A MISSION TO INFORM

Daphne Caruana Galizia speaks out

The last recorded interview with Daphne Caruana Galizia
6 October 2017
Edited by Marilyn Clark and William Horsley

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Abridged version

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Statement available at www.ohchr.org.

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Note on the abridged version

The interview with Daphne Caruana Galizia in this publication is an abridged version of the original which was recorded in audio on 6 October 2017.

The interview was conducted for a scientific qualitative study which set out to gain a more complete understanding of the forms of intimidation and harassment experienced by journalists working in countries across the Council of Europe region through 20 in-depth interviews, conducted face to face. The results of the study are documented in the Council of Europe's publication *A mission to inform – Journalists at risk speak out,* authored by the undersigned. In that book, excerpts from each of the 20 interviews are cited and the personal narratives are closely analysed to provide an evidence-based account of the nature of the pressures and threats faced by many journalists in Europe.

The interview with Daphne Caruana Galizia was not intended to be published in full or as a stand-alone document. However, in recognition of its significance as the last recording of the journalist's own assessment of the circumstances of her life and work before her assassination, it is now published in tribute to her and as a public record. Given the nature of the interview as recorded, the dialogue was in places digressive, casual or incomplete. The editors have removed repetitions and extraneous material, and footnotes have been added to provide context regarding references that are likely to be unfamiliar to some readers. To increase readability as well as the flow of the narrative, editors have opted to remove ellipses in places where text from the original transcription was left out. This abridged version faithfully presents Daphne Caruana Galizia's account in her own words of the obstacles, threats and dangers of which she was plainly aware only a few days before she was killed.

Marilyn Clark and William Horsley,
editors

Foreword

Daphne Caruana Galizia's death in October 2017 represented an important wake-up call in Europe and beyond. This event, together with the killing of other investigative journalists, such as Ján Kuciak, showed that journalists in Europe are still facing considerable and even extreme risks – too often underestimated – in exercising their profession. These risks have been also documented by different studies commissioned by the Council of Europe such as, lately, *A mission to inform – Journalists at risk speak out*, a study based on interviews with 20 journalists from 18 Council of Europe member states. Among these 20 journalists was Daphne Caruana Galizia. The interview with Ms Caruana Galizia was recorded 10 days before her murder and is a unique testimony on the threats and pressures she suffered as a journalist and the climate of fear in which journalists often have to carry out their investigations in order to uncover information of public interest.

It is a matter of urgency for relevant stakeholders in the Council of Europe member states and beyond to ensure effective protection of journalists' safety, put an end to impunity for those responsible for threats and attacks against journalists and other media actors and provide all the necessary conditions for an environment favourable to the freedom of expression. Particular attention should be paid to the standards set by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) and relevant documents of the Council of Europe. As stated by the European Court in numerous cases, states have an obligation to protect journalists through means such as putting in place effective criminal law measures and ensuring their enforcement, but also through taking preventive measures. When a crime against a journalist occurs, states are obliged to inquire into the connection between it and the journalistic activity of the victim and undertake an investigation that is prompt, effective and independent. The abundant case law of the European Court of Human Rights is further supplemented by Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors. The recommendation asks states to enhance the protection of journalists by working around four pillars: "prevention, protection, prosecution (including a specific focus on impunity) and promotion of information, education and awareness-raising".

It is my hope that by respecting these important standards set up by the Council of Europe, states will be able to put an end to all forms of violence and impunity for crimes against journalists and avoid the murder of another fearless watchdog such as Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Stefan Schennach,
General Rapporteur media freedom and safety of journalists at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Abridged interview with Daphne Caruana Galizia

(6 October 2017)

Interviewer: I would like to hear about your experiences of unwarranted interference in your work as a journalist – any acts or threats to your physical or moral integrity which have interfered with your activities. Are there any examples of physical violence or psychological attacks, or else hostile economic or legal pressures directed against you by anyone at all in the course of your work?

D. Caruana Galizia: All the problems I encounter stem from an exact parallel with what in psychology is known as scapegoating. When you look at my story it's a classic, classic case of scapegoating on a national, nationwide scale. Obviously, when you have a scapegoat there's an entity which is doing the scapegoating and encouraging others to scapegoat. And in my case that became the Labour Party, which was in opposition for many years but now has become more dangerous because the Labour Party is actually in government and so has a lot more power. The greatest difficulties I encounter come from the fact that they have made me into what in effect is a national scapegoat. And this has gone on for 30 years now, almost.

I am in a situation where people who can't even read English – and therefore have never read anything I've written – at the same time are aware of who I am, know that they are meant to hate me, or dislike me, or despise me, or disagree with me, or whatever, and react to me on that basis. Totally irrespective of what I write but as "the person", as the figure that they are told to hate. So, this has become a massive, massive problem. And I have had cases, especially when the incitement is really high at times of political tension, where I have had problems even with people in the street. And I look at them and think, "OK, what's their problem with me? I don't think they've ever read anything I've written!"

And there was one case which ended up in the papers, when I was literally in the car park at the hospital. I had spent all day there with my mother, and by the time I went down to the car park, the car park was practically empty. It was after visiting hours and I was trying to reverse out of the car park, out of my parking bay, and I saw this big car behind me. And obviously, a dark car park at night, a car blocking you…

Interviewer: Yes, you feel very frightened.

D. Caruana Galizia: My face had just been up on all the Labour Party billboards all round the island, where they put me up in the same group as the prime minister and senior politicians. And I was totally the fish out of water but I was there with these politicians, so I became instantly recognisable to people. And there was this car blocking. I mean it was a really intense situation, and this car was just blocking me. And I reversed out and this guy started shouting and blowing the horn and whatever. And he went to file a report saying that I reversed into him, which wasn't true at all! The police then did a conspiracy because they happened to be supporters of the government or whatever. [The police] took me up to court, it was headlines in all the papers. I mean it was awful. [The court] let me off. And I said, "OK, I was let off but meanwhile I was put through this mill and the headlines and everything."

Interviewer: OK, so in a sense what you're saying is that you've become a folk hero or…

D. Caruana Galizia: Or an enemy. Exactly, exactly!

Interviewer: How long have you been working as a journalist?

D. Caruana Galizia: Since 1990. Twenty-seven years. And always with a newspaper column, which makes a very big difference because there's your face and there's your name. And it's *your* opinion, so it's not the same situation as somebody with a byline in a newspaper doing routine news. So you are automatically rocketed into the public imagination, I suppose.

Interviewer: OK. So very visible.

D. Caruana Galizia: *Very* visible. You have to keep in mind the newspaper environment at that time, in 1990. So, there were just two English-language newspapers: *The Sunday Times* and *The Times*. The others were owned by the political parties. And *The Sunday Times* and *The Times* in those days were very drab. They had like foreign news on the front pages, no real news, nothing like the news we have today. You know, literally, something happened and we report it. Facts. And there were no columns with the person's name, there was just one anonymous one called "Roamers Column". So, two things happened: Malta got its first named newspaper columnist and it was a 25-year-old *woman*. And this thing was a double shock. And I used to have people actually telling me, "But does your husband write them for you? Does your father? Does your brother? Do you have a brother?" And you know, which is *really* offensive.

Interviewer: OK, so you've brought in an important element, the gender dimension. That as a *female* journalist …

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, the gender dimension was horrific. Because women were not allowed to have opinions. I mean I'm sure you're well aware. "My God, a newspaper column, an opinion column and it's written by, not only a woman but 25 years old. Absolutely not allowed!" So, this was such a disturbance. You look back and you say, "But nothing I write was that exceptional. So why did it create all this commotion?" And that created the commotion, the fact *who* was writing.

Interviewer: [And] have you experienced unwarranted interference because of your work as an *investigative* journalist?

D. Caruana Galizia: I experience a lot of harassment. I lost my job as a columnist with *The Sunday Times* because I had written a column about Guido de Marco,[1] basically, because of this issue, I always felt vulnerable and I didn't like it at all, because I said, "I'm supposed to be an opinion columnist but at the same time, I can't write what I really think because I'm always conditioned by my employers", which in a way I understand because it's like any business at the end of the day. *The Times* is owned by a foundation, so it *shouldn't* be a business but *The Malta Independent* is a business. So, I said, "OK, there are these issues." And I was also aware of the fact that if ever they got angry for any reason or decided they needed to sack me or whatever I would be left without anywhere to write. And then this miracle called the internet happened and I said, "OK, I'll use that as a fall back". And this is how my blog, in a way, started, you know? I said, "Now, nobody can say we're gonna shut her up!" Because before that "shutting me up" constituted putting pressure on my directors to sack me, and they're still doing it to this day, trying to get me to lose my column at *The Independent* by saying, "We won't give you government advertising because you've got her on board."

Interviewer: What you're saying is that you may have been silenced by your editors because of the business model of newspapers?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, of course.

Interviewer: And you also mentioned economic harassment?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, and the most obvious economic harassment at the moment concerns advertising on my website. It's obvious I need the advertising since that's where the money comes from. I actually encounter situations where people are afraid. They recognise that it's their audience and it's a fantastic audience for them and it reaches their potential customers and whatever, but they are actually afraid to advertise on it because people who support the old government think they would get retribution from the government, or that supporters of the government would boycott their product or their shop.

Interviewer: And this obviously has an impact?

D. Caruana Galizia: Of course it does! It makes life a real struggle. Because when you think, nobody worries about advertising on "Super One" or on "Net Television"[2] because they're considered to balance each other out. So, you advertise with one, you advertise with the other. It's classic scapegoating: punish her, isolate her! I mean it's all like a systematic attempt to isolate me and cut me off from everybody else.

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1. At the time referred to here Guido de Marco was a trustee of the foundation that owns Allied Newspapers Limited which published *The Sunday Times*. He served as the sixth President of Malta from 1999 up to 2004. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1966 and appointed secretary general of the Nationalist Party in 1972. He became the Nationalist Party's deputy leader in 1977. He served as Minister for the Interior and Minister for Foreign Affairs. See Daphne Caruana Galizia's "Running Commentary" blog https://daphnecaruanagalizia.com/2010/02/with-saviour-its-either-sex-or-a-straitjacket/.
2. As explained by Vassallo, "[t]he two main political parties represented in the [Maltese] House of Representatives own, control and manage their own media enterprises". Net TV is owned by the Nationalist Party and Super One (now One TV Channel) is owned by the Labour Party. Louiselle Vassallo, *Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era: Application of the Media Pluralism Monitor in the European Union, Albania and Turkey in the years 2018-2019, Country report: Malta,* European University Institute, 2020, p. 14.

Even, for example, when Glenn Bedingfield set up his blog. Obviously, I work in communication, so I understand the communication aspect. And I used to tell people, "That's not Glenn Bedingfield's blog, that is the government's blog. And it's actually written from the prime minister's office. It just happens to have his name on it but it's the instrument of government targeting, you see." And it's systematic, and there was one point where I actually filed a complaint with the Council of Europe.[3] Obviously they understood what the complaint was about. And when I filed my complaint they were absolutely horrified. And they said, "What, you mean the *prime minister's assistant* is targeting a journalist?" I said, "Yes!" I sent them the copies [of the blog posts]. In one year, there were 380 posts about me. More than one a day, you know, with photos! I mean I can understand that they take a photo of me doing something obscene or something illegal or whatever, but this was actually harassment. Like I'd be in my local coffee shop having a cup of coffee and they'd encourage people to take photos of me and send them in. And I would have a photo: "Drinking her coffee at Yorkdale in Naxxar." I mean there's no news value in that, you know. It was just harassment, to say, "Look, wherever you go, people are taking photos of you."

Interviewer: So there was interference in your personal life as well?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, totally. Totally! I've ended up, I can't even go to the beach! I can't! For four years I have not been able to go to the beach. The last time I went was four years ago. There was this group [names two individuals] following me around taking photos of me and uploading me on Facebook. I said, "Forget it, I'm not going to the beach anymore, you know."

Interviewer: So, you would agree that it has impacted significantly on your personal life …

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, yes. On every aspect.

Interviewer: On every aspect. Can you tell me about that? We want to know how attempts to intimidate journalists impact on freedom of expression.

D. Caruana Galizia: I think the biggest, biggest negative impact it has, because I've been at it since I was 25, [is that this] experience hardens you and it just becomes your way of life. I literally know no other way of life, you know. Literally, one of the wonders for me of leaving Malta is knowing what normal life is like, 'cause I can be invisible, I can go where I like, without people staring or nudging, or whatever. I got used to it – like, you know, like a scar forms around a wound. But my biggest concern is that because people see what happened to me, they don't want to do it. It's scared others off! So people keep asking, "Why is there only one of her?" And the only reason there's one of her is not because I do something unique or wonderful or my abilities are super special, because there are loads of people, especially in the younger generation.

Interviewer: Who could potentially?

3. No record of a complaint on this matter lodged by Daphne Caruana Galizia to the Council of Europe has been found. Her son Matthew Caruana Galizia has surmised that this complaint might instead have been made to another intergovernmental organisation. Personal communication (videoconference) with Matthew Caruana Galizia, 28 August 2020.

D. Caruana Galizia: OK, you can say for my generation I'm not typical. I'm 53. I'm not typical of my generation.

Interviewer: What about the impact on the general climate, that people are afraid to talk?

D. Caruana Galizia: What I worry about is this: that I mean I'm unique in Malta – to use the word "unique". I don't like using it, but I am like 10 a penny anywhere else in Europe: it's a normal job! Every newspaper has five like me, you know? Or every television station. And when people ask, you know, "Why aren't more people doing her job?" And the reason is that people are scared because they see me under constant attack. They see what my life is like and they say, no way!

Interviewer: When I look at the results of this study (points to the 2017 Council of Europe study *Journalists under pressure*),[4] people's families being threatened, and their economic resources being closed up, you wonder, "Why do journalists continue to do this?" So I ask you, what motivates you despite these experiences?

D. Caruana Galizia: Well, I think, one, I *really* hate to give up. That's a personality trait. Secondly, I've been doing it for a really long time. As they say, in for a penny, in for a pound now! You know, what am I going to do – give up now? And secondly, now I'm maybe a bit more secure, but can you imagine what happened to me earlier this year with Chris Cardona discovering that he can use that precautionary warrant for a libel suit that had never been done in Malta before?[5] It was always legally possible, but it had never ever been done before. Suppose that had happened to me when I was 25 or when I was 30, you know? I wouldn't have had the resources to cope.

Interviewer: So the goal is to take your resources and not allow you to speak up?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, and because they didn't change the law as they promised they would. You know, after this big thing happened and everybody was horrified, and the government said it's going to change the law. They said they're going to change the law but they didn't ask Chris Cardona to please withdraw … practice what you preach and withdraw the warrant! In fact, what he said then – Chris Cardona – is that he agrees with removing precautionary warrants for journalists but makes an exception in my case. And this came out in a government press statement. A government press statement from the DOI [Department of Information], with the DOI thing on top, full of abuse against me to justify why he did that to me.[6]

Interviewer: OK, so it's very far reaching. Can you talk to me about your experiences with judicial intimidation? You have experienced a number of court cases.

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4. Clark M. and Grech A. (2017), *Journalists under pressure – Unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship in Europe*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, https://rm.coe.int/journalists-under-pressure-fa-en-/168097e9e1.
5. The issue has been reported to the Council of Europe's Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists. For more details see www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/detail-alert?p_p_id=sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_col_id=column-3&p_p_col_pos=2&p_p_col_count=11&_sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_alertPK=57564779#block-member-replies.
6. See Department of Information press statement here (in Maltese only): www.gov.mt/en/Government/DOI/Press%20Releases/Pages/2017/February/08/PR170315.aspx.

D. Caruana Galizia: The business about court cases is actually *really* very bad. Libel damages aren't very high in Malta, I think maximum it's about 11 000 euros – which is [nevertheless] pretty high when you have a number of cases of whatever and that's exactly the problem. Because whereas in Britain for example or in the US you can get massive damages, uncapped – millions, whatever – it's also extremely difficult to sue. And if you sue capriciously, you're penalised. You get to pay: there have been people who have had to sell their houses to pay the court costs. So, you don't sue unless you really know it's been a *big* offence and a major lie or whatever. But here in Malta they sue even when they don't have a case. It's cheap and it's seen as a game. For example, now on Monday I have 19 cases filed by Silvio Debono.[7] Luckily the magistrate who's reasonable, and probably for his own sanity as well, is hearing them all together so I don't have to go 19 times, but this is another form of abuse. In this case, [the person who sued] didn't do it for the PR headline. He did it, and he was clear about this and he told me himself on the phone, to harass me, because he can. You see what I mean? Meanwhile, it cost me about 7 000 euros just to file my responses. *7 000 euros* because there are 19 cases, 400 [each]. But the law allows them to do it. So if the law allows them to do it they can file a precautionary warrant to anyone and sue for… One [or] two of the cases were for two sentences in the same post, each one. Because the law allows you to do that.

Now in some jurisdictions the law will prevent you from filing 19 cases over the same libel allegation. And these would be considered vexatious, you see? But the Maltese law allows you. So, as long as they allow you, all journalists in Malta know that they are operating under the goodwill of those they write about because at any moment they can slap a court case with a precautionary warrant for 11 000 euros on them.

Interviewer: So, it creates a climate of fear, especially among those who are starting off?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, it does. Yes of course it does! And, as I've said before, you don't even need a case to slap a precautionary warrant. You know all the things people say about me? And when you file the case, there's no preliminary screening session to see whether there's really grounds for the case. So you can sue. And they can freeze your assets for 11 000 euros.

Interviewer: Which incapacitates you.

D. Caruana Galizia: It's *really,* really abusive. People [who register precautionary warrants] have immediate access to the courts. So you have a situation where laws, where the spirit of the law [that] was designed to protect people who are genuinely hurt is being used as a tool of abuse and aggression by people in power against people with no power. It's a complete reversal.

Interviewer: But you have experienced intimidation?

D. Caruana Galizia: Aha, yes. I mean I had my house set on fire ten years ago. That was at the time there was a lot of incitement against immigrants. There were a lot

7. See the Council of Europe's Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists: www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/detail-alert?p_p_id=sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_col_id=column-3&p_p_col_pos=2&p_p_col_count=11&_sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_alertPK=57564779#block-member-replies.

of fires [and attacks against individuals who supported the humane treatment of immigrants and spoke out against racism]. There were a lot of demonstrations with hundreds of people. I kind of said, "OK, I'm probably next", because it was the obvious thing. And I go home one day about three days before the fire and found that somebody had painted in big black letters like, "Daphne sucks black cock" all over the road. Huge, huge white letters over the road, or black letters over the road. And luckily by the time I got home and phoned the police and whatever, somebody had come out with a paintbrush and had painted over them. But I said, "OK, they're coming next with a fire." And they set fire to the house at about 3 a.m. And they didn't set fire to the front door like other people, because our house is isolated. So they actually went to the back and put truck tyres packed with bottles of petrol and jerry cans full of petrol against a glass door.

Interviewer: So, an explosion?

D. Caruana Galizia: They wanted to burst in the glass doors and set the whole house on fire. And we were really lucky, for two reasons. One of them [is that] our bedroom is right down like on the ground floor, because the house is built on a slope and they came up through the back. And just five days before, we had changed those doors to security doors, so even though they were glass it was security, fireproof.

Interviewer: And they didn't shatter?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, they took quite a long time to shatter and when they shattered, the glass stayed in place. But [the perpetrators] didn't know because when they had come on the recce[8] they found pine doors with normal glass which would have exploded within a second with the glass. So it was just five days before [that] we changed. And the next [thing] is that our son came home, it was three o'clock in the morning and when he came home he saw the fire reaching up to the roof and he started shouting.

Interviewer: So he alerted you. Does this make you feel fearful? Because it's your own personal safety but also the safety of your family, your friends.

D. Caruana Galizia: Ah, but they don't live here, my children, anymore. But at the time, yes, I was. I said, 'cause these are really, like, vicious people, you know … In fact I had issues even with the police. I said, "You can't treat this as an arson attack. This is an attempted murder, not an arson attack! They came at three o'clock in the morning and their aim was to burn the house down."

Interviewer: With you in it.

D. Caruana Galizia: With us inside it, exactly. Otherwise they would have come to the front door and done the symbolic setting fire to the front door, you know.

Interviewer: Exactly. Just to scare you. But this was more than that. So, how did the police react? Did you find support, or would you say …?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, they took it quite seriously, aha, yes. And they were confounded in fact because they asked Vodafone and Go Mobile for the phone numbers

8. "Reconnaissance".

of the people who were in the vicinity because everybody carries a mobile phone. And because we are off the beaten track we're not going to have hundreds of people. So there'd be a few and they say, "What are those doing there at 3 a.m. unless they actually live there?" And they [the phone companies][9] wouldn't co-operate!

Interviewer: Would you say that these injustices have been treated with impunity?

D. Caruana Galizia: I feel it's a very primitive situation and I really do feel – and this is where the primitivity of Malta really comes out – I don't feel I'm living in a European country. I can't say I do, I really can't.

Interviewer: And how do female journalists get harassed differently to males? There's quite a bit of evidence that they do?

D. Caruana Galizia: I mean, yes they do, and that's why I said it shows a lot of the primitive factors of Maltese society. So I'm quite sure women journalists are harassed in more advanced European societies than ours, too. But in Malta it extends; the form of harassment is really, really primitive. It's always what you look like, how fat you are, how overweight you are. If a woman is going to be less than perfect, she's going to get trashed.

Interviewer: So would you say that you may have experienced harassment in the past that was directed to you in a particular way because you are a woman? What does that have to do with the way you write? At the end of the day it's your writing that matters.

D. Caruana Galizia: Exactly! And I laugh because I used to be really skinny, ultra, ultra skinny, until I was about 40. And the cartoons of me used to be like a skeleton in a miniskirt – a skeleton. So in the past they used to insult me because I was skinny. Now they insult me because I'm overweight, you know it's like I have to laugh really.

Interviewer: What about "psychological violence" – here we're talking about things like smear campaigning, making you feel fearful, intimidation?

D. Caruana Galizia: Well, that is constant with me and it is absolutely terrible. And there have been periods where literally I would feel like, oh my God, I'm going to get a stomach ulcer. That churning, churning nerves all the time. Because you're living under it constantly, you know. And it was bad enough, as I said, when [the] Labour Party was in opposition but now they're in government. Now, they have access to *all* my private information – everything, you know, at the push of a button.

Interviewer: You feel that this is happening now?

D. Caruana Galizia: Of course it's happening!

Interviewer: And to you personally.

D. Caruana Galizia: They have absolutely no red lines. For them, and I say "them" advisedly, any information they have access to is all fair, "all's fair in love and war" and there are absolutely no boundaries. They can call up anything about anybody, even your children's exam results!

9. As confirmed by Matthew Caruana Galizia, Daphne Caruana Galizia's son. Personal communication (videoconference), 27 August 2020.

Interviewer: This is a state of surveillance essentially.

D. Caruana Galizia: Constantly. Constantly! I mean, we talk about data protection. It's a joke. Because we have an ID card, and this has made me realise why in Britain they have fought so strongly against the idea of ID cards. When you have an ID card number all your information is filed under that, which means that anybody with access in the civil service can key in your number and get up everything about you, everything. They got up like my marriage certificate, all my children's birthdays. Everything, everything, everything!

Interviewer: And would you say you've also experienced things like smear campaigns, people trying to make you look – you've mentioned earlier – "evil"?

D. Caruana Galizia: All the time, all the time, all the time, all the time.

Interviewer: And this makes you feel very tense?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, it doesn't make me feel very tense. I think it's annoying. Other things, things which are actually more threatening, make me feel tense – like acts of aggression or you feel you're being surveilled, or this kind of thing. But these smear campaigns, they make me realise how primitive Maltese society is, it's extremely primitive. Because smear campaigns are only effective when people think primitively.

Interviewer: And believe them?

D. Caruana Galizia: Exactly.

Interviewer: So what you're saying is that in Maltese society there is fertile ground for this to really take root?

D. Caruana Galizia: It's medieval. Look at what they call me most, a *witch*. I mean, when were women called witches? Pre-the age of enlightenment, you know? That's all, woman: witch, you know? And very openly. *Witch!* You know, literally, *witch!* If I were a man, would they call me a witch? No!

Interviewer: I'm wondering how this affects you as a journalist?

D. Caruana Galizia: Well, it doesn't affect my work.

Interviewer: I mean, does it stop you? Do you feel OK?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, no. It's too late to affect me but it is definitely affecting other people. And they're definitely not doing the work, you know. And again, I'm quite sure that I am one of the reasons why there aren't more women in public life. Because earlier I used to literally get a lot of correspondence from younger women, or women, saying, "You know, you're really a good role model – you know, you really encourage me to whatever." And I think, OK the flip side of that is that they probably see what's happening to me as well, and they might not want to have to deal with that.

Interviewer: So for journalists generally how would you say the climate is in terms of freedom of expression in Malta?

D. Caruana Galizia: I think it's actually pretty bad. We *seem* to have very good freedom of expression. And in fact when there are studies – you know, these routine tick-the-box-studies, how many newspapers, how many … it looks like, wow, we

have a real free society. In reality we don't because people are all the time auto-censoring, constantly.

Interviewer: Journalists themselves?

D. Caruana Galizia: Journalists.

Interviewer: Self-censoring?

D. Caruana Galizia: Even, yes. Journalists, and not just journalists. Anybody who is required to speak openly. It has become very difficult, for example, for journalists to get comments from people.

Interviewer: So people are afraid. So the climate is one of fear?

D. Caruana Galizia: It's a climate of fear. People are afraid of consequences. For example, even when people send me information, [they say] "Don't quote me." And, sometimes I feel like laughing. I say, "Don't quote me – keep me anonymous?" I say, "Keep you anonymous? All you've done is sent me a photo from Facebook, I mean, keep you anonymous? It's not like you're giving me a state secret!"

Interviewer: So would you say doing journalism in a climate of fear is…?

D. Caruana Galizia: It's become very, very difficult.

Interviewer: *Real* journalism.

D. Caruana Galizia: Aha, yes, yes. It's become very difficult. If you're writing an article talking about the banking sector and there are serious problems there, your article will be so much more powerful and more convincing if you could quote Mr X, chairman of X bank, not "sources in the banking industry" – and you know it's the chairman but he doesn't want to be quoted. Your readers need to know it's the chairman, you know.

Interviewer: You've been harassed over a number of years quite openly. You're a public figure in this regard and yet you continue writing – you're motivated to speak the truth. What strategies do you bring into play to mitigate these risks? I mean personally, psychologically, to cope with this?

D. Caruana Galizia: I have thought about this, and I think that what happened is that I as a person – not as a journalist but as a person – I bring to bear a lot of the traits and attributes and factors that would equip me to cope. And one of them is, I have never in all my life, from childhood, been dependent on cliques or acceptance from peers. I've always been, and I remember again from school always being the one who was a bit different, and people accepted me for being different. It wasn't like I was the one in the corner, you know, but I was allowed to be different. So that really helped because I never felt I had to give in to peer pressure. And it also means now that one of the most aggressive tools which the Labour Party and the government tries to use against me, which is the one of social ostracism and alienation, does absolutely not work on me because I'm not going to go and jump off a cliff or tear my hair out if I don't get invited to a party, you know what I mean? Whereas for other people …

Interviewer: So you'd say it's psychological resilience. In a sense you have become resilient over the years and perhaps it's your nature?

D. Caruana Galizia: Aha! Yes I have. And another thing is that I don't have an inferiority complex, so I don't like worry, "Oh my God, they're saying that about me!" You know, I don't worry at all. And I think [it's] very important too, and we're not allowed to mention it because these things get all fraught in Malta: I don't have a social inferiority complex. So I don't come at it, I'm not impressed by politicians who think they're better than me, you know what I mean? So, I don't feel like I have to worship them or whatever. I'm not impressed at all and I don't feel I'm being attacked by a more socially important person, you know?

Interviewer: So a certain degree of self-confidence is needed. In a sense what you're saying is that psychological resilience is really important, but are there any other tools?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yeah, I used to receive shit in envelopes through the post.

Interviewer: Horrible! Horrible!

D. Caruana Galizia: I used to receive it in envelopes through the post and there was a time when I used to pick up the envelope, "Oh, it's soft." Straight in the bin [laughter].

Interviewer: How do you cope with such things?

D. Caruana Galizia: It's funny because the harassment changes with technology. Amazingly, the advent of the internet, and people with internet connections, has meant that poison pen letters have stopped, and harassing phone calls have begun to stop. Because one of the things I used to worry about the most [was getting] letters. I could go to the post box and my children used to laugh. They used to tell me, "There's one – an old man." I used to say, "How do you know it's an old man?" "Because he used a funny typewriter!" Sending me these crazy letters. I used to tell them "Look, the crazy old man wrote again." And eventually he must have died because they stopped. But one of the things I used to worry about most was that they used to phone home blaspheming, saying all kinds of things, and the children used to pick up the phone, you know. They used to pick up the phone and they used to hear this string of blasphemy at the other end. That all stopped.

Interviewer: So now you're cyberbullied, essentially?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, because now they can go on Facebook and insult me through a "friend", they don't even need to insult me to my face. And it's become so good that now my [mobile] number is completely public, and I felt safe making it public.

Interviewer: People don't bother to phone you?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, they never phone.

Interviewer: Because they harass you on Facebook?

D. Caruana Galizia: Because they're getting their frustrations out elsewhere.

Interviewer: What other strategies do you use that help you to persist in doing journalism?

D. Caruana Galizia: I think the most important thing – and I'm speaking for myself personally but I think this is really important for what you mentioned – is to teach people what's normal. Now luckily I am hyper-aware of what's normal because I grew up reading British newspapers, British magazines, whatever. So I know what

the standard is of what's normal, and what's acceptable and what's not acceptable, reactions and whatever. So, that changed my *forma mentis*. I don't think like other people who would say, "Oh my! You write that?" I said, "Yes, I write that – so what?" I said, "That is a perfectly normal thing to write outside this little rock." "But you're living on this little rock." I said, "Yes, it doesn't mean that this little rock is a special place and we have to be weird and we have to be different." We're calling ourselves European. We're a European Union member state, so you can't say ah, you can write that in England, you can write it in Rome, but you can't write it in Valletta. I said, "If you can write it in Rome and you can write it in London, you can write it in Valletta." And they just don't get this. So I think it's really important to remind people that just because Malta is a rock, 17 miles by nine, with a weird scenario, it doesn't mean that the weirdness is either normal or acceptable. The fact that it's normal here doesn't mean that it's normal generally, you know. That it's actually weird and it's actually undesirable. And once you know that that is weird and undesirable and that your thinking is the correct one, that gives you a lot of strength, you know.

Interviewer: The Council of Europe is really concerned with providing remedies. In this study we're also trying to think of what the remedies are. For example, the decriminalisation of defamation. What things can we put into play that will protect journalists?

D. Caruana Galizia: In fact I want to write to the Council of Europe about this, because they had issued a press release when the government said that it's going to decriminalise defamation, saying, this is a step forward for journalists. And I want to make the point that actually this is not going to help journalists at all, it's not going to change our lives at all because the other [civil] defamation is still there. So, to me it makes no difference whether I'm being taken up to court by the police or by [a private individual]. I'm still being taken to court, you know.

Interviewer: Would you say that you've ever experienced prejudice on the basis of your gender, or of language, religion, class?

D. Caruana Galizia: Well, that's why I said in the beginning, talking about Maltese society I always say that it's like living in the play, *The Crucible*. I don't know if you ever watched the play or the film, this witch-hunt in 17th-century Salem. And you watch it and you think, madonna, this is like Malta but with different clothes. You know what I mean? It's like living like that. OK, they're not going to hang anyone for adultery but the kind of oppressiveness of the society is, and the narrow-mindedness …

Interviewer: It remains there.

D. Caruana Galizia: And it all comes from growing up, living from cradle to grave surrounded by the exact same people. People stay in the same environment. So if you were in Britain, or in Italy, you would never see your school friends again. You'd move out of town, you might go once every 15 years for a reunion and you don't live in the same town, you know: you move away, you make your own life. Here you're forced into constant contact for your whole life which means many things, including the fact that you have to rub along with them. So any offence you caused when you were 20 years old is still going to be freaking this other person out when you're

both 70 years old, you know? And it's going to be dogging you and following you, so nobody does anything to upset anybody else.

Interviewer: So it creates a very uncritical environment?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, completely uncritical.

Interviewer: Everybody knows everybody else. Either they're related or they've been to school together or they grew up in the same village.

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, or they don't want to be ostracised from the cliques so they won't upset one member or whatever. Or they want to go to that party or that wedding. It's like that Maltese saying, you don't know whom you'll need.

Interviewer: But *you* upset people. How do you manage to continue living in our society and doing this?

D. Caruana Galizia: It's not like I made the decision I wanted to live in Malta. I never really felt I fitted in, and I always wanted to go off in search of somewhere where I did fit in. I always had this perspective of somebody on the outside looking in, which is what they say the classic thing is in anthropology, the outsider looking in. So that has helped me a lot in my work and also made me not care – well I obviously care about what's happening, but I'm not vested in what people think of me because I've said something, you see?

Interviewer: So in a sense you are critiquing Maltese society and you're not threatened by that or by people's attempts to silence you?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, not at all. But you asked earlier about language, class and all this kind of thing – and I think that a lot of the factors that really, really created an antipathy towards me were the fact that I was a woman and would …

Interviewer: Not stay in your place?

D. Caruana Galizia: No, I wouldn't stay in my place. And obviously a lot of the people I was criticising, because of the way it was, people with a public life, were men – hardly any women. So, you know, "What do you mean, a woman criticising a man?" And the men react really badly! And even till today, 27 years later, they react viciously. Viciously! Viciously!

Interviewer: More so than if a male journalist had to do it?

D. Caruana Galizia: Exactly. They react viciously. With hatred and with anger.

Interviewer: What would you describe as the high points and the low points in your career?

D. Caruana Galizia: I consider myself lucky to have been able to make a career out of it [journalism] and a living out of it; well, not an amazing living, but I make a living out of it despite, against all the odds. I always enjoyed writing and my intention was to leave Malta to be able to get a job in journalism, either with a newspaper or with a magazine because I was never really into television or broadcast journalism or anything like that. But I don't know how I managed, and it was like a miracle I managed when I think about it; and probably if I had to start today at this age I'd be so aware of the pitfalls that I wouldn't even have done it.

Interviewer: So you managed to plough your way through.

D. Caruana Galizia: Aha, really. And it was literally a desperate situation. There were no magazines. The newspapers were these two really dry, turgid – literally "man knocked down by car" kind of newspaper coverage. And I used to read them. I obviously used to read the British papers, and I used to read *The Times* [of Malta] and say, why don't they have any columnists? Or I'd get a lot of news outside – like people talking, you go to a party and you hear, "You hear that? You heard that?" I'd open the newspaper and there'd be nothing about it because it wasn't a fact that they could report, like an incident or whatever. Now news reporting has changed completely. And I said OK, I'm going to write a column – and I wrote a column. And I sent it to the editor of *The Sunday Times* thinking OK, if he publishes it I don't care if I don't get paid, it was fun doing it. And he rang up and he said, "Can you do me one every Sunday and I'll pay you?" And I was like, and I bought a typewriter, you know what I mean. Typewriter! And I think, even for him, Anthony Montanaro [the editor], you know, a guy, close to retirement. In fact, he retired a year later. I said even for him, it was really like groundbreakingly brave.

Interviewer: Yes, to have this woman journalist who's writing these things.

D. Caruana Galizia: Aha. I mean, it was so bad in those days – my dreams of becoming a journalist in an environment where the only English-language newspaper on the island was not allowed – *not allowed* – to employ women.

Interviewer: And we're not talking about that long ago.

D. Caruana Galizia: 1990. So they had this really, really crazy situation where a woman is writing this big column, where they had the first named columnist as a woman but no women in the newsroom. And when I had asked why, they told me – I had wanted a job there, full time – "No, we can't give you a job because we can't send women to cover mass meetings and these dangerous situations!"

Interviewer: So the high points if I'm hearing you correctly are sort of when you managed to break through the barriers. It's a real achievement. What would you say is the lowest of the low points in your journalistic career?

D. Caruana Galizia: There's been a lot of stress. There's been a lot of stress, so I can't actually pinpoint one thing.

Interviewer: Not one in particular but is it the threats that get to you?

D. Caruana Galizia: No. No, threats don't get to me. It's the constant … I don't think anyone really knows what it's like because… there isn't one politician in parliament now on either side of the house who was there when I started working. I've seen them all off, you know, and I am *still* here being targeted by the same machine. I said, that is exhausting. It wears you down… And nobody outside Malta knows it's happening because it's in Maltese.

Interviewer: That's another big issue in a sense.

D. Caruana Galizia: It's shocking. It's shocking! And you find them on Youtube – you just need to search "Daphne Caruana Galizia!"[10] That's the worst aspect for me. It's like the constant propaganda against me, you know. It's just terrible and it's an unequal thing because they [the government] have a whole broadcasting machine and a political party.

Interviewer: And there's you.

D. Caruana Galizia: One woman with a blog.

Interviewer: So why do you continue? Why do journalists continue to do this?

D. Caruana Galizia: Because I think, the alternative I wouldn't be able to live with it … And this is where you see why so many people drop out because they won't really have it in them, you know. I'm not an artist or a musician but I can imagine that anybody who has the urge to paint or to play music or whatever, once you take that away from them, they can't … they have to do it, you know what I mean?

Interviewer: And your urge is to *speak out*?

D. Caruana Galizia: I mean now, even if I consider stopping – like I stop for a month or whatever, which I've often done – I'll be thinking, "I say, ma, look at that!" And straight away my brain goes into … or a story, a bit of information. But that links to that, you know.

Interviewer: What do you think could be done to make the work of journalists safer? What can an institution like the Council of Europe do to create a climate that's better?

D. Caruana Galizia: Well, I think that international awareness and international coverage really, really helps. For example, I know that with the Council of Europe when we had the Chris Cardona thing and they put out a press statement about it.[11]

Interviewer: On the [Council of Europe] platform?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, on the platform; and it received a lot of coverage. And they actually wrote to the prime minister, and they got an answer. I mean, the prime minister felt obliged to answer or whatever.

Interviewer: So you think something like the platform works. It calls people to task in a sense and they have to respond. Because many governments do not.

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, they don't reply.

Interviewer: But you think that this is a useful tool?

D. Caruana Galizia: That helped where Malta's concerned. I wouldn't be able to speak for other countries. And another thing which is really important is – because Maltese people do not have exposure to media outside Malta, except for television

10. Daphne Caruana Galizia is talking about how headlines with her name were featured on TV and subsequently shared on YouTube.
11. See more on the Council of Europe's Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists: www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/detail-alert?p_p_id=sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_col_id=column-3&p_p_col_pos=2&p_p_col_count=11&_sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_alertPK=57564779#block-member-replies.

– they don't know what the standard is for journalism, you see. So one very important starting point is to teach them what journalism really is, what's normal.

Interviewer: OK, so more media literacy?

D. Caruana Galizia: Yes, more media literacy. From very young. Because they have no idea – nothing. Nothing. So then obviously they don't look at somebody like me and say, "What's the big deal – she's just writing a newspaper column", or "She's just writing a blog". They see me as somebody personally attacking others, you know.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Afterword

The interview with Daphne Caruana Galizia – presented here in an abridged version – took place on the afternoon of 6 October 2017. This was to be the first of a series of in-depth interviews with 20 journalists for the book *A mission to inform – Journalists at risk speak out* and it was the last recorded interview with Daphne Caruana Galizia. She spoke at length and with passion about her career as a journalist, columnist and blogger while facing years of unrelenting harassment and intimidation by the many who sought to deter her. She spoke of living in "a climate of fear", but she herself was undaunted. Ten days later this tenacious "woman with a blog" was brutally assassinated. This final interview deserves to be preserved, and it stands as a tribute to her exceptional contribution to the journalistic profession and her tireless quest to inform.

The interview is a unique, first-hand account of how Daphne Caruana Galizia was exposed to physical, psychological, judicial and economic harassment from elected politicians, public figures and business persons, as well as from people in the street who were incited and emboldened by the hostile rhetoric directed against her as an "enemy" of her country. Her words portray the perilous realities of everyday life for Daphne and for many other investigative journalists who strive to hold power to account. Yet the courage and determination which she displays are a remarkable testament to her resilience despite the enormous pressures to stay silent. Daphne was acutely aware of the obstacles and risks she had to face, yet she refused to compromise. Ultimately she paid for that resistance with her life.

Daphne Caruana Galizia's extraordinary life and the shock of her violent death have raised the public's awareness of the need for governments everywhere to ensure that attacks against journalists are rigorously investigated and punished, and to provide a favourable environment for journalists to do their work safely and without fear.

Marilyn Clark and William Horsley,
editors

Tribute to Daphne Caruana Galizia by her son Andrew Caruana Galizia

In 2018, a young journalist called Ján Kuciak was shot dead in his home near Bratislava moments before his fiancée Martina received a single shot to the head. I read the news and crushed the glass I was holding into small pieces. Everything we had worked for, all those people who had joined our fight, our conviction that if we had done this earlier my mother would still be alive: it was all obliterated in a moment like the lives of Ján and Martina, and like my mother's before theirs.

Two years later I sat in court watching a lawyer plead the case for bail for his client, the man accused of masterminding my mother's murder. He said liberty is the most fundamental right of all and it is only in the most exceptional cases that a court can deprive a defendant of this sacred right, and certainly not a man with a clean criminal record who also happens to love his family. I sat there willing the presiding magistrate to correct the lawyer; to remind him that there can be no liberty without life, that his client stands accused of ordering a crime so exceptional that it continues to dominate public life three years later, that he was recorded discussing the plot in front of his own children, and that his criminal record was only clean – and then only in Malta – because of his friends in the police and the prime minister's office.

My older brother Matthew was due to testify. His eyes were bloodshot from his hour-long night. After five hours in court he realised there wouldn't be time for his testimony. He had wasted a night and a day when there was so much to do. I checked the news reports on my phone as the magistrate announced the date of the next court sitting, more than a month from then. They read, "Matthew Caruana Galizia is sitting on a bench near his two brothers, Andrew and Paul, and his father, Peter". I hated to be reminded that my mother was dead, that the four of us were the only ones left of our family. Some mornings, when my mind was transitioning from sleep into wakefulness, I believed she was still alive and had spent a day with my children and then sent them cards in her unmistakable handwriting.

Sitting on the bare courtroom bench I thought back to the day my mother was assassinated. Just after 3 p.m. on 16 October 2017, according to a driver who witnessed it, my mother screamed and disappeared into a ball of flames. It was just as I had dreamed it in the nightmares that followed her death. I remembered the fear, the complete darkness. I also remembered what the archbishop had told my brothers and me the day we buried our mother, "see that you will always be the children of the light". I liked the archbishop, and so had my mother. "At last, an archbishop who isn't a timorous coward", is how she once described him. My brothers and I were grateful there was at least one Maltese public figure left standing who our mother hadn't revealed to be hopelessly compromised by money. But what did he mean, to be children of the light when all we could see was darkness?

Paul flew in from London on the day of the bombing. The next day the three of us sat side by side at the top of a flight of steps leading down to the valley behind our parents' garden and grieved for a moment, not knowing when we'd ever be able to grieve again. Only we knew what it was like to be the children of our mother. It felt as though we were the only people in the world to whom nothing about her needed to be explained. Alone together, sitting on the steps our father had helped lay when we were children, we could finally think and breathe. We set ourselves the mission of changing Malta, the country that had killed our mother, into a country capable of delivering her justice.

When the man sitting in court an arm's length away from me had been arrested trying to flee the country in his yacht, it had suddenly become much harder for the government to explain my mother's assassination as the work of common criminals. An angry crowd developed outside the Maltese Parliament, trapping the justice minister in his car. My aunt pressed a giant photo of her sister onto his window. His driver panicked, accelerating over the foot of a police constable. The minister's colleagues tried to escape on foot, through an ancient tunnel opening out into a ditch. They were met with a hailstorm of spit and coins from the crowd above.

I stood there in front of the parliament, thinking how proud my mother would be of the people in the streets. I noticed how different the atmosphere around me was from earlier protests. Raw anger and defiance had driven away the fear, sadness and desperation. It was extraordinary; unlike anything the country had seen for generations. Two years earlier my mother and I had walked past the same building. Strangers were glaring at her, unable to hide a seething hatred. I stared them down so that she wouldn't have to, hiding my shock that she now found this so normal that she laughed at my reaction, as though I were a tourist appalled by a common Maltese custom. One woman refused to look away, and my mother pulled me by the arm until I kept walking. Only weeks before, my mother had been celebrated as a hero whose writing would bring down a corrupt government. When the opposition failed to win in surprise elections, she was blamed for their defeat. Everyone but her most loyal readers wanted her silenced. Knowing how fickle people could be, she had trained herself to be indifferent to public opinion. But this was something else. Her daily life had become intolerable.

When my mother started writing at 25 she quickly became what passes for a celebrity in the country – one of the very few who weren't singers. She was to go on to survive two arson attacks, two arrests, pets who were butchered or who had disappeared, slander against her husband and children, betrayals by old friends, and all against the backdrop of incessant television propaganda. By the year of her death, a single one of her blog posts typed out in seconds could paralyse the government for days. Her network of sources had grown into an "international network of spies", and her energy was only fractionally diminished by an asset freeze and the 47 libel suits she was fighting off – 19 of which she one day found sellotaped to our garden gate by a court marshall.

Look what it took, I thought, to get a measure of accountability in this country: a journalist so talented that her readership exceeded the combined circulation of the country's newspapers, so impossible to intimidate that when a famous London law

firm sent her a threatening letter on behalf of a client who could almost literally print money (he held the concession to sell Maltese passports), she said she'd use it the next time she took her dog out for a walk.

All that talent, energy and courage built up over a lifetime did nothing to protect her in life or save the country from itself. What was it all for?

The assassination of pathfinding journalists like my mother Daphne or the young Ján Kuciak robs people of their right to understand the reality in which they live. The way people react or fail to react to the darkness that descends over them when their moral and intellectual leaders are murdered in turn changes the course of a country's collective life. The men who ended my mother's life knew this. They feared not the police, nor their own conscience, but the thousands of people who chose to light a candle to drive away the darkness – my mother's children of the light.

Andrew Caruana Galizia

Note on publication

Democratic societies can only flourish if freedom of expression is duly protected. Protecting freedom of expression implies that journalists and other media actors can perform their "mission to inform" on matters of public interest without interference and without fear.

As the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers acknowledged in Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors "[j]ournalists 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". This has – to say the least – a chilling effect on freedom of expression.

The Council of Europe is fully committed to addressing these increasing attacks on journalists and implicitly on freedom of expression. Apart from setting standards to better protect journalists and other media actors, the Council of Europe has also put in place different mechanisms to enhance their safety such as the Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists. To better understand the situation in the field and raise awareness about this pressing issue, the Council of Europe commissioned several studies. Among them is the book *A mission to inform – Journalists at risk speak out* (by Marilyn Clark and William Horsley) for which the interview on the preceding pages was held. The interview was the first of a series of 20 interviews in which investigative journalists across Council of Europe member states spoke frankly about the challenges they encountered in their work and the ways they built resilience to carry on.

Daphne Caruana Galizia was murdered just 10 days after giving this interview. Her words stand as a powerful testimony to the "climate of fear" in which many of her peers undertake their work.

Given the commitment of the Council of Europe to better protect journalists across member states and the public interest in Daphne Caruana Galizia's case, Council of Europe Publishing has included the abridged version of the interview on its list of publications.

Daphne Caruana Galizia, Malta's foremost investigative journalist, was killed on 16 October 2017 in a targeted car bomb attack near her home. Her reporting focused incisively on members of Malta's political and business elite and allegations of corruption, money laundering and organised crime. In this interview, recorded 10 days before her death, she spoke about facing multiple defamation lawsuits and of living in a "climate of fear" because of threats and acts of violence. She characterised her situation as "one woman with a blog" against the "constant propaganda" of a powerful political machine. At the time of publication her murder remains unresolved.

"She was a fierce, independent and brave investigative journalist, relentless in her efforts to uncover stories of public interest."
Harlem Désir, Fourth OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

"Her loss is a severe blow to independent investigative journalism, not only in Malta but also as a global symbol of the power of reporting in the public interest."
UN Special Rapporteurs

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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