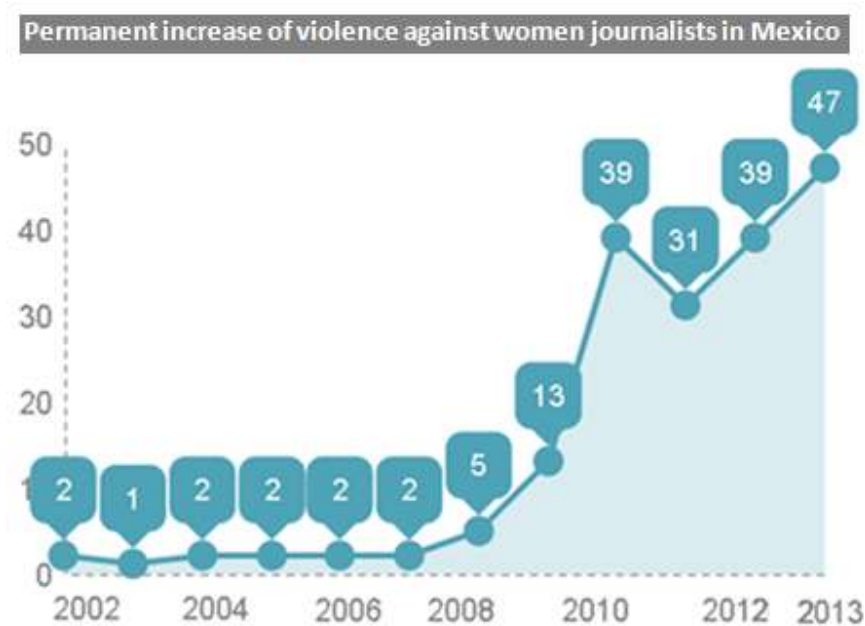


Impunity and Violence Against Female Journalists in Mexico¹

In response to the heightened violence against female journalists in Mexico over the last ten years, Communication and Information on Women (CIMAC, for its acronym in Spanish)—a nonprofit organization formed 26 years ago that specializes in journalism with a gender perspective—has made this issue a core aspect of our advocacy work. We work with the government, journalists, and civil society organizations with the goal of eliminating the gender-based violence that female journalists experience daily because of their critical and independent journalism.



Among the objectives that CIMAC has worked toward since its foundation, we consistently work to promote networks that provide female journalists with adaptable, equitable, and respectful resources for professionalization and empowerment.

Toward this goal, we have documented cases of violence against female journalists. From 2002 to 2013, CIMAC documented 184 such cases, and the aggression has only intensified during the past

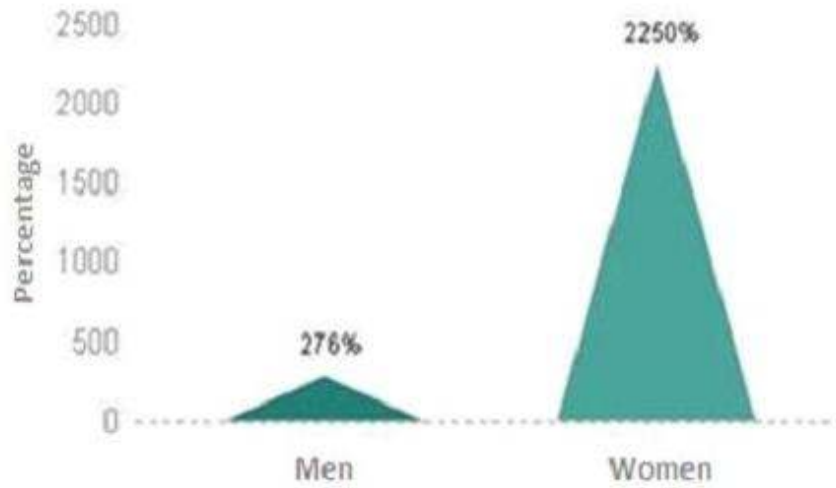
ten years. Of these incidents, 11 were cases of femicide, a phenomenon that has transformed Mexico into one of the most dangerous places to practice journalism in the world, according to the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN).

The Mexican State uses gender-based violence as a mechanism of control against these women, a tactic which contributes to the unequal representation of female correspondents in positions of power within the media. The gravity of the situation is only compounded by the violent context in which they work, women's position in society, and the normalization of this violence in Mexico.

¹ Communication and Information on Women (CIMAC), *Diagnostic Report on Violence Against Female Journalists in Mexico, 2010-2011: Sept. 2012*. Mexico City, http://www.cimac.org.mx/cedoc/publicaciones_cimac/Informe_violenciacontramujeresperiodistas.pdf;

Communication and Information on Women (CIMAC), *Impunity: Violence Against Female Journalists, a legal analysis: 2014*. Mexico City, http://www.cimacnoticias.com.mx/sites/default/files/informe_impunidadcimac.pdf.

Violence increase against Mexican journalists disaggregated by gender



The alarming number of murders and death threats against male journalists obscures the violence suffered by their female colleagues because the latter cases represent the minority, both in the type and number of attacks. There is a lack of understanding of the structural obstacles that normalize violence against women, thus making it difficult to raise awareness about these attacks or file a formal complaint, let alone provoke an official response.

Thus, due to the lack of coverage of these attacks, violence against women has been normalized and disregarded as a mere “occupational hazard” faced by journalists. This dismissive attitude places female correspondents in a disadvantaged situation, making it all the more difficult for them to access paths to justice and reparations for personal and professional damages resulting from these attacks.

Between 2002 and 2013, attacks against female journalists increased by more than 2,200 percent, while attacks against male journalists increased by 276 percent.

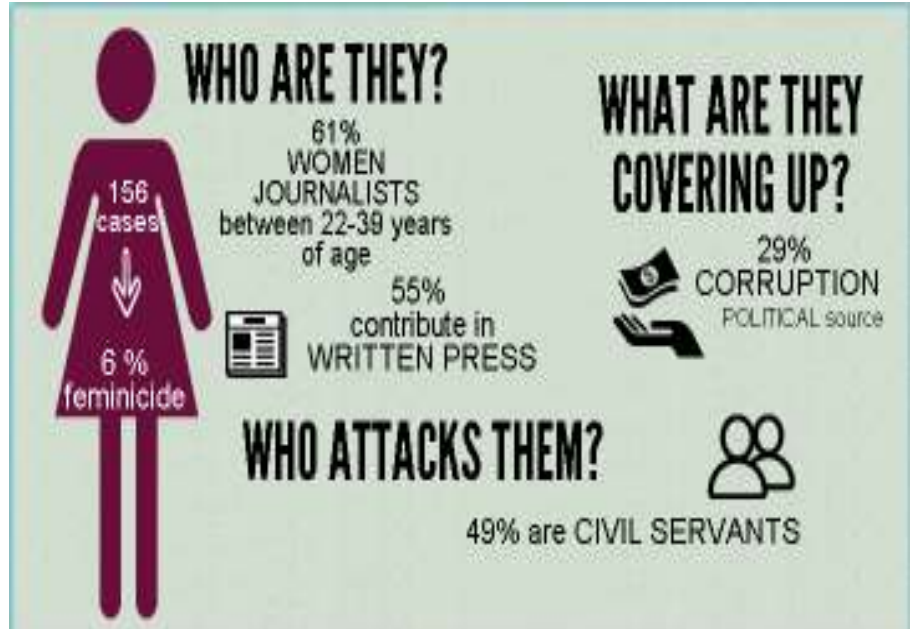
Of the 32 states in Mexico, there is not one that has not experienced a case of violence against journalists. In the states where we do not have an official record of such cases, we know that victims of violence have been unable to denounce these crimes through legal avenues or civil society organizations due to fear of retaliation.



The states with the highest number of violent crimes against journalists are: the Federal District with 40 cases (26 percent); Oaxaca with 22 cases (14 percent); and Veracruz with 20 cases (13 percent).

By recording and documenting these cases, we identified various obstacles that prevent journalists from accessing justice, which leads to increased impunity.

Our key interest is not only to yield punishment for these crimes, but also to procure legitimate reparations for damages and guarantee that this violence will not continue. Currently, not a single one of these cases has been rectified.



Among the cases in which a formal complaint was filed, we found:

Women journalists confront all forms of violence



-An absence of research that considers the role of women in journalism or uses a gender and human rights perspective.

-Inadequate procedures for the safekeeping and quality insurance of the evidence, tools, and/or products of the crime, which violates the methodology for carrying out an extensive, speedy, and effective legal investigation.

-A lack of security measures that would enable women to freely and safely practice journalism.

-Legal obstacles that obscure the facts and impede official decisions from being made.

-Reports that lack gender analysis and fail to establish an appropriate plan of action to be followed after an incident.

There has been progress in the recognition and awareness of violence against female journalists, however CIMAC demands that the Mexican government guarantee full safety for these female correspondents □ a demand they have yet to fulfill.

We urge the Mexican government to assume responsibility for these attacks and to take the following actions:

- Comply with all of the recommendations published by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),² the Universal Period Review (UPR),³ and the Organization of American States' Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.⁴
- Guarantee women a life free of violence that includes unlimited and secure participation in the media, the ability to exercise their liberty of expression and full access to justice and reparations.
- Release official records of attacks on the freedom of expression with data organized by gender, identifying appropriate security measures and plans of actions for journalists to help them avoid and address violence.

We urge international human rights organizations to take the following actions:

- Closely monitor all of the promises of the Mexican government related to this issue and hold them accountable.
- Continue to observe, evaluate and publish recommendations for the Mexican state on issues related to the protection and integrity of women journalists.

We are a civil society organization of journalists who focus on gender and human rights issues. Working alongside other journalists, community groups, politicians, and academics, we aim to raise awareness about the social condition of women and girls in order, promote media with a gender perspective and contribute to an equal, just, and democratic society.

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² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *CEDAW Final Observations* (New York: United Nations, 2012), http://132.247.1.49/PAPIME306511/pdfs/Anex2_ObservesfinalesCocedaw.pdf.

³ United Nations General Assembly, *Preliminary Report by the Work Group for the Universal Period Review (UPR)*, A/HRC/WG.6/17/L.5 (October 22nd to November 1st 2013), http://cmdpdh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/A_HRC_WG-6_17_L-5_Mexicoss-1.pdf.

⁴ Report of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, *Annual Report of the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights 2013 Volume II*. Washington DC, 2013, http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/expresion/docs/informes/2014_04_22_IA_2013_ESP_FINAL_WEB.pdf.