

Expert Group Meeting

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN JOURNALISTS

13 March 2020 • Meeting Report

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A record of proceedings of a meeting held online via Zoom.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CWGL	Center for Women’s Global Leadership
EGM	Expert Group Meeting
HRC	Human Rights Council
IAWRT	International Association of Women in Radio and Television
JiG	Journalism Initiative on Gender-Based Violence
SRVAW	Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences
Section J	Section of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing women and media
UN DAWG	United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women and girls
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
VAWJ	Violence against women journalists

ABOUT THE MEETING

The Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women (EGM) took place online on 13th March 2020 hosted by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) in partnership with the Office of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SR VAW), its causes and consequences, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT).

The EGM was hosted in the lead up to the proposed report focusing on violence against women journalists, by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović to be presented at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) from June to July 2020.

Due to the restrictions in place as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, the meeting was hosted entirely online via Zoom and facilitated by CWGL and the Special Rapporteur out of New York City.

The purpose of the EGM was to facilitate a discussion among experts, media organizations, news entities and key women journalists on the status, causes and consequences of threats, discrimination and violence against women journalists worldwide.

Discussions centered around:

- Manifestations of gender-based violence (GBV) against women journalists.
- Situation of women journalists who face multiple and intersecting forms of violence.
- Specific dangers faced by women journalists and media workers.
- Application of legal frameworks at the international, regional and national levels on the protection of journalists.

The meeting was attended online by 28 international media experts, women journalists, UN entity representatives and partner organizations.

BRIEF BACKGROUND: SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in resolution 1994/45¹, adopted on 4 March 1994, to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women, including its causes and consequences SR VAW. The mandate was extended in resolution 2003/45² by the Commission on Human Rights in 2003, at its 59th session.

In accordance with her mandate, the SR VAW submits a report to the Human Rights Council annually on a selected issue pertaining to violence against women, its causes and consequences.

In 2018, the SR VAW, submitted her annual thematic report to the UN General Assembly on the issue of online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective. The report included definitions of online harassment, harm and manifestations of online violence against women; information and communications technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, and the application of international human rights frameworks to online violence against women and girls. It included recommendations for the United Nations, for States and for Internet intermediaries.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur was last renewed in 2019 via resolution 41/17³. According to the current mandate, the SR VAW is to:

- Seek and receive information on violence against women, its causes and consequences from Governments, treaty bodies, specialized agencies, other special rapporteurs responsible for various human rights questions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, and to respond effectively to such information;
- Recommend measures, ways and means at the local, national, regional and international levels to eliminate all forms of violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences;
- Work closely with all special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and with the treaty bodies, taking into account the request of the Council that they regularly and systematically integrate the human rights of women and a gender perspective into their work, and cooperate closely with the

Commission on the Status of Women in the discharge of its functions;

- Adopt a comprehensive and universal approach to the elimination of violence against women, its causes and consequences, including causes of violence against women relating to the civil, cultural, economic, political and social spheres.

Šimonović (Croatia) was appointed as the Special Rapporteur (SR) in June 2015 by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC).

SR Šimonović identified the issue of violence against women journalists as the topic of her June report to the HRC. In her report, the Special Rapporteur aims to build on the existing human rights standards and to offer a more holistic approach to addressing the specific challenges faced by women journalists, as well as their causes, and to provide recommendations to States and other stakeholders on how to tackle these issues. The report seeks to lay the foundation for States to establish an appropriate human rights framework including through the development of policies or strategies to ensure the protection of women journalists.

¹ UN Commission on Human Rights. "Resolution: Question of integrating the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and the elimination of violence against women." March 4, 1994, E/CN.4/RES/1994/45. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f47f4.html>

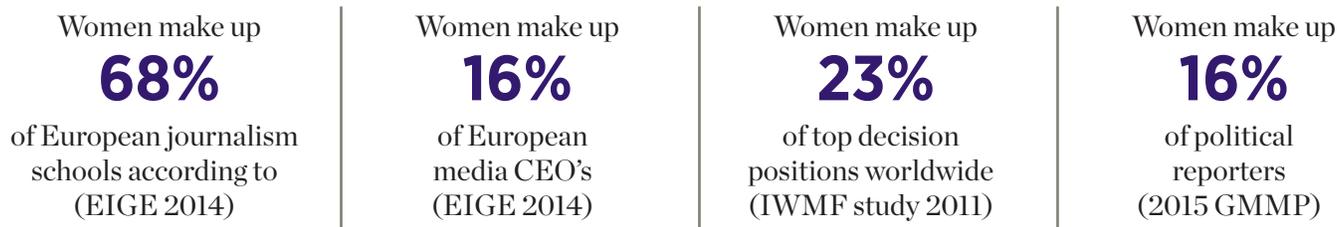
² UN Commission on Human Rights. "Resolution: Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2003/45: Elimination of Violence against Women." April 23, 2003, E/CN.4/RES/2003/45. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/43f3133b0.html>

³ UN Commission on Human Rights. "Resolution: Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in the world of work." July 19, 2019, A/HRC/RES/41/17. https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/41/L.5/Rev.1

BRIEF BACKGROUND: CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

With feminist values, CWGL strengthens and bridges voices for human rights towards social justice and self-determination. Working at the intersection of gender, human rights and economic policy, CWGL utilizes an intersectional approach in the design and implementation of its strategies. For over 25 years, CWGL has been at the forefront of global feminist organizing and movement-building with signature programs focusing on organizing and partnering with grassroots and grass-top leaders, facilitating movement-building capacity and activities, and framing and conducting strategic research and advocacy to gain greater attention to women's human rights, broadly understood, in the international realm. It has cultivated strong partnerships with women's rights and social justice organizations worldwide, with work ranging from hosting conversations and planning meetings for strategic initiatives focused on UN processes, to shaping new concepts and strategies related to GBV, labor, macroeconomics and human rights, to working with locally-grounded organizations to challenge the status-quo. Within this, the Center operates under a strategy that includes convening those closest to the struggle to explore and exchange ideas and solutions, conducting research with an intersectional and action-oriented lens, guided by partners and constituencies around the world, and advocating with and for those traditionally excluded from decision-making at the local, national and international levels. A key aspect of CWGL's work within the UN system, around norm building and accountability, is its engagement with Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council including with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, the Independent Expert on foreign debt and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

In 1991 CWGL founded, and continues to coordinate, the *16 Days of Activism to End Gender-based Violence Campaign* that has been used by more than 6000 organizations in over 185 countries. In 2015, the CWGL helped found the Feminist Alliance for Rights (FAR). FAR's mission is to promote feminist values; strengthen feminist movement building; challenge systems of oppression; eliminate discrimination; and advance women's human rights and gender equality.



Source: *International Federation of Journalists*

BRIEF BACKGROUND: JOURNALISM INITIATIVE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The eradication of GBV continues to be a key strategic priority of CWGL within its current Theory of Change which is “A world without violence is possible.”⁴ As the initiator and the global coordinator of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, CWGL continues to explore ways to increase awareness of GBV as a violation of women’s human rights. Nearly three decades of campaigning and lessons learned by CWGL contributed to the conceptualization of the Journalism Initiative on Gender-Based Violence (JiG)⁵.

JiG was formulated in 2018, as an outcome of a review of the Global 16 Days Campaign which concluded that media plays a critical role in either shifting or perpetuating attitudes toward GBV against women and that they are integral in shifting the discourse on how GBV. JiG seeks to establish tools by journalists and for journalists and media to strengthen GBV reporting worldwide. The project outputs include a book that will be a standard-setting resource, a website for journalists and journalism schools, and an App to be used by journalists in the field to be released in 2020 and 2021.

Between 2018 and 2019, over 110 women journalists were consulted from 38 countries on their experiences of GBV in the pursuit of a story and ways to shift the narrative to reduce GBV and enhance the standards and impact of its coverage. The regional consultations took place between July 2018 and November 2019, in Sri Lanka (South Asia region), Jordan (Middle East region), Australia (Asia-Pacific region), Mexico (Latin American region), Kenya (Southern and Eastern Africa region) and the United States.

⁴ *Center for Women’s Global Leadership Website*. “Purpose and Goals.” [://cwgl.rutgers.edu/about/purpose-goals](http://cwgl.rutgers.edu/about/purpose-goals)

⁵ *CWGL, JiG Website*. <https://sites.rutgers.edu/gbv-journalism/JiG>

BRIEF HISTORY: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AS ADDRESSED BY THE UN

While the UN has highlighted the rights of journalists through its various mechanisms and agencies, there has been limited focus on the specific threats faced by women journalists. In 2006, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution S/RES/1738⁶, which established a coherent, action-oriented approach to the safety of journalists in armed conflicts. Since then, the UN Secretary-General has presented an annual report to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on the implementation of this Resolution.

In 2008, the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) under UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted a Decision on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The Decision urged member states to end impunity and prosecute those responsible for deliberate killings of journalists and to voluntarily report to UNESCO actions taken to prevent the impunity of perpetrators. The Decision also urged states to report on the status of judicial inquiries conducted on killings condemned by UNESCO. The Decision requested the Director-General to provide the IPDC with an analytical report based on responses from member states. The report has since been produced biennially.

In 2011, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, in her report to the 19th Session of the HRC, included the specific risks and challenges faced by selected groups of defenders, including journalists and media workers in Chapter III of her report.

In 2012, the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists was endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board, which was convened by the UNESCO Director-General.

In 2015, UNESCO partnered with Reporters without Borders (RSF) to update their 1992 Safety Guide for Journalists working in high-risk environments.

In September 2016, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) unanimously adopted Resolution 33/2⁷ on the safety of journalists.

In 2017 the UNGA adopted Resolution 72/175⁸ on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. Also that year a multi-stakeholder consultation held by UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) produced a list of suggested actions on the safety of journalists for member states, including national implementation of the standard-setting framework of the UN Plan of Action and enhanced reporting on the issue, including within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

⁶ *UN Security Council*, "Resolution: Protection of civilians in armed conflict." December 23, 2006, S/RES/1738, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Civilians%20SRES1738.pdf>

⁷ *UN Human Rights Council*. "Resolution: The safety of journalists." September 29, 2016, A/HRC/RES/33/2. https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/33/2

⁸ *UN General Assembly*, "Resolution: The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity." December 19, 2019. A/RES/72/175, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/175>

BRIEF HISTORY: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AS ADDRESSED BY THE UN

In July 2018 the HRC adopted Resolution 38/5⁹, which addresses discrimination and violence against women in digital contexts, including the impact on freedom of expression, and in September 2018 HRC adopted Resolution 39/6 on the safety of journalists.

In 2018 UNESCO supported the African Union Commission in organizing an interregional forum on national mechanisms for the safety of journalists.

UNESCO signed in 2019 a memorandum of understanding with the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to strengthen freedom of expression and the safety of journalists in West Africa.

OHCHR and UNESCO have advised Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda on setting up protective mechanisms for the safety of journalists.

Findings of a study of online harassment faced by women journalists in Pakistan

9 out of **10**

respondents said that online violence has a significant impact on their mental health

9 out of **10**

respondents said that online violence or fear of it has an impact on their professional choices

8 out of **10**

respondents said they have self-censored in order to counter online violence

Source: Hostile Bytes: A study of online violence against women journalists, Media Matters for Democracy.
Full Report: <https://bit.ly/2BENwua>

⁹ UN Human Rights Council, "Resolution: Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in digital contexts." August 17, 2018, A/HRC/RES/38/5, https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/38/L.6

REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING

The following is a report of the proceedings of the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) as held on 13th March 2020 via Zoom due to limitations as a result of Covid 19. The substantive and logistical aspects of the meeting were organized by Cosette Thompson and Lagipoiva Chelle Jackson of CWGL and Oragh McCann and Renata Preturlan of the SR VAW Office.

The meeting was co-facilitated by Krishanti Dharmaraj, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership and Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SR VAW).

The meeting was divided into three panels with presentations from selected speakers followed by comments from lead discussions and a brief question and answer session. The first Panel were for women journalists and discussions focused on manifestations of gender based violence against women journalists and situation of women journalists who face multiple and intersecting forms of violence. The second Panel focused on the work of media experts who discussed specific dangers faced by women journalists and media workers. The final Panel consisted of UN entities who focused on the application of the legal framework at the international and regional level on the protection of journalists.

The meeting ended with a summary of discussions by Dharmaraj and concluding remarks by SR Šimonović.

WELCOME REMARKS

Krishanti Dharmaraj, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), welcomed all participants and expressed appreciation to SR VAW for the opportunity to co-host the Expert Group Meeting on Violence Against Women Journalists (EGM), along with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Population Fund (UNPFA), and the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT).

She briefly outlined the history and breadth of the Center's work, including how it its work contributed to the creation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Center's support for the work of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls (UN DAWG), its cooperation with UN Women, its advocacy for the adoption and now ratification of the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment¹⁰, and its role in forming the Feminist Alliance for Rights (FAR) to engage in shaping global policy.

Dharmaraj noted that the Journalist Initiative on Gender-Based Violence (JiG) started in 2018 by the Center, which looks at shifting the discourse on how GBV is reported in the media. She noted that JiG has organized six regional convening's in South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, Pacific, Latin America, Latin America and South and East Africa, of journalists from 38 countries which resulted in the Center to take a closer look at violence against women journalists.

Dharmaraj observed the increasing importance of the role of women journalists worldwide in recent years, and with that an increased risk of threats, violence and harassment. She noted that while much has been written about violence against journalists generally, JiG wanted to ensure that violence against women journalists is recognized at the highest level by addressing it at the international level and implemented at the regional and national levels.

Dharmaraj stressed that the types of violence that women journalists face beginning with discrimination and exclusion, is not limited to physical violence, but rather includes the threat of violence which inflicts emotional abuse, as well as online violence. She said the ways that women journalists have faced violence has gone from violence in the home, by the community, violence and discrimination in the workplace, to violence by non-state actors and by the state itself. These threats have had the impact of silencing women journalists or prompting many to change jobs or take on freelancing just to continue working as journalists, or in some cases, self-silencing. She expressed concern that such silencing is affecting not only journalism and pursuit of the truth at large, but an entire community of women journalists in particular.

¹⁰ *International Labour Organization*. "C190 - Violence and Harassment Convention, No. 190." 2019. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190

OPENING REMARKS

Dubravka Šimonović, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SR VAW), thanked all for participating, and briefly outlined the mandate of the Special Rapporteur established 25 years ago, including the presentation of two thematic reports per year. She noted two recent thematic reports she had presented relevant to the EGM, one on online violence against women, the other on violence against women in politics. She explained that with her forthcoming thematic report on violence against women journalists she will examine what needs to be addressed better by her mandate through recommendations to put forward to states and other stakeholders at national, regional and global levels to prevent violence against women journalists, address services needed, and the prosecution and responsibilities aspects.

SR Šimonović said that as a SR VAW, she will use a human rights-based framework and approach to address the various issues regarding violence against women journalists. She explained that a human rights-based approach looks at the connection between the responsibilities of the state, of intermediaries or private persons with respect to different forms of violence against women and girls. The report will seek to provide clear recommendations about those responsibilities in terms of legislation and mechanisms that enable women journalists in such situations to seek protection, as well as systems providing services needed, including reparation and recovery measures that give women journalists the possibility of continuing their important work.

SR Šimonović said she would like to learn from participants' experience on the main issues that should be addressed in her report. She noted that under the complaints procedure of the United Nations Human

Rights Council, her office has already received more than 10 cases involving violence against women journalists, and suggested that perhaps this was a tool that could be more widely used by those who know of violence against women journalists or by women journalists themselves who have been exposed to different forms of violence. SR Šimonović said she wanted to explore how more could be done within the SR VAWs mandate and to build on what is already there, to focus on what more needs to be done in terms of measures and mechanisms, and to highlight the different types of violence facing women journalists.

SR Šimonović noted the call for submissions for the report on the Special Rapporteur's webpage and that staff from the OHCHR was participating in the EGM and would be happy to follow-up with any additional submissions, including recommendations that participants might like to offer.

She asked not only for participants' recommendations about how to address violence against women journalists, but also their views on how such violence should be reported. Noting how recent movements such as #MeToo are reshaping societal attitudes, SR Šimonović emphasized the important role media and journalists can have when they report on different forms of violence, key obstacles to addressing it and how perceptions can be changed through changes in law, mechanisms and mindsets.

In closing, SR Šimonović urged the participants to share any personal stories and examples they may have regarding the topic, promising not to use their names in the report.

PANEL 1: WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Topics:

- **Manifestations of gender-based violence against women journalists.**
- **Situation of women journalists who face multiple and intersecting forms of violence.**

Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson, Independent Journalist Representative, Samoa Media Council (Samoa); Chief Editor, JIG

Lagipoiva explained that Samoa has a fairly small media industry, with about 35-40 journalists working in Samoan media, the majority of them women. Because of the size of the industry, issues covered receive attention by the government, and front-page stories have the potential to create social change immediately. However, protections for women journalists have not kept pace.

She said a national assessment report conducted in 2019 by the Journalists Association of Samoa (JAWS), in partnership with the Samoa Alliance of Media Practitioners for Development (SAMPOD) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), regarding violence against women journalists, revealed that 74% of journalists who took part in the assessment had been threatened in one way or another within a year of the assessment.

She explained that choosing to pursue a career in journalism as a woman in a country with a very small media community, such as in Small Island Developing States, where women journalists are accessible by members of the public they report on, exposes them to many risks. She said that the interconnected nature of Samoan community means that threats of retaliation and increased risks against the families of women journalists have discouraged many women from taking up the profession. She noted avenues of threats and harassment include social media, telephone calls to the workplace, email, and direct harassment.

Lagipoiva noted that a leading source of threats toward women journalists are religious leaders, who are protective of their churches when they receive media coverage. Another source of threats, are politicians, who threaten women journalists by making public demeaning comments, retaliating against their families including through threatening family members who hold public sector positions, denying their participation in media conferences, rejecting all requests for comment, and even demanding that they be fired.

She said one of the recommendations resulting from consultations held in Samoa is to train and educate law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judiciary on the safety of journalists including women journalists, and to develop protocols and training programs for all State authorities who are responsible for fulfilling State obligations concerning the protection of women journalists and other media actors.

A challenge she highlighted was that the media in Samoa does not fall under the ambit of a single ministry or office, therefore any protection that might be afforded to women journalists is not the responsibility of anyone in particular and there is no avenue for funding to build the capacity of women journalists, to construct protective measures, and to ensure women journalists are protected when they are in the field. As a result, media effectively must manage and protect themselves and find their own means to do so. Fortunately, she said, UN agencies such as UNESCO and the ILO have stepped in to help.

SR Šimonović requested that Lagipoiva send the results of the survey mentioned for reference in her report, or if it has been published, to provide a link to it.

Sheila Dallas-Katzman, Chief UN Representative and USA Chapter Chair, IAWRT-USA

Dallas-Katzman explained that IAWRT¹¹ is a global network of 14 national chapters, including IAWRT-USA, and members in 54 countries that seeks to meet the urgent challenges faced by women in media. She mentioned the variety of forms in which violence against women journalists manifests using anecdotal evidence from members in Uganda, Cameroon, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

She shared the story of an IAWRT member, a television reporter from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, who, while covering the Tunisian demonstrations during the Tunisian Revolution, picked up the camera to continue coverage when the cameraman who was accompanying her dropped the camera and ran. When she saw a group of men and boys, she moved closer to film them. Upon seeing her with the camera, the men smashed the camera and gang-raped her, including a policeman who had been surveilling her on behalf of the government. Dallas-Katzman said in Tunisia the culture propagates the idea that women take men's jobs, so there is a strong negative cultural bias towards professional women and that was the excuse used by her rapists. In a further indignity, her media employer forced her to pay for the very expensive camera that her rapists had broken.

She said in Cameroon, women journalists covering unrest in the conflict-ridden regions of the country have come under attack from all sides. Journalists endure harassment, including having their phones conversations and movements surveilled, and are threatened with kidnapping, immolation and shooting, and sometimes such threats are carried out.

In Uganda, Dallas-Katzman noted, it has become common to weaponize social media to pressure and silence women journalists. These journalists face frequent online attacks, both from isolated individuals and highly organized networks. Women are particularly vulnerable to threats of violence and rape, including sexist and racist insults, and calls for their rape and murder. She also mentioned the non-consensual dissemination of the personal intimate images of women journalists and other women of influence. Laws, instead of protecting them

and criminalizing non-consensual circulation of intimate images, further victimize the victims by accusing them of pornography. She noted the example of a female television journalist fired in 2016 over what she claimed was a fabricated sex tape.

In Cambodia, she said there is no research on women journalists and the threats they face. She said women journalists there are so marginalized that the Minister of Information, a woman, could not name a single female journalist in her country.

Even in the US, Dallas-Katzman highlighted, after a workshop organized in 2019, a black journalist who had made a substantial contribution to the workshop requested that her name not to be mentioned anywhere in the report of the meeting, which reflects the discrimination and disproportionate threats that black journalists still face in the US. Dallas-Katzman mentioned that she herself was denied a journalist role which she was the favorite candidate until her potential employer met her in person and realized that she is black.

Elizabeth Ford, Lead Editor, Women's Rights and Gender Equality Issues, The Guardian, UK

Ford said that while she personally had not experienced violence or abuse while doing her job, she knew of several colleagues who had received threats, most of them online. She reported that each had a different reaction. One received online threats of rape of her and her daughter which resulted in her going offline. Another colleague had received threats which may result in her stop writing. A third colleague received an online bomb threat and reported it to the police; the police searched her home, and recommended that she not stay at home that night. No arrests were made; the threatening party only had his Twitter account suspended. The colleague wrote about it saying she was more irritated than worried by the threat, but shocked by what happened afterward, not only by the lack of police action, but also because of all the requests for interviews from news outlets that wanted to focus on a narrative about high-profile journalists rather than the problem of online abuse. She asked that everyone focus less on her and her particular case, and more on the broader issue to bring an end to any kind of violence against women.

¹¹ The International Association of Women in Radio and Television. <https://www.iawrt.org/>.

Ford noted that in 2016¹² The Guardian did research on abusive comments on articles posted online studying millions of comments both posted and those blocked by moderators. She said the research revealed that articles by women received more abusive comments. It also found that the opinion piece writers that most often receive abusive comments were women. Ford commented that The Guardian has clear guidelines on handling such abuse which include a recommendation not to engage, and to stay safe, outlining what kind of support writers can receive. She noted that the UK has relatively robust laws about abuse and harassment, but not so much about online abuse.

Ford offered several recommendations. She suggested Editors need stronger guidance on who to send into hostile environments and on the measures in place to protect them. She noted that hostile environment training courses for journalists tend to exclude the gender dimension, and suggested that the SR VAW's report recommend that this change be undertaken. Ford called for changes in both law and cultures about respect for women and girls, commenting that without the cultural shifts, laws alone will not suffice. She suggested creating a network of women journalists that report when they witness other women journalists being abused, especially those who do not have the same protections and resources available to The Guardian journalists and others.

SR Šimonović inquired if the Guardian research on abusive comments was publicly available, and if so, how could she obtain a copy. Ford responded that she could send a link to an article written about the findings of the research, which includes a discussion of the methodology utilized.

Aimée Vega Montiel, Chair, Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG); Researcher, National Autonomous University (UNAM), Mexico City

Dr. Vega explained that GAMAG was launched in 2013 by UNESCO and more than 500 organizations from around the world were part of the first Global Forum on Gender and Media. Its mission is to promote gender equality in and through the media. She noted that GAMAG has already sent in a submission to the SR VAW Call for Submissions that offers international perspectives on the issue, covering reports from national GAMAG chapters in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Vega offered several recommendations for the VAWJ Report. She suggested seeking more data on the issue of violence against women journalists noting that current data is sparse and focuses only on specific areas. She highlighted the need for a holistic approach when preparing the VAWJ report. The survey offered by the SR VAW only looks at "one slice of the pie" and ignores the fact that that rising violence is the result of ingrained attitudes and impunity (i.e. failures of states). She said, the VAWJ Report should have a strong conceptual framework, breaking down the abuse and violence by types and modalities, with specific examples of each. She cautioned that the report cannot examine violence against women journalists in a vacuum and that it must include discussion of the link to violent environments. Vega said while the VAWJ should recall and stress the importance of Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing women and media, since 2020 is the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, it should also emphasize how not only states have neglected their commitments under Section J in those 25 years, but news media industries have as well. She underscored

¹² Mansfield, Mahana. "How we analysed 70m comments on the Guardian website." *The Guardian*, April 12, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/12/how-we-analysed-70m-comments-guardian-website>

the need for the industry to adopt real commitments on protecting women journalists, not only in the workplace but in the field as well. VAWJ Report, according to Vega should call on all states to ratify and implement ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment. GAMAG suggests using November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to call on all nations to ratify the Convention. GAMAG also suggested calling upon governments to implement the more detailed elements of ILO Recommendation 206 Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work that accompanied the Convention.

Further she said regions need to adopt policy instruments relevant and referred to the Council of Europe (CoE) adoption in 2019 of a Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism that offers the first internationally agreed definition of sexism, and urged other regions and international bodies to follow suit. She recommended that an online platform on violence against women journalists by news media should be created.

Vega urged for more efforts to build bridges between journalists and journalism students on the topic, noting a recent GAMAG exercise to map internationally available resources on the topic at universities. She suggested a call in the VAWJ Report for the education sector to become more involved on the topic and for governments to be required to tackle impunity, with the report recommending ways to “put international eyes on this dimension of national action or inaction.”

She said efforts are needed to combat gender stereotypes, since these underpin the discrimination, harassment, abuse and harassment and that the VAWJ Report should call for dignity in the workplace for women journalists.

Jenni Monet, Independent Journalist and Tribal Citizen of Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico

Monet observed that many aspects of her experience match that of many women journalists when it comes to spotlighting intimidation, threats or assault they face in the industry, but as an indigenous female professional there are aspects of her experience that make it somewhat unique.

Monet remarked that in the US “the cost of reporting while female” is largely an invisible problem. She suggested a key factor behind this is that the media is

mostly a male cohort who dominate positions of power in the industry, and the victim shaming and blaming that occurs whenever women raise concern about gender-based hostility.

Monet said in April 2019 she traveled to Santa Fe as part of a speaking tour, where she was illegally arrested and detained for 48 hours. In the process she began to suffer financially, professionally and emotionally. To protect her mental health, she went into hiding.

Monet said that her arrest came after a week of abuse from three men in positions of power within her industry involving destructive assaults on her character and in published media accounts, alongside outright bullying. At the time she could only turn to a few trusted friends, since she knew of no early warning or rapid response system in place such as a hotline or emergency contact point.

She noted that the night that she was arrested, she was the one who actually called the police for help. When they finally arrived, within the first minute the police profiled her as being drunk and they handcuffed her. A week later the local CBS affiliate sent a crew to her public speaking event, supposedly to cover the subject of her remarks, namely “troublesome media reporting on indigenous affairs.” Monet characterized the report instead as “a hit job,” cherry picking the most unflattering moment of her arrest when she verbally lashed out at Deputies for putting her in handcuffs. She said, the resulting news video populated the internet and has replaced her otherwise positive internet presence. She said, that the stories about her that now dominate the internet do not report that the judge had ruled that her arrest was illegal and unconstitutional, that her case was dismissed. Instead she said she is now labelled with the most caustic stereotype of native-Americans -- that she is a “drunk, angry Indian”.

Monet also mentioned her six months chronicling the indigenous protests at Standing Rock regarding the pipeline, where she was trampled on by riot police, hit with rubber bullets, arrested while being the only credentialed journalist in the field, and later aggressively cyber-harassed by pipeline proponents and conservative-leaning groups.

Monet said her Santa Fe arrest has led her to call into question journalism itself and involvement by an indigenous female journalist. She noted that she did not know of a mechanism in place to help a female journalist such as herself, but suggested one is highly overdue. Monet said after nearly a year without work in her profession

and depleted savings, she is now faced with leaving her chosen profession after 21 years due to doxxing, digital defamation and abuse of power relations and other unethical and discriminatory practices of journalists themselves.

SR Šimonović thanked Monet for sharing her story. She suggested sending further information involving Monet's case and considering the use of the communication procedure under the SR VAWs mandate.

Discussion

Chi Yvonne Leina, Executive Director, Women Relief Services, also Board Member of World Pulse, highlighted the need for women journalists to be empowered to name and shame the perpetrators of violence against women journalists. She shared stories about the discrimination that she faced working in a Cameroonian newsroom, including an instance when her boss asked her to take off her clothes to show him the proof that she had undergone a surgery, and the experience of being asked to take time off after giving birth, being told that she has gained weight and that the skin issues caused by her pregnancy were unaesthetic for the public. She explained that the objectification of women journalists is widespread in the Cameroonian culture and that the common stereotype is that women journalists are rebels. They are denied the space to report on issues that are culturally and politically sensitive such as atrocities committed on widows, breast ironing or female genital mutilation, and are pushed instead to report on issues like beauty, she added.

Nupur Basu, Independent journalist and documentary filmmaker from India, noted that the phenomenon of hunting and killing of women journalists has become widespread over the past three or four years, and gave the example of women journalists who were killed in India, Panama, Malta, and Ireland. She stressed that the red line of not harming women journalists has been crossed. She also mentioned the widespread global misogyny against women journalists and the online harassment that they continue to face. She said that women journalists in India are pushing boundaries on reporting on corruption much further than male journalists do, and consequently face severe consequences such as defamation lawsuits, job loss, and sometimes even death.

Lisa Williams-Lahari, digital media journalist, Cook Islands, expressed her regret that no progress has been made on Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing women and media, since its adoption in 1995, when she participated in the drafting of the section as part of the Pacific Women and Media group. Given the fact that 25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action the key areas of challenge remain, she underscored the need for the activist networks of women journalists to find a way to disrupt the status quo, adding that resources and support are still parts that necessitate strengthening to be able to move forward with the implementation of the Platform.

Williams-Lahari mentioned that the condition and situation of women in media in the Pacific mirrors their situation in the Pacific society, where violence against women is rampant. Noting the power of networking, including through UNESCO projects and networks, she underscored the importance of journalist trade unions. In addition to trade unions, Williams-Lahari emphasized the necessity to address cultural stereotypes even in countries where there are strong trade unions and laws. She gave the example of New Zealand, where indigenous media are still stereotyping in a way that marginalizes indigenous women journalists. She also warned against stereotyped language rooted in countries' colonial history, and illustrated through the example of the mindset around sorcery in Papua New Guinea, where even though sorcery has been recently decriminalized, media reports of murders of those suspected of sorcery do not stir any reaction as culturally sorcery is still considered a crime.

Summary

Summarizing the discussion, Dharmaraj welcomed the participants' and panelists' first-person accounts of GBV and harassment, adding that discussions have focused on the structural discrimination that leads to the exclusion, discrimination, and violence against women journalists, their consequences, and recommendations to address them. She stressed the need to uphold and implement, rather than revisit, the standards embodied in Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing women and media, to consider harassment and violence against women journalists as a human rights issue, and to utilize the tools offered by ILO Convention 190.

PANEL 2: MEDIA EXPERTS

Topic: Specific dangers faced by women journalists and media workers.

Violet Gonda, President, International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT); Radio Journalist, Zimbabwe/UK

Gonda said, IAWRT is a unique global network of women working on the ground in many countries. She noted its work on journalists' safety, including a handbook, training and projects. She observed that online abuse is greater against women in media, although both sexes are subjected to it, but attacks on women are more pronounced. She noted that editors assume little responsibility for countering such abuse. Gonda said IAWRT can play a larger role in fighting for the safety of women journalists both online and offline.

Gonda told of her personal story as a Zimbabwean journalist. In 2002 due to her reporting with BBC's World Service Radio Africa, she was banned from returning to Zimbabwe, attacked by the regime and denied a passport. When she was finally allowed to return in 2018, she said she was constantly harassed, called a rebel and accused of sleeping with opposition leaders and spreading "fake" news. She was also briefly detained, and has been a victim of extreme cyberbullying by online trolls, with some saying she deserved the same treatment given to Jamal Khashoggi, The Washington Post columnist murdered in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. Gonda related that when she came under attack, she withdrew from social media platforms. "It's unfair, but a reality many of us face." She said many women journalists suffer in silence and practice self-censorship.

Gonda suggested that the problem with international recommendations, however groundbreaking they may be, is that they often remain on paper and are not implemented. She said IAWRT is planning on launching a project on online harassment against women in media, which in its first phase will explore the types of support women journalists need followed by workshops on those needs.

She said IAWRT has a long list of recommendations for the VAWJ Report. She suggested exploring collaborative opportunities with the SR and CWGL on meaningful support to women journalists dealing with threats and violence, particularly regarding the issue of state-supported violence.

Marija Šajkaš, Consultant, Reporters without Borders (RSF)

Šajkaš explained that RSF is a nonprofit organization comprising a network of correspondents in 130 countries and bureaux in ten cities that seeks to defend freedom of expression and information through defense of journalists. She said she would be outlining the findings of an RSF report for 2019 just prepared by her colleagues which will be submitted to the SR VAW.

On the report she highlighted three areas which are types of violations, working conditions in the newsrooms and forbidden subjects.

On types of violations, she highlighted:

- Deaths related to their work of four women journalists, in Pakistan, Somalia, Northern Ireland and Mexico.
- Imprisonment and arbitrary detention of 31 women journalists, mostly in China and Iran.
- Kidnappings and disappearances in detention and seeing an uptick in recent years of sexual violence, assault and rape which include a gang rape in Toulouse, France in January 2020.
- Online attacks and harassment, including doxxing, revenge porn and death threats.
- She noted that in many of these reported cases, the accounts of the women journalists are questioned or dismissed as false by authorities, and some are told that they are simply self-promoting.

On working conditions in newsrooms she said, journalism is perceived in many parts of the world as a “provocative” occupation for women, and incompatible with marriage or family values. Women journalists often receive unwanted advances and harassment inside newsrooms, a phenomenon still occurring even in “advanced democracies” such as France, where a private Facebook group used by prominent journalists to target their female colleagues was recently discovered.

On forbidden subjects she said that targeting women journalists mirrors larger patterns of sexism and GBV, and seeking not only to punish them for voicing critical or dissenting opinions, but also for speaking out as women.

SR Šimonović asked if RSF would follow-up on some of the reports identified to discuss whether impunity was involved. Šajkaš responded RSF would be happy to answer all follow-up questions by the SR VAW.

Kerry Paterson, Deputy Director of Advocacy, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Paterson explained that CPJ defends the rights of journalists to report news without fear of reprisal. She said CPJ does not systematically track gender-based attacks and thus does not have comprehensive data on violence or sexual harassment against women journalists. However she said a search of its databank on attacks against journalists using certain keywords found that they had reports of at least 96 women journalists killed in the line of duty, at least 68 of which were specifically targeted for murder (as opposed to simply being caught in cross-fire).

She said that what has become apparent from this research is that the threat model for women journalists differs from their male counterparts. Women are consistently under-represented in figures on journalists killed or jailed, usually between 7-13%, not because their work is inherently safer, but rather because they face different types of threats.

She noted that CPJ has conducted several studies of gender-based risks, attacks and challenges involving women journalists, citing a few examples such as its 2011 report, “The Silencing Crime: Sexual Violence and Journalists.”¹³ In that report, CPJ found that victims remained silent not just because of social stigma, but also due to fears of negative repercussions on their career.

She mentioned that in 2016, CPJ dedicated its annual report to the topic of gender and media freedom, with some chapters on violence and harassment, the problems of online harassment, and internet trolling and doxxing. She said CPJ also looked at responses to the onslaught of digital abuse, considering training, reporting mechanisms and documentation processes for online harassment, and the pros and cons of direct response to people harassing journalists.

She highlighted a September 2019 CPJ report and collection of safety resources on threats faced by women journalists. The report featured a survey of women journalists in the US and Canada, where 85% of respondents believed that journalism had become less safe in the last five years, and more than 70% reported they had received threats to their safety while on the job or in the course of their work. She noted that across the board, online harassment was identified as the biggest issue, and not unique to any single type of journalism. The respondents spoke a great deal about the psychological toll these threats and abuse could take. The report highlighted broadcast journalists, who often have to endure stalking or stalking threats.

She reported that CPJ has seen in recent years a notable uptick in journalists reaching out for trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) support, and a disproportionate percentage of these involving women journalists.

¹³ Wolfe, Lauren. “The silencing crime: Sexual violence and journalists.” *Committee to Protect Journalists*, June 7, 2011. <https://cpj.org/reports/2011/06/silencing-crime-sexual-violence-journalists/>

Nadine Hoffman, Deputy Director, International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)

Hoffman explained that IWMF conducts comprehensive safety training, offers grants, and offers emergency support tailored for women journalists and photographers in crisis.

She suggested that the starting point for discussion is that representation matters, noting that media must represent the society that they serve, with gender equity and a diversity of voices in order to see true press freedom. However, men continuing to dominate the top positions across-the-board.

Hoffman said the press community is seeing threat levels rise around the world regardless of gender, but women journalists are experiencing additional layers of threats that their male counterparts are not. Often women journalists are not prepared for it, either they do not have access to training, have not received any guidance from their newsroom, or they are working independently and do not have access to the resources to handle the myriad forms of violence they are likely to encounter in the field, online or even inside their own newsrooms.

Hoffman noted a 2018 report by IWMF on attacks and harassment on women journalists involving some 600 journalists based primarily the US. Nearly two-thirds of the women journalists surveyed said that they had been subjected to online harassment and threats, with more than one in ten reporting that it was happening often or daily. One-third reported considering leaving the profession, with the rate even higher among younger journalists.

She reported that IWMF is receiving increased requests for support, specifically related to online harassment. She said IWMF sees a trend toward increasing levels of threats and violence across-the-board and around the world. A significant number of journalists do not tell their supervisor about harassment, thinking that nothing will be done and reporting it might adversely impact their careers. Women journalists covering politics, reproductive rights and other "hot button topics" are often the targets of misogynistic attacks, particularly if they are women of color.

She concluded with a few key takeaway messages as follows:

- Newsrooms need to create a culture of safety, where Reporters feel comfortable reporting the attacks that they face.

- Managers need to take online threats as seriously as those that occur offline.
- Media organizations need to adopt holistic safety policies that address the full spectrum of threats, and to create peer support networks so Reporters have someone to turn to when attacks happen.
- The press freedom community needs to recognize that gender-based threats directed at women journalists are threats to press freedom as a whole and are not "a women's issue" to be minimized.
- The journalistic community needs to build a strong ecosystem of support. A lot of resources already exist, and we need to work to make them more accessible to women journalists, not continue to reinvent the wheel.
- More resources are needed to support emergency assistance.
 - Instead of more research on the threats, what is now needed are practical solutions and interventions.

Discussion

Abeer Saady, Vice-Chair, IAWRT, shared her experience with the first safety training she had in 2000, noting that it was very expensive and very rare. She emphasized the need to provide safety training to all journalists, irrespective of gender, and for localizing and contextualizing trainings in order for them to be effective. She presented a safety notebook that IAWRT had developed with UN-ESCO and called for safety trainings for local journalists, especially those in conflict zones.

Albana Shala, Program Coordinator, Free Press Unlimited, noted that while there is recognition that Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing women and media is important and should serve as the roadmap for advancing the cause of the protection of women journalists, civil society did not have the chance to discuss it for Beijing+25. Since 1995 when the Platform was adopted, she said, there has been minimal engagement on gender issues from most media companies. While she saluted the existence of GAMAG, she observed that an analysis of the composition of the alliance reveals that, even though GAMAG has 500 organizations and individuals as members, the news media are not part of it, which represents a real problem. She stressed that ILO Convention 190 needs to be ratified by all governments

and then applied in all countries in a way that forces the media to implement its provisions. She added that, 25 years after Beijing, it is time to call for a new gender deal on gender mainstreaming in media and digital communication.

Elana Newman, Research Director, Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, mentioned that, while society and the media industry have recognized the need for training on addressing the risks that women journalists face, there has not been enough training for women journalists in danger zones, including the danger zones close to home. She noted that the fact that different countries and disciplines use different terms to describe the same issues represents one of the challenges of legal classification of violence against women journalists. She highlighted that gender and sexual violence against women journalists have proven psychological and physiological impacts, and that the psychological toll that falls on women journalists has a negative effect on newsroom diversity. She added that it is not only the event itself, but also the cultural context, which has a strong negative impact on the psychological effects of trauma, the most dangerous environments being the ones where there is impunity for the perpetrators.

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised issues related to, *inter alia*: the direct link between media literacy and support for women journalists; the framing of killing of women journalists in a way that excuses the lack of proper investigations, such as arguing that the killings had personal reasons; the disproportion between the abuses that journalists face in the Global South compared to the Global North; and the need to keep the Beijing Platform of Action as the main instrument for addressing violence against women in media.

They also highlighted the need for:

- Supporting the rights of women to work.
- Strengthening the responsibility of social media platforms; ensuring that governments have gender-sensitive reports.
- Public awareness campaigns on violence against women journalists.
- Focusing not only on strong legislative measures but also on their implementation and addressing the cause of women journalists who are in prisons.

- Addressing state-sponsored violence against women in media.
- A taskforce to facilitate the implementation and follow up on the Beijing Platform for Action, especially with regards to Section J addressing women and media and using existing media funds for advancing gender issues.

Responding to questions and comments, SR Šimonović noted that while in the past all her predecessors have provided legislative and policy recommendations for the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, what is needed now is a focus on implementation and assessment of the implementation.

SR Šimonović explained that her mandate is to establish a platform for strengthening cooperation between international and regional independent mechanisms on violence and discrimination against women. She underscored the necessity to:

- Focus on the integrated and coherent implementation of all existing international norms and mechanisms.
- Focus the Beijing Platform for Action's follow-up on implementation strategies.
- Shift the focus of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to implementation.

Noting the need to utilize existing mechanisms that are currently underutilized, SR Šimonović expressed the hope that the report will be useful in supporting trainings on Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing women and media by centralizing existing knowledge, also inviting feedback on the publication. She added that women journalists should be well positioned to take advantage of these mechanisms as they have a high-level of literacy, including systemic and legal literacy. SR Šimonović further suggested the use of the template of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to report dangers faced by women journalists who are in prison.

Providing concluding remarks for the panel, Dharmaraj said the discussion showed that violence against women in the media is widespread, becoming increasingly sexualized, the result of which is an isolation of women journalists, for some of them leading even to renouncing the journalistic career.

PANEL 3: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Topic: Application of the legal framework at the international and regional level on the protection of women journalists

Marceline Naudi, President, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), Council of Europe (CoE)

Naudi explained that GREVIO is the Council of Europe's monitoring body for the 2011 Istanbul Convention¹⁴ on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and while the Convention does not specifically mention women journalists, journalism is not exempt from its concepts.

She observed that even though more women are studying and practicing journalism, it remains a male-dominated field. Females remain under-represented in media management positions, and their careers tend to be shorter than their male counterparts. Naudi suggested that violence against women journalists reflects violence against women generally in society, which remains prevalent in Europe.

She cited a 2014 online survey conducted by the IWMF and the International News Safety Institute, which found that two-thirds of the 977 female respondents experienced some form of intimidation, threats or abuse in relation to their work as women journalists. Most of the interference with their work took place at the workplace, either by employers or coworkers. Many incidents go unreported, and thus under-reporting is a problem.

Naudi noted Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4¹⁵ adopted by the CoE Committee of Ministers on the protection of journalism and safety of journalist and other media actors, which promotes actions to prevent violence against journalists, including recommendations on protecting women journalists. Following adoption of the Recommendation, the CoE commissioned a study on unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship among European journalists, led by Professor Marilyn Clark of the University of Malta. The study, covering 940 journalists in 47 countries, 46% of them female, found high levels of interference. The report noted some statistically significant differences between men and women journalists: the males might be threatened with force or physical assault, whereas women tend to get sexually-oriented threats.

Naudi observed that this matches findings by Professor Karen Ross of Newcastle University, who says male journalists and opinion writers tend to get called stupid idiots, while the females get rape threats. She noted that women journalists are more likely to experience sexual harassment or violence, and lots of online comments about their physical attributes and personal behavior. This leads many women journalists to self-censor and the voice of women journalists goes unheard.

Naudi reported that an in-depth follow-up qualitative study to the Clark report is being done which should become available in May. She explained the report will be based on interviews with 20 European journalists, seven of them female, to better understand personal experiences with journalism interference and the gender dimension. She expressed the hope the report will identify a number of remedies that countries can adopt.

¹⁴ Council of Europe. "Details of Treaty No. 210." <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210>

¹⁵ Council of Europe. "Committee of Ministers: selection and most recent Adopted Texts." April 13, 2016. https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/committee-of-ministers-adopted-texts/-/asset_publisher/aDXmrol0vvsU/content/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

Tatiana Rein Venegas, President, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention

Rein said the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) was the first in the world to recognize violence against women. She explained the Convention establishes a set of rights to guarantee women a life free of violence, and a system of State obligations to respect and guarantee those rights and act with due diligence to protect women from any form of GBV. She said the relevant Convention articles for the issue of violence against women journalists are 2, 6, 7 and 8.

Rein noted that the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported seven homicides of women communicators and media workers in the Americas during 2012-2018 for reasons related to their work. She also noted a global study conducted by the International Women's Media Foundation which found 63% of the 597 women surveyed reported they had been threatened or harassed online, 58% had been threatened or harassed in person, and 26% were victims of physical attacks. She pointed out the report also recognizes that women journalists, women human rights defenders and women politicians are doubly attacked for exercising freedom of expression and because of their gender.

She noted that violence against women journalists not only violates provisions of the Convention but also constitute a violation of the right to freedom of expression, and this should be addressed under the Inter-American system of human rights.

Rein said that, in addition to regulatory steps to implement the Convention, the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention (MESECVI) has recommended that states promote positive measures such as sensitivity training, self-regulation by the media, and oversight of the media by independent organizations that include citizen participation. It also recommended protective measures to guarantee the obligation of due diligence in cases of gender-based violence that are available without the need to initiate criminal proceedings, since some women do not report out of fear of retaliation. Protection mechanisms should include restraining orders, and rehabilitation measures for victims. The patriarchal culture should be addressed, since without doing so critical actors, such as enforcement officials, will not act to protect women's

human rights and victims are socialized to accept, rather than reject, violence as a part of the fabric of their daily lives.

Rein cited the Declaration of Pachuca "Strengthening efforts to prevent violence against women," adopted by the MESECVI calling for measures such as eliminating gender stereotypes and sexist and discriminatory images and messages in communications media and promoting gender training in the curricula at all levels of journalism, advertising, and communication. She suggested that steps adopted to stop violence against women in politics can serve as a useful model to address violence against women journalists. She also noted that the model law for implementation of the Convention calls for states to take the necessary measures to ensure that the media adopt by mutual agreement appropriate guidelines that respect the rights of women, compile statistics, and adopt training and awareness measures.

Melissa Upreti, Expert Member, UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls (UN DAWG)

Upreti highlighted aspects of her work as a member of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls (UN DAWG) which was established by the Human Rights Council in 2010 to identify, examine and monitor laws, policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls and to engage in constructive dialogue with Member States to address them.

She explained that the UN Working Group was created by the Human Rights Council in 2010 with a mandate to identify, promote and exchange views, in consultation with States and other actors, on good practices related to the elimination of laws that discriminate against women, and to dialogue on laws that have a discriminatory impact where women are concerned. She referred to the thematic reports produced by the Working Group in areas such as political and public life with a focus on political transitions, economic and social life with a focus on economic crisis, family and cultural life, health and safety as well as deprivation of liberty.

She said the Working Group has created a framework for examining country practices, including 20 country visits and responses to over 300 communications, many of the latter involving women's rights defenders. Upreti said the Working Group had not yet focused on women journalists, and commended the SR VAW for decided to produce a report on the subject.

On factors that increase the likelihood of violence and harassment in the world of work for women journalists she highlighted the following:

- Sex- and gender-based discrimination rooted in unequal power relations that shapes all systems, norms and practice. No country has completely eliminated laws that discriminate against women.
- The systematic disadvantage that women and girls face in all spheres of their lives – political economic, social and cultural – are interrelated and increase their vulnerability to violence.
- Norms – whether social, cultural or legal - often embody discriminatory sex- and gender-based stereotypes and end up supporting, and even legitimizing, different forms of violence and harassment.
- The convergence of multiple forms of discrimination based on personal identities and circumstances further increase the risks.
- Whether hidden from the public eye or overt, threats and more public displays of violence are often sexual in nature and premised on notions of the inferiority of a particular sex, and executed with the intention of subordinating the other, which is inherently discriminatory.

Upreti also noted character assassination, a threat that can be devastating. She referred to a case addressed by the UN WG DAWG involving a woman journalist who had written on diversity themes and was referred to on an internet site as a “covert Islamist,” a characterization which Upreti said clearly has a discriminatory racial element and was used with the intent of causing harm.

She said many legal systems tend not to respond to threats, even though they constitute a clear early warning sign of actual violence.

On good practices she highlighted the following:

- The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights’ decision on the failure of States in protecting women during acts of political protest, including in a case concerning violence against women journalists.

- Honduras’ Act on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Officials (2015).
- The adoption by countries of the ILO Convention 190 to address violence and harassment in the world of work which broadly defines workers and the world of work, and the need to encourage Member States to use these new standards as a basis for the development of national legal frameworks that will apply to journalists under a variety of work arrangements as well as in different work-related settings and spaces.

Open Discussions

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed issues related to, inter alia: the need to address the lack of awareness of existing mechanisms, especially with regards to women journalists from developing countries and young journalists; the necessity for women attending the annual meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women to share the information they receive with the women back home; and the need to stop “preaching to the choir and to the converted” and instead expand the discussion and outreach to the unconverted, especially male editors.

Summarizing the session, Dharmaraj noted that the discussion emphasized the link between gender-based discrimination and harassment and violence against women in the media, as well as the need to challenge and change the patriarchal norms that underpin systemic and cultural discrimination.

Closing Remarks

Delivering closing remarks, the SR Šimonović said she will need time to reflect on the issues discussed at the meeting. She mentioned several resources that could assist partners and different stakeholders in supporting the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, including a booklet available on the SR VAWs website. She observed that the discussions have revealed that the siloed approach to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action persists, and that the messages aiming to address violence against women journalists need to be spread in a more effective and impactful ways as they are not currently well heard and widespread.

SR Šimonović invited participants to reflect on how each of them can use their power and knowledge better, as well as to provide her with recommendations.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY MEDIA BODIES AND INSTITUTES ON THE SAFETY OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Prior to the EGM and SR VAWs consideration of the issue of violence against women journalists, many organizations and entities have already invested time and resources into producing reports and studies related to aspects of violence against women journalists.

This section highlights some of these existing reports and studies as it is relevant to the VAWJ Report.

International media organizations, such as the International Women in Media Foundation (IWMF), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Reporters without Borders (RSF), and the International Press Institute (IPI), have conducted research on threats to journalists as a whole, with portions offering a specific focus on women journalists, or reports solely focused on women journalists.

IPI, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, issued in March 2019 a report “Legal Responses to Online Harassment and Abuse of Journalists: Perspectives from Finland, France and Ireland¹⁶,” focused on women journalists.

IWMF issued in 2014 a report titled “Violence and Harassment against Women in the News Media: A Global Picture.”¹⁷ In 2018 it co-authored with Trollbusters an update on the 2014 report titled “Attacks and Harassment: The Impact on Women journalists and Their Reporting,”¹⁸ based on the findings of a global survey on violence, attacks and online abuse against women journalists and media workers.

CPJ produced a report in 2011, “The Silencing Crime: Sexual Violence and Journalists,”¹⁹ featuring interviews with more than four dozen journalists who have undergone varying degrees of sexual violence—from rape by multiple attackers to aggressive groping—either in retaliation for their work or during the course of their reporting. In 2016 CPJ dedicated its annual report to the topic of gender and media freedom, with some chapters on harassment and violence, the problems of online harassment, and internet trolling and doxxing. In September 2019 CPJ issued a report on threats faced by women journalists in the US and Canada.

The Report: “Women’s rights: Forbidden subject,”²⁰ that RSF published in March 2018 highlighted the fact that women journalists are leading targets of trolls.

The Pakistani nonprofit Media Matters for Democracy issued in 2018 the report “Gendering Self-Censorship: Women Journalists and the Double Bind.”²¹

¹⁶ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. “Legal Responses to Online Harassment and Abuse of Journalists: Perspectives from Finland, France and Ireland.” March 7, 2019. <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/413552>

¹⁷ Barton, A., Storm, H. “Violence and Harassment against Women in the news Media: A Global Picture.” *International Women’s Media Foundation*, 2014. <https://www.iwmf.org/resources/violence-and-harassment-against-women-in-the-news-media-a-global-picture/>

¹⁸ Ferrier, Michelle. “Attacks and Harassment: The Impact on Female Journalists and Their Reporting.” *International Women’s Media Foundation*, 2018. <https://www.iwmf.org/attacks-and-harassment/>

¹⁹ Wolfe, Lauren. “The silencing crime: Sexual violence and journalists.” *Committee to Protect Journalists*, June 7, 2011. <https://cpj.org/reports/2011/06/silencing-crime-sexual-violence-journalists/>

²⁰ Reporters Without Borders. “Women’s Rights: Forbidden Subject.” March 1, 2018. https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/womens_rights-forbidden_subject.pdf

²¹ Lodhi, Annam. “Women Journalists and the Double Bind: Choosing silence over being silenced.” *Media Matters for Democracy*. July, 2018. <https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/women-journalists-and-double-bind-choosing-silence-over-being-silenced>

SUMMARY OF JOURNALISM INITIATIVE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (JIG) RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE VAWJ REPORT

Drawing from a series of JiG consultations with 110 women journalists from 38 countries, these recommendations were developed based on the issues they raised, challenges they shared and their hopes for protection and safety to practice journalism without fear of repercussions on them.

The recommendations are listed below.

For States:

- Adopt and implement legislation prohibiting and criminalizing violence against women journalists or incorporate adequate provisions into existing laws on eliminating violence against women journalists, consistent with international and regional human rights standards that are comprehensive enough to cover new forms of violence, including online or ICT-facilitated violence against women journalists.
- Bring their laws, policies, and practices fully into compliance with their obligations and commitments under international human rights law.
- Respect the professional independence and rights of women journalists involved in situations of armed conflict.
- Ensure through relevant State policies the safety of women journalists during periods of elections and while covering events in which persons are exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.
- Implement more effectively the applicable legal framework for the protection of women journalists and media workers in order to combat pervasive impunity.
- Create special investigative units or independent commissions to address issues related to women journalists, in particular on GBV and in the pursuit of a story.
- Ratify ILO Convention 190 and define “workplace” for a woman journalist to recognize that it extends beyond a traditional workplace and that violence and harassment come in many forms for a woman journalist.
- Implement ILO Convention 190 in such a way to provide measures to mitigate the impact of domestic violence in the world of work as it relates to women journalists, such as leave for victims, flexible work arrangements, and temporary protection against dismissal for victims.
- Establish programs to address factors increasing the likelihood of violence and harassment at work for women journalists, including discrimination, abuse of power relations, and gender, cultural and social norms that support violence and harassment.
- Take appropriate preventive operational measures, such as providing police protection or voluntary evacuation to a safe place.
- Establish early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms such as hotlines or 24-hour emergency contact points operated by media organizations or civil society.
- Partner with civil society and the media to promote best practices for the protection of journalists and other media actors and for combatting impunity.

- Train and educate law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judiciary on the safety of women journalists, including the development of protocols and training programs for all State authorities responsible for fulfilling State obligations concerning the protection of women journalists.
- Establish information gathering mechanisms such as databases to permit the gathering of verified information about threats and attacks against women journalists.
- Frame legal and policy measures to eradicate online harassment of women journalists and GBV against women journalists within the broader human rights framework.
- Recognize doxxing as a serious form of violence against women journalists in relevant legal and policy measures.

JiG recommends that UN Agencies should:

- Create a Special Representative for the Safety of Journalists.
- Coordinate a UN-wide approach for further cooperation in promoting awareness of and implementing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
- Establish an information gathering mechanism permitting the collection and swift dissemination of information about threats and attacks against women journalists among law enforcement agencies.
- Coordinate and cooperate in technical assistance and capacity building regarding the safety of women journalists and encourage national, sub-regional, regional and international human rights bodies and mechanisms to address the relevant aspects of the safety of women journalists in their work.

JiG recommends international news media organizations to:

- Establish mechanisms in partnership with States and UN agencies to protect the rights of women journalists in their work.
- Facilitate activities that emphasize the role media organizations can play in providing adequate safety, risk awareness, digital security and self-protection training and guidance, together with protective equipment and insurance, where necessary.
- Provide specific training for women journalists on protection and security both online and offline, and the legal resources for them in the case of a violation.
- Facilitate implementation of policies on gender equality, the elimination of sexual harassment in media organizations, as well as clear and safe mechanisms to report incidents.
- Intervene when national journalists and their representatives cannot, in advocacy of the safety of women journalists, holding States accountable for any violations.
- Provide comprehensive training for women journalists in hostile environments.

JiG recommends that newsrooms should:

- Develop a code of ethics to prevent discrimination and harassment of women journalists in the newsroom.
- Train women journalists on avenues for recourses, understanding and identifying discrimination and GBV in the workplace.
- Establish an accountability mechanism to hold private sector newsrooms accountable for labor rights violations against women journalists.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Sheila Dallas-Katzman	Chief, UN Representative and USA Chapter Chair, IAWRT-USA
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Tatiana Rein	President, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention. The Guardian
Violet Gonda	President, IARWT

Expert Group Meeting (EGM)
Violence against women journalists (VAWJ)
13 March 2020 Meeting from 8 a.m. 3p.m.

CWGL ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/641869356>

Time	Item	Speaker
8:00	Welcoming Remarks Framing the day	Krishanti Dharmaraj Executive Director Women's Global Leadership
8:15	Opening Remarks	H.E Dubravka Šimonovic (Croatia) Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences United Nations
8:30	Panel 1: Women Journalists Topics: - Manifestations of gender based violence against women journalists - Situation of women journalists who face multiple and intersecting forms of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson, Chief Editor, Journalism Initiative on Gender-Based Violence, CWGL Council Member, Samoa Media Council, Samoa • Sheila Dallas-Katzman, Chief, UN Representative and USA Chapter Chair, IAWRT-USA • Elizabeth Ford, Lead on Women's Rights and Gender Equality Issues, The UK Guardian • Jenni Monet, Independent Journalist and Tribal Citizen of Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico
9:10	Open Discussions	
10:10	Short Break	
10:15	Panel 2: Media Experts Specific dangers faced by women journalists and media workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marija Sajkas Consultant, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) • Kerry Paterson Deputy Director of Advocacy, Committee to Protect Journalists (CP), Committee to Protect Journalists • Aimee Vega Montiel Chair, Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) Researcher at the National Autonomous University, Mexico City, Global Alliance

		on Media and Gender
11:00	Open Discussions	
12:00	Short Break	
12:15PM	<p>Panel 3: UN entities</p> <p>Application of the legal framework at the international and regional level on the protection of journalists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marceline Naudi, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe (GREVIO) • Tatiana Rein, President of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention. • Melissa Upreti, Member, UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls
12:45	Open Discussions	
1:45	Wrap Up and Closing Remarks	<p>H.E Dubravka Šimonovic (Croatia)</p> <p>Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences</p> <p>United Nations</p>
2:30PM	ENDS	



