

On Twitter, **female** journalists receive nearly **3X** as much **abuse** as male journalists.

We must not leave female journalists to deal with this burden alone.

Online attacks meant to silence female voices are an affront to **plurality, freedom of the media and democracy.**



Spotlight on:

ARZU GEYBULLAYEVA
freelance journalist

Baku-born Geybullayeva started receiving death threats in 2014, when her work for Agos, a Turkish Armenian newspaper sparked an extensive online abuse campaign against her. Her first death threat came through Facebook, describing how she should be killed and where she should be buried. The threats that followed varied in content and detail, often including rape and other sexual threats, and all were meant to intimidate, instill fear and silence her voice.

Geybullayeva has reclaimed her power online by documenting and tracking down those responsible for the harassment. Despite continued daily online harassment, she has made a name for herself as a champion for media freedom, speaking openly and loudly against online and physical intimidation of journalists in her native Azerbaijan, throughout the OSCE region and beyond.

What can media organizations do?

-  Respect the needs of individual journalists. Each journalist has her own level of privacy, risk and exposure.
-  Designate a point person who is responsible for collecting reports of online harassment from journalists and engaging other parts of the media organization, such as legal, management and information technology teams.
-  Provide training in supportive and empathetic response and trauma response and effects.
-  Train journalists in where, when and how to report online abuses. Develop various protocols for handling social media accounts in the event of a coordinated attack.
-  Discuss possible strategies with the target of the online abuse and determine how legal and IT teams and colleagues might help.
-  Practice information security techniques throughout the news workflow.
-  Learn how hardware, software, mobile technologies and other workplace platforms leave data and information exposed. Train staff on encryption solutions to workflow.
-  Determine how social media will be used/required for your journalists. Do you have a social media policy? How flexible is it to accommodate different needs of different journalists?

What can policy makers, other journalists and civil society do to help protect female journalists online? Visit www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/safety-female-journalists-online to learn more about the #SOFJO campaign and how you can get involved.

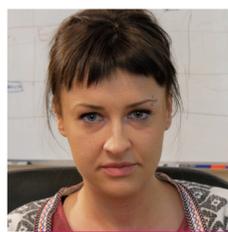


#SOFJO

Online threats **can** and sometimes **do** lead to physical harm and **death.**

We cannot leave female journalists to deal with this burden alone.

Online attacks meant to silence female voices are an affront to **plurality,** freedom of the media and **democracy.**



Spotlight on:

MARIJA VUCIC
journalist, Cenzolovka

In June of 2017, Serbian journalist Marija Vucic published a story about an incident that occurred in the city of Nis. Protesters carrying Serbian flags and chanting anti-Albanian slogans prevented the showing of a film about Serb-Albanian relations in the city of Nis. After the story was published, Vucic became a target. The first death threat came as a message via Facebook. It read that she would be killed with a sword, and then used sexual insults against

her. Initially, she did not feel that the threats would lead to physical attack, but soon she started to worry that someone could follow, harm or kill her. While she continues to do her job as a journalist, the threats have made her question what cost she is willing to pay in order to report the truth to the public. It is likely that events such as this one lead to self-censorship, or female journalists leaving the profession of journalist altogether.

What can policy makers do?

-  Consider providing physical and online support to targets of online abuse.
-  Examine how social media policies may affect private and off-line time of journalists.
-  Enforce existing legal frameworks and find new technological remedies to counter attacks by bots and smart mobs.
-  Develop better education and training of journalists, management and information technology specialists about workflow protections and data management.
-  Provide training to law enforcement to better investigate and prosecute online abuses.
-  Work with technology partners to develop better reporting practices.

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