%	40%	73%	50%
Anti-terrorism laws	11%	6%	13%	2%	55%
National security laws	23%	19%	13%	4%	30%
Public order laws	28%	51%	53%	23%	30%
Hate speech laws	4%	1%	7%	0%	0%
Blasphemy laws	10%	0%	0%	4%	5%
Memory laws	3%	4%	7%	2%	3%
Fraud/tax laws	9%	8%	0%	2%	3%
Laws protecting state interests	14%	8%	13%	6%	23%

### 2.2.5. Gender differences in experiences of unwarranted interference

Male journalists were significantly more likely than females to be threatened with force, intimidated by police and to experience physical assault. Conversely, females were significantly more likely than males to experience sexual harassment and/or violence. There were no statistically significant gender differences with regard to experiences of robbery, non-contact personal theft, psychological violence, cyberbullying, intimidation by police and intimidation by interest groups (Table 17).

**Table 17: Experiences of unwarranted interference by gender**

Experiences of unwarranted interference		Male	Female
Physical assault	No	65%	73%
	Yes	35%	27%
Threatened with force	No	51%	57%
	Yes	49%	43%
Sexual harassment	No	92%	80%
	Yes	8%	20%
Robbery	No	79%	80%
	Yes	21%	20%
Non-contact personal theft	No	80%	81%
	Yes	20%	19%
Psychological violence	No	31%	30%
	Yes	69%	70%
Cyberbullying	No	45%	49%
	Yes	55%	51%
Intimidation by police	No	63%	67%
	Yes	37%	33%
Intimidation by political groups	No	54%	61%
	Yes	46%	39%
Intimidation by interest groups	No	50%	51%
	Yes	50%	49%

There were no significant gender differences with regard to fear of the likelihood of future experiences of unwarranted interference, apart from sexual harassment or violence. A significantly higher percentage of females (18%) compared to males (5%) thought that it would be likely or very likely that they would experience sexual harassment/violence in the future (Table 18).



**Table 18: Fear of unwarranted interference by gender**

Likelihood of future encounters of unwarranted interference		
Type of interference	Gender	Likely/Very likely
Physical assault	Male	32%
	Female	27%
Threats of violence	Male	44%
	Female	37%
Sexual harassment	Male	5%
	Female	18%
Robbery	Male	22%
	Female	19%
Non-contact personal theft	Male	25%
	Female	25%
Psychological violence	Male	58%
	Female	61%
Cyberbullying	Male	55%
	Female	59%
Intimidation by the police	Male	36%
	Female	28%
Intimidation by political groups	Male	44%
	Female	39%
Intimidation by interest groups	Male	37%
	Female	37%

### 2.2.6. Gender differences in self-censorship

In response to experiences of unwarranted interference, male journalists were more likely than females to report the content of their stories in a less controversial manner (33% v. 26%), abandon sensitive, critical stories (17% v. 12%), be selective about what items to report (36% v. 29%) and shape stories to suit their company’s needs (21% v. 16%). Conversely, females were more likely than males to frame the content of their stories as acceptable discussion (23% v. 18%). Where the issue of not engaging in self-censorship was concerned, gender differences were minimal: 37% of male journalists and 35% of females stated that the experiences of unwarranted interference made them even more committed to not engage in self-censorship (Table 19).

**Table 19: Gender differences in self-censorship**

	Gender	
	Male	Female
Report content in a less controversial manner	33%	26%
Tone down sensitive, critical stories	32%	30%
Abandon sensitive, critical stories	17%	12%
Be selective about what items to report	36%	29%
Frame content as acceptable discussion	18%	23%
Withhold information	24%	21%
Shape your story to suit your company's/ editor's interests	21%	16%
Become even more committed to non-self-censorship	37%	35%

**2.2.7. Impact of type of contract and medium used on experiences of unwarranted interference**

Self-employed or freelance journalists were significantly more likely than journalists employed on a contract basis to experience physical assault (37% v. 30%), threats with force (53% v. 44%) and robbery or confiscation of property (26% v. 19%). The medium used did not place journalists any more or any less at risk of unwarranted interference except in the case of being threatened with physical force, where journalists who work in online or audio/visual media reported significantly more experiences of threats with physical force (52%) than journalists who work in the print media (42%).

**2.2.8. Length of career as a journalist and experiences of unwarranted interference**

Veteran journalists (those working in the field for over 10 years) were significantly more likely than journalists who had been in the field for less than 10 years to experience physical assault, threats with force, intimidation by police and/or interest groups (Table 20).

**Table 20: Differences in length of career with regard to experience of unwarranted interference**

Experiences of unwarranted interference		Working more than 10 years	Working less than 10 years
Physical assault	No	63%	72%
	Yes	37%	28%
Threatened with force	No	49%	57%
	Yes	51%	43%

Experiences of unwarranted interference		Working more than 10 years	Working less than 10 years
Sexual harassment	No	86%	87%
	Yes	14%	13%
Robbery	No	78%	80%
	Yes	22%	20%
Non-contact personal theft	No	82%	80%
	Yes	18%	20%
Psychological violence	No	27%	32%
	Yes	73%	68%
Cyberbullying	No	49%	46%
	Yes	51%	54%
Intimidation by police	No	58%	69%
	Yes	42%	31%
Intimidation by political groups	No	58%	57%
	Yes	42%	43%
Intimidation by interest groups	No	55%	47%
	Yes	45%	53%

### 2.2.9. Journalistic union membership and experiences of unwarranted interferences

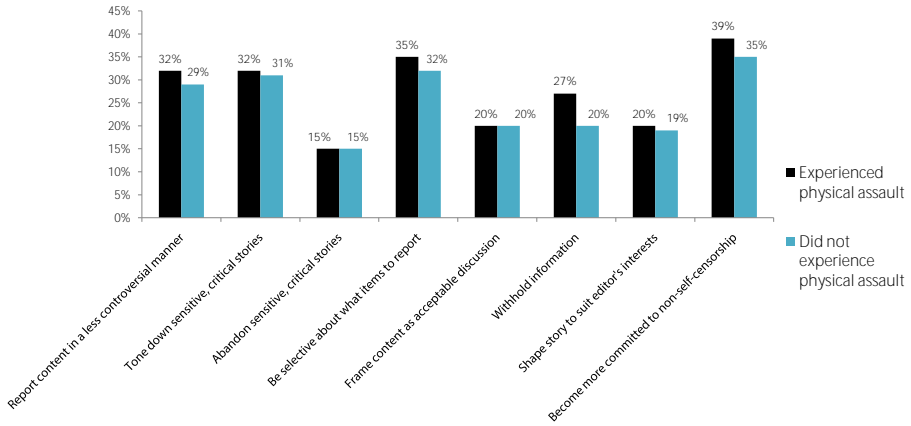
Journalists who belonged to a journalistic union were not subjected to experiences of unwarranted interference any more or less than those who were not part of any union. However, the reactions of those who were members of a journalistic union differed significantly compared to those who were not members of any union. Journalists who were members of a journalistic union felt more adequately supported (38% v. 21%).

### 2.2.10. The chilling effect

This section will analyse the relationship between the experiences of unwarranted interference and subsequent fears, threats to journalistic sources and self-censorship.

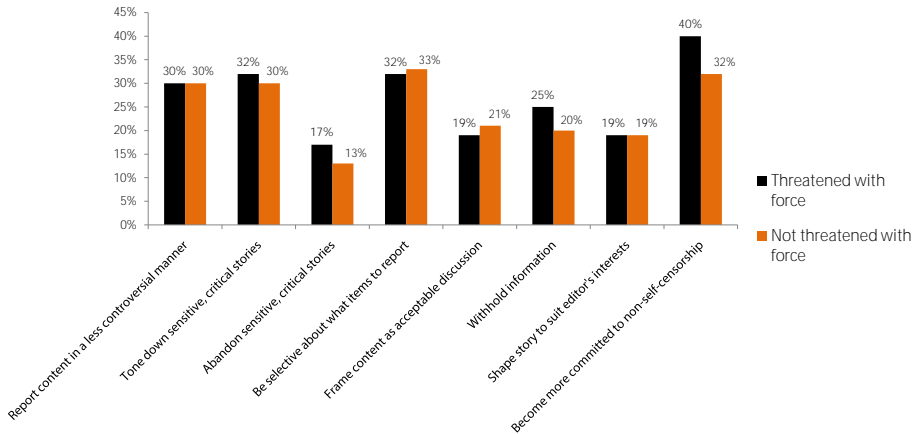
Journalists who reported experiences of unwarranted interference during the last three years were significantly more likely than those who had no such experiences to feel that the ability to protect their sources was compromised. They were also significantly more likely to worry about their personal safety and the safety of their significant others. These journalists also worried significantly more that they would become victims of physical assault, threats with violence, sexual harassment, robbery, non-contact personal theft, psychological violence, cyberbullying and intimidation by various groups. They consequently reported that these experiences significantly affected their personal and their work lives more than those who said that they did not have any experiences of unwarranted interference during the last three years.

**Figure 14: Experiences of physical assault and self-censorship**

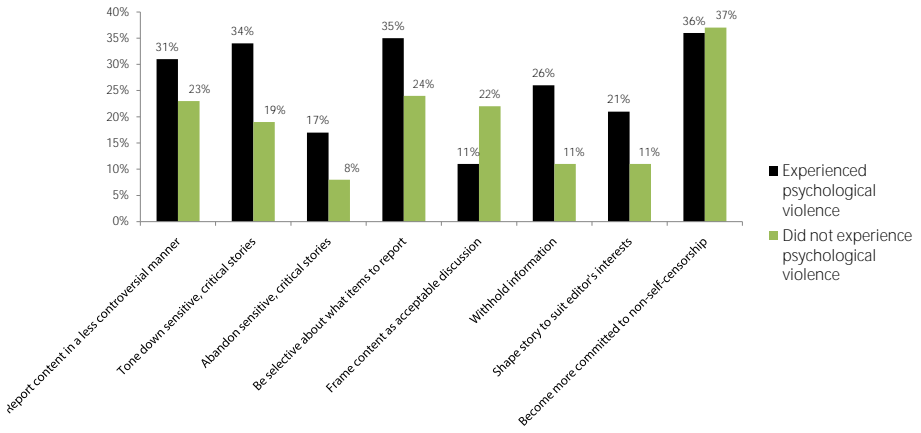


The impact of unwarranted interference on the daily work of journalists was noted in the responses from those who reported experiencing unwarranted interference in the last three years. Specifically, those who reported experiences of physical assault (Figure 14), threats with force (Figure 15) and psychological violence (Figure 16) also reported that these experiences made them more likely to make certain compromises in certain aspects of their work compared to those who did not have such experiences. The largest impact is noted among those who had experienced psychological violence.

**Figure 15: Experiences of threats with force and self-censorship**



**Figure 16: Experiences of psychological violence and the chilling effect**



## Chapter 3

# Conclusions and recommendations for further research

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### 3.1. CONCLUSIONS

**T**he data garnered from this study point to a number of important conclusions regarding the experiences of unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship over a three-year time period among a sample of journalists from Council of Europe member states and Belarus.

#### **3.1.1. Experiences of unwarranted interference**

A wide range of experiences of unwarranted interference were reported over the three-year period, with 40% of respondents claiming that the interference was bad enough to affect their personal lives. The most frequently encountered unwarranted interference was psychological violence (69%) followed by cyberbullying (53%). Other types of unwarranted interference included the following.

- ▶ Intimidation by interest groups (50%)
- ▶ Threats with force (46%)
- ▶ Intimidation by political groups (43%)
- ▶ Targeted surveillance (39%)
- ▶ Intimidation by the police (35%)
- ▶ Physical assault (31%)
- ▶ Robbery, confiscation or destruction of property (20%)
- ▶ Non-contact personal theft (19%)
- ▶ Sexual harassment (13%)

Male journalists were more likely to be threatened with force, intimidated by police and experience physical assault, while female journalists were more likely to experience sexual harassment. Union membership did not impact on the experience of unwarranted interference. Twenty-three per cent of survey respondents claimed having experienced arrest, investigation, threat of prosecution and actual prosecution under different laws. Of those who had experienced judicial intimidation, the most common was under defamation laws. There were regional differences in the reporting of unwarranted interference, with journalists from Turkey reporting very high percentages. Regional differences in reported judicial intimidation were also noted. Journalists reporting in EU and non-EU Western Europe and South-East Europe most commonly experienced prosecution under defamation laws; journalists reporting in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus were more frequently prosecuted under public order laws; and those in Turkey were more typically pursued under anti-terrorism laws, national security laws and laws protecting state interests. Self-employed or freelance journalists were significantly more likely than journalists who were employed on a contract basis to experience interference.

### **3.1.2. Responses to unwarranted interference**

Despite the high rate of unwarranted interference, 35% did not feel that they had at their disposal adequate mechanisms for reporting it. Of those who had experienced unwarranted interference, 28% did not report the unwarranted interference to the company for which they worked and 57% did not report it to the police, with 23% of those who did report it not satisfied with the police's response. Among those who belonged to a union, 40% did not report it to their union. Journalists who were members of a journalistic union felt more adequately supported.

### **3.1.3. Perceived likelihood/fear of unwarranted interference**

The fear of becoming a victim of unwarranted interference in the future was reasonably high, with 60% saying that they feared they would experience psychological violence, 57% feared that they would experience cyberbullying and 51% and 45% feared intimidation by individuals and interest groups, respectively. A third of respondents reported concern about personal safety and the safety of their significant others. Some 48% of journalists reported that they feared their ability to protect sources was compromised.

The perceived fear of future victimisation was significantly positively correlated with having actually experienced unwarranted interference during the last three years and was higher in those regions where journalists experienced heightened unwarranted interference. Journalists in those regions reporting heightened experiences of unwarranted interference were more likely to report that they feared encountering such experiences again in the future. Gender differences were also noted, with females more likely to fear sexual harassment or violence.

### **3.1.4. Consequences of unwarranted interference**

The psychological impact of unwarranted interference was high with respondents reporting that the unwarranted interference, or fear of it, affected them psychologically

in various ways, mainly with regard to increased stress and anxiety levels, paranoia, changes in sleeping patterns and feelings of depression and helplessness. On an interpersonal level the impact included increased preoccupation about significant others, neglect of private-life duties, conflicts with partners and family members, and termination of romantic relationships.

### **3.1.5. Self-censorship**

The impact of the unwarranted interference on the way journalists went about their work was also notable, with 37% stating that it affected their daily work. Significant percentages reported toning down sensitive, critical stories, abandoning sensitive, critical stories, reporting content in a less controversial manner, being selective about what items to report, framing content as acceptable discussion, withholding information and shaping stories to suit company's/editor's interests. Self-censorship was significantly more prevalent among those journalists who reported incidents of unwarranted interference during the last three years than among those who reported no such incidents. This was most evident for the experience of psychological violence. Nonetheless, 36% reported that the experience of unwarranted interference made them even more committed to not engaging in self-censorship. Some gender differences in self-censorship were also noted. The issue of self-censorship was most evident in Turkey. Those from EU and non-EU Western Europe (44%) and South-East Europe (43%) had the greatest percentages of respondents reporting that these experiences made them even more committed to not engaging in self-censorship.

## **3.2. LIMITATIONS**

The main research limitation in the study concerns the use of non-probability sampling, which does not allow a generalisation of the entire population of journalists in the Council of Europe's member states. The inherent bias present in the use of a convenience sample allows the researchers to make claims only about the research respondents. Another limitation is that the survey questionnaire used mainly closed-ended questions; these may have a lower validity rate than other question types.

## **3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In addressing the limitations identified in the section above, further research may lead to the following.

- ▶ Using qualitative in-depth interviews exploring experiences of unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship. Such a qualitative approach would allow for a phenomenological understanding of unwarranted interference and identify the strategies journalists use to negotiate such interference, as well as the impact on their personal and work activities.
- ▶ Exploring further psychological violence and cyberbullying, since these were reported extensively in this study.



- ▶ Examining the current state of reporting mechanisms and support structures available to journalists who have experienced unwarranted interference.
- ▶ Further exploring modes of self-censorship and its opposite, post-traumatic resilience.
- ▶ Devising a more extensive study of judicial intimidation and its regional distribution.
- ▶ Engaging in an in-depth exploration of sexual harassment and intimidation/ violence and how it manifests itself among both men and women.

### **3.4. FINAL NOTE**

We live in a world struggling to maintain media plurality in the face of the emerging digital media landscape, a concentration of ownership, a lack of transparency of media ownership and financing, and political battles that weaken public-service media. However, it is safe to say that intimidation and harassment of journalists, threats and violence against them, and impunity for the perpetrators are among the most serious challenges facing media freedom today.

This study sought to document the real dimension of unwarranted interference experienced by journalists. The results provide the first quantitative evidence showing the prevalence of different types of unwarranted interference among journalists from the member states of the Council of Europe, and the relationship with journalists' fear of interference and consequent self-censorship. The results are striking and confirm that an effective monitoring mechanism is necessary to consistently measure the prevalence of unwarranted interference emanating from economic, political and judicial intimidation of journalists, and particularly to track and address the increasing number of attacks on the physical integrity of journalists, harassment of journalists, the experience of impunity, threats to journalistic sources, and all measures and acts having a chilling effect on media freedom. The design and gathering of reliable statistics represent an essential tool for strategic planning in this field. Council of Europe member states should also fully and urgently implement Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors, which clearly states that attacks on journalists have a grave chilling effect on freedom of expression and provides for a range of measures to combat this troubling phenomenon.

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# Appendices

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## APPENDIX A – REGIONS JOURNALISTS REPORTED FROM

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Regions	Percentage
<b>EU and non-EU Western European countries</b>	
Belgium	9
United Kingdom	7
Romania	2
France	7
Sweden	3
Italy	6
Finland	2
Greece	6
Slovakia	0.3
Germany	4
Norway	1
Spain	3
Slovenia	2
Hungary	3
Liechtenstein	0.1
Cyprus	1
San Marino	0.1
Bulgaria	1
Croatia	4
Switzerland	2
Czech Republic	0.3
Denmark	1
Monaco	0.1
Estonia	1
Ireland	1
Latvia	1
Lithuania	1

Regions	Percentage
Luxembourg	1
Malta	2
Netherlands	1
Austria	2
Poland	3
Portugal	0.3
Iceland	0
Andorra	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.3</b>
<b>Eastern European countries</b>	
Ukraine	11
Russia	4
Moldova	0.3
Belarus ( <i>not a Council of Europe member state</i> )	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.3</b>
<b>South Caucasus countries</b>	
Azerbaijan	3
Armenia	2
Georgia	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>South-East European countries</b>	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8
Serbia	6
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	3
Montenegro	5
Albania	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>
Turkey	13

Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could choose more than one country from which they reported during a 12-month period

EU and non-EU Western European countries	78.3%
Eastern European countries	23.3%
South Caucasus countries	6%
South-East European countries	26.8%
Turkey	13%

## **APPENDIX B – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **1. Background of the study, definitions and instructions**

#### **Background**

The working life of journalists is often perceived as dangerous since journalists expose themselves to a number of risk factors for unwarranted interference and consequently may have high levels of fear. Their job characteristics may expose them to direct physical confrontations, attacks and psychological abuse. Despite the high risk of unwarranted interference, the prevalence of such interference among journalists is virtually unknown since there are few systematic studies conducted among this group. The Council of Europe Information Society Division has developed a questionnaire to address this issue.

#### **Research agenda**

This questionnaire will explore the prevalence of unwarranted interference emanating from economic, political, managerial, criminal and judicial intimidation in a representative sample of active journalists in Council of Europe member states. Unwarranted interference includes attacks on the physical integrity of journalists, the harassment of journalists, the experience of impunity and threats to journalistic sources. It will also explore the extent and prevalence of fear, feelings of alarm or dread caused by a number of contingencies including the expectation of unwarranted interference. Finally, it will explore the impact of these experiences and fears and how they may have a chilling effect on media freedom.

#### **Definitions**

While it is recognised that multiple definitions exist, for the purposes of this research the key terms to be used in this study will be defined as follows.

**Journalist** – A person who is regularly engaged in collecting or disseminating information to the public with a journalistic (informing in the public interest) purpose.

**Unwarranted interference** – The facing of acts and/or threats to a journalist's physical and/or moral integrity in the exercise of journalistic activities. This refers to undue pressure (physical or psychological, through the use of violence, non-protection from third persons' violence, use or misuse of law, economic pressure, etc.) on journalists – from officials, other powerful figures, advertisers, owners, editors, etc.

**Fear** – The emotional response to possible unwarranted interference.

**Self-censorship** – The act of censoring one's own work or what one says without overt pressure from any specific party or institution of authority, often for fear of sanctions.

#### **Instructions**

Please complete the following questionnaire. Completion of the questionnaire is anonymous. You will not be asked for your name and your identity will not be

disclosed at any time. You retain the right to quit the questionnaire at any time. You may also choose to refrain from answering any question. There are some items that are compulsory for progression. Choosing not to answer them is in essence a choice to discontinue with the questionnaire. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire!

## 2. Personal Information

**This section asks you for some personal information and will allow the researchers to make comparisons between groups.**

**\* 1. Sex**

- Male
- Female
- Intersex

**\* 2. Age**

- 18-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61+

**\* 3. What is your nationality?**

**\* 4. How long have you engaged in journalistic activities (in years)?**

- less than 1 year
- 2 to 4 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- More than 16 years



5. In the last 12 months, in which country/ies did you mainly carry out your journalistic activities? Please list a maximum of three countries.

please select

Country 1

Country 2

Country 3

Other (please specify)

\* 6. What is your main journalistic activity? Choose only one option.

Other (please specify)

7. What type of media do you mainly work for?

Other (please specify)

8. What is the topic you mostly report on?

Other (please specify)

9. What is your current employment status?

- Part time
- Full time
- Not currently in employment

10. How are you currently employed?

- Contract
- Self employed
- Freelance
- Not Applicable
- Other (please specify)

11. Are you a member of a journalist association or a journalists' union?

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate what kind of union you belong to, e.g. state approved/independent

### 3. Experience of unwarranted interference

#### Introduction:

**This section asks you about your experiences of unwarranted interference (the facing of acts and/or threats to a journalist's physical and moral integrity in the exercise of journalistic activities. This refers to undue pressure, physical or psychological, on journalists – from officials, other powerful figures, advertisers, owners, editors, etc.) in the last three years.**

12. How often in the last three years have you experienced physical assault in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

13. How often in the last three years have you been threatened with force in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

14. How often in the last three years have you experienced sexual harassment or violence in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

15. How often in the last three years have you experienced robbery and or confiscation or destruction of your property in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

16. How often in the last three years have you experienced non contact personal thefts (e.g. in your absence) in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

17. How often in the last three years have you experienced psychological violence in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

18. Your experience of psychological violence in the exercise of your journalistic activities entailed:

	By public authorities	By interviewees	By media owner	By advertisers	By your work colleagues	By your management	By other journalists	By some other party not mentioned above
a. Being belittled or humiliated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Being made to feel scared or intimidated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Being threatened with being physically hurt or with having someone close to you hurt, e.g., a family member?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Personally experiencing slander or smear campaigning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Do you think you are being subjected to targeted surveillance?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

20. If yes, how do you think you are being surveyed? You can tick more than one option.

- emails  
 social media  
 land line  
 mobile phone  
 other  
 NA

21. Do you believe you are reasonably protected against targeted surveillance?

- Yes  
 No

22. How often in the last three years have you experienced cyberbullying in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

23. How did the cyberbully communicate with you? Please state all types of communication.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Blog/comments
- Online article / commentary / comments
- Email communications

24. What was the nature of the abuse? Please select all that apply.

- Racist
- Sexist
- Homophobic
- Sectarian
- Threatening violence or serious harm to you
- Threatening violence or serious harm to your family
- Directly related to the content of the article/piece of work undertaken
- NA
- Other (please specify)

25. How often in the last three years have you experienced intimidation by the police in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

26. How often in the last three years have you experienced intimidation by political groups in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

27. How often in the last three years have you experienced intimidation by interest groups (lobbyists, economic companies, private investors, media owners, advertisers, editors) in your work as a journalist?

- Never
- On one occasion
- 2 to 5 times
- Between 6 and 10 times
- Between 11 and 20 times
- More than 20 times

#### 4. Responses to unwarranted interference

**Introduction:**

**This section explores your reactions to unwarranted interference and possible experiences of impunity.**

**In view of your most significant experience of unwarranted intimidation.**

28. Do you feel that you had, at your disposal, adequate mechanisms for you to report experiences of unwarranted interference (the facing of acts and/or threats to a journalist's physical and moral integrity in the exercise of journalistic activities)?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

If no, why not?

29. Did you report the unwarranted interference to the company/organisation you were working for at that time?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

If no, why not?

30. Did you report the incident to your journalists' association or your journalists' union?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

31. Following your report, did you feel you were adequately supported?

- Yes
- No
- N/A



32. Did you report it to the police?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

33. Were you satisfied with the police response?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

34. Have you ever been arrested, investigated, threatened with prosecution or actually prosecuted under...  
(tick all that apply)

- Defamation laws
- Anti-terrorism laws
- National security laws
- Public order laws
- Hate speech laws
- Blasphemy laws
- Memory laws
- Fraud/tax evasion laws
- Laws protecting state interests (treason/espionage)

## 5. Threats to journalists' sources

**This section explores the issue of threats to journalistic sources.**

35. Do you feel that your ability to protect your sources may be compromised?

- Yes  
 No

36. Have you experienced situations where your ability to protect your sources was in fact compromised?

- Yes  
 No

37. What mechanisms do you have in place to protect your sources? (tick all that apply)

- assuming you are being watched
- encrypting data
- securing communication devices
- being aware that even face-to-face meetings can be compromised by the presence of geolocatable mobile devices and security cameras
- being aware that using Tor, PGP and other forms of data encryption can "red flag" digital communications with sources i.e. such practices can make you and your sources a bigger target

## 6. Fear

**This section explores your fears associated with potential unwarranted interference.**

38. To what extent do you worry about your personal safety?

I worry a lot	I worry somewhat	don't know	I rarely worry	I don't worry at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. To what extent do you worry about your friends' and family's safety?

I worry a lot	I worry somewhat	don't know	I rarely worry	I don't worry at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. How likely is it that you will become a victim of :

	very likely	likely	don't know	unlikely	very unlikely
Physical assault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threat of violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual harassment and violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Robbery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non contact personal theft	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Psychological violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cyberbullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimidation by the police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimidation by political groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimidation by interest groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimidation by media owners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimidation by individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimidation by criminals/delinquents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 7. The chilling effect

### Introduction:

**This section explores the possible consequences of experiences of unwarranted interference and fear on journalistic activities.**

41. Did the experienced unwarranted interference (or threat of it) or fear of interference cause any problems with the following? Please mark all that apply.

- Sleep
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Depression
- Tearfulness
- Helplessness
- Feeling worthless
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling isolated
- Fearful for personal safety
- Weight loss
- Burn-out
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Other mental / physical symptoms
- None of the above

42. Did the unwarranted interference and/or fear of unwarranted interference affect your personal life / private activities?

- Yes
- No

If yes, in what way?

43. Did the unwarranted interference (including threats) or fear of unwarranted interference affect any aspect of how you went about your work?

- Yes
- No
- If yes, please give some details.

44. Did the unwarranted interference or fear of unwarranted interference encourage you to

- report content in a less controversial manner
- tone down sensitive, critical stories
- abandon sensitive critical stories
- be selective on what items to report
- frame content as acceptable discussion
- withhold information
- shape your story to suit your company's/editor's interests
- become even more committed to non-self-censorship

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Journalists are under threat in Europe. Different forms of violence against journalists have increased significantly over the last decade: from physical attacks, to intimidation and harassment, targeted surveillance and cyberbullying, we now see a range of tactics deployed to silence critical voices and free speech. Together with impunity for the perpetrators of unwarranted interference on journalists, these are among the most serious challenges facing media freedom today. Self-censorship is hardly surprising in such circumstances.

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