



Background material to the UN Secretary-General's Report on Safety of Journalists and Impunity

Fojo Media Institute's Special Report focusing on Threats and On-line Hate against Women Journalists and Gender Equality

Summary

This report summarizes experiences from actors within the Swedish media sector specifically related to on-line hate and threats against women journalists in Sweden. It also provides summaries of Fojo Media Institute's activities related to on-line hate and threats against women journalists as well as gender equality in Sweden, globally, Somalia, Russia and Belarus, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and the MENA-region.

Sweden

Analysis of on-line hate and threats directed towards women journalists

Threats, harassments and hate-crimes against journalists and media workers in Sweden have increased during the last years. Women working in media are particularly exposed to threats of sexual violence and intimidation. Although the results of this trend indicate a clear risk for women's voices in media to be silenced due to these threats, a positive trend is that many women journalists have chosen to speak up about the threats and on-line hate they have been exposed to. Their disclosure has resulted in an increased awareness of the need for action as well as a vital public discussion on the topic.

The levels of violence, threats of violence and intimidations directed towards journalists have increasing in Sweden as well as many other countries. Different surveys indicate that between 30 - 40 percent of Swedish journalists have received direct threats, journalists within daily press more often than for instance journalists from web media. Approximately two thirds have been subject to intimidations of different kinds.

In comparison, only 5 percent of the general population report having been subjected to threats and harassments (according to statistics from Brå, national authority <https://www.bra.se/bra/brott-och-statistik/hot-och-trakasserier.html>) Women are more subject to harassment than men: 5,7 percent in comparison with 3,7 percent.

In some surveys, female journalists stand out as being more often victimized than their male counterparts. In other surveys there are no difference in the intensity between threats against male and female journalists. However, all results point to the fact that the nature of the threats and intimidations differ between the genders: female journalists receive sexualized threats, harassment and intimidations much more frequently than their male colleagues. The threats are also cruder (Anette Novak, Fojo Deputy Chair, former Media Commissioner to the Swedish Government). According to the Cision National Journalist Survey 2015, a quarter of all Swedish women journalists were subjected to sexist on-line hate.

A report made by Utgivarna regarding hate and threat towards Swedish media outlets summarizes the results of a survey conducted by TNS Sifo and Utgivarna in 2016. The results display that 75 percent of the media outlets have experienced an increase in threats during the last five years, and that 42 out of 92 media outlets had been threatened during the last 12 months.

Furthermore, the survey indicate that the threats carried out through e-mail have increased in relation to threats carried out face-to-face or through telephone calls in comparison to results from 2015 year's survey. The most severe threats came predominantly from unidentified private individuals and right-wing extremist groups. According to the survey, the most common reasons for severe threats were anger and disappointment related to a certain publication, often with the specific purpose to scare the media worker into silence and passivity (Utgivarna, 2016).

Another survey, conducted by the Swedish Union of Journalists (Journalistförbundet), reveals that harassment, threat and other forms of pressurizing impact Swedish journalists in their reporting as well as in their decision to report or not to report on particular topics. 30 percent of the journalists that participated in the survey answered that threat, harassments or other ways of pressure had an impact on their reporting. As many as 25 percent answered that they had chosen not to report about a particular topic due to the threats (Journalistförbundet, 2014).

Based on a study of hate and threat towards Swedish journalists, the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom) argue for the results to show a clear misogynist discourse when it comes to sexist comments directed towards journalists. One third of the study's women journalists had received sexist comments and 15 percent had been threatened with rape, mutilated genitals and other forms of sexual violence. For men, the same numbers represented only 3 respectively 5 percent of the male journalists (Löfgren Nilson, 2015).

The results from a research conducted by the Swedish Public Service Radio (Sveriges Radio, SR) and Tidningsutgivarna (TU) based on 619 interviews with media workers within SR and TU show that every third journalist had been threatened during the last 12 months (Nydahl, 2016). Cilla Benkö, Executive Director of SR, says in relation to the conducted research that it is today easier than ever to scare and harass journalists to silence, as threats and harassment can be done through an e-mail, a telephone call or a massive hate attack through social media. Benkö also stresses the fact that women journalists often receive threats related to sexual violence, which in contrast affect very few male journalists. At the same time, the research shows that men are behind the absolute majority of threats towards both men and women (Benkö, 2016).

Jeanette Gustafsdotter, Executive Director of TU, adds the number of media workers who are considering quitting their jobs due to threats is considerable higher among women compared to men. Gustafsdotter stresses the risk that women journalists are scared off their democratic mission to pursue their careers as journalists (Gustafsdotter, 2016).

Dr Maria Edström, senior lecturer at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Gothenburg describes the problem of threats and sexualized hate speech towards women journalists in Sweden as at least twofold. The first issue relates to the self-censoring mechanism of threats and hate speech; namely the way in which the purpose of the threats is to silence the voice of women journalists, as well as to scare off other women and keep them from entering the field of journalism. As a result, women journalists avoid writing reports on particular topics which may attract threats and hate-attacks.

The second issue relates to the way in which sexualized hate speech made by (predominantly male) internet trolls are often protected by the Swedish hate crime legislation, which currently lacks a gender component. The lack of gender-inclusiveness in the legislation, as well as absence of knowledge by criminal authorities in how to deal with hate-crimes, facilitates for trolls to deny their actions or to claim them to be ‘jokes’ that never were meant to be realised.

As a result, the actions of the trolls are seldom held to account. In addition, Edström argues that although there are some laws that might apply to these issues – such as unlawful threats and libel – these laws are seldom used. Hence, sexualized hate speech can currently be used as an effective tool for silencing women and aggravate gender equality.

However, although threats and sexualized hate speech may limit women journalists, Edström also lifts forward a positive trend in Sweden; namely the fact that many Swedish women journalist have chosen to speak openly about the threats. As a result, connections

between antifeminism and other undemocratic ideas have been revealed in the process (Edström, 2016).

Activities to counter on-line hate and threats

The Swedish government has acted on the situation and invited in April 2016 media representatives to a roundtable on threats against female journalists.

A special seminar on the threats and hate speech against journalists was carried out in January 2017, hosted by the Swedish Press Ombudsman and the Press Council. The seminar was attended by several high-profile publishers as well as professor Marilyn Clark who has carried out an investigation on the topic on behalf of the Council of Europe and the Swedish National Police Commissioner.

The Swedish Government has also initiated an action plan with the purpose of protecting and safe-guard the democratic discussion against hatred and threats. The result of this work will be presented during 2017. It will contain direct actions aimed at specifically targeted subjects who play a central role in the national public discourse, as well as broad, proactive actions to decrease the vulnerability in the public sphere. Since the Swedish government has declared itself a feminist government, the action plan will most certainly contain activities specifically addressing the vulnerability of women journalists.

The Swedish Government recently received the final report of a national Media Inquiry, prompting them to investigate possible legislative measures, namely to investigate the possibility to consider “threats against journalists” as a more serious crime than common threats. The proposal is based on the fact that several surveys have shown that threatened journalists are silenced – and that these types of crimes therefore should be considered a crime against democracy itself.

Indicting and condemning the perpetrators is also mentioned in the Media Inquiry as important from a signal point of view. The inquiry urges the Swedish State Attorneys to prioritize investigating these crimes – in order to bring the criminals to justice.

On a branch level, the Swedish Journalism Union has developed “Guidelines to Manage Threats against Journalists”, a roadmap used by many newsrooms. This material, however, does not address the specific challenges faced by women journalists.

On a media branch level, major newsroom are collaborating with security companies and offer internal safety training for editorial and other staff. Fojo Media Institute and other actors also offer safety trainings.

Fojo Media Institute's activities related to safety, on-line hate and threats against women journalists

Globally

International Seminar on Hate and Threats against Women Journalists

Fojo Media Institute, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Institute and the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO organized an international seminar on the topic 'Defying Hate and Threats against Women Journalists' at the Swedish Government Office. The seminar was held on December 2, 2016, the 250th Anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of Expression Act, the first of its kind in the world.

During this seminar, roundtable discussions were organized on safety of women journalists. Issues emphasized during the seminar and of which were jointly agreed upon by the seminar participants included:

- the problem surrounding **the difference in the content of threats** directed towards women journalists compared to those directed towards male journalists. Female as well as male participants of the seminar emphasized the way in which threats against women journalists are more directed towards initiating public humiliation and sexual harassment compared to threats received by male journalists, which tends to be milder and less personal in their nature. This fact illuminates an apparent inequity underlying the way in which men and women journalists face unequal opportunities in their work; women journalists are limited and constrained by threats and attacks which convey a different kind of hatred compared to those directed towards male journalists.
- the double-edged nature of **social media** in being both a hinder and an asset for strengthening the protection of journalists. The seminar participants emphasized the fact that there are loopholes in social media which allow threats and harassments to be spread freely without the perpetrators being brought to justice. In this manner, social media currently reflects a grey area in which personal attacks can wreak havoc and in which there is a lack of an efficient protection system aimed towards combatting threats against journalists. At the same time, social media platforms allow for collaboration, networking, and can in many ways function as forums for the support and help for journalists who have been exposed to threat or harassments.

- the issue surrounding authoritarian states **control and censorship** of the media and their targeted work against independent journalists (e.g. Philippines, Mexico, Russia and China). Journalists being followed, imprisoned and threatened to death is a serious threat to democracy. The importance of other states and international organisations in taking a stance against such undemocratic acts was underlined by the seminar participants as effective means for securing the safety of journalists working under the scrutiny of such states.

Lastly, the participants of the seminar expressed important needs that are crucial in order to be able to tackle the above-mentioned issues, namely;

- the need for **legal protection** against threats and harassments in order to safeguard the work of (particularly women) journalists and tackle the issue of impunity. Laws and regulations need to be adjusted to facilitate the work and protection of journalists.
- the need for **structural support** for journalists exposed to risks and threats in their work in order to enable them to withstand external pressures without having to risk their careers
- the need to **inform and educate** civil society in source criticism and how to tackle the issue of disinformation (i.e. fake news)

For more information on the seminar, see <http://fojo.se/journosafe>

"2 December Declaration"

Jointly with the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), Fojo Media Institute elaborated the 2 December Declaration in defence of women journalists being subjected to on-line hate and threats. The Declaration was signed by a great number of newspapers - among others the New York Times - and media practitioners all over the world. For more information, please see <http://2december.wan-ifra.org/> and Annex 1.

Activities proposed

Fojo Media Institute has proposed that the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs finance a pilot for a Swedish based International Centre to Manage On-line Hate and Threats against Women journalists. For a brief Concept Note on the proposed Centre, please see Annex 2.

Somalia

Somalia remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, and is a country with a prevailing culture of impunity. Al-Shabab continues to pose a threat to women journalists in Somalia, and non-Al-Shabab conservative elements across Somalia have been known to threaten women journalists specifically. Somali women journalists are also exposed to sexual harassment and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Despite the security threat, one of the most important challenges for Somali women journalists is not their physical safety, but the cultural barrier. Somali society largely does not support the idea of media being an appropriate profession for women. It is seen as inappropriate for women to appear on television and radio as well as interacting with men other than their husbands and immediate family members. There is a clear double standard in the way in which Somali families do not support their wives and daughters in becoming journalists, while at the same time there is a societal preference for women as presenters of radio and television programmes.

In news reporting, women voices are rarely heard in Somali media. If portrayed, it is usually in a stereotypical way; as victims and not as actors. Subjects of relevance for women are rarely covered in Somali media. These cultural norms are preventing Somali women from contributing to media and hinder them from making their voices heard, which poses a fundamental problem for Somali society at large.

The ‘Strengthening Somali media: Promoting peace, reconciliation, accountability and citizen participation in democratic processes’ programme implemented by Fojo Media Institute and International Media Support (IMS) takes a broad approach to gender, with specific gender-focused activities and gender as a cross-cutting theme, which ensures that all activities taking place are designed with a gender perspective (PCG, Fojo & IMS, 2015).

The programme has three gender specific intervention areas (Fojo & IMS, 2016):

- 1) Safety and working conditions of female media workers
- 2) Career development of female media workers
- 3) A gender perspective on media content

Intervention area 1: Safety and working conditions of female media workers

A number of activities are taking place under the programme to address the safety of women media workers. The activities include inter alia;

- Safety training for women journalists, as well as training in court ethics and courtroom behaviour for both male and female journalists to address the problem of journalists breaking the rules when going to court to defend themselves or attend trials of their colleagues, thus being held in contempt of the court.
- The establishment of a legal aid department employing two lawyers full-time to defend journalists and provide legal counselling for free.
- The creation of a hotline for journalists which journalists can call if they face danger or are in distress.
- The initiation of the Somali Media Safety Committee, in which the Somali Women Journalists (SWJ) association is a key member, ensuring that safety and security issues affecting women are taken into account as part of the committee's work in developing a national safety system. SWJ is a key participant in the advocacy capacity building activities and thereby strengthening their skills in advocating for improved working conditions, including on safety, for women.

Intervention 2: Career development of female media workers

The Women in News (WIN) programme works with media houses and their female employees to overcome the gender gap in management and senior management positions. The programme equips women media professionals with the strategies, skills and support networks they need to take on a greater leadership role within their organisations.

Intervention area 3: A gender perspective on media content

Fojo and IMS have developed and implemented a highly successful gender-mainstreaming strategy with Radio Ergo, resulting in the proportion of female voices in the radio programming rising with 10 percent in solely one month.

Myanmar

Fojo/IMS's report on gender in the Myanmar media landscape reveals that women journalists are facing two main obstacles that are hindering them in their daily work. The first one relates to a lack of opportunity for women to advance their careers. The second obstacle relates to the absence of institutional mechanisms that support women working within the media industry. (Fojo Media Institute, 2016a).

Although the majority of women journalists included in the study had received training from international NGOs – with equal opportunities for men and women to participate – the training equations were missing the aspects of safety and gender; two critically

important areas of training for a transformative society like Myanmar. The report illuminates the way in which women media professionals are particularly exposed to security threats, which hinders them from working on equal footing with men. Due to on-going conflicts in many areas of Myanmar, the issue of security for women media workers has become a key factor behind the relatively low number of women journalists in the states and divisions. The political instability has made parents oppose their daughters entering the media industry, and unsafe roads are making it difficult for women journalists to travel on their assignment. Consequently, the media coverage of conflict related stories tend to be predominantly assigned to male reporters. As a result, the marginalization of women is often reflected in the absence of women's perspectives on political and societal issues; a fact which ultimately constitutes a risk of biased and unbalanced news representation in Myanmar media (Fojo Media Institute, 2016a).

Fojo's recommendations for gender equality in the Myanmar media landscape include active promotion of gender equality to, and influence over, the media through;

- The development of a public service media law which includes principles of diversity and pluralism
- The implementation of firm gender equality and sexual harassment policies within media houses
- The incorporation of gender and diversity in journalism curricula of universities and other media related academic curricula
- The promotion and development of media networks and associations that work towards strengthening women's right in the media field
- The provision of training in gender awareness and sensitivity for both men and women in media houses

Moreover, Fojo and IMS have supported the creation of the Myanmar Press Council (MNMC) under which umbrella two safety training workshops have been conducted so far: one in Yangon in December 2016 and one in Taunggyi in January 2017.

Russia and Belarus

Research conducted by Fojo and its partners in Russia and Belarus reveals how gender bias is built into the power structures of media organizations. While women make up more than half of the Russian media executives on a local level, in regional media they only make up 36 and in federal media only 10 percent. Hence, the closer to power the fewer the women. Similar results have been found in the media context of Belarus, where women make up 70 percent of the journalist corps while the remaining 30 percent male professionals virtually all hold some kind of supervisory position. The findings point

towards prejudices against women and their abilities that are ingrained in society as the core of the gender power imbalance. The research consisted of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and an on-line questionnaire covering more than 400 respondents (Fojo Media Institute, 2016b).

In addition to the above mentioned research, Fojo has conducted a draft report on the Russian media environment which highlights gender aspects of media workers employment and career. The purpose of this report is inter alia to identify gender aspects of salary levels and career prospects in the Russian media industry, as well as to analyse the impact of gender on the choice of topic and content of media publications. Moreover, the report includes an analysis of gender stereotypes among those employed in the Russian media as well as the distribution of men and women within different professions and positions. The draft is available in Russian and will be translated into English within short.

Rwanda

In Rwanda, media is considered as one of the areas where gender equality has had limited success. Men continue to dominate top positions and hard news reporting jobs. Gender-based corruption, such as sexual harassment, is widespread in the recruitment process as well as in the working conditions for female media practitioners. In general, the risk of threats is met with self-censorship in the editorial offices.

Fojo is engaged in improving the education at the School of Journalism at the University of Rwanda and has established a volunteer program with journalists from Sweden. Through this program, Fojo is strengthening female journalism students in particular through:

- Using a gender perspective throughout the training
- A strong gender perspective in the Baseline Study for the project to identify specific threats, obstacles and problems for women journalists/journalism students
- A curriculum review of the three-year training with a specific module about gender issues
- Short courses for professional journalists to raise awareness about gender issues
- Female volunteers and lecturers acting as role models

Zimbabwe

The media industry in Zimbabwe is hampered by repressive media laws, self-censorship, low revenue and lack of qualified journalists. There are however signs of reforms and several opportunities for change.

Having been engaged in media support in Zimbabwe since 2008, Fojo manages the Sida funded Swedish Media Development Programme in Zimbabwe since 2012. The programme aims to contribute to increased freedom of expression and a professional and independent media sector, serving democracy, human rights and development in Zimbabwe (Fojo Media Institute, 2016c).

In 2015, Fojo's partner Gender and Media Connect (GMC) partnered with the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) on a nationwide programme training on sexual harassment issues in newsrooms throughout Zimbabwe. From this work, GMC and ZUJ produced the booklet called 'Power, Patriarchy and Gender Discrimination in Zimbabwean Newsrooms'. On November 18, 2016 the Zimbabwean radio station Star FM carried out a training session on sexual harassment for their staff under the lead of GMC (Mujati, 2016).

On December 2, 2016, GMC in partnership with Fojo and the Embassy of Sweden held the candid talk 'Women at the frontline of Zimbabwe Journalism - Challenges of staying the course' (see Annex 3). The event was attended by representatives from media houses, CSOs, freelance journalists, journalism and media students and lecturers as well as donor communities. Key issues that were brought up during the candid talk's panel discussions were related to sexual harassments, remuneration disparities and other bottleneck issues that hinder female professional progression.

The MENA-region

On the 1-3 November 2016, Fojo and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, Egypt, held a seminar for women journalists from the Middle East and North Africa on how to counter threats, on-line harassment and other kinds of intimidations of journalists. In connection to this seminar, the participating journalists adopted a Declaration in which they urge governments, media organization and civil society to intensify their efforts in dealing with threats and on-line hate against journalists, with a particular focus on women journalists, the Alexandria Declaration (see Annex 4).

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Annexures

1. Edström, M. (2016) 'The trolls disappear in the light'
2. The 2 December Declaration
3. Concept Note on a proposed Swedish based International Centre to Manage On-line Hate and Threats against Women Journalists
4. 'Women at the frontline of Zimbabwe Journalism - Challenges of staying the course'
5. The Alexandria Declaration



The Trolls Disappear in the Light: Swedish Experiences of Mediated Sexualised Hate Speech in the Aftermath of Behring Breivik

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Abstract

Feminist journalists have come to expect special resistance, and even threats, from men's groups as part of their work as journalists. However, the biggest threats might not originate in men's groups' activities. A big threat currently comes from Internet trolls' responses to individuals who engage in hate-provoked and hate-provoking attacks on women as women. This is exemplified in the case of Anders Behring Breivik, who blew up government buildings in Oslo in 2011 and murdered youth from the Labour Party at Utøya as part of his explicitly articulated xenophobic and misogynist campaign against the Islamification of Norway. His ideas are still being shared in social media responses to this tragedy across Nordic countries. This paper argues that this demonstrates that the harms to women and to society go well beyond the individual victims of an identifiable incident. Largely because of their role in condemning and rejecting the hateful ideas advanced across social media forums, troll responses to the Breivik tragedy constitute a particular threat to female and especially feminist journalists.

Keywords

Journalism; hate speech; antifeminism; gender; sexualised hate speech; Behring Breivik.

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Introduction

On 22 July 2011 Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people, first by blowing up government buildings in Oslo and then, dressed in a police uniform, by shooting young people at Utøya, a camp organised for the youth of the Norwegian Labour Party. While females and males alike were targeted, more than half of those murdered were young and female (41 of 77). This over-representation of females was not a coincidence. In addition to being Islamophobic and xenophobic, Breivik was avidly antifeminist. In the manifesto that he sent to a thousand recipients only hours before the attack, he made this clear. Indeed, as analysts of Breivik's 1,516 page-long manifesto have noted in their publications and as expert witnesses at his trial (see, for example, Gardell 2013; Walton 2012: 7), misogyny and antifeminism are at the core of Breivik's larger Islamophobic project.

At the time of this writing Breivik's ideas are still being promoted in Internet trolls' responses in Norway, Sweden and other Nordic countries. Internet trolls are people who write offensive things in order to provoke a reaction. The meaning in English indicates that they are trolling for reactions, but in the Nordic countries trolls are also well-known mythological figures who fear the light. This paper argues that the deliberately provocative 'Breivik fanclub' response to the Breivik massacre demonstrates that the harms to women and to society go well beyond the 41 female and 36 male victims of this tragedy. Largely because of their role in exposing and condemning the online forums that disseminate the ideas outlined in Breivik's manifesto, feminist journalists are particularly threatened. In the hope that sexists and trolls will wither in the face of public exposure, this paper offers a critical commentary on the brave ongoing efforts of feminist journalists to bring sexualised hate speech to the attention of the public and authorities.

The Breivik Manifesto

Shortly before the attack, Breivik sent out a 1,516-page compendium entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* (hereafter the manifesto).¹ An expert witness at the Breivik trial, history of religion scholar Mattias Gardell, described the manifesto as an Islamophobic-zenophobic mix in which antifeminism plays a key role. Indeed, Gardell describes the manifesto as a 'hyper-masculine performative act'. Gardell points out that Breivik describes feminists as traitors who promote multiculturalism, care for refugees, the poor and the disabled, who seek to feminise 'Western men who know how to change diapers but have lost their ability to fight' (the manifesto, as cited in Gardell 2014: 140). As documented by Stephen Walton, who also studied the manifesto, Breivik explicitly calls upon men to kill women:

[Y]ou must ... embrace and familiarise yourself with the concept of killing women, even very attractive women, since they not only comprise the majority of cultural Marxists, but also 20% of the police force, and will in any case 'not hesitate to kill you'. (Section 3.46 of the manifesto, titled 'Killing women on the field of battle – directly or indirectly', as cited in Walton 2012: 7)

Legislative and media context

Gender equality and freedom of expression are fundamental values in Western societies and are widely viewed as fundamental to Western democracy. As stated in Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), everyone, 'without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status' is entitled to human rights and freedoms. These include freedom of expression (Article 19), defined as the individual's right to hold opinions, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979), one of the most highly ratified human rights treaties, re-clarified that gender equality is a universal human right. While some scholars claim that gender equality

considerations should not interfere with freedom of expression (for example, Wolfson 1997), the Council of Europe is clear that these values are connected:

Media freedom (including editorial freedom) and gender equality are intrinsically interrelated. Gender equality is an integral part of human rights. Freedom of expression, as a fundamental right, goes hand-in-hand with gender equality (Council of Europe 2013).

Nordic countries are proud of their strong legislation protecting both gender equality and freedom of expression and, therefore, freedom of the press. The tension between these two fundamental values are, however, ongoing. In Sweden, there have been several failing efforts to legislate against gender stereotypes in advertisements, but freedom of expression has always been the explicit argument for not regulating against gender stereotypes (Svensson and Edström 2014). The first law to protect freedom of the press was introduced in Sweden 250 years ago, in 1766. Safeguarding freedom of expression has been a core value for all the Nordic countries for a long time and it has almost become part of the national identity, with a risk of citizens losing sight of why it should be valued (Petäjä 2009: 23). Nevertheless, gender equality has also become a hallmark of Nordic values, with Nordic countries routinely being among the top five most gender-equalitarian countries in the world as measured in the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index.

Political consensus in Nordic countries on the importance of gender equality has affected women's status in the media industry. In terms of numbers, there is parity in many occupational roles in Nordic news organisations, especially in recent years which has seen an increase in the number of women in high ranking editorial positions, both in newspapers and in public service broadcasting companies (Byerly 2013; Edström 2013; International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) 2011; World Association for Christian Communication 2010). Unfortunately, the increased prominence and visibility of female journalists seems to have triggered some men's urges to defame or threaten them as women.

Trolls and sexualised hate speech against female journalists

Threats against and which target identifiable groups constitute hate speech, a form of expression that falls outside legal bounds of free expression. While there is no universal definition of hate speech, the European Court of Human Rights (Council of Europe 2013) has indicated cases in which free expression is considered hate speech, as have individual European countries. Focusing on Sweden, criminal law on hate crime covers hate speech, which is explained as publicly making statements that threaten or express disrespect directed towards groups or a person for their race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, faith, or sexual orientation, and has been motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation, but not on gender. This legal situation, that hatred against women is not included in the legislation, has been criticised by feminist law scholars (Granström 2007). However, there are criminal code provisions under which hate speech directed against women might be prosecuted, and there are court cases that have resulted in people being convicted and sentenced for sexualised threats and online expressions of hate on the grounds that these constitute unlawful threats or defamation.

As outlined above, trolls are a metaphor in the Nordic countries that signify beings that fear the light; Internet trolls are people who write offensive things in order to provoke reaction. Net hate refers to harmful and hateful comments that appear in various places on the Internet, including blogs, Facebook, and commentary on traditional news media. Sexualised hate speech, the principle concern of this paper, does not exist as a legal term. However, it is commonly used in the debates and public discussions that draw upon the Breivik tragedy. In this discourse, sexualised hate speech refers to the special kind of sexualised and misogynist hate speech that

women in the media receive, to distinguish it from the 'ordinary' threats that come with the job of journalism, which female and male journalists alike receive.

The urge of some trolls to defame or threaten female journalists as women is particularly important given the pervasiveness of Internet media at the present time. Simply stated, traditional media has given way to something that is more individualised and interactive. More people are so-called 'prosumers', people who increasingly both use and produce media (Olsson 2013). At the same time, it has become easier to be anonymous, and thus to raise openly misogynist voices towards feminists, feminist media, feminist journalists and, more broadly, women who speak up. It should be noted that both male and female journalists face threats almost as part of the profession, especially for journalists who cover controversial issues. Indeed, surveyed male and female journalists report receiving threats at approximately equivalent rates (35 per cent versus 32 per cent), but female journalists received more sexualised threats (Löfgren Nilsson 2013, based on 1,372 respondents). The report confirms the findings of a global survey conducted by IWFM in 2014. As Friedersdorf (2014) notes, certain kinds of troll seems especially interested in making journalism miserable for women.

The Mission Investigate 'Men Who Net Hate Women' documentary

Focusing on Sweden, for a long time, sexualised hate speech towards female journalist was unknown to the Swedish public. The guidance from security personnel in media companies and the police was not to give attention to people who threatened others, in the hope of avoiding the likelihood of someone turning threats into actions. In the winter of 2012-2013 this changed. In December 2012, Åsa Lindeborg, the cultural editor of the largest daily tabloid *Aftonbladet*, reported that she could no longer live in her apartment; indeed, she had to live separate from her family due to persistent and serious threats against her. Then, in March 2013, the most prominent Swedish investigative reporting television show, *Mission Investigate*, broadcasted a documentary entitled '*Men Who Net Hate Women*'² (Män som näthatar kvinnor), alluding to the original Swedish title of the book *Men Who Hate Women*, subsequently made into a film, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, by Stieg Larsson.

The *Mission Investigate* documentary revealed how antipathy towards women, feminists and journalists, and xenophobia, intertwine in contemporary online media. As part of the documentary, well-known women journalists read letters and emails with death threats and sexualised hate speech that they had received, some authored by self-identified members of the 'Breivik fan club'.³ The following examples were read by Maria Sveland, a journalist and writer, and Jenny Alversjö, a news anchor. They are exemplary of the messages conveyed to all twelve women journalists who participated in the documentary:

Maria Sveland, I will give you an ultimatum, you either quit your job as a journalist, live your pathetic life anonymously and make a living out of a with a 9 to 5 job, or prepare yourself for war, a life where you never feel safe. One day I will personally cut your throat and leave you with the knife shoved into your pussy. Unlike you I am an intelligent person. I understand that you'll initially seek protection, but in time you'll take risks, believing that you're safe. Your safety is imaginary. I will murder you when you least expect it. To do 12 years in Kumla prison hotel would be an honour, not a punishment, It's up to you, insincere greetings, the Breivik fan club. (*Mission Investigate* 2013)

Now is the time ... for us to have sex, I will be waiting for you outside the building. If you say no, I will cut up your body. Then, your body parts will be hung up on meat hooks. Then I will fry your breasts in butter. Yum, it will taste good. Go on, call the police. I am not afraid of the cop bastards. (*Mission Investigate* 2013)

In addition to documenting hate emails and letters, the *Mission Investigate* documentary followed a young woman who had written a negative comment about the artist Tupac on the Facebook site of the clothing company H & M, who received thousands of harsh comments and threats. *Mission Investigate* reporters Nicke Nordmark and Hasse Johansson recounted that they had tried to track down the perpetrators, making it clear that their intent was that the police would hold those making the threats accountable for their actions. At the same time, they questioned why the police had not responded to such threats in the past. They also questioned the lack of responsibility taken by the company itself, for not sufficiently monitoring their Facebook site.

The *Mission Investigate* documentary was a success in terms of audience; it was one of the most watched investigative programs during that season, and a 6-minute clip of the documentary on *YouTube* had received 369,600 clicks by April 2016. Indeed, the *Mission Investigate* documentary received international recognition, and reporters Nicke Nordmark and Hasse Johansson received the Gold World Medal award at the international New York Festivals World's Best TV & Films festival in 2014.

The *Mission Investigate* documentary also spurred others to think about ways of investigating the phenomena of threats and bad behaviour on the Internet. In 2014, a commercial channel started a TV show called *The Troll Hunters* (Trolljägarna). In the program, well-known journalist Roberts Aschberg hunts down trolls and asks them what they are doing. Assisted by law professor Mårten Schultz, they sometimes took legal action. The merits of the program were intensely debated not only for the unconventional methods it used, but also for the fact that people started pursuing the trolls that had been in the spotlight. The program itself was reported for unlawful threat by a woman appearing on the show as a presumed troll. The dubious methods of exposing people have also caught attention outside Sweden, including an article in *MIT Technology Review* about the development of groups that act like judges and juries (Chen 2014). A Swedish research group, *Researchgruppen*, used large volumes of data to collect information about the most active people giving comments on sites that are connected with racist and extreme right-wing forums. Their investigation indicated persons giving comments were typically middle-aged men from all segments of society. These men may have different agendas, but they were united in their hatred of feminism and feminists (Expressen/Researchgruppen 2013, Researchgruppen 2013).⁴

The above disclosures of the hostile online environment that journalists and especially female journalists face convinced many newsrooms to shift to pre-monitoring of online comments. One of the journalists interviewed in the *Mission Investigate* documentary was Anna-Klara Bratt, the editor-in-chief of a feminist online newspaper, *Feminist Perspective*. She reports that, after the program broadcast, her newspaper noticed a considerable decline in threats.

Reactions from authorities

Following the *Mission Investigate* documentary, the police started to take female journalists' complaints more seriously, especially after the female blogger with one the largest audience in Sweden, the young fashion blogger *Blondinbella*, posted her experiences. Inspired by the *Mission Investigate* documentary, she began writing about the many harassments and threats that she had been facing. She also talked about the lack of response from the police (Löwengrip 2013). The police, who had failed to act on threats against her previously, now started to go through the material and separate libel and unlawful threats from negative comments. They also managed to track down a man who had threatened several female journalists and other women and politicians. This man was sentenced to six months of probation for unlawful threats and sexual molestation (Courtcase B 3963-13). Unfortunately, even though the court believed that this man had threatened hundreds of persons, mostly women, only 12 were included in the court case.

As the *Blondinbella* case was proceeding, the courts began imposing fines on more people, though the value of the fines have been low. One example is a court case from 2014 involving a female journalist who received several threats which she reported to the police. In this case, the court found that it is acceptable to write [translated from Swedish] 'to me gender equality is when you take a sexist feminist whore in the vagina with a large knife'. The court ruled that this statement is protected by freedom of expression, since it a general statement. However, the court clarified that it was not acceptable to include the name of the person, as he also did:

It is sexist feminist whores like [XX] that should shut up. She is just making a fool of herself. Up with a knife in the pussy of sexist feminists (as cited in Court case B 10319-14).

For this the defendant was sentenced for molestation and received a 2 500 SEK (400 AUD) fine. Feminist scholars have criticised this verdict for being counterproductive and serving as an instruction manual for getting away with threats. 'Those who hate adapt. Now they know they should not put the name of the person they are threatening in the postings' said journalist My Vingren (Bohlin 2016).

Both police and prosecutors have publicly complained about the difficulties in taking legal action: 'freedom of expression has become a threat to itself', claimed one prosecutor in a debate among Swedish law practioners (Greberg 2014). Legal scholars have also called for reform or modification of the legal system (Schultz 2013). The lack of legislation on Internet crime is now an issue for a Swedish government report due in 2016, which is part of the government's claim that it will modernise legal protections for individuals targeted by net hate (Department of Justice Sweden 2014: 74). The government has also commissioned the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention to investigate the scope and magnitude of Internet hate. They have already concluded that there is a lack of IT competence within the police and that most cases do not lead to any further investigations (Brå 2015).

Discussion

The resistance of certain men to women's rights is sometimes explained by changing power relations between men and women in society, which influence some men to blame feminists for their problems (Anderson 2014; Blais and Dupuis-Déri 2012). Nordic scholars have tried to develop a more complex analysis that draws upon intersectional understandings (Bredesen 2104; Eriksson 2013; Gottzén 2011; Gottzen and Mellström 2014; Keskinen 2013). This approach recognises that there is a clear connection between racism and antifeminism in Nordic politics. The report *Patriotism and Patriarchy – The Impact of Nationalism on Gender Equality* (Ekerstedt 2014), describes how strong nationalism in Europe affects women's human rights and women's role in society. It raises concern that the growing nationalist parties will join forces with other nationalists in the fight against immigrants, LGBTQ persons, and women's rights. 'Such developments mean that core human rights are at risk of being undermined – and the gender equality successes that the women's movement has achieved during its many years of struggle risk being thwarted' (Ekerstedt 2014: 27). Kvinna till Kvinna and another organisation, Expo, highlight that it is not only women who might fear this development. The nationalists and radical right are also a threat to LGBTQ people, especially if one recognises that homophobia has a connection to normative masculinity (Hannus 2012; Swedish Official Reports 2014).

Cyber mob or a handful of grown men?

Feminist Anita Sarkeesian has pointed out that online harassment and cyber mobs are a kind of social activity in which people can be loosely coordinated and still create a toxic environment. 'They are maintaining and reinforcing and normalising a culture of sexism, where men who harass are supported by their peers and rewarded for their sexist attitudes and women are

silenced, marginalised and excluded from full participation' (Sarkeesian 2012). This was the case in Sweden in 2011 when a theatre in Stockholm began receiving threats on a large scale because they were hosting a performance of the *Scum Manifesto* by Valerie Solanas. The mob threatening the theatre seemed to be huge but, when investigated by the media, it turned out to be a small number of men. It also became clear that some of these men were front figures in men's groups working for 'humanism' and against feminism (*Feministiskt Perspektiv* 2012a, 2012b).

One of the most critical voices was a blogger called Citizen X who in November 2011 was responsible for writing 'A murdered feminist is a good feminist' on his blog (no longer available online but see Billing 2012) and then posting the home addresses of theatre staff. Citizen X explained in another more prominent antifeminist blog why he wrote the threat; it was meant as satire: 'I am an ordinary, white, middle aged man, with a job and family, but also with a large interest in how society is developing' (Billing 2012). Citizen X claimed that it was just satire and it should be clear to anyone. The people he verbally attacks are privileged and should be able to handle some kicks from below, from '... a citizen who only can have a voice through a blog'. One interesting aspect was that the blog host, Per Billing, commented that he thought Citizen X had gone too far, and the combination of talking about murder and giving out addresses was too much. Shortly after revealing that the huge mob in fact consisted of only a handful of men, the activities in these two major blogs decreased sharply.

It is also important to note that some of the antifeminist bloggers are women who make a joint cause with male resistance movements, demonstrating that women and girls are also a part of the net hate problem. In December 2012, the so called 'Instagram riots' took place at a high school in Gothenburg, Sweden, where a mob was looking for a girl they thought had posted degrading content on the web. Fortunately the police could secure the situation for the girl who was later found to be innocent. Two other two girls, just 15 and 16 years old, were sentenced for defamation and had to pay in total 570 000 SEK (91 000 AUD) to the 38 defamation victims. The younger girl was sent to juvenile detention and the older girl received community service (Gye 2013 and Court case B 705-13).

Conclusion

The problems of threats and sexualised hate speech towards female journalists are at least twofold. Firstly, the purpose of the threats is to silence. Many journalists refer to the self-censoring mechanism of threats and hate speech. Is it worth taking up the fight? The harassment might also scare other women and keep them from entering journalism. Secondly, one never knows when words will turn into actions. When the trolls are confronted by reporters they often deny their actions or claim that it was a joke. These threats were never meant to be realised. However, they can inspire others to act. As Breivik was inspired by other bloggers, hateful speech can serve as fuel for action where you least expect it.

Sexualised hate speech can be seen as an expression of power or lack of power. The female journalists under attack are often successful, whereas the person making the threats might not feel that way, and making threats can be a way of controlling and having power over visible, outspoken successful women. That seemed to be the case with the blogger Citizen X who clearly identified himself as an underdog who only had his blog to fight back. Many of the journalists that have been facing sexualised hate speech are not outspoken feminists; their only 'crime' is their visibility as women. Threats and sexualised hate speech may limit female journalists but in Sweden many of the journalists have chosen to speak openly about the threats. As a result, connections between antifeminist and other undemocratic ideas have been revealed. Political shifts towards nationalistic agendas in the Nordic countries tend to include antifeminist themes and threats that affect female journalists not only professionally but also in their private lives.

Technological shifts have opened up new ways of displaying hate but this hate is also contested. The media can choose to highlight antifeminists in many ways. There are examples where antifeminists seem to have free access to television viewers but, as this article describes, the media can also put a critical spotlight on antifeminist activities. Most of the people behind the sexualised hate speech are men, and they appear to both court and fear public attention. This paper participates in raising awareness of the issue in the hope that their position will be weakened as their actions become visible. Like the trolls, they will hopefully disappear in the light.

As mentioned earlier, Sweden has had a web-based feminist newspaper that has been investigating the trolls and countered threats, and that continues to stand up for feminism and feminist journalists. It is also part of international networks and has commissioned a journalist to collect other feminist journalists' stories and strategies. In *Tackle the Hate* (Bohlin 2016), a recently published book initiated by the newspaper, feminist journalists and editors from Spain, France, Sweden and Mexico talk about how they handle threats and why it is so important to be open about the threats.

Since gender is not part of the hate crime legislation in Sweden and freedom of expression is so highly valued, there has been a dearth of response from society to sexualised hate speech. Criminal authorities lack knowledge on how to deal with these issues and, moreover, some laws that might apply – such as unlawful threats and libel – are seldom used. Sexualised hate speech, often protected by law, can truly be seen as a way of silencing women and hindering gender equality.

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¹ According to Norwegian Blogger *Fjordman*, the number 2083 refers to the year Islam should be defeated by a form of Christianity in which patriarchy rules.

² The English title is now changed to *Surfing the Web of Hate* (<http://svtsales.com/programme-sales/surfing-the-web-of-hate/>).

³ The journalists who went public were Karin Hubinette, Åsa Lindeborg, Lisa Magnusson, Ann-Charlotte Martéus, Fridah Jönsson, Maria Sveland, Sanna Lundell, Jenny Alversjö, Titti Schultz, Anna-Klara Bratt, My Vingren and Anna Hedenmo.

⁴ The reason for the Research group finding so few younger men might be explained by younger men's greater likelihood of having better knowledge on how not to leave any tracks on the web, and thus safeguard their anonymity.

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The 2nd December Declaration

On 2nd December 1766, the Swedish King enacted a 'Gracious Ordinance Relating to Freedom of Writing and of the Press', the world's first legislation guaranteeing the right to a free press.

Today, journalists around the world depend on this right to uncover corruption, provide transparency and demand accountability. However, verbal threats and hate speech increasingly put this function at risk.

On the 250th anniversary of this important legislation, we call for greater worldwide efforts to protect all media professionals, wherever they may be challenged.

We, the undersigned, believe in the need to strengthen and support free, independent and professional journalism, however and wherever necessary. Professional journalism is our most effective means of countering disinformation and combatting hate crimes. It is the best weapon we have against all types of prejudices. Journalists are on the front line when it comes to protecting freedoms in society - and women journalists are often the most vulnerable and exposed. They are targeted, not only because they report on the abuse of power, but because they are women.

We therefore draw particular attention to the specific dangers facing women journalists and underline the urgent need to do more to counter the growing hostility felt by women across the globe towards their right to freedom of expression.

We denounce those who use threats and hate to silence the women who are making their voices heard. This constitutes not only a threat to quality journalism, but also to equality and ultimately to democracy itself.

We wish to use this historic day to pay tribute to all women journalists who are defying death threats, sexual violence, physical and psychological abuse, hate speech or online intimidation to pursue their professional calling. Women who continue, despite such pressures, to provide citizens with the information they need to make informed decisions about their lives, their communities, and their governments.

The 2nd December Declaration is an initiative by WAN- IFRA, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers and the Fojo Media Institute.

It is presently being offered to publishers and journalists all over the world, providing them with a possibility to display their support to women journalists and their conviction of the need for free, independent, professional journalism.

Please turn to www.wan-ifra.org to sign the Declaration.



Concept note on a Swedish based International Centre for structured support to Women Journalists Subjected to On-line Hate

The December 2 event was a practical demonstration of the Swedish stand on Freedom of Expression and the support for the right for women to safely express their opinion. At the same time, the event highlighted the importance of free, independent and professional journalism, making an historic bound to the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act from 1766.

But what happens now, after December 2? How can a possible continuation of the support to women journalists who are exposed to on-line hate and threats look like?

In this Concept Note, Fojo Media Institute suggests a pilot for an international centre that supports media organizations/media houses and individual journalists in the East and South in their efforts to manage on-line hate, with a particular focus on women journalists.

Why should Sweden do this?

Organised on-line hate, intimidation combined with disinformation are some of the most efficient tools to silence journalists who demand accountability.

These intimidations affect journalists worldwide and often lead to self-censorship and reduced transparency – not to mention personal suffering. Women journalists are particularly targeted.

The Swedish media sector is, in an international perspective, at the forefront in identifying and implementing strategies for journalists facing on-line hate and threats.

The Swedish capacity in this field within the media sector is proven both at branch level, editorial level and individual level. Additionally, the Ministry of Culture as well as a range of Swedish civil society organisations have been working consciously and actively on the issue.

How can it be done?

The Fojo Media Institute has a long experience of strengthening free, independent and professional media in the East and South. Operations to manage hate speech, threats and misinformation have long been part of Fojo's activities.

The Swedish Institute on Foreign Affairs Institute conducts research and has extensive knowledge in the field, particularly is proposed as partner, together with Fojo implement the pilot project.

A special Advisory Board is proposed, composed by journalists with specific experiences and knowledge of on-line hate and its implications.

By combining the knowledge and experience of the Fojo Media Institute the Swedish Institute on Foreign Affairs and other Swedish and international actors and individuals under one ha, the centre has the possibility to become a platform:

- that investigates on-line hate, intimidation and their connection to forces that engage in disinformation,
- that creates a bridge between media industry initiatives with organizations dealing with on-line hate against journalists at the policy level, such as UNESCO.
- that provides hands-on support to media houses that wish to improve their competence in handling on-line hate against women journalists
- that strengthen networks aimed at supporting journalists subjected to on-line hate.

Proposed Swedish partner organizations are:

- Utgivarna – Interest organisation for Swedish publishers. Organises all major Swedish media companies, including public service.
- Swedish PEN
- Swedish Institutet
- Swedish Institute in Alexandria
- Kvinna till Kvinna (Woman to Woman, NGO)
- Linnaeus University, institution for media and journalism
- Institutet för Mediestudier (Swedish Institute for Media Studies)
- Civil Rights Defenders
- EXPO (NGO/magazine specialized in mapping extreme right wing organisations. The writer Stig Larsson worked for this organisation)
- The Press Ombudsman
- Ministry for Foreign Relations
- Ministry for Culture and Democracy
- MSB – Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
- Sida – The Swedish International Development Agency
- Cooperation should also be sought within the private sector, particularly among IT-related companies

Potential international partner organisations include:

- UNESCO
- OSCE's Representative for Press Freedom
- OCCRP
- INSI
- WAN-IFRA
- IMS
- Reporters without Borders
- CPJ
- GAMAG/Unesco
- Prague Civil Society Centre



GENDER AND MEDIA CONNECT (GMC) CANDID TALK: WOMEN AT THE FRONTLINE OF ZIMBABWE JOURNALISM- CHALLENGES OF STAYING THE COURSE



Friday December 2, 2016

Panelists

Name	Profession Prowess	Title at Event
Tendai Madondo	Managing Director, Hevoi FM	Moderator
Agnes Gwatiringa	Veteran Producer, Writer and Director	Panelist
Annie Mpalume	Chief Photographer , Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ)	Panelist
Patience Zirima	Media Monitors Director	Panelist
Susan Makore	CEO, AB Communications	Panelist
Faith Zaba	Zimbabwe Independent Newspaper, Deputy Editor	Panelist
Victoria Ruzvidzo	Managing Editor, Zimpapers	Panelist
Fungai Machirori	Blogger and New Media	Panelist

Opening Remarks and Background

On Friday December 2, 2016 Gender and Media Connect in partnership with FOJO and the embassy of Sweden held a candid talk dubbed *Women at the frontline of Zimbabwe Journalism- Challenges of staying the course*. The event was held to commemorate 250 years of the Press Freedom Act. This candid talk also coincidentally fell during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. The event was attended by 54 people from the media houses (retired and practicing), media and other CSOs, freelance journalists, journalism and media students and lecturers and the donor communities.

The moderator; Tendai Madondo said the objective of the candid talk was to portrayal the role of women in the media in Zimbabwe their challenges and opportunities. The moderator explained that the seven panelists were women with varied expertise in the media ranging from activism, editorial, management, blogging and photography.

Opening remarks were given by Maria Selin, Deputy Head of Communications at the Embassy of Sweden who then gave a ¹brief account of the December 2 press freedom act commemorations. She alluded that although women in the media in Zimbabwe have increased the reality for male and female journalists is different in an environment of self / newsroom censorship and hindrances in exposing corruption, there is need to appreciate the work being done by the media and media CSOs such as GMC, VMCZ and MISA Zimbabwe.

¹ <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2016/12/02/press-freedom-never-take-granted/>

Key Issues raised during the panel discussions

- Sexual Harassment remains a problem in the most media houses and is affecting both female and male media personnel from within the media structures and from sources. It needs to be defined
- Challenges in juggling productive and reproductive responsibilities by female media practitioners
- Bottlenecks that hinder female professional progression e.g. (1) promotion is not viewed on merit by their male counterparts, (2) women pulling each other down (bullying), (3) motherhood and wifehood are seen as barriers to elevation.
- Remuneration disparities e.g. there is a pay gap between sexes, male have better negotiation skills and females get lateral promotions
- Identity issues for women in media management in terms of expectations and responsibilities
- Death of professionalism e.g. rules no longer clear and no standards, fluidity helps people get away with anything.
- Lack of institutional support for female journalists in newsrooms and female journalism and media students as interns in newsrooms.
- Media Houses are a boys zone/ brotherhood where women have to work extra hard than their male colleagues in order to be promoted within the newsroom structures.
- There is lack of sisterhood support structures within the media sector.
- Women are expected to volunteer and are not expected to negotiate their packages
- Lack of job orientation, males keep the secret of the trade to themselves.

Recommendations from the Candid Talk:

For Media Houses

- Leveling the playing field for both women and men in the media so that they can both fully participate in sectorial issues.

- Address practical challenges that hinder female journalists executing their duties e.g. transport challenges after night assignments, safety, rape and abuse etc.
- Call those discriminating colleagues in the media to order.

For Female Journalists

- Develop a good character and be a brand
- Learn to multi task in the event of unforeseen retrenchment (skills diversity)
- Invest in trainings/ further your studies (skills development)
- Buy professional equipment to use for part time consultancies / to supplement your income
- Seasoned journalists should not be intimidated by subordinates but offer mentorship.

For GMC

Develop Gender Policies for media houses as an empowerment tool to address gender inequalities in the media.

Provide platforms for interface between journalism and media lecturers and women media practitioners

Strengthen women networking spaces e.g. media women networking platforms

Capacity building of female journalists so that they are as competitive as male journalists and want to stay in the newsrooms

Start a sexual harassment campaign

Train women journalists on online violence and safety measures

For Development Partners

- Support wellness programmes for women

THE ALEXANDRIA DECLARATION ON PROTECTION OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS

In recent years, the incidence of internet hate has increased at an enormous rate. No other professional group is subjected to as many threats as journalists, and woman journalists are particularly vulnerable.

Female investigative reporters are often subjected to hate speech and threats, not only because they report on abuse of power, but because they are women. Undemocratic governments, religious organisations, organised crime, and extreme political organisations and individuals use threats and hate speech to silence the women throughout the MENA-region who are making their voices heard. This constitutes not only a threat to quality journalism, but also to equality and ultimately to democracy itself.

Online abuse must be dealt with in the broader context of gender discrimination and violence against women to ensure that the same rights that people have offline must be protected online.

We, women Arab journalists, from Morocco in the West till Jordan in the East, coming together at the Swedish Institute in Alexandria at a seminar commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act, the oldest in the world and an inspiration to many democracies, see an urgent need to acknowledge and respond:

We recognise both the need for freedom of expression and the problem of hate and threats in the society of today.

We expect associations and unions of journalists to take an active role in responding to threats against journalists, in particular women journalists.

We ask our colleagues, men and women, not to stay silent when women colleagues are subjected to threat, harassment and intimidation.

We request that publishers, unions and association of journalists work closely with legislators to improve the protection of journalists in vulnerable situations.

We invite colleagues to form networks of support and protection of journalists; and publishers and international donors to recognize the need for psychosocial and legal support.

We encourage leaders of civil society, business and religion to stand by women journalists who are defying death threats, sexual violations, physical and psychological abuse, hate speech or online intimidation while pursuing their professional calling to safeguard democracy.

We urge governments in the MENA-region and beyond to fulfil their fundamental responsibility on human rights as expressed in the Universal Declaration and all the conventions developed thereafter.

We appreciate the Swedish government initiative to raise global attention on the threats and expect that this will materialize in improved support structures, including a UN Special Rapporteur with a mandate to monitor crimes against journalists and freedom of speech.

This declaration was adopted at a seminar organised by the Fojo Media Institute and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria 1-3 November 2016, in connection with the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalist, 2 November.

EGYPT

Shahira Amin

JORDAN

Lina Shannak

Tala Elissa

Etaf Roudan

Samar Haddadin

Hiba Obeidat

Dr. Abeer Al-Najjar

Lina Al-Ejeilat

LEBANON

Amal Khalil

Hanan Hamdan

Najat Gemayel

MOROCCO

Sarah Zouak

Chama Darchoul

PALESTINE

Naela Khalil

Rafa Musmar

Reem Abulaban

Lubna Alashqar