



*This month the union launched a video and a toolkit on the safety of journalists to help protect members from a range of personal threats and abuses and to keep their sources secret*

**N**ovember 2 is an important date in the media's diary – it is the day we make a stand against the attacks on journalists across the world. This year alone 62 media workers have been killed during the course or because of their work.

The union held an online event to mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, standing with our colleagues around the globe to demand justice for journalists who pay with their lives, the ultimate price for simply doing their jobs. For, shockingly, nine out of 10 killings of journalists go unpunished.

NUJ member Don Philips and his colleague Bruno Pereira were killed in the Amazon. Their campaigning journalism was exposing the destruction of the rainforest and how people who live there are under attack. For this they lost their lives, and their killers remain free. Don's sister has been involved in an exhibition that launched this month – the NUJ is planning to host it in Headland House and will make the material available to branches who may be interested in holding the exhibition in their areas.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish Secretary, spoke about the death of Sunday World journalist Martin O'Hagan who was shot dead by the Loyalist Volunteer Force more than 20 years ago. The union will not rest until an independent inquiry finds out the truth, as the UK government's constant evasions have led us to conclude it is a cover up over collusion by the security services.

When Shireen Abu Akleh, the renowned Al Jazeera reporter, was killed by Israeli forces, we were already backing action against the systematic targeting of Palestinian journalists. Her case has

now been added to several others that are the subject of an NUJ-backed submission to the International Criminal Court.

Jim Boumelha, NEC member and treasurer of the IFJ, told the webinar that the latest figures collated by the Palestine Journalists' Syndicate for the second half of 2022 list 470 violations ranging from arrest, physical assaults and smashing of equipment.

Journalists here in the UK and Ireland face routine and insidious threats that

**IFJ International Federation of Journalists**

**IFJ Safety Fund**

The IFJ's Safety Fund is a lifeline for journalists facing violence, persecution, threats, loss of income and needing medical treatment. Make a donation now: <https://www.ifj.org/safety-fund.html>

can be debilitating, if less deadly. Social media pile-ons, trolling and doxing are widespread and target women and journalists from minority backgrounds disproportionately.

At the event we heard from BBC journalist Monika Plaha. She explained how she is routinely targeted online, often by racist comments. After being involved in a Panorama programme exposé about revenge porn, she received a flood of personal abuse, including death threats.

That's why Monika agreed to take part in an NUJ video where members discuss the threats they have received, to make



the public and policy makers aware of the attacks on them and the effect they have on the freedom of the press. The video is a deeply moving testimony from a group of professional journalists who are passionate about their jobs but have had enough of the abuse they receive. Find out more on page two.

We also launched a mobile-friendly safety toolkit to help members find advice and information while they are on the move. It covers physical safety, information security, mental health care, health and safety at work and gives advice on how to take action against abuse on social media platforms (see page four).

Every attack brings with it an individual, human cost, but the broader damage to a free media is no less disturbing. We will continue to push back when the police try to use photographers' and videographers' material as short cuts to their investigations. We need to establish trust with the public, so they understand we are impartial news gatherers and not state agents.

We will press for a change of culture where it is totally unacceptable for journalists to be threatened and abused just for doing their job.

In Solidarity

**Michelle Stanistreet**

# 'Our jobs can be scary'

The NUJ's new video interviews journalists who have experienced abuse and threats as part of their work

One journalist explains how he receives death threats and knocks on the door from the police at the dead of night.

He knows the threats are real. A colleague of his, Martin O'Hagan, was shot dead. **Steven Moore** is a reporter on the Belfast-based Sunday World. All the staff on his newspaper were threatened by a dissident loyalist group. In the video he describes how he has to check under his car before the family sets off.

Video-journalist **Jason N Parkinson** has many years of experience covering protests and demonstrations, but he has noticed increasingly that journalists can suddenly find the protestors turning on them. Colleagues of his now think twice about picking up their camera to cover the sort of events which for many years were their bread and butter.

**Lauren Moss** was filming with a BBC crew when a member of the public threw a hot drink at her: "They attacked me without any knowledge of who I am as a person." She notices the level of abuse increases when she reports on minority groups. "This intimidation is sad," she said. "It's important that these voices are heard."

**Rana Rahimpour** works for BBC Persian. She and the rest of her colleagues are subject to a reign of terror from the Iranian authorities - they and their families are routinely subjected to threats, harassment and intimidation. This included Rana's head being superimposed on to a Playboy cover and then disseminated on social media to humiliate her.

**Kate Cronin** is a court reporter. She knows exactly which cases will



Rana Rahimpour

lead to a flood of invective and threats made on Facebook moments after the publish button is pressed on her copy. "You feel as if you are about to walk into an online gladiatorial arena," she says.

BBC news correspondent **Danny Savage** has been a TV reporter for more than a decade, but these days there are jobs where he wants to make sure someone is watching his back while filming.

**Monika Plaha** has had people shouting and heckling her when she has been out filming on the street. Her Instagram account has also been full of abuse, often racist abuse: "People think they can say what they want to on social media - where is

## Action

This video is part of the union's campaign to bring home the message that journalists should not have to put up with abuse for doing their job. Show the video at your branch or chapel meeting and use it in meetings to support the union's work on safety of journalists. You can watch the video and shorts on YouTube and the NUJ website [www.nuj.org.uk/resource/nuj-safety-videos-reveal-impact-of-abuse-targeted-at-journalists.html](http://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/nuj-safety-videos-reveal-impact-of-abuse-targeted-at-journalists.html)



Monika Plaha



Joseph Harker



Kate Cronin



Andy Aitchison

the line? Our jobs can be scary.”

Certain groups of journalists, such those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and women find they are particularly targeted online or when they are broadcasting on the street.

In two short videos the BBC's **Monika Plaha** and The Guardian's **Joseph Harker** discuss the insulting and hurtful remarks and posts they have received. “When you talk about race, you get a massive backlash,” says Joseph. “What are you doing here? Are you a diversity hire?” Monika says: “When it's comments about the colour of your skin it's not nice.” [[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_E3kkuLSBUo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E3kkuLSBUo)]

**Kate Cronin** says: “I've no doubt that me being a woman elicits a higher level of abuse than I see targeted at male court reporters.” **Lauren Moss** describes how men heckle her and jump into shot.

**Steven Moore** says: “It's certainly nastier for women. There's a misogynist side when a woman writes something a man doesn't like.” [[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OHHc5WJN98](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OHHc5WJN98)]

Freelance photographer **Andy Aitchison** tells how he was arrested at his home after sharing photographs of activists demonstrating against conditions at Napier Barracks, where asylum seekers were housed. His mobile phone and camera memory card were seized, and he was held in police custody for more than five hours. Thanks to the NUJ, his equipment was returned, and he received an apology from the Kent police. “You should never have to be being arrested for doing your job,” he says. [[www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGC7DMUL\\_IY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGC7DMUL_IY)]

“A third of respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds experienced racism.”  
**Home Office and DCMS survey 2021**

“More than half of NUJ members abused online said it had affected their mental health.”  
**NUJ members' survey November 2020**

“One out of five NUJ members reported physical assaults or attacks and 27 per cent had been physically threatened.”  
**NUJ members' survey November 2020**

“Four in five journalists have experienced threats and violence at work.”  
**Home Office and DCMS survey 2021**

# SAFETY

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## Safety tips on the go

*The NUJ has launched a mobile-friendly safety toolkit to help members find advice and information while they are on the move*

Investigative journalists are under threat from surveillance. Photographers say they are increasingly becoming the target when they cover protests. And writers are subject to day-to-day attacks by online trolls who often target women and journalists from minority backgrounds disproportionately.

A report in The Sunday Times exposed gangs which hack files to order, with journalists - including the newspaper's investigative editor Jonathan Calvert, Mediapart's Yann Philippin, and the BBC's Chris Mason - being targeted.

The toolkit provides clear, simple information and advice, as well as signposting journalists to other important resources. It offers information to help journalists protect themselves and their sources and technological ways to secure communications. It covers physical safety, information security, mental health care, health and safety at work and gives advice on how to take action against abuse on social media platforms.

Michelle Stanistreet, National Union of Journalists general secretary, said: "With surveys and our own research showing that four

in five journalists have experienced threats and violence at work and more than half of NUJ members suffering online abuse, something needs to be done. That is why we have devised a toolkit offering practical tips to journalists to help protect them while doing their job.

"But what needs to happen is a change of culture where it is totally unacceptable for journalists to be threatened and abused just for doing their job."

## Toolkit

You can find the mini-app toolkit at: <https://www.journalists-safety.tools/> Add it to your Home page by clicking the Share icon then "Add to Home Screen". Or go on to the NUJ's website: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/advice/journalists-safety-toolkit.html> The toolkit will be constantly updated. Branches are encouraged to put the toolkit on their agendas and encourage members to use it.



## Be smart, keep safe

*The NUJ's safety toolkit is part of a suite of resources provided by the union to help journalists navigate hostile attacks and dangerous situations*

**T**he NUJ, with support from the Google News Initiative, has published an online interactive tool to help journalists deal with hostile environments and cyber threats.

Journalism is increasingly hazardous. Reporters die or are injured every year. Media workers' phones and computers are targeted with sophisticated spying software. The Storysmart interactive modules [[www.nuj.org.uk/learn/storysmart.html](http://www.nuj.org.uk/learn/storysmart.html)] divide risk into hostile environments, psychological trauma and well-being, cyber risks and dealing with injury. Designed to work on phones, tablet, and laptops, they are a series of bite-sized modules each taking 10 to 20 minutes. They include advice from hostile environment trainers, cyber-



security experts and experienced journalists.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "Journalism has always been dangerous, but hostile environments now extend to the streets of our own cities and cyber-attacks on the devices in all

of our pockets. Storysmart raises journalists' awareness of the challenges they face and provides tested methods to minimise risk and protect sources."

• *The IFJ provides specialist travel insurance to journalists: <https://ifj.battleface.com/>*

## Protecting your sources

Journalists need to know their communications are safe so they can protect their sources – a sacrosanct tenet of the NUJ's code of conduct. The union has a long history defending the right of journalists to protect sources and established that right in law. It was supporting journalist Bill Goodwin in

the European Court of Human Rights that led to a ruling giving journalists the right to protect their sources. The NUJ successfully supported Chris Mullin, the journalist and former MP, to stop West Midlands Police getting hold of material relating to the 1985-1986 investigation of the Birmingham pub bombings. The

union won its case in support of Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey, arrested in relation to their film *No Stone Unturned*, about the killing of six men in Loughinisland, Northern Ireland in 1994. The NUJ is also lobbying against the extradition of Julian Assange. Find out more on the NUJ website: [www.nuj.org.uk/resource/protection-of-sources.html](http://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/protection-of-sources.html)

## Women's deaths double

In 2021, the percentage of women among all journalists killed almost doubled, rising to 11 per cent from 6 per cent the previous year. This year, so far, data shows that again 11 per cent of killings have been women journalists.

This is one of the trends picked up in the Unesco report *Knowing the Truth is Protecting the Truth*. "This worrying development may be a reflection of women journalists being subject to online gender-based attacks which often spill over into offline violence, putting their safety at risk," it said.

While journalists killed in conflict zones get worldwide publicity, it is local journalists who are the most likely to be killed. Most of the attacks will be outside their newsroom, on the street, in their cars or after being kidnapped. Several, say the report,

were killed in front of their families.

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 38 per cent of killings, followed by Asia and the Pacific with 32 per cent. In 2020-2021, around one fifth of all journalist killings were freelance journalists.

The full report will be published later this month and commemorates the 2022 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists and the ten-year anniversary of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists.

At the NUJ's safety webinar, Jeremy Dear, deputy general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, renewed calls for governments, journalists, and media groups to adopt a UN convention on the safety and independence of journalists and

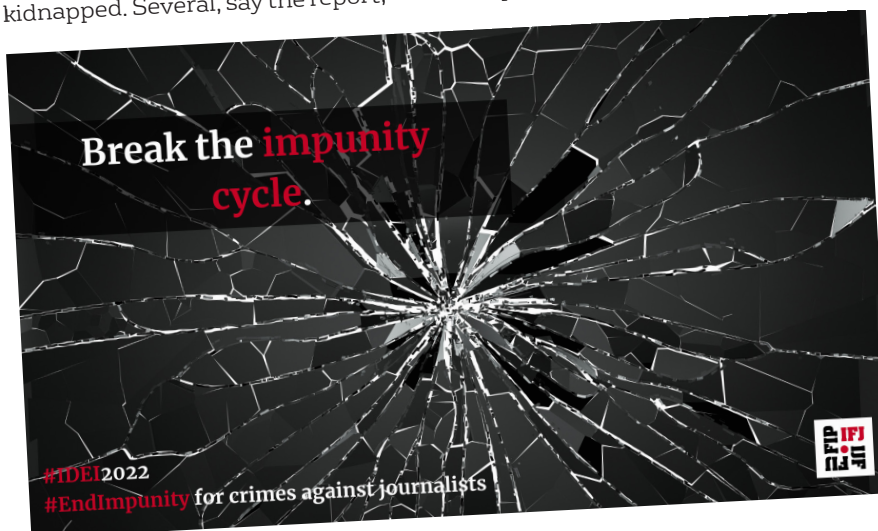
other media professionals.

He said that 10 years after the UN's journalists' safety plan was launched it had failed to deliver the "free and safe environment for journalists and media workers" it promised. The action plan has not been acted on. He said robust measures must be adopted by countries to end impunity, as is a binding, legal treaty to protect freedom of the press.

### Key points

- The number of women killed has more than doubled to 11 per cent in the past two years.
- Freelances make up a fifth of the deaths.
- Most deaths are among local journalists, and they are most likely to be killed on the street or in their cars.
- Journalists are now less safe in non-conflict countries.
- In 2022, UNESCO's global impunity rate was measured at 86 per cent, compared to 89 per cent in 2018.

*Knowing the Truth is Protecting the Truth, 2022 UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity.*



# CAMPAIGN

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## Get Active



*The NUJ is a campaigning union. Here's how you can get involved*

### Save BBC Local Radio

The BBC's plans for local radio will mean most output in the afternoons and evenings will now be shared.

Overall, BBC local staffing in England is expected to reduce by around 48 posts. The NUJ believes this will seriously diminish a service that is highly valued by listeners and underpins local democracy. BBC Local Radio provides a vital service of news, information, and companionship for its communities.

Write to your MP and local politicians. Ask your MP to sign the early day motion 550 **BBC local radio programming**. Invite a BBC local radio rep to your branch meeting. Get local community groups, charities and faith groups involved in the campaign. Find out more: [www.nuj.org.uk/resource/keepbbclocalradiolocal.html](http://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/keepbbclocalradiolocal.html)

### Events

#### For Dom, Bruno & the Amazon

This exhibition organised by academics, journalists, activists and campaigning organisations will honour Dom, Bruno and others

who have lost their lives through campaigning efforts: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/for-dom-bruno-the-amazon.html>

#### Claudia Jones Memorial Lecture:

it's the 20th anniversary of the NUJ's lecture to commemorate one of the founding members of The Notting Hill Carnival and the first black newspaper, The West Indian Gazette and Afro-Asian Caribbean News, on Monday 14 November at 18:30 - 20:30 at the Hallam Conference Centre, 44 Hallam Street, London W1W 6JJ. It is a free event, but you need a ticket to attend. **Find out more and make a booking.**

The NUJ's Ethics council invites you to an online webinar on Monday 21 November at 17.30-18.30pm exploring the **NUJ's Code of Conduct**. Whether setting out rules for journalists on the protection of sources, defending media freedom or avoiding plagiarism, the code outlines the main principles of UK and Irish journalism. Details of the speakers and how to book are **on the NUJ website**.

**Workplace equality in a time**

**of crisis:** the NUJ's equality and health and safety councils invite you to an online event on Saturday 26 November from 10.30-13.30 to discuss how to get better rates for freelancers and offset the cost-of-living crisis with collective union action. Find the list of speakers and more information **on the NUJ website**.

**Freelancers versus the economic crisis:** are you a freelance feeling the pinch and the punch of the economic horrors assailing us all? Then come along to this online event organised by London Freelance on Thursday 24 November: <http://www.londonfreelance.org/fl/2211col.html>

### Appeals

**Ukraine: please make a donation** to the IFJ/EFJ fund created to help support journalists reporting on the war in Ukraine. Funds are used to provide emergency assistance.

**Afghanistan:** Since the Taliban took control Afghan journalists have faced attacks, harassment, censorship, and harsh restrictions on the media. They need your support. Please consider **making a donation** to the IFJ's fund.

# REASONS TO JOIN



## Protection of Sources

The NUJ supports its members in upholding the vital principle of protecting sources – a key tenet of journalism. Over many years the union has provided full backing to countless NUJ members who have faced legal threats and prosecution in attempts to force them to disclose their sources and hand over journalistic material and images. Whatever the nature of the challenge, the NUJ stands foursquare behind its members in defending their right to maintain confidentiality.

**Are you keeping good company?**

Join the NUJ today at

[nuj.org.uk/join](http://nuj.org.uk/join)

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