



**safejournalists.net**

# **The Western Balkans Journalist Safety Index**

Narrative report Croatia 2022

# CONTENTS

LEGAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

9

DUE PREVENTION

18

DUE PROCESS

27

ACTUAL SAFETY

35

# Introduction

The Western Balkans' Journalists' Safety Index (WB-JSI) is a research-grounded tool designed to measure and monitor the changes in the respective social and political environments of the WB countries, that have direct or indirect impact on the safety of journalists and media actors while practicing their profession. The WB-JSI relies primarily on the research evidence collected and analysed by the partners of the [Safejournalists.net](https://safejournalists.net) Platform in compliance with a rigorous procedure of inquiry. The collected data on various dimensions of the complex concept of 'journalists' safety' is quantified and aggregated into a composite indicator – Journalists' Safety Index, to measure the changes across the seven Western Balkans' countries over time. Based on the research evidence, nine members of the Advisory Panel<sup>1</sup> in each country assess the situation and assign scores to each of the 19 indicators within the following dimensions:

- (1) **Legal and organizational environment** – the existence and implementation of legal safeguards relevant for the safety of journalists;
- (2) **Due Prevention** – the existence and implementation of a range of preventative measures that have direct effects on journalists' protection and safety;
- (3) **Due Process** – the behaviour of state institutions and public officials towards journalists and the efficiency of the criminal and civil justice system concerning the investigations of threats and acts of violence against journalists;
- (4) **Actual security** – incidents and instances of various forms of threats and acts of violence against journalists and media.

The WB-JSI was jointly developed by the researchers from the Skopje based RESIS Institute<sup>2</sup> and partners of the Safejournalists.net Platform: Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia, Association of BH Journalists, Trade

<sup>1</sup> The advisory panel in Croatia consists of Chiara Bilić, Jasmin Klarić, Dora Kršul, Tomislav Levak, Silvia Novosel, Saša Paparella, Anja Vladislavljević, Valentina Wiesner and one another member who wanted to remain anonymous.

<sup>2</sup> The researchers of the RESIS Institute ([www.resis.mk](http://www.resis.mk)), Snezana Trpevska, Igor Micevski and Ljubinka Popovska Toševa have developed the conceptual framework for the Index and the model of its aggregation, weighting and calculation.

Union of Media od Montenegro, Association of Journalist of Macedonia, Association of Journalist of Kosovo, Croatian Journalists' Association and independent researcher in Albania<sup>3</sup>. As such, the Index is a result of a joint effort of the Platform Safejournalists.net and covers all the specific issues that local partners identified as relevant for their country contexts.

The first (pilot) year for development of the conceptual framework and methodology for scoring, aggregating, and calculating the Index was 2020. This report refers to the situation in Serbia in 2021 and presents the improvements or deterioration of the situation related to the four dimensions by taking into consideration the assessment for 2020 as the reference year. For more details about the theoretical framework and the process of creating and calculating the Western Balkan Journalist Safety Index and all country reports see (<https://safejournalists.net/safety-index/>).

---

3 Blerjana Bino as independent researcher in Albania for Safejournalists.net platform.

## JOURNALIST SAFETY INDEX



	2021	2022		Main new developments in each dimension
1. Legal and Organizational Environment	3.74	3.75	↑	Legal and organizational environment has been slightly better rated than last year. A large number of lawsuits, including SLAPP suits, still pose a significant problem, and defamation and insults of honor have not yet been decriminalized. The Ministry of Culture and Media has established a working group with the goal of combating SLAPP suits. The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) is working on signing a document with the Ministry of the Interior (MUP) to improve the protection of journalists and prevent attacks.
2. Due Prevention	3.57	3.57	-	The situation in this dimension remains unchanged. Politically prominent individuals and groups insufficiently condemn attacks on journalists and are often themselves creators of a conducive environment for attackers. However, MUP has shown sensitivity towards the journalistic profession, and the signing of an agreement with CJA for better protection of journalists is expected.
3. Due Process	3.25	3.25	-	The situation in this dimension remains unchanged. Journalists rarely report threats and attacks, and many consider them a part of their job. Court procedures for attacks on journalists are lengthy, and in some cases, several years after the attacks, court hearings have still not taken place.
4. Actual Safety	3.47	3.60	↑	The dimension of journalist safety has received a better rating compared to last year, and there has been a lower number of attacks compared to 2021. Physical assaults are characteristic of public gatherings, while the majority of threats occur online.
<b>Journalist Safety Index</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>↑</b>	

## — SUMMARY

### I. LEGAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- The situation has not improved compared to 2021; the Criminal Code still contains provisions on defamation and insult. These provisions are often used to silence journalists and media, as well as a means of retaliation for critical reporting.
- The situation remained unchanged in 2022 compared to 2021. The protection of journalistic sources is regulated by law, and government bodies mostly adhere to it. Overall, journalists felt free to seek sources of information in 2022.

- The situation in 2022 showed slight improvement compared to 2021. According to publicly available data, there were no lawsuits in 2022 that appeared to aim at silencing journalists based on legal provisions related to the dissemination of disinformation, fear, panic, and similar actions. In Croatia, there is no official definition of SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), but among the numerous ongoing and concluded court cases, there are cases that exhibit elements of SLAPP and are likely to be categorized as such. Recognizing this, the Ministry of Culture and Media has established a working group with the aim of combatting SLAPP lawsuits. The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) is actively working towards signing an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior (MUP) to enhance the protection of journalists and prevent attacks.
- The situation remained unchanged in 2022 compared to 2021. Journalists do not require licenses to practice journalism, and there were no attempts to introduce licensing in 2022. Journalists are generally allowed to report from all state institutions whose activities are considered public, although accreditation may be necessary for some institutions. The freedom for journalists to join professional associations continues to be upheld, although certain media owners may hold reservations about it.
- The situation in 2022 remained unchanged. A significant number of journalists work without employment contracts, with many of them functioning as freelancers or external collaborators. Salaries and working conditions vary widely, depending on numerous factors, resulting in a significant disparity. The journalism profession continues to face instability, with only three media outlets having collective contracts in place, and no National Collective Contract. Female journalists typically experience the same working conditions as their male counterparts, but age-based discrimination is observed despite this. Freelancers represent one of the most vulnerable groups among journalists, lacking employment contracts and the associated labor rights. While private media outlets have unions, owners often view such associations unfavorably. Journalists usually have access to legal assistance through their editorial offices, and the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) and the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ) provide their members with free legal support.

## II. DUE PREVENTION

- The situation remained unchanged in 2022 compared to 2021, with no special mechanisms for protecting journalists in Croatia – reports of attacks and threats can be filed with the police, just like for any other citizens.

Hate speech aiming at hatred and violence is subject to criminal prosecution, handled by the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia. Other forms of hate speech, depending on their nature, can be reported to the Council for Electronic Media, ombudsmen, and the Journalists' Ethics Council. Police process every report of an attack, and in cases of serious threats and attacks, they systematically address them. In 2022, there were no cases where the police refused to accept a report of an attack or investigate a particular incident.

- In comparison to 2021, the situation remained unchanged. The Ministry of the Interior (MUP) is the only national-level institution that can provide physical protection to journalists, as well as other citizens. The police have provided twenty-four-hour protection to journalists on several occasions. There are several laws that identify specific protection needs for individuals who are victims. The CJA responds to attacks on journalists by reaching out to all necessary institutions, and through its Center for the Protection of Freedom of Expression, in collaboration with lawyers, offers journalists free legal assistance.
- In 2022, the situation did not improve compared to 2021; victims generally lack trust in the protection system. While Croatia has signed, ratified, and incorporated the Istanbul Convention into some of its laws and introduced new acts, protocols, and regulations to better protect women, there are still institutions and organizations that serve as mechanisms for women's protection. Despite the foundation for improved protection of women, they continue to be at risk. Women who are victims of sexual harassment are typically subordinate to the harasser, younger, report harassment anonymously, lack trust in the protection system, and often face consequences such as self-censorship or worsened mental health.
- In 2022, the unchanged situation has led to a worsening of journalists' safety. State institutions, public officials, political parties, and politicians in general inadequately condemn attacks on journalists and often themselves create fertile ground for attackers. Journalists are frequently the target of verbal insults and attacks from powerful politicians. Citizens often adopt the narrative of politicians, whom they perceive as a "permission" for attacks, and openly threaten journalists. In Croatia, an unfavorable atmosphere for journalists still exists, in which they are seen as responsible for everything.
- In 2022, the situation remained unchanged compared to 2021. Police officers continue to receive annual training, but these training sessions do not include specific attention to journalists. The police have not yet adopted protocols related to handling journalists or

preventing attacks on journalists, but they have shown willingness to cooperate with journalists' associations.

### III. DUE PROCESS

- The situation in 2022 remained unchanged. The Ministry of the Interior and the State Attorney's Office still do not have specialized departments exclusively dealing with attacks and violence against journalists. There are still no documents in place to aid in more effective prosecution of those who attack and threaten journalists. Threats against journalists are prosecuted ex officio, and journalists are recognized in the Criminal Code as individuals performing tasks of public interest.
- The situation in 2022 remained unchanged. Investigations in cases involving threats to journalists remain independent of the perpetrators, and depending on the severity of the cases, background circumstances are considered during investigations. Some cases are resolved promptly, while others take years to even begin trial proceedings. Procedural deadlines are not a problem in investigations if there is an interest in resolving the case swiftly, while in all other cases, procedures can take from several months to several years. Journalism is recognized in the Criminal Code as a profession carried out in the public interest.
- In 2022, there was no significant change compared to 2021, but the number of reports of online harassment was lower than the previous year. The most common form of online harassment against journalists is through social media and comments on news portals. This year, threats were reported via messages, email, and a hacking attack. The implementation of the new Law on Electronic Media and its provisions regarding comments on news portals has not yet shown significant results. While other laws are applied when an attack occurs, better prevention of such attacks is needed. Journalists rarely report online threats and attacks because they consider them to be part of their job.
- The situation has not changed in 2022. During the examination of the merit of the complaint at the State Prosecutor's Office, which can last for years, the victim has no access to information. Some information is made public by the courts and the prosecution on their websites, while some information can be obtained through inquiries by journalists. In discussions with lawyers, it was not determined whether any of the information published by these institutions was untrue.
- The situation has not changed in 2022. In Croatia, there are still no publicly available statistical data specifically related to journalists that are recorded by government bodies and institutions. The Ministry of the Interior and the State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Croatia

maintain their statistics in cases where journalists are the victims, but these statistics are not publicly accessible. The Ministry of Justice and Administration also keeps statistics on civil and criminal proceedings involving journalists and provides this data to CJA upon request. The data CJA has access to are not sorted by gender, ethnic background, and other sociodemographic criteria.

#### **IV. ACTUAL SAFETY**

- In 2022, 7 non-physical threats to journalists were registered, which is significantly less than in 2021, when 14 such threats were recorded. Despite this, it seems that the situation has not significantly improved compared to the previous year.
- Death threats and threats to the physical security of journalists were the second most common type of attack against journalists in 2022. There were 5 such threats, two of which were in person, one through a letter, and two through electronic communication, such as social media, emails, or comments under media articles.
- The number of physical attacks in 2022 decreased compared to 2021. One physical attack was recorded.
- The number of attacks on the media and professional organizations is in a slight decline compared to 2021. Despite this, insults bordering on threats directed at the media and professional associations are not abating.

# Legal and Organizational Environment

3.75

Legal provisions related to defamation and their implementation do not produce chilling effects on journalists and media

2.63

Confidentiality of journalists' sources is guaranteed in the legislation and respected by the authorities

5.03

Other laws are implemented objectively and allow the journalists and other media actors to work freely and safely

3.13

Journalists are free to pursue their profession and to establish, join and participate in their associations

5.07

Journalists' job position is stable and protected at the workplace

2.91

1.00  
2.00  
3.00  
4.00  
5.00  
6.00  
7.00



By Law and in practice, there is absolutely no protection of journalists' working position, their sources and their organizations, thereby producing an extreme chilling effect.

By Law and in practice, there is a highest degree of protection of journalists' working position, their sources, and their organizations.

# Legal provisions related to defamation and their implementation do not result in "chilling" effects on journalists and media

**Final score for 2021: 2.63 / Final score for 2022: 2.63**

**The situation in this regard has not improved compared to 2021; the Criminal Code still contains provisions on defamation and insult. These provisions are often used to silence journalists and media, as well as a means of retaliation for critical reporting.**

The Criminal Code still contains provisions on the criminal offenses of defamation and insult, as offenses against honor and reputation. These provisions are often used to silence critical media and journalists, regardless of the accuracy and verifiability of the information published in the public interest. The law does not make distinctions in the treatment of officials and journalists, but in the case of the criminal offense of insult, it provides for an exclusion of unlawfulness if the act is committed in the course of journalistic work. The prescribed sanctions are not proportional to the offense committed. Disputes against journalists can be resolved in civil law, while criminal law provisions should be used only in the most serious of cases. In January 2022, the County Court in Zagreb ruled that journalist Davorka Blažević must pay a compensation of 40,000 Croatian kuna to Supreme Court Judge Senka Klarić Baranović for "violation of honor and reputation." The initial amount of 75,000 kuna was reduced to 40,000 kuna after the journalist appealed. The total amount that the journalist had to pay, including interest and court costs, ended up being 52,000 kuna, which represents more than 10 of her regular monthly earnings. This lawsuit was initiated by a Supreme Court judge, who, although not a politically engaged person, is an influential and public figure. For some journalists, such rulings are not intimidating or discouraging, while for others, they lead to self-censorship, most commonly among freelance journalists or those working for nonprofit media, who do not have the legal and financial support of an employer. The awarded amounts or penalties have a "freezing" effect on journalists, especially when multiple lawsuits are filed against them, and plaintiffs simultaneously initiate both criminal and civil proceedings for damages over the same journalistic report. The strength of the

— INDICATOR 1.1

impact of such lawsuits depends on various factors, such as the psychological profile of the journalist, the size and "power" of the media they work for, the duration of the legal process, and the amount of the awarded penalty. Some journalists continue to work in the same tone, while others are demotivated by such verdicts to continue writing critical articles. These and similar verdicts have a strong negative impact even on journalists who are not directly affected by the lawsuit.

# Confidentiality of journalists' sources is guaranteed by the legislation and respected by the authorities

**Final score for 2021: 5.03 / Final score for 2022: 5.03**

**The situation remained unchanged in 2022 compared to 2021. The protection of journalistic sources is regulated by law, and government bodies mostly adhere to it. Overall, journalists felt free to seek sources of information in 2022.**

According to the law, journalists are not obliged to disclose information about their sources, except in cases where revealing the source would serve a greater public interest than protecting it. In practice, these provisions are generally respected. Over the past year, there have been no sanctions against journalists who refused to reveal the identity of their sources. Pressures to disclose sources do exist, especially within media organizations (between publishers/management, editors-in-chief, and journalists), but journalists are reluctant to talk about such pressures, making it difficult to determine their number and frequency. The legislation does not prescribe a specific penalty in the event of a journalist refusing to disclose a source. During 2022, there were no recorded cases in which authorities confiscated a journalist's phone or computer and jeopardized a source. Journalists, in general, feel free to communicate with their sources.

# Other laws are implemented objectively and allow journalists and other media professionals to work freely and safely

**Final score for 2021: 3.07 / Final score for 2022: 3.13**

**The situation in 2022 showed slight improvement compared to 2021. According to publicly available data, there were no lawsuits in 2022 that appeared to aim at silencing journalists based on legal provisions related to the dissemination of disinformation, fear, panic, and similar actions. In Croatia, there is no official definition of SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), but among the numerous ongoing and concluded court cases, there are cases that exhibit elements of SLAPP and are likely to be categorized as such. Recognizing this, the Ministry of Culture and Media has established a working group with the aim of combatting SLAPP lawsuits. The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) is actively working towards signing an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior (MUP) to enhance the protection of journalists and prevent attacks.**

Most lawsuits against journalists in Croatia are typically initiated under the Criminal Code's provisions for defamation and insult. These lawsuits are often filed by high-ranking officials, politicians, judges, and entrepreneurs with political ties. Additionally, actions are taken based on the Civil Obligations Act and the Media Act, which pertain to compensation for violation of personal rights (such as the right to honor, reputation, and dignity), but there are also other cases. Proceedings under the Act on Misdemeanors are also initiated for breaches of public order and peace, and complaints are submitted to the Personal Data Protection Agency (for alleged breaches of personal data protection) and the Electronic Media Agency (regarding hate speech). During 2022, there were no recorded cases of the Prime Minister or other top state officials filing lawsuits under different laws. In 2022, such cases did not occur. In Croatia, SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) lawsuits are not defined by law, and there is no protection for journalists against such pressures. In 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Media established an Expert Working Group to shape a policy for combating SLAPP lawsuits. This

— INDICATOR 1.3

group includes representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Media, the Ministry of Justice and Administration, journalists, publishers, professional journalists' associations (CJA and TUCJ), the Judicial Academy, the Croatian Bar Association, and the academic community. In 2022, CJA recorded at least 945 lawsuits against journalists and media outlets in its annual survey. When comparing the amount of compensation claims and the purpose of the lawsuits that were filed, it can be concluded that among these lawsuits, there are also SLAPPs, which aim to discourage journalists from continuing their work. CJA, through its Center for the Protection of Freedom of Expression, in collaboration with lawyers, provides free legal assistance to journalists, and media organizations also have their lawyers. However, considering the absence of a SLAPP definition and the non-categorization of lawsuits based on this criterion, there is no official data indicating that there were SLAPP lawsuits in 2022 that would censor, intimidate, and silence journalists by burdening them with high defense costs. Although official data is lacking, there are cases that undoubtedly contain elements of SLAPP. In 2022, one physical attack on a journalist occurred during a protest. Representatives of CJA were in discussions with the Ministry of the Interior in 2021, initiating negotiations that should result in the definition of a joint action model through guidelines or protocols, based on the European Commission's Recommendations on Guaranteeing the Protection, Safety, and Strengthening of the Position of Journalists. In 2022, an initiative was launched to sign a document of joint action to improve and formalize collaboration by defining communication channels and processes, ultimately leading to better protection of journalists and prevention of attacks. It is expected that this document will be signed in 2023.

# Journalists are free to pursue their profession and to establish, join and participate in the work of their associations

**Final score for 2021: 5.07 / Final score for 2022: 5.07**

**The situation remained unchanged in 2022 compared to 2021. Journalists do not require licenses to practice journalism, and there were no attempts to introduce licensing in 2022. Journalists are generally allowed to report from all state institutions whose activities are considered public, although accreditation may be necessary for some institutions. The freedom for journalists to join professional associations continues to be upheld, although certain media owners may hold reservations about it.**

In Croatia, journalists do not require licenses to practice journalism, and there were no official initiatives to introduce any form of licensing in 2022. Reporting on the activities of all state bodies classified as public is accessible to journalists. However, for reporting from the Government, Parliament, and some other public institutions, journalists or editorial teams must typically obtain prior accreditation or apply for attendance. According to a survey conducted by the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) among its members, 52.5% of respondents reported instances where they were denied access to certain locations or events due to a lack of accreditation issued by the relevant authority or for some other reason. Journalists generally do not face significant challenges in proving their profession; they typically provide their Croatian Journalists' Association membership card or their media organization's identification or accreditation. It can occasionally happen that judges, during legal proceedings, question and express doubt about a journalist's status if the journalist has not completed formal journalism education. Journalists are free to join professional associations, and in Croatia, two major organizations that unite journalists are the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) and the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ). Some media owners may not see membership in professional associations like CJA and TUCJ in favourable light, perceiving it as a form of rebellion or protest. Apart from the CJA, there is an association of Croatian Journalists and Publicists (HNIP) in Croatia, founded in 2015, but it is nowhere near as representative as the CJA, nor does its existence diminish the importance of the CJA.

# Journalists' job position is stable and protected at the workplace

**Final score for 2021: 2.91 / Final score for 2022: 2.91**

**The situation in 2022 remained unchanged. A significant number of journalists work without employment contracts, with many of them functioning as freelancers or external collaborators. Salaries and working conditions vary widely, depending on numerous factors, resulting in a significant disparity. The journalism profession continues to face instability, with only three media outlets having collective contracts in place, and no National Collective Contract. Female journalists typically experience the same working conditions as their male counterparts, but age-based discrimination is observed despite this. Freelancers represent one of the most vulnerable groups among journalists, lacking employment contracts and the associated labor rights. While private media outlets have unions, owners often view such associations unfavorably. Journalists usually have access to legal assistance through their editorial offices, and the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) and the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ) provide their members with free legal support.**

Publicly available data regarding the employment of all journalists do not exist. According to data collected by the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ), among its 2,200 members only about 1,000 have permanent employment contracts, while the others are individual freelancers or occasional collaborators, with a smaller number being retirees. Under the Labor Law, only those journalists with signed employment contracts enjoy all legally guaranteed labor rights and better social security compared to those working on a freelance basis. Based on conversations with colleagues, the TUCJ has calculated approximate net salary averages for journalists in three categories: large electronic systems (national television) where journalists earn salaries ranging from 900.00 to 1,000.00 euros, while editors earn between 1,500.00 and 2,000.00 euros; national print media where journalists earn salaries between 750.00 and 1,000.00 euros,

— INDICATOR 1.5

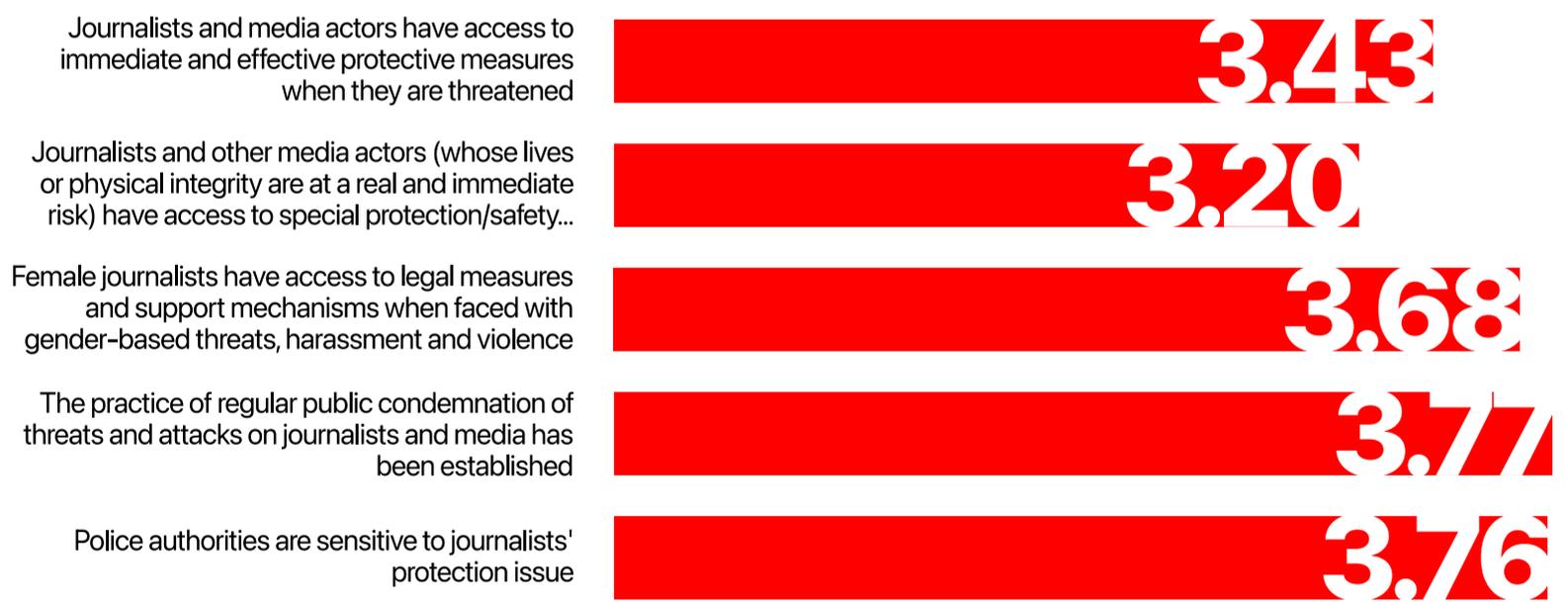
with editors earning between 1,000.00 and 1,600.00 euros; local media, where journalists earn salaries between 500.00 and 700.00 euros, with editors earning between 700.00 and 900.00 euros. For journalists with employment contracts, their salaries must be regularly paid according to the law, while freelance collaborators have varied experiences. If they work for financially stable media outlets, they generally receive regular compensation. Working conditions for journalists depend on several factors, including the media outlet they work for, the type and size of the media, and the legal framework that provides different rights depending on whether they are employed or freelance. Non-compliance with legal regulations is often a problem contributing to the instability of jobs in journalism. In some media, often online news portals, work outside regular working hours, especially weekend shifts, is not regulated. Compliance with the statutory requirement for media statutes, which should protect journalists and editorial independence, only started being partially followed through when tax privileges were granted to media owners with statutes under the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act. Some media outlets still lack statutes, or their statutes are not valid, and there is no oversight of compliance with these documents. Consequently, media outlets may appoint loyal rather than professional editors, which can lead to the persecution of journalists, with publishers enjoying inappropriate financial benefits. Female journalists mostly work under the same conditions as their male counterparts, and employment via employment contracts is generally not gender specific. Women working in the media as freelancers do not have the right to maternity or parental leave. There are indications that older female journalists may have more difficulty securing positions at television stations, and the appearance and age of female journalists are sometimes considered significant factors in hiring decisions. The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality responded to one such discriminatory treatment of female journalists at HRT (Croatian Radio Television).

In Croatia, however, there is a significant number of atypical workers in the media, such as freelancers, who, by not having employment contracts, do not have labor rights guaranteed by the Labor Law. The Trade Union of Croatian Journalists believes there is a need to create conditions in which freelancers can protect their labor rights and compensation through some form of collective agreement. Private media outlets have unions, but certain media owners perceive such associations as rebellion or protest and may not view them favorably. Collective contracts exist in three media outlets in Croatia, but there is no National Collective Contract. Media companies generally have a good practice of providing legal assistance to journalists who are sued for their reporting, despite there being no legal obligation to do so. Members of the Croatian Journalists' Association have access to advisory assistance from lawyers, and in some cases, pro bono representation in court. Members of the Union who have met the requisite membership duration are entitled to legal assistance in labor disputes.



# Due Prevention

3.57



1.00  
2.00  
3.00  
4.00  
5.00  
6.00  
7.00



Institutional mechanisms for immediate protection of journalists in cases of threats and attacks do not exist, officials encourage attacks on journalists and police officers treat journalists extremely harshly.

All institutional mechanisms are established for the immediate protection of journalists in the event of attacks, officials clearly and systematically discourage attacks on journalists and police authorities treat journalists with respect.

# Journalists and media professionals have access to immediate and effective protective measures when threatened

**Final score for 2021: 3.43 / Final score for 2022: 3.43**

**The situation remained unchanged in 2022 compared to 2021, with no special mechanisms for protecting journalists in Croatia – reports of attacks and threats can be filed with the police, just like for any other citizens. Hate speech aiming at hatred and violence is subject to criminal prosecution, handled by the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia. Other forms of hate speech, depending on their nature, can be reported to the Council for Electronic Media, ombudsmen, and the Journalists' Ethics Council. Police process every report of an attack, and in cases of serious threats and attacks, they systematically address them. In 2022, there were no cases where the police refused to accept a report of an attack or investigate a particular incident.**

Relevant public institutions in Croatia do not have established specific mechanisms for protecting journalists. Like other citizens, journalists can report threats and attacks to the police, which do not have a dedicated department exclusively for journalists. Reports of hate speech can be addressed to the Council for Electronic Media, one of the ombudsman offices (the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Gender Equality, the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities, and the Ombudsman for Children), and the Journalists' Ethics Council of the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA). If hate speech aims to incite violence and hatred, it falls under criminal prosecution, which is the responsibility of the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia. In 2022, the Ministry of Interior (MUP) received reports of 10 incidents related to individuals engaged in journalistic activities. In all 10 cases, journalists reported threats received through letters, phone calls, or social media. In one case, elements of a criminal offense were not established, while in one case, the police officers filed a criminal complaint against the specific perpetrator with the competent state prosecutor's office. In the remaining eight cases, criminal investigations or decisions by the State Attorney's Office were still ongoing at the end of 2022. If the police determine

— INDICATOR 2.1

that the reported incident is not a serious threat, they do not continue to investigate it. However, in cases of serious attacks and threats, they systematically address them. Threats against journalists related to their work are prosecuted ex officio, and journalists are considered persons engaged in public interest activities, thus leading to ex officio prosecution of perpetrators under the law. According to HND data, there were no instances in 2022 where the police ignored a journalist's report.

# Journalists and other media professionals (whose lives or physical integrity are at real and immediate risk) have access to special protection/safety mechanisms

**Final score for 2021: 3.20 / Final score for 2022: 3.20**

**In comparison to 2021, the situation remained unchanged. The Ministry of the Interior (MUP) is the only national-level institution that can provide physical protection to journalists, as well as other citizens. The police have provided twenty-four-hour protection to journalists on several occasions. There are several laws that identify specific protection needs for individuals who are victims. The CJA responds to attacks on journalists by reaching out to all necessary institutions, and through its Center for the Protection of Freedom of Expression, in collaboration with lawyers, offers journalists free legal assistance.**

At national level, the police in Croatia can provide physical protection to journalists, as well as other citizens, if they are at risk. In the past, the police have assigned protection to endangered journalists on several occasions. Croatia has several laws that cover the process of systematic risk assessment to identify specific protection needs, but they are not exclusively related to journalism as a profession. Article 99 of the Act on Police Duties and Authorities stipulates that while there are justified reasons, the police will appropriately "protect the victim and another person who has provided or may provide information important to the criminal procedure, or persons close to them if they are under threat from the perpetrator or other persons in connection with the criminal procedure." Witnesses in criminal proceedings are subject to the Witness Protection Act, where the Chief State Prosecutor can request the inclusion of an endangered person in the Witness Protection Program if a free statement of the witness in the criminal proceeding cannot be ensured in any other way. Journalists, like any other individuals reporting irregularities, have the right to judicial protection, protection in accordance with procedures for reporting irregularities, compensation

— INDICATOR 2.2

for damages, and protection of identity and confidentiality. The Act on the Protection of Whistleblowers explicitly prohibits hindering the reporting of irregularities. When an attack occurs against a journalist, the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) reacts within its powers and capabilities towards all necessary institutions. Within its Center for the Protection of Freedom of Expression, CJA, in collaboration with lawyers, provides journalists with free legal assistance.

# Female journalists have access to legal measures and support mechanisms when faced with gender-based threats, harassment and violence

**Final score for 2021: 3.68 / Final score for 2022: 3.68**

**In 2022, the situation did not improve compared to 2021; victims generally lack trust in the protection system. While Croatia has signed, ratified, and incorporated the Istanbul Convention into some of its laws and introduced new acts, protocols, and regulations to better protect women, there are still institutions and organizations that serve as mechanisms for women's protection. Despite the foundation for improved protection of women, they continue to be at risk. Women who are victims of sexual harassment are typically subordinate to the harasser, younger, report harassment anonymously, lack trust in the protection system, and often face consequences such as self-censorship or worsened mental health.**

The Istanbul Convention has been incorporated into Croatian law through a series of acts, protocols, and amendments to existing legislation. Croatia signed the Istanbul Convention in 2013 and ratified it in 2018, at which point it began to be enforced in the country. The Act on the Ratification of the Istanbul Convention, also known as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, was enacted. Croatia also adopted the National Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence for the period from 2017 to 2022, which includes the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Since the ratification of the Convention, several protocols have been in effect, including the Protocol on Action in Cases of Sexual Violence, the Protocol on Action in Cases of Domestic Violence, and the Protocol on Integration/ Reintegration of Victims of Human Trafficking. In early 2020, measures for stricter punishment were introduced, along with rules for the expedited and efficient prosecution of individuals committing crimes of violence against women, children, and within families. Additionally, employees of the social care and education systems were granted official status under the law (Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Act, and Domestic Violence Protection Act). The Law on Free Legal Aid

— INDICATOR 2.3

guarantees free legal assistance to victims of violence, which includes primary and secondary legal aid. This type of legal aid applies to all individuals equally, not just women. Several institutions in Croatia serve as mechanisms for the protection of women, including the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality (an independent institution for combating discrimination in the field of gender equality) and the Ombudspersons (appointed by the Croatian Parliament to protect and promote human rights and freedoms, serving as the central body for combating discrimination and functioning as the National Preventive Mechanism for the Protection of Persons Deprived of Their Liberty). Throughout Croatia, there are approximately 60 organizations or their branches that focus on the safety and legal protection of victims of gender-based violence. There is a national hotline for victims of criminal offenses and misdemeanours, as well as free legal and psychological counselling services. However, these are projects run by non-governmental organizations with the support of donations from the European Union and relevant ministries. In 2022, female journalists did not reach out to support organizations, although it is possible that such reports remained confidential due to the protection of the journalists' identities. The police provided data only on the number of journalists without specifying their gender. Female journalists who experience discrimination or harassment in their newsrooms can contact one of the aforementioned institutions. According to research on experiences of sexual harassment and harassment in the media conducted by Dina Vozab, a professor at the Faculty of Political Science, the majority of participants in the study were victims of some form of sexual harassment, most commonly from colleagues in the newsroom or in the field. The victims are usually in a lower position of power and younger in age. The consequences of harassment often include self-censorship or mental health problems. Harassment incidents are not well-known because they are silenced or rarely reported, mostly due to distrust. As many as 44.9% of respondents stated that they try to ignore or disregard harassment.

# The practice of regular public condemnation of threats and attacks on journalists and media has been established

**Final score for 2021: 3.77 / Final score for 2022: 3.77**

**In 2022, the unchanged situation has led to a worsening of journalists' safety. State institutions, public officials, political parties, and politicians in general inadequately condemn attacks on journalists and often themselves create fertile ground for attackers. Journalists are frequently the target of verbal insults and attacks from powerful politicians. Citizens often adopt the narrative of politicians, whom they perceive as a "permission" for attacks, and openly threaten journalists. In Croatia, an unfavorable atmosphere for journalists still exists, in which they are seen as responsible for everything.**

Influential political parties and state institutions occasionally condemn the most serious attacks on journalists, but there is no established regular practice of consistently condemning all attacks on journalists. Public officials, political leaders, and politicians in general rarely condemn attacks on journalists. Such condemnations most often follow sharp reactions from professional associations and pressure from international organizations. Journalists frequently endure unfounded verbal attacks from various politicians and powerful figures. Public officials, including the president and the prime minister, sometimes make statements targeting individual journalists or media outlets. This leaves room in the public sphere for potential attackers, with the highest-ranking officials serving as examples. In Croatia, the atmosphere in which journalists are blamed for everything still exists, and public officials often contribute to such an atmosphere.

# Police authorities are sensitive to journalists' protection issues

**Final score for 2021: 3.76 / Final score for 2022: 3.76**

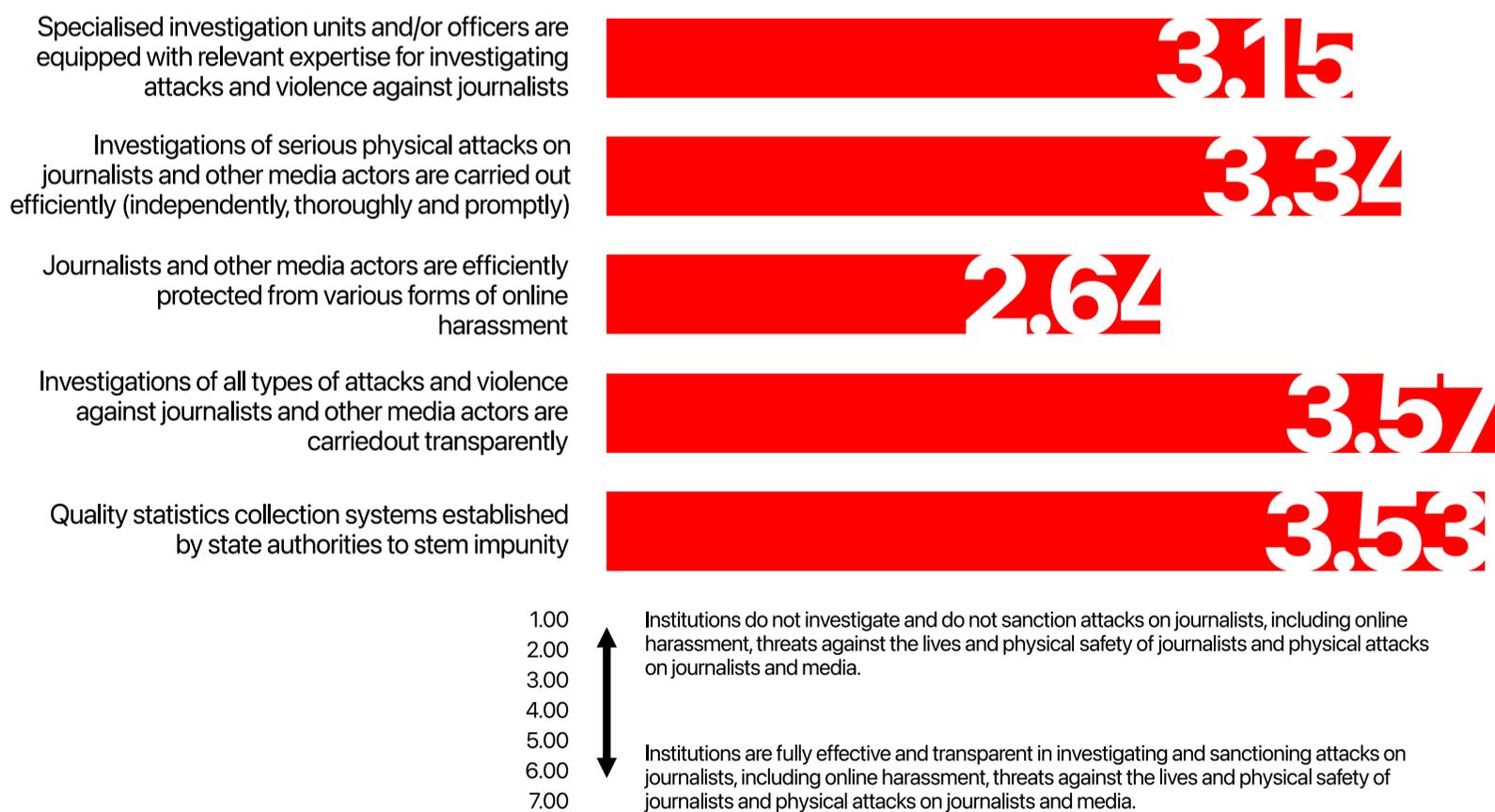
**In 2022, the situation remained unchanged compared to 2021. Police officers continue to receive annual training, but these training sessions do not include specific attention to journalists. The police have not yet adopted protocols related to handling journalists or preventing attacks on journalists, but they have shown willingness to cooperate with journalists' associations.**

Police officers undergo annual training on various aspects of the Criminal Code but do not receive specific education related to the role of journalists in a democratic society. Law enforcement authorities have not yet adopted protocols or guidelines to prevent harassment, intimidation, or physical attacks on journalists. Generally, the police demonstrate a positive attitude toward collaborating with journalists' associations when it comes to ensuring the safety of journalists. In 2021, the Croatian Journalists' Association and the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists initiated negotiations with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior. These negotiations were intended to result in the definition of a common model of action through guidelines or protocols in cases of mutual interest, based on the European Commission's Recommendations on guaranteeing the protection, safety, and strengthening the position of journalists. However, as of now, such a protocol has not been signed.



## Due Process

3.25



# Specialized investigation units and/or officers are equipped with relevant expertise for investigating attacks and violence against journalists

**Final score for 2021: 3.15 / Final score for 2022: 3.15**

**The situation in 2022 remained unchanged. The Ministry of the Interior and the State Attorney's Office still do not have specialized departments exclusively dealing with attacks and violence against journalists. There are still no documents in place to aid in more effective prosecution of those who attack and threaten journalists. Threats against journalists are prosecuted ex officio, and journalists are recognized in the Criminal Code as individuals performing tasks of public interest.**

The Republic of Croatia's State Attorney's Office and the Ministry of the Interior do not have established specialized departments exclusively dedicated to addressing violence against journalists. There is a need for better education of the police and the State Attorney's Office to enhance their understanding of the specific nature of journalistic work. There are no guidelines or other documents in place that would ensure effective detection and prosecution of violence solely against journalists. According to the Criminal Code, for threats directed at a journalist in connection with their work, as specified in Article 139, paragraph 3, the perpetrator is prosecuted ex officio. Further protection for journalists in the performance of their duties is provided by Article 315.b of the Criminal Code, which covers coercion against individuals performing tasks of public interest or in public service, and for which the perpetrator is also prosecuted ex officio. Collaboration between the staff of relevant institutions regarding the investigation of threats and attacks against journalists depends on the severity of the cases in question.

# Investigations of serious physical attacks on journalists and other media actors are carried out efficiently (independently, thoroughly and promptly)

**Final score for 2021: 3.34 / Final score for 2022: 3.34**

**The situation in 2022 remained unchanged. Investigations in cases involving threats to journalists remain independent of the perpetrators, and depending on the severity of the cases, background circumstances are considered during investigations. Some cases are resolved promptly, while others take years to even begin trial proceedings. Procedural deadlines are not a problem in investigations if there is an interest in resolving the case swiftly, while in all other cases, procedures can take from several months to several years. Journalism is recognized in the Criminal Code as a profession carried out in the public interest.**

Investigations conducted in cases involving threats to journalists are independent of those who have caused harm or injury. Depending on the severity of the cases, background circumstances are taken into account during investigations. The speed of the investigation and prosecution varies from case to case. Generally, the judicial process is quite slow, as demonstrated by the case of the attack on journalist Živana Šušak Živković on April 12, 2020, where the verdict was delivered only on November 7, 2022. In the case of investigative journalist Dušan Miljuš, who was assaulted with baseball bats in front of his apartment building in Zagreb 14 years ago, the trial has not yet begun. In 2010, during the "Shock 3" operation, many individuals were arrested in the search for culprits. Investigations were conducted against several of them, but after a six-month investigation, the Prosecutor's Office decided not to file charges due to insufficient evidence, and the case was returned to the Zagreb Police Directorate for the collection of evidence against the perpetrators and the instigator. In practice, the State Attorney's Office (DORH) independently decides

— INDICATOR 3.2

whether to initiate proceedings or whether there are elements of a criminal offense in the attack. If DORH rejects a criminal complaint, the journalist is left on their own. They can choose to pursue criminal prosecution themselves, which means covering legal expenses, including the cost of the proceedings if they fail to prove the criminal offense. Most journalists cannot bear such costs. When there is a "higher" interest in swiftly resolving a case, there is no time issue due to the procedures that need to be followed. Criminal complaints are submitted to the state prosecutor, who examines the validity of the complaint. This process can take months or even years, during which time the victim has no information about what is happening. Attacks on journalists are generally classified as criminal offenses. Journalism is recognized in the Criminal Code as a profession carried out in the public interest. Threats made against journalists in relation to their work are covered by Article 139, paragraph 3, of the Criminal Code, for which the perpetrator is prosecuted *ex officio*. Further protection for journalists in the performance of their duties is provided by Article 315.b of the Criminal Code, which covers coercion against individuals performing tasks of public interest or in public service, and for which the perpetrator is also prosecuted *ex officio*.

# Journalists and other media professionals are efficiently protected from various forms of online harassment

**Final score for 2021: 2.64 / Final score for 2022: 2.64**

**In 2022, there was no significant change compared to 2021, but the number of reports of online harassment was lower than the previous year. The most common form of online harassment against journalists is through social media and comments on news portals. This year, threats were reported via messages, email, and a hacking attack. The implementation of the new Law on Electronic Media and its provisions regarding comments on news portals has not yet shown significant results. While other laws are applied when an attack occurs, better prevention of such attacks is needed. Journalists rarely report online threats and attacks because they consider them to be part of their job.**

The most common form of harassment against journalists continues to be through the internet, with journalists receiving messages, as well as vulgar and threatening comments posted by users on the online editions of certain media outlets. According to the Electronic Media Act, the real authors of written comments are responsible for their content, and they must be registered on the platform where they are commenting. If this is not the case, or if the publisher has not taken steps to register users, then the publisher can also be held responsible. The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia has a "Red Button" on its website, which allows for reporting of online harassment of children. While the Criminal Code does not explicitly mention the internet and harassment together, it does recognize the prohibition of internet access as a measure for those who have committed a criminal offense online. Harassment is recognized in the Act on Combating Discrimination and is also mentioned in several places in the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence, the Act on Gender Equality, the Act on Whistleblower Protection, the Labor Law, and other similar acts and subordinate regulations. As one of the measures, the Criminal Code also mentions a restraining order against harassment and stalking, which can be imposed on the perpetrator for a period of one to five years if there is a

— INDICATOR 3.3

risk that the perpetrator may commit the same criminal offense against the persons they have harassed in the past. Journalists rarely report such forms of harassment because they consider them to be part of their job. In 2022, journalists reported threatening messages via communication apps, threatening emails, as well as one hacking attack. The implementation of the new Electronic Media Act and its provisions regarding comments on news portals have not yet yielded significant results. Other laws are applied, but only when attacks occur. There is a need for better prevention of such attacks.

# Investigations of all types of attacks and violence against journalists and other media professionals are carried out transparently

**Final score for 2021: 3.57 / Final score for 2022: 3.57**

**The situation has not changed in 2022. During the examination of the merit of the complaint at the State Prosecutor's Office, which can last for years, the victim has no access to information. Some information is made public by the courts and the prosecution on their websites, while some information can be obtained through inquiries by journalists. In discussions with lawyers, it was not determined whether any of the information published by these institutions was untrue.**

Victims often do not have effective access to the investigative process. The procedure typically involves filing criminal complaints with the State Prosecutor, who examines the merit of the complaint, a process that can take months or even years. During all this time, the victim has no information about the proceedings. Only if the State Prosecutor decides to bring forward charges, the victim has the right to receive information about the proceedings, based on which they can protect their rights. These pieces of information are not automatically provided; both sides in the criminal proceedings have access to the case file, so the victim and their lawyer must be proactive. Some information is made public by the courts and the prosecution on their websites, while certain information can be obtained through inquiries by journalists. In discussions with lawyers, it was not determined whether the courts and the prosecution have published any untrue information.

# Quality statistics collection systems are established by state authorities to stem impunity

**Final score for 2021: 3.53 / Final score for 2022: 3.53**

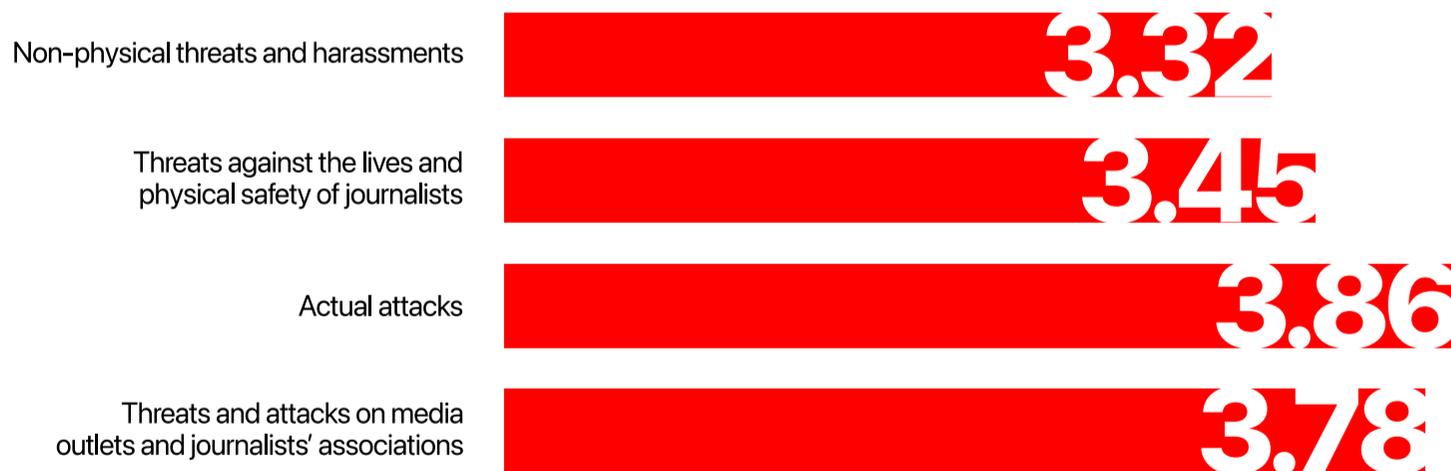
**The situation has not changed in 2022. In Croatia, there are still no publicly available statistical data specifically related to journalists that are recorded by government bodies and institutions. The Ministry of the Interior and the State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Croatia maintain their statistics in cases where journalists are the victims, but these statistics are not publicly accessible. The Ministry of Justice and Administration also keeps statistics on civil and criminal proceedings involving journalists and provides this data to CJA upon request. The data CJA has access to are not sorted by gender, ethnic background, and other sociodemographic criteria.**

In Croatia, there are no publicly available statistical data specifically related to journalists that are recorded by government bodies and institutions. The Ministry of the Interior provided us with data this year on the number of cases they processed in which journalists were the victims, but these data are quite limited and do not contain specific information about the cases themselves. The State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Croatia monitors criminal offenses committed against journalists for which prosecution is initiated ex officio and keeps records based on data provided by lower state prosecutor's offices. At the request of the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA), the Ministry of Justice and Administration annually provides CJA with statistical data on lawsuits filed against journalists. These data include the number of active and completed criminal cases involving journalist defendants, categorized by years (2016 – 2022), the article of the law under which they were filed, and the type of closure (if completed). They also provide data on the progress of civil cases in which journalist defendants are involved in all municipal courts in Croatia. The data table presents, by year, received, resolved, and unresolved cases for compensation and correction of information. However, these data are not sorted by gender, ethnic background, and other sociodemographic criteria.

# IV

## Actual Safety

3.60



1.00  
2.00  
3.00  
4.00  
5.00  
6.00  
7.00



There are severe cases of threats and actual attacks against journalists and media organisations, including killings.

There have been no cases of actual attacks, no threats against the lives and physical safety of journalists, nor there have been non-physical threats and harassment against the journalists and media.

# Non-physical threats and harassments

These include: surveillance or tracking, harassment by telephone calls, arbitrary harassment by representatives of judicial or administrative bodies, aggressive statements by public officials, other forms of pressure that may jeopardize the safety of journalists in the performance of their duties. These types of threats do not include mobbing and violent behavior in the work environment.

**Final score for 2021: 3.24 / Final score for 2022: 3.32**

**In 2022, 7 non-physical threats to journalists were registered, which is significantly less than in 2021, when 14 such threats were recorded. Despite this, it seems that the situation has not significantly improved compared to the previous year.**

- 22.11.2022. – In the folders of the tablet seized by the police from Dražen Koštan, who was indicted on November 21, 2022, for preparing terrorism, documents were found indicating that Koštan was monitoring around sixty individuals or institutions, including Faktograf editor Petar Vidov, columnists Tomislav Klauški and Ante Tomić, as well as N1 television.
- 15.10.2022. – Former Member of Parliament and member of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Stevo Culej, current president of the Association of Special Police from the Homeland War, told journalist Gordana Duhaček that he would wish the journalist to be raped.
- 11.10.2022. – Hrvoje Zovko received a letter addressed to the Croatian Journalists' Association (HND) in which, among other things, it states: "And you, Chetnik from Imotski, don't think that we don't follow your actions and your leading role in that Chetnik den – everything is seen and known. The hand of justice will reach you, be sure of that." The letter is signed by "VOLUNTEERS OF THE HOMELAND WAR, READY FOR THE HOMELAND." (a pro-nazi salute from era of WWII)

– INDICATOR 4.1

- 1.8.2022. – Maja Sever was filming the usurpation of the coast and the devastation of maritime property on the island of Tijat, near Šibenik. A man, who was identified as the owner of a restaurant, approached her, shouting and insulting her. He demanded that she delete the footage from her mobile phone and then took her phone.
- 4.4.2022. – In early April, journalist Hassan Haidar Diab from Večernji list received threats after writing an article about the Chechen leader Ramzan Kadirov. Now, in the same arrogant tone, Matvej Sidorov, former media advisor to the Russian ambassador in Croatia, has addressed him. Sidorov reacted to the publication of threats to Haidar Diab through the Telegram application and wrote, among other things: "Hey, greetings Hassan, another great article! But it's not really up to date. Why didn't you publish it while we were in Zagreb?"
- 7.3.2022. – The editorial board of the portal Direktno.hr received a message on their editorial email in which it said, "Message to the owners of Direktno.hr portal: We are monitoring your pro-Russian activities. Consequences will follow."
- 6.2.2022. – Split's Deputy Mayor Bojan Ivošević, after a published article that he did not like, contacted Nikolina Lulić, editor and journalist of the City section of Slobodna Dalmacija, by phone and verbally attacked her in a rough manner. As reported by the daily newspaper, Ivošević told her, among other things, "I will drink your blood."

# Threats against the lives and physical safety of journalists

These may include: death threats to the journalist, their family and friends or a journalist source; threats of causing grievous bodily harm to a journalist, their family and friends or a journalistic source. These threats can be direct or through third parties, through electronic or face-to-face communication, implicit and explicit.

**Final score for 2021: 3.18/ Final score for 2022: 3.45**

**Death threats and threats to the physical security of journalists were the second most common type of attack against journalists in 2022. There were 5 such threats, two of which were in person, one through a letter, and two through electronic communication, such as social media, emails, or comments under media articles.**

Threats against the lives and physical safety of journalists are the second most frequent form of attacks on journalists in 2021, and there had been fifteen such threats registered, one of which was in person, while the other fourteen occurred through some form of electronic communication, through social networks, emails or comments under articles in the media. Online space is a very welcoming ground for various forms of attacks on journalists. One example of such cases is the attack on the journalist Boris Dežulović. After the publication of a column entitled "Jebo vas Vukovar" in which the author questioned the abuse of the sacrifice of Vukovar for political purposes, Dežulović fell victim to comments on the column, messages in the inbox of his personal Facebook profile, as well as getting publicly condemned by both the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs and the mayor of Vukovar. Dežulović has so far received hundreds of threats over this column, in which he is insulted, where it is said that he needs to be stripped of his Croatian citizenship and expelled from Croatia, listing precisely where the journalist lives, and that he should be murdered.

- 15.11.2022. – Hrvoje Zovko received a letter addressed to the Croatian Journalists' Association in which someone refers to him as "CHETNIK HRVOJE." Among other things, the letter states, "TO ALL OF YOU AND ESPECIALLY DEŽULOVIĆ, I WISH FOR CROATIA TO KILL YOU WITH PREMEDITATION OR NEGLIGENCE, WHICHEVER." The sender signed off as "HOS member" and added "FOR THE HOMELAND READY." (a pro-nazi salute from era of WWII)

– INDICATOR 4.2

- 26.10.2022. – The trial for the criminal offense of fraud began in Dubrovnik for Zoran Čegar, a police officer from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Journalists from the Center for Investigative Journalism (CIN) in Sarajevo approached Čegar outside the courthouse, where he started insulting them. After a CIN journalist requested a comment from Čegar, he reacted aggressively and threatened: "I'll rip out your throat!"
- 8.9.2022. – Marcello Rosanda, a journalist from Glas Istre, received insults and death threats due to an article published in the newspaper, on the website, and the Facebook page of Glas Istre, titled "Pula Restaurateur Develops a Business with All the Elements of Quackery. Providing Advice to Seriously Ill Patients."
- 9.8.2022. – Journalist Toni Perinić from Zadarski list received threats after publishing an investigation into a case of tourist fraud, for which the Tourist Board received at least 30 complaints.
- 22.6.2022. – Journalist Mateo Pejaković wrote several critically-toned articles about the head of the Administrative Department for Municipal Services and Management of the City of Požega on his portal. After the articles were published, Pejaković encountered Mandel at a local establishment in Požega, and they spoke for a few minutes. Following their conversation, Mandel's husband, Ivan, appeared and verbally clashed with Pejaković. Allegedly, he attempted to grab Pejaković by the throat while his wife tried to prevent it. According to sources, Ivan Mandel reportedly pointed his finger at the journalist and told him, "You're dead."

# Actual attacks

This type of attack can include actual physical or mental injury, kidnapping, intrusion into a home or newsroom, confiscation of equipment, unauthorized detention of journalists, attempted liquidation, etc.

**Final score for 2021: 3.72 / Final score for 2022: 3.86**

**The number of physical attacks in 2022 decreased compared to 2021. One physical attack was recorded.**

There was one physical assault recorded in 2022, and like the previous year, it occurred during a protest. The initiative "Freedom Together" held a protest on September 10, 2022, at the Square of Victims of Fascism in Zagreb under the slogan "We're firing you." The protest was directed against the government of Andrej Plenković and the HDZ party, and the protesters demanded the government's resignation, the holding of early elections within 90 days, and the organization of all referendums that had not been called yet. During the protest, one of the protesters aggressively pushed journalist Bojana Guberac, who worked for the TV channel Vida, while hurling insults.

# Threats and attacks on media outlets and journalists' associations

Threats relate to: actual attacks on the property of the media and organizations, their staff, seizure of equipment, aggressive statements by officials, etc.

**Final score for 2021: 3.73 / Final score for 2022: 3.78**

**The number of attacks on the media and professional organizations is in a slight decline compared to 2021. Despite this, insults bordering on threats directed at the media and professional associations are not abating.**

In 2022, there was one hacking attack on the editorial office of Slobodna Dalmacija. However, media outlets regularly face various insults that border on threats, which they regularly receive via email and on social media.

Original title  
Western Balkans Journalists' Safety Index  
Narrative report Croatia 2022

Publishers  
Croatian Journalists' Association  
Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia



Author  
Monika Kutri

Legal Expert  
Vanja Jurić

Media Expert  
Đurđica Klancir

Translator  
Josipa Šiklić

Design  
comma.rs

This publication was produced with the assistance of the European Union and Civil Rights Defenders. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia and may in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union and Civil Rights Defenders.

