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# POSITION AND SAFETY OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN KOSOVO

**This report represents the first in-depth analysis of the position and safety of women journalists in Kosovo, a topic of growing importance as the media landscape and gender equality continue to evolve in the region.**

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## 1. Introduction

This report represents the first in-depth analysis of the position and safety of women journalists in Kosovo, a topic of growing importance as the media landscape and gender equality continue to evolve in the region. As journalism evolves in the digital age, the role of women in the profession needs more attention, especially in post-conflict societies like Kosovo. Women's participation in journalism is critical not just for gender equality but also for ensuring diverse perspectives and representation within media outlets.

The main aim of this report is to explore two connected themes: the safety of women journalists and their position within newsrooms across Kosovo. Both are essential for understanding the challenges women journalists face. On one hand, safety concerns outside the newsroom, such as harassment, threats, and violence, remain significant barriers to free expression and women's ability to work without fear. On the other hand, the internal dynamics within newsrooms often create additional challenges, such as gender biases and limited opportunities for career advancement. Both themes are crucial in shaping the professional lives of women journalists in Kosovo.

By examining these areas, the report seeks to highlight the systemic challenges faced by women, from everyday biases and microaggressions to more serious safety concerns. It also proposes practical solutions to address these challenges, aiming to create a more equitable and secure environment for women in journalism. The ultimate goal is to help build a media landscape that not only empowers women journalists but also allows them to thrive and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive media sector.

This report is based on qualitative data gathered through two focus groups, each with 12 women journalists from various media outlets across Kosovo. These focus groups provided valuable insights into the real-world experiences of women in journalism, sharing their struggles, successes, and perspectives on the issues that matter most to them. In addition to the focus group discussions, a detailed questionnaire was distributed to further understand the challenges women journalists face. A stakeholder analysis was also conducted to evaluate the wider media landscape, examining policies and support structures for women journalists, as well as the actions of key organizations and stakeholders in addressing these challenges.

The combination of focus group discussions, questionnaires, and stakeholder analysis offers a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities for women journalists in Kosovo. These methods have allowed for a deeper exploration of the factors contributing to the unequal treatment of women in the media industry, as well as a better understanding of the support systems available to them. The findings of this report aim to serve as a key resource for policymakers, media outlets, and advocacy groups working to create a more just and equal media environment for women in Kosovo.



Through this analysis, the report will highlight not only the issues but also the potential solutions and opportunities for reform. It is hoped that this study will contribute to ongoing efforts to improve the safety, recognition, and opportunities for women journalists in Kosovo and beyond.

## **2. Methodology**

The methodology for this report used three main methods: focus groups, a structured questionnaire, and stakeholder analysis. These methods worked together to provide a full and accurate picture of the challenges faced by women journalists in Kosovo, with a focus on both their safety in the field and their position within newsrooms. By using these different approaches, the report aimed to collect a wide range of perspectives, offering a deeper understanding of the issues women journalists face.

### **2.1 Focus Groups**

Two focus groups were held, each consisting of 12 participants from different media outlets across Kosovo. The participants were selected to represent a variety of media types, including public, broadcast, and online platforms. The first focus group discussed the challenges women face inside newsrooms, such as gender bias, limited career growth opportunities, and workplace harassment. The second group focused on the safety concerns women journalists experience while reporting in the field, including harassment, threats, and physical violence. These discussions aimed to create an open environment where participants could freely share their experiences and ideas for improvement, fostering a safe space for dialogue.

The focus groups were led by Qendresa Tereshani and Leonida Molliqaj who guided the conversation to ensure everyone had the opportunity to speak. A combination of structured and open-ended questions was used to delve into the participants' experiences. The sessions were recorded and transcribed to accurately capture all comments for later analysis.

### **2.2 Questionnaire**

To complement the focus group discussions, a structured questionnaire was distributed to the participants. The questionnaire was designed to gather individual responses on key issues such as career advancement, workplace harassment, gender bias, safety concerns while reporting, and the available support systems within media outlets. It included both multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions, allowing participants to share detailed feedback on their personal experiences.

The responses from the questionnaire helped enrich the findings from the focus groups. By combining individual answers with the insights gathered from group discussions, the report was able to provide a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by women journalists in Kosovo.



## **2.3 Stakeholder Analysis**

Another key element of the methodology was the stakeholder analysis, which involved engaging with important organizations and regulatory bodies within Kosovo's media landscape. These included the Independent Media Commission (IMC), the Press Council of Kosovo (PCK), Gender Equality Office, Free Legal Aid and other media-related organizations.. The objective was to understand the existing policies and practices aimed at supporting women journalists and to examine how these organizations are addressing the challenges identified in the focus groups.

## **2.4 Triangulation Approach**

The triangulation approach, which combined focus groups, a questionnaire, and stakeholder analysis, provided a thorough and reliable analysis. By collecting data from various sources—journalists, media organizations, and regulatory bodies—the research offered a comprehensive view of the situation. This method allowed the report to identify both shared challenges and differences in the experiences of women journalists, enhancing the reliability of the findings.

This approach also helped to ensure the accuracy of the results. By cross-referencing information from the focus groups, questionnaire responses, and stakeholder input, the research was able to draw stronger, more reliable conclusions about the challenges women journalists face in Kosovo. As a result, the recommendations in the report are backed by solid evidence, which increases their potential to bring about meaningful change.

# **3. Findings**

## **3.1 Challenges Faced by Women Journalists in the Newsroom**

Despite comprising 65% of the journalist database within the Association of Journalists of Kosovo, women journalists continue to face significant barriers to their professional growth. These challenges are not only systemic but are also deeply embedded in the cultural and institutional structures of the media industry. The persistent gender inequality in Kosovo's media landscape underscores the pressing need for reform and a paradigm shift toward inclusive, fair, and equitable practices within media organizations.

### **3.1.1 Gender Bias in Career Advancement**

Gender bias remains one of the most persistent challenges faced by women journalists, particularly when it comes to career advancement. Despite having equal or even superior qualifications, experience, and performance, women are often overlooked for leadership roles or high-profile assignments. Many media organizations still adhere to traditional societal norms that associate authority and leadership with men, sidelining women from decision-making roles.



During focus group discussions, participants shared numerous examples of gender bias. They spoke about male journalists, even those with less experience or fewer qualifications, being promoted to editorial or managerial positions over equally or more capable female colleagues. This disparity is not only frustrating but also demoralizing for women journalists, who feel their contributions are undervalued.

Such biases are often subtle but consistently present, leading to missed opportunities for women to take on assignments that could significantly enhance their careers. These barriers create professional stagnation, particularly in journalism, where advancement is crucial for gaining influence and visibility. This cycle of inequality prevents women from reaching the upper echelons of newsroom leadership or participating in major assignments, perpetuating the imbalance and limiting the industry's overall diversity and fairness.

### **3.1.2 Lack of Mentorship**

A significant challenge highlighted by women journalists was the lack of mentorship in their careers. While male colleagues often benefit from informal mentorship networks that open doors to career advancement, women journalists are frequently left without similar support. They shared that male journalists were regularly included in informal mentoring relationships with senior figures such as editors and managers. These relationships provided valuable advice, guidance, and access to high-profile opportunities, giving male journalists a clear advantage.

In contrast, women journalists often found themselves excluded from these networks, leading to feelings of isolation and exclusion within their newsrooms. This disparity not only limits their access to career-enhancing opportunities but also creates a professional environment that feels unwelcoming and inequitable.

To address this gap, the inclusion of exchanges and study visits can serve as a tool for fostering mentorship and professional growth among women journalists. These opportunities allow women to learn from best practices in other media environments, gain exposure to diverse perspectives, and build international professional networks. By participating in such programs, women journalists can develop essential skills, broaden their career horizons, and access mentorship opportunities that might otherwise be unavailable in their local settings.

### **3.1.3 Marginalization in Editorial Processes**

Women journalists often face challenges framed as personal issues rather than systemic problems within the media industry. This perspective shifts responsibility away from organizations, leaving women to navigate barriers alone without institutional support.

This framing undermines their confidence, limits career growth, and excludes them from key editorial decisions, reducing diversity in media narratives. To drive progress, the media industry



must recognize these challenges as systemic and implement structural changes to promote inclusivity, equity, and diversity in newsrooms.

### **3.1.4 Gendered Assignments**

A concerning pattern highlighted during the focus groups is the prevalence of gendered assignments in newsrooms, where women journalists are disproportionately tasked with covering topics traditionally labeled as “soft” news, such as lifestyle, education, entertainment, and human-interest stories. Meanwhile, men are often assigned to cover “hard” news, including politics, economics, and investigative journalism. This division perpetuates outdated gender stereotypes, implying that women are better suited for emotionally driven or less impactful topics, while men are seen as more capable of handling complex, high-stakes reporting.

However, despite being steered toward “soft” news, women are often sent to handle some of the most challenging assignments, such as reporting from conflict zones or high-risk areas. While women journalists navigate these perilous situations—often without adequate consideration for their specific needs, such as menstrual health or access to appropriate facilities—their male colleagues are more likely to host live TV shows from the safety of studios. This stark contrast highlights a double standard: women are expected to endure the physical and emotional toll of field reporting in dangerous environments, while men often take on roles that provide greater visibility and perceived prestige from safer settings.

Such practices not only hinder women’s professional development but also perpetuate systemic imbalances in newsrooms. Women are denied the opportunity to develop expertise in influential beats and face additional challenges that their male counterparts are not subjected to, reinforcing their underrepresentation in leadership roles and high-profile positions. This imbalance diminishes the diversity of perspectives in media coverage, particularly in critical areas like politics and economics, where women's voices and insights are essential for inclusive narratives.

Addressing these disparities requires media organizations to challenge entrenched stereotypes, ensure equitable assignment practices, and provide the necessary support for women journalists in demanding roles. By creating an environment where women can thrive across all areas of journalism, the industry can benefit from richer, more inclusive storytelling that accurately represents society's complexities.

### **3.1.5 Workplace Harassment**

The issue of workplace harassment emerged as one of the most concerning challenges faced by women journalists. Participants shared stories of verbal harassment, inappropriate comments, and, in some cases, outright hostile behavior, often coming from male colleagues or supervisors. The experiences ranged from casual derogatory remarks to more overt instances of discrimination, where women felt uncomfortable or unsafe. However, even when harassment



was reported, the response from media organizations was often slow or ineffective. Many women expressed fear of retaliation, including professional repercussions such as loss of assignments or damaged reputations, which discouraged them from filing complaints or speaking out about their experiences.

This pervasive culture of harassment is harmful not only because of the immediate discomfort or trauma it causes but also because it creates a hostile work environment where women feel marginalized and unsupported. It undermines their ability to perform their job effectively, leading to decreased job satisfaction, lower morale, and a sense of powerlessness. The lack of clear reporting mechanisms and policies designed to address harassment exacerbates the problem, allowing toxic behaviors to persist unchecked.

### **3.1.6 Balancing Professional and Personal Responsibilities**

Balancing professional and personal responsibilities remains a significant and often overlooked challenge for women journalists. Many newsrooms operate under rigid policies that fail to accommodate the caregiving and health-related responsibilities that disproportionately fall on women. Factors such as inflexible work hours, frequent travel, and unpredictable on-call shifts create a work environment that does not consider the dual burdens of career and family life. This imbalance forces women journalists to make difficult choices, often sacrificing career growth to fulfill caregiving duties or manage their health needs.

Maternity leave and period leave, in particular, emerge as critical points of contention. While maternity leave is often seen as a professional setback, period leave remains largely absent in newsroom policies. Many women face challenges during menstruation, including pain or discomfort, yet are expected to perform at full capacity without accommodations. The absence of policies that address such realities reinforces a culture that ignores women's specific needs, perpetuating inequities in the workplace.

Women journalists have reported that taking maternity leave or caring for a family member has led to perceptions of reduced commitment to their jobs, negatively impacting career progression. Similarly, the stigma surrounding menstruation and the lack of support for period-related challenges can further marginalize women, making them feel undervalued and isolated in their professional environment.

The failure to provide sufficient support for work-life balance, including health-conscious policies like period leave, places a heavy burden on women journalists and contributes to the gender gap in leadership positions and other areas of professional advancement. Addressing this issue requires a systemic shift in newsroom culture and policies. Implementing family-friendly and health-conscious practices, such as flexible scheduling, parental leave, and period leave, would not only alleviate pressures faced by women journalists but also foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment. These changes are essential to enabling women to fully



contribute to their professions without being forced to choose between their careers, health, and personal responsibilities.

### **3.2 Safety of Women Journalists Outside the Newsroom**

Women journalists in Kosovo face significant safety concerns, including both physical threats and psychological harm. These challenges arise from risks such as violence, harassment, and intimidation while reporting in the field, as well as online abuse like cyberbullying and hate speech. These safety issues not only endanger their physical well-being but also impact their mental health and professional autonomy. The combination of gender-based discrimination and safety risks creates a hostile environment, discouraging women from fully engaging in their work and limiting their professional opportunities. Addressing these concerns is crucial for ensuring a safer and more supportive environment for women journalists.

#### **3.2.1 Harassment in the Field**

One of the most pervasive issues outside the newsroom is harassment in the field. Many participants reported experiencing verbal and physical harassment while covering stories, particularly in public spaces or during high-profile events. Cultural stereotypes about women's roles and capabilities often exacerbate these threats, creating a hostile and unsafe environment. Some women journalists reported that they had been physically pushed, verbally abused, or even threatened with violence while working on the ground. These incidents often went unreported, partly due to the fear of retribution and partly due to the perception that such behavior is "normal" or acceptable in some public settings.

The consistent threat of harassment leads many women journalists to avoid certain assignments, particularly those that require them to work in male-dominated or highly polarized environments. This results in a limited professional scope for women journalists, reducing the diversity of voices in the media and restricting women's access to high-profile or politically sensitive stories.

#### **3.2.3 Online Harassment**

In addition to harassment in the field, women journalists in Kosovo also face a significant threat from online harassment. After publishing sensitive or controversial stories, many women journalists reported receiving abusive messages, including threats of physical or sexual violence. This form of harassment is particularly insidious because it is often anonymous and widespread, reaching not only the journalist but also their family and friends. Participants described how such harassment targeted them as individuals, often focusing on their gender, appearance, or personal lives, rather than the content of their work.

The psychological toll of online harassment is profound. Many women journalists admitted to feeling anxious, depressed, and isolated due to the constant barrage of threats and abuse. Some reported engaging in self-censorship, avoiding topics that could provoke such harassment. This



self-censorship, while serving as a protective mechanism, ultimately undermines journalistic integrity and stifles important public discourse.

### **3.2.4 Institutional Neglect and Psychological Impact**

Women journalists highlighted the urgent need for stronger institutional responses to ensure their safety and security. Reports of harassment and threats are often met with slow and ineffective action from law enforcement and other institutions. Even when formal complaints are filed, many women feel their concerns are dismissed, and perpetrators are rarely held accountable. This lack of institutional support exacerbates the vulnerability and insecurity faced by women journalists.

The psychological toll of these threats and harassment is another critical issue. Constant exposure to such risks has led to increasing levels of anxiety, burnout, and depression among women journalists. Despite these challenges, accessible mental health resources remain scarce, leaving many without the support needed to navigate the emotional and mental strain of their work. In such an environment, women journalists are left to manage the dual burden of professional demands and personal safety concerns, often with insufficient support systems in place.

## **4. Stakeholder Analysis**

The stakeholder analysis highlighted the areas where women journalists need support and action from key organizations to address the challenges they face:

### **4.1 Independent Media Commission**

Women journalists emphasized the need for the IMC to enforce rules that ensure respect and fairness for women in the media. They called for media outlets to adopt internal policies that promote equal representation of women and stop harmful practices. Women also suggested that the IMC impose penalties on media outlets that produce content that objectifies women, reinforces stereotypes, or spreads misogynistic messages. Additionally, they stressed the importance of the IMC running public education campaigns to help audiences identify and challenge sexist content. Self-regulation within the media industry was also seen as an important step to reduce gender bias.

### **4.2 Press Council of Kosovo**

Women journalists pointed out the role of the PCK in promoting responsible journalism, especially when reporting on sensitive issues like gender-based violence (GBV). They urged the PCK to ensure that reporting on these topics is accurate and respectful, avoiding sensationalism and harmful stereotypes. They also asked the PCK to improve moderation of online comments to



prevent hate speech and abusive language aimed at women journalists. Creating better systems to handle hate speech and ensuring that online spaces remain respectful was seen as essential.

A key recommendation was to create a cooperation agreement between the Women Journalists Network, IMC, PCK, and justice institutions. This agreement would help address issues like harassment, threats, and violence against women journalists. Women journalists emphasized the need for clear processes for reporting safety concerns and ensuring timely responses to cases. This collaboration was seen as a way to improve the enforcement of legal protections and strengthen efforts to promote women's rights in the media.

### **4.3 Free Legal Aid**

The Free Legal Aid agency is a critical resource for women journalists who face legal challenges, including workplace harassment, defamation, or other forms of gender-based discrimination. Legal support is particularly essential for journalists dealing with cases of online abuse, threats, or legal disputes arising from their reporting. By ensuring access to free and impartial legal advice, this agency can empower women journalists to seek justice without the burden of financial constraints.

This collaboration could include:

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Educating women journalists about their legal rights and available protections.
- **Proactive Legal Assistance:** Offering workshops on how to handle legal threats or harassment in the workplace and while reporting.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Partnering with media organizations to establish and enforce stricter anti-harassment policies.

### **4.4 Gender Equality Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo**

The Gender Equality Office is another essential partner in promoting gender inclusivity within Kosovo's media landscape. As a government body dedicated to advancing gender equality across all sectors, it has the authority to influence policies that impact the working conditions and safety of women journalists.

Potential areas of collaboration include:

- **Policy Development:** Advocating for gender-sensitive media policies that promote equitable recruitment, career advancement, and assignment practices.



- **Training Programs:** Implementing gender awareness training for newsroom leaders to reduce biases and promote an inclusive work culture.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Establishing mechanisms to track and report gender-based disparities and harassment in media workplaces, ensuring accountability and transparency.

## 5. Survey findings

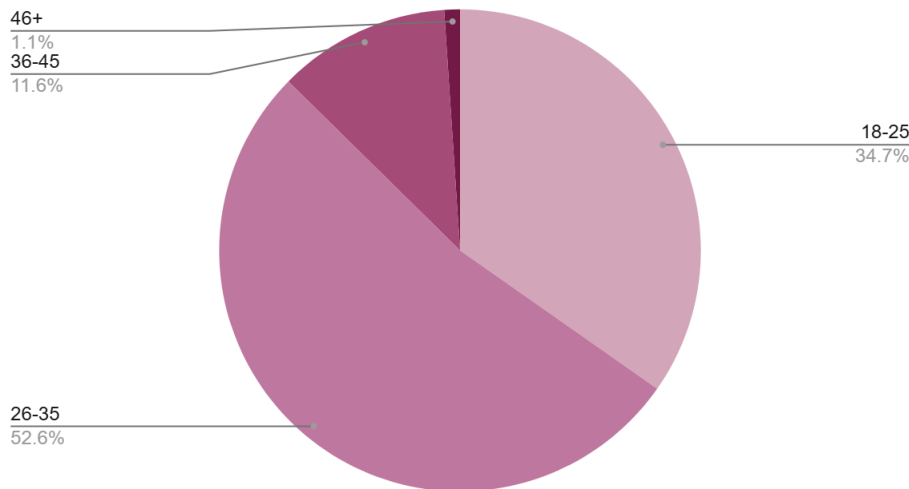
### Demographic data

The respondents are distributed across various age groups. The majority fall between 18-25 years and 26-35 years, making these the most represented categories. A smaller portion is aged 36-45 years, with only a few participants aged 46 years or older.

The survey is predominantly composed of Albanian respondents, reflecting the majority population. Minority groups, including Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, and Bosniak individuals, also participated, adding valuable diversity.

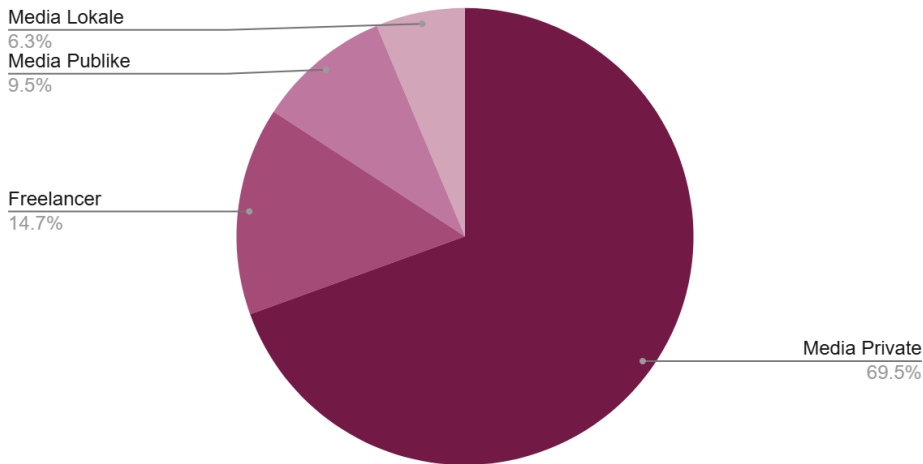
A large proportion of respondents work for private media outlets, followed by those in public media and local media. Additionally, a significant number are engaged as freelancers, indicating a variety of professional backgrounds.

Mosha/Age/Godine





### Organizata Mediatike/Media Organization/Medijska Organizacija

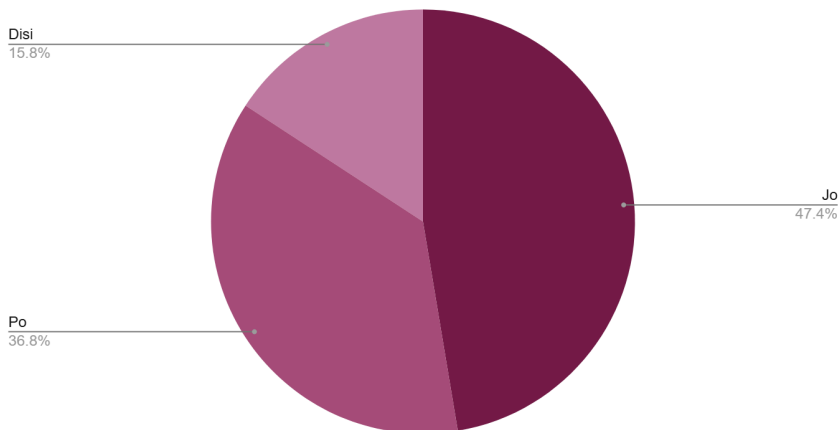


The survey reveals a complex array of challenges faced by women journalists in Kosovo, emphasizing significant gaps in equality, safety, and workplace culture. Below is a more comprehensive breakdown of the findings:

#### 5.1 Perception of Equal Career Advancement

A recurring theme in the responses is the perception that women journalists do not enjoy equal opportunities for career advancement when compared to their male colleagues. A considerable portion of respondents believe that barriers such as biased promotions, lack of mentorship opportunities, and gender stereotyping hinder their professional growth.

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While some respondents acknowledged that their organizations offer equal opportunities, the overall sentiment reflects that many workplaces still favor male journalists for leadership or

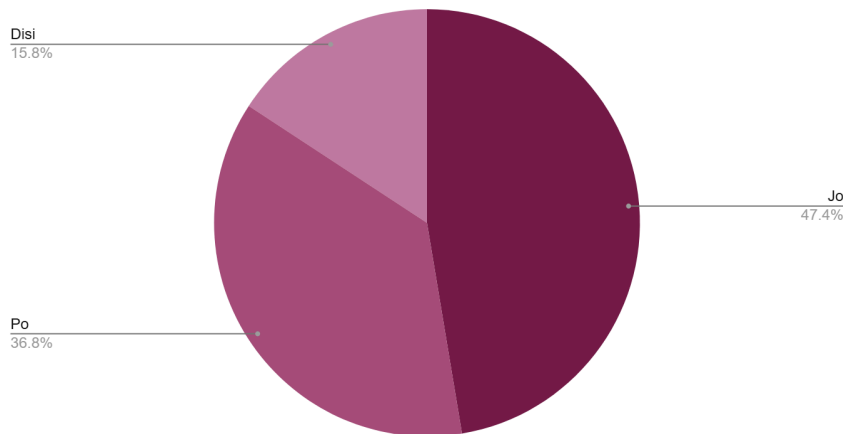


high-profile roles. Additionally, the uncertainty among some respondents suggests a lack of transparency in career advancement policies. This highlights the need for clear guidelines and proactive measures to ensure women journalists have equitable access to promotions, professional development, and leadership opportunities.

## 5.2 Experience of Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination remains a significant issue, as evidenced by the substantial number of respondents reporting personal experiences of unfair treatment. This discrimination manifests in various forms, including exclusion from decision-making processes, unequal pay, and assignment of less prestigious or challenging roles. In some cases, women journalists may also face derogatory remarks or dismissive attitudes from colleagues and management.

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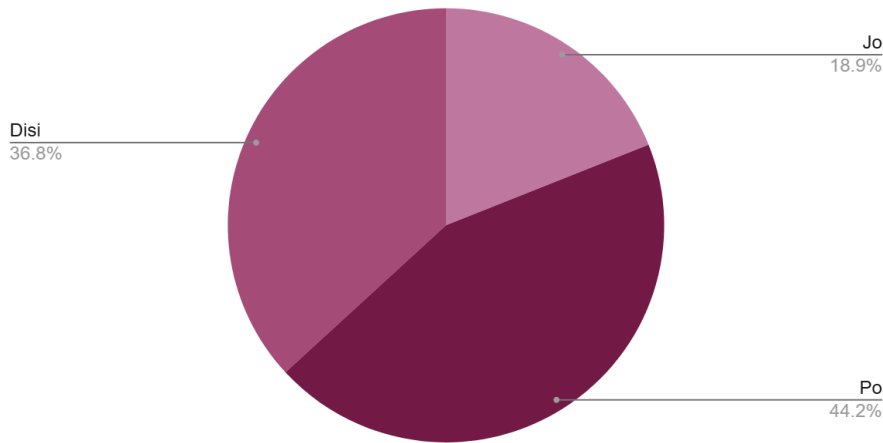
Although a smaller group of respondents reported no direct experience of discrimination, this does not negate the prevalence of the issue. Instead, it underscores the diverse experiences of women journalists, with some working in relatively supportive environments while others endure systemic inequality. These findings call for a cultural shift within media organizations to eliminate gender bias and foster an inclusive environment where all journalists are treated equitably.

## 5.3 Policies Addressing Gender Discrimination

The lack of clear and enforceable policies to address gender discrimination is a critical concern. Many respondents indicated that their organizations either lack such policies or have not communicated them effectively. This ambiguity creates an environment where discriminatory practices can thrive unchecked.



A ndiheni të mbështetura nga media juaj kur përballeni me kërcënime për sigurinë?



Organizations with existing policies often fail to implement them consistently, leaving employees uncertain about how to report issues or seek support. This points to a need for comprehensive anti-discrimination frameworks that include clear reporting mechanisms, mandatory training sessions for staff, and regular audits to ensure compliance. Furthermore, these policies should be widely communicated to all employees to foster awareness and accountability.

#### 5.4 Safety Policies for Women Journalists

The absence of tailored safety measures for women journalists, particularly those working in high-risk environments, emerged as another significant issue. Respondents highlighted a lack of organizational support in addressing threats or harassment, both in the field and within the workplace. Women journalists often face unique risks, such as physical threats, sexual harassment, or targeting during protests or in conflict zones.

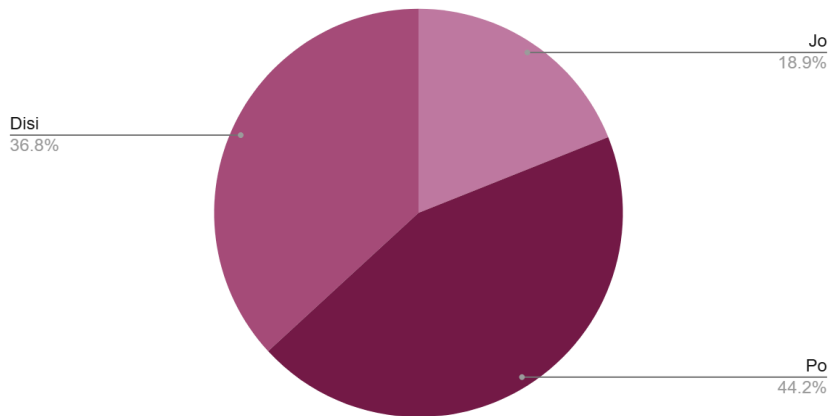
Without formal safety protocols, these journalists are left to navigate such dangers on their own, which can affect their mental health and willingness to take on challenging assignments. Organizations must prioritize the development of gender-sensitive safety policies, including risk assessments, training for reporting in hostile environments, and access to immediate support during crises.

#### 5.5 Online Harassment

The survey revealed alarming levels of online harassment targeting women journalists. Common forms of abuse include sexist comments, threats of violence, doxxing, and social media impersonation. This digital harassment not only undermines their professional credibility but also poses serious emotional and psychological challenges.



A ndiheni të mbështetura nga media juaj kur përballeni me kërcënime për sigurinë?



The rise of online platforms has amplified the visibility of journalists, making them more vulnerable to targeted attacks. For women journalists, this often takes a gendered form, with threats that focus on their appearance, personal lives, or perceived abilities rather than their work. These findings underscore the need for robust measures to combat online harassment, such as providing digital safety training, enabling secure online profiles, and advocating for stronger legal protections against cyberbullying and threats.

## 6. Recommendations

### 6.1 Improvement of Gender Equality Policies

Media organizations should develop clear, transparent, and enforceable gender equality policies. These policies should explicitly address career advancement, mentorship, equal pay, and opportunities for high-profile assignments. The implementation of regular training programs on gender equality and bias reduction in newsrooms is essential. In addition, organizations should create clear mechanisms for addressing complaints of gender discrimination, including the establishment of independent committees to handle such cases.

### 6.2 Enhanced Workplace Harassment Reporting Mechanisms

Media organizations must establish robust, confidential reporting systems for workplace harassment and discrimination. These systems should ensure that complaints are handled swiftly and effectively, with clear consequences for perpetrators. Additionally, organizations should establish support networks for women journalists who experience harassment, including psychological support and legal advice. The creation of internal workplace anti-harassment policies is necessary to ensure that all journalists work in a safe and respectful environment.



### **6.3 Implementation of Family-Friendly and Health-Conscious Policies**

To help women journalists balance professional and personal responsibilities, media organizations should introduce more flexible work policies. This includes offering maternity and period leave, ensuring these are seen as a part of a healthy work-life balance, rather than as setbacks. Flexible scheduling, parental leave, and policies that accommodate caregiving responsibilities will help reduce the burden on women and ensure their full participation in the workforce.

### **6.4 Addressing Online Harassment**

A comprehensive strategy to combat online harassment is crucial. Media outlets should implement digital safety training programs and provide journalists with tools to protect their online identities. Clear reporting mechanisms for online harassment should be established, and organizations must advocate for stronger legal frameworks to protect journalists from online abuse. Additionally, media organizations should invest in building a supportive community for journalists affected by online harassment, providing mental health resources and spaces for solidarity.

### **6.5 Collaboration with Key Stakeholders for Support**

Collaborations between media organizations, government bodies, legal aid agencies, and media regulatory bodies are essential in ensuring the safety and support of women journalists. The creation of a cooperation agreement between the Women Journalists Network, the Independent Media Commission (IMC), the Press Council of Kosovo (PCK), and the Gender Equality Office could address harassment, threats, and violence against women journalists more effectively. The development of gender-sensitive safety policies, including risk assessments and training, is crucial to safeguard women in hostile reporting environments.

### **6.6 Strengthening Institutional Accountability and Response Mechanisms**

Institutions, including law enforcement, must take more proactive roles in addressing the safety of women journalists. Reports of harassment and threats should be handled with urgency, and the perpetrators should be held accountable. Media organizations should create a culture of accountability, ensuring that all threats, both in the workplace and online, are taken seriously. Media outlets should work with institutions to establish clearer, faster, and more effective channels for addressing safety concerns.

### **6.7 Mental Health Support and Institutional Resources**

The psychological toll of harassment, both in the workplace and online, cannot be overlooked. Media organizations should provide mental health resources for women journalists, such as counseling services and stress management workshops. Access to support during high-stress situations, including exposure to violence or harassment, is essential. Institutional support should extend beyond physical safety to address the emotional and mental well-being of journalists.



## 7. Conclusions

The challenges faced by women journalists in Kosovo are multifaceted, ranging from workplace harassment and gender discrimination to the pervasive threat of online abuse. These issues undermine the professional growth, safety, and mental well-being of women in the media, ultimately limiting their contributions to journalism and the broader public discourse.

Workplace harassment, in particular, is one of the most concerning issues. Verbal and physical harassment, often perpetrated by male colleagues or supervisors, has led many women to feel unsafe, unsupported, and marginalized in their work environment. This lack of support, coupled with the fear of retaliation, has contributed to a pervasive culture of silence, where many women refrain from reporting harassment due to concerns about professional repercussions. Media organizations must address this culture by implementing clear reporting mechanisms, establishing anti-harassment policies, and ensuring swift and effective responses to complaints.

Balancing career and personal responsibilities remains a significant challenge, especially for women journalists who often face inflexible work policies that do not accommodate their caregiving and health needs. The absence of maternity and period leave in many media organizations further exacerbates the difficulties faced by women in balancing these demands. Implementing family-friendly and health-conscious policies, including flexible scheduling, maternity leave, and period leave, is crucial to creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment for women journalists.

Outside the newsroom, women journalists face additional safety concerns. Harassment in the field, including physical and verbal abuse, often goes unreported due to the perceived normalcy of such behavior in public settings. Online harassment is another pervasive threat, with women journalists receiving threats of physical or sexual violence following the publication of controversial stories. This online abuse, often gendered and focusing on personal aspects rather than professional work, has profound psychological effects, leading many women journalists to self-censor or avoid high-profile stories altogether.

Institutional responses to these issues are often slow or ineffective, leaving women journalists feeling vulnerable and unsupported. Reports of harassment and threats are frequently met with indifference, and perpetrators are rarely held accountable. This lack of institutional support compounds the challenges faced by women journalists, leading to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and burnout.

The stakeholder analysis underscores the need for a collaborative approach to addressing these issues. Media organizations, regulatory bodies, legal aid agencies, and government institutions must work together to create a safer, more equitable environment for women journalists. This includes the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, the establishment of clear reporting and safety protocols, and the provision of legal and mental health support.



Ultimately, fostering an inclusive and supportive media environment for women journalists is not only essential for their well-being but also for the integrity and diversity of journalism itself. By addressing these issues head-on and working together, we can ensure that women journalists are empowered to fully contribute to the media landscape, free from harassment, discrimination, and safety concerns.