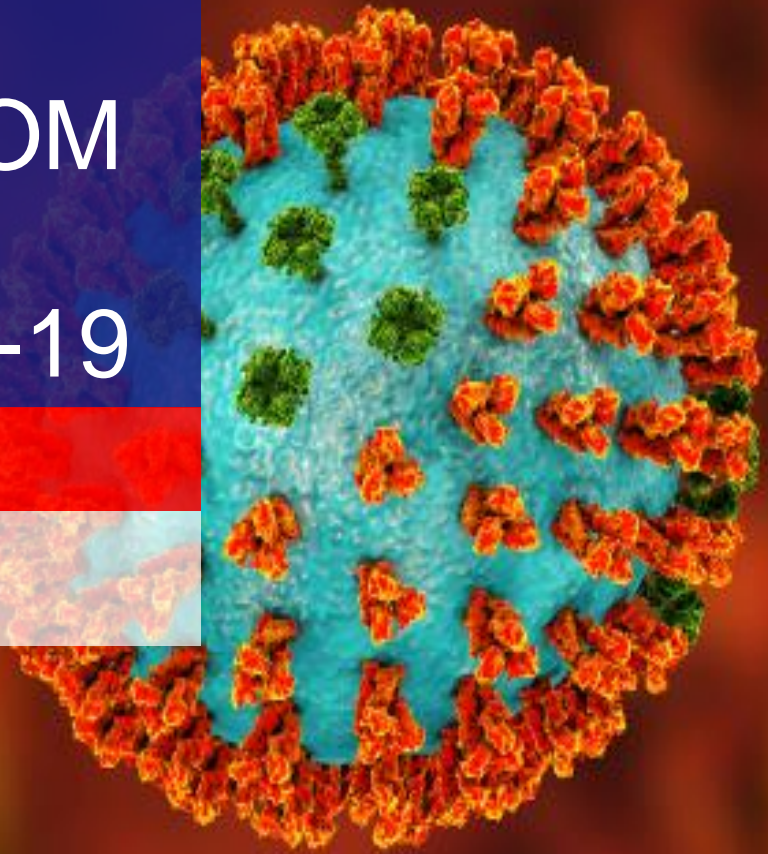


PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS DURING COVID-19

Media Council of Kenya



About Media Council of Kenya

MCK is an independent national institution established by the Media Council Act 2013 to set media standards and ensure compliance as set out in Article 34(5) of the constitution;

- The Council promotes and protects freedom and independence of the media, and assures protection of the rights and privileges of journalists in the performance of their duties among others.
- The council often engages stakeholders on issues of freedom of the media, which is guaranteed in the constitution (Article34).



Press Freedom in Kenya



Freedom of the media allows practitioners to scrutinize and analyses events or information that shapes the society;

- It is this freedom that allows journalists and editors to determine what should be consumed by the public and what should not;
- The Council conducts an annual review of the performance and the public opinion of the media, and publish the results in at least two daily newspapers of national circulation – MCK Act 2013, Sec 6 (i).

Press Freedom in Kenya

- Kenya is ranked 103 in 2020; and 100 in 2019 on World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF);
- This is attributed to the media being routinely subjected to attacks by security forces, the public and threats as well as intimidation from politicians and their supporters;
- Journalists continue to be harassed or their equipment confiscated/destroyed. MCK reports.

Journalists in Frontline

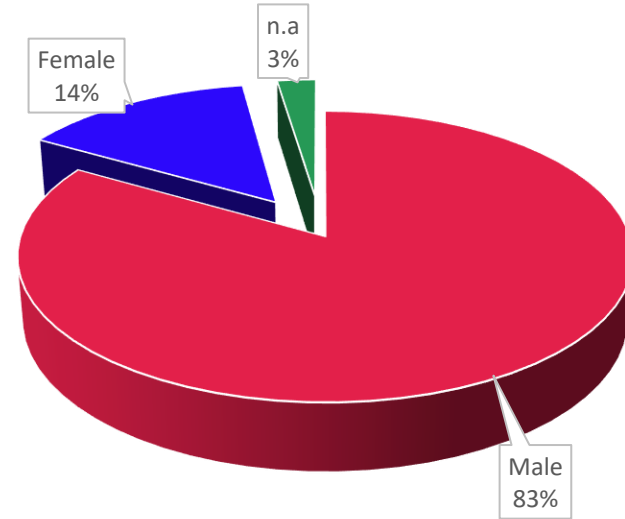
- ❖ Journalists and other media workers face a range of digital and physical threats that threaten freedom of expression;
- ❖ During the period, the Covid-19 Pandemic has provided a number of challenges to media houses and journalists;
- ❖ A number of journalists and other media professionals experienced safety challenges that greatly affected their work and their profession;
- ❖ From intimidation to hostile operating environment, journalists and other media professionals are exposed to safety concerns;
- ❖ Documentation of the violations during the period indicate that there is a gap in the manner the safety of journalists and other media professional are dealt with including how those responsible are held to account.

Journalists globally

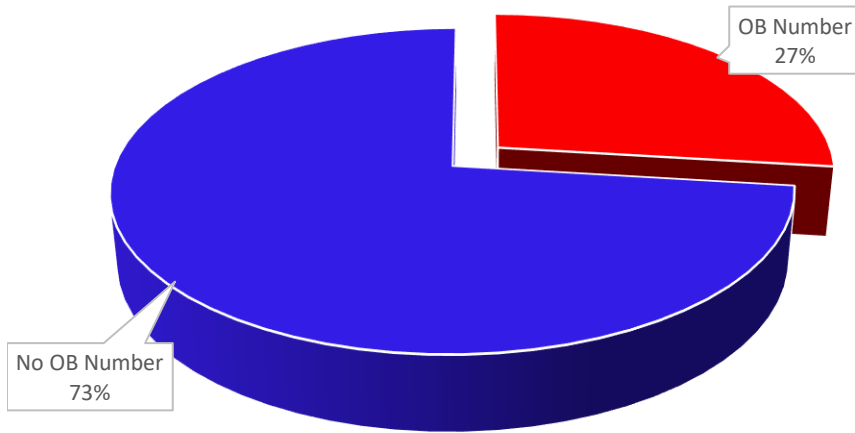
- International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) – survey 2020 in a study of 1300 frontline journalists in 77 countries found...
- Three in four journalists have faced official restrictions, obstruction or intimidation in reporting on Covid-19;
- Two-thirds of staff and freelance journalists have also suffered pay cuts, lost revenue, job losses, cancelled commissions or worsening working conditions,

Distribution of attacks per gender

- ❖ A total of 52 cases were analyzed during the period;
- ❖ Most of the threats and attacks had been directed at male journalists accounting for 83% while 14% were women.

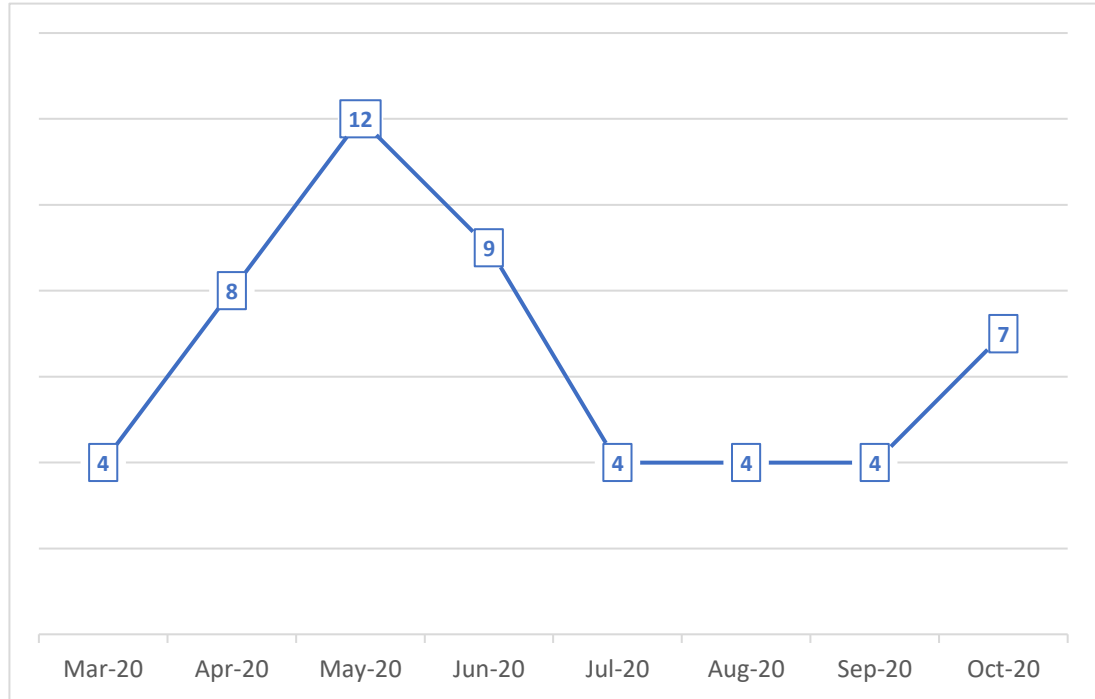


Cases reported to police and investigated

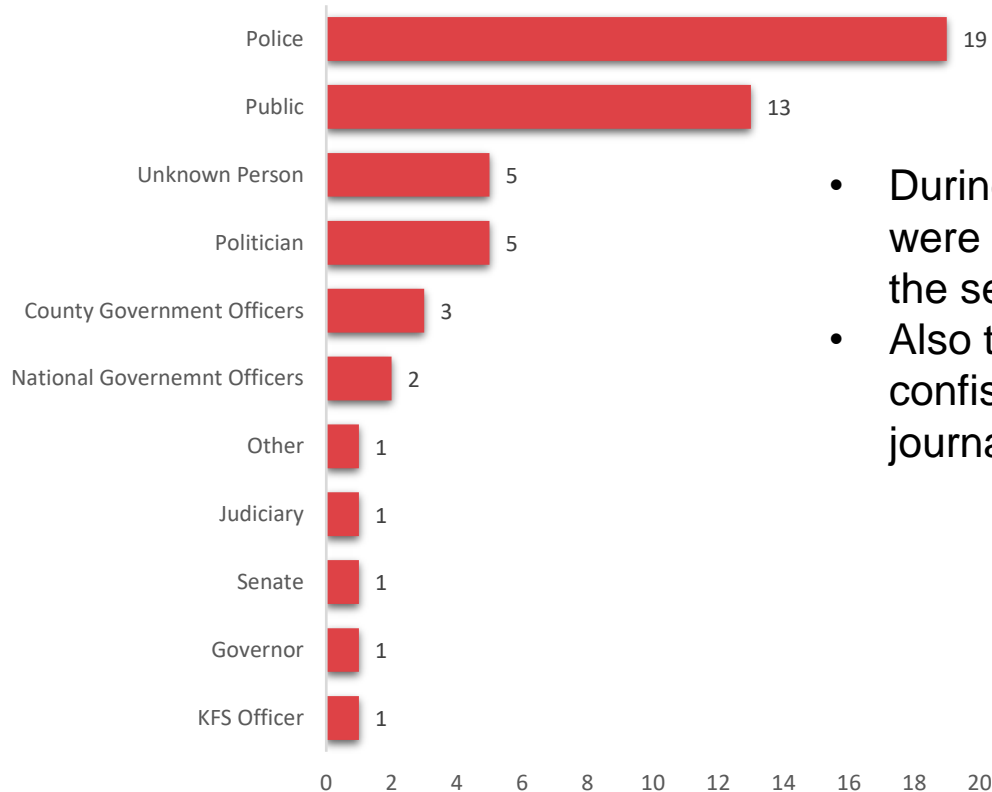


- Most journalists and media practitioners whose rights have been violated are reluctant to report the cases to the relevant authorities;
- When reported, they resort to withdrawal or abandon the cases midway, thus perpetrating impunity;
- All the 27% cases reported have never been investigated or completed by police

Monthly cases reported during the period

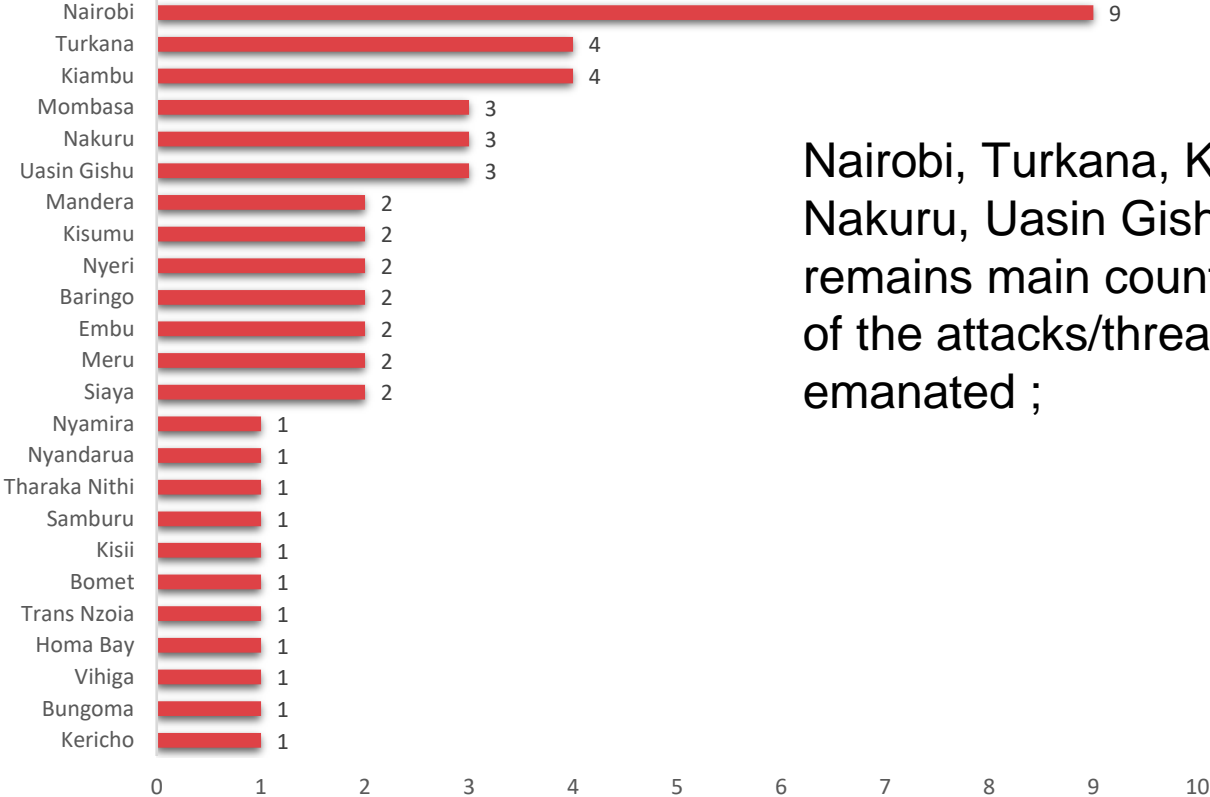


Perpetrators of these press freedom violations during COVID-19?



- During coverage of COVID-19, journalists were routinely subjected to attacks mainly by the security forces and the public;
- Also threats and intimidation by politicians, confiscation of equipment, and censorship of journalistic content.

Number of cases reported Per County



Nairobi, Turkana, Kiambu, Mombasa, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Mandera, remains main counties of concern as most of the attacks/threats of journalists emanated ;

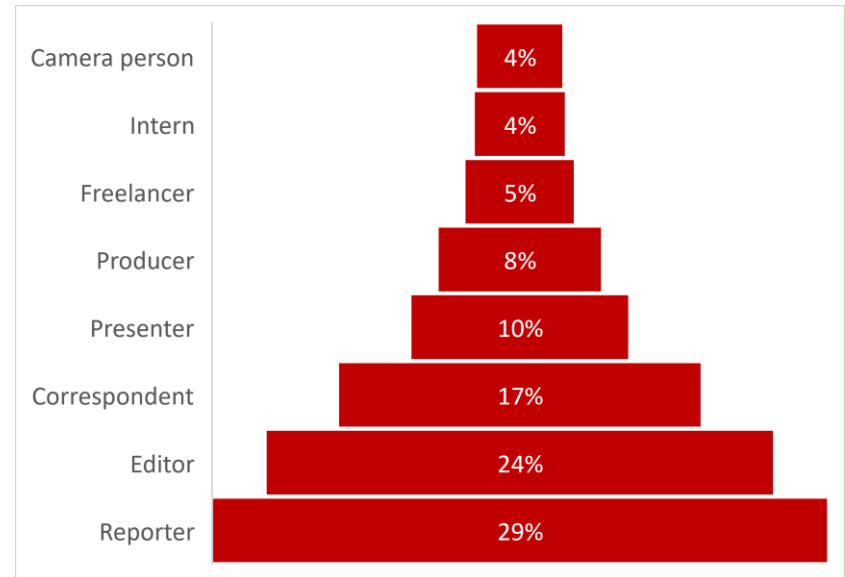
Type of Incidents reported during COVID-19

- Assault/Intimidation/harassment
- Physical assault leading to injury/deaths
- Restrictions on access to information
- Loss of employment
- Legal measure (laws restricting press/media freedom)
- Criminal charges
- Arrest/detention/imprisonment
- Bullying/trolling insult/abuse
- Attack / threat to property/ personal belongings
- Attack / threat to equipment
- Physical assault not resulting in injury
- Digital censorship

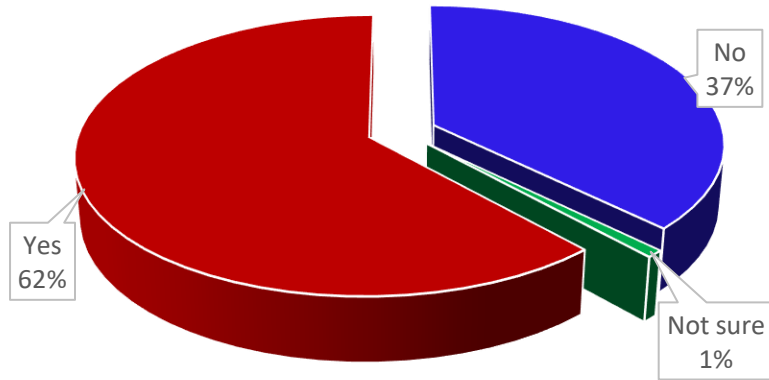
SURVEY

SEXUAL HARRASSEMENT IN THE MEDIA

- MCK and Article19 jointly conducted a survey using online questionnaire;
- Targeting 118 journalists and media practitioners in September 2020;
- Participants composed of 61 (52%) female and 57(48%) male and all worked in print, radio, TV and online platforms;
- Comprising reporters, editors, correspondents, freelancers etc



Have you or a colleague you know been harassed while working at your organizations or in the field and by whom?

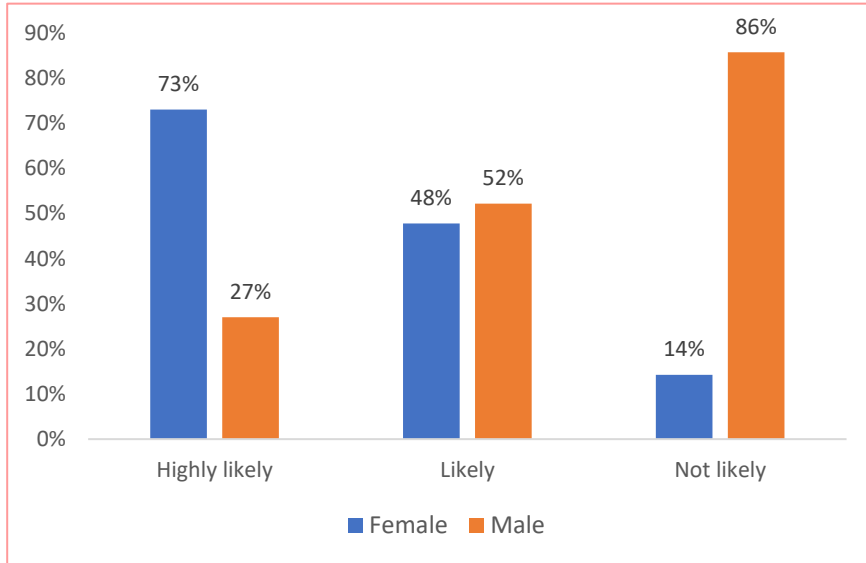


Behaviours that count as sexual harassment

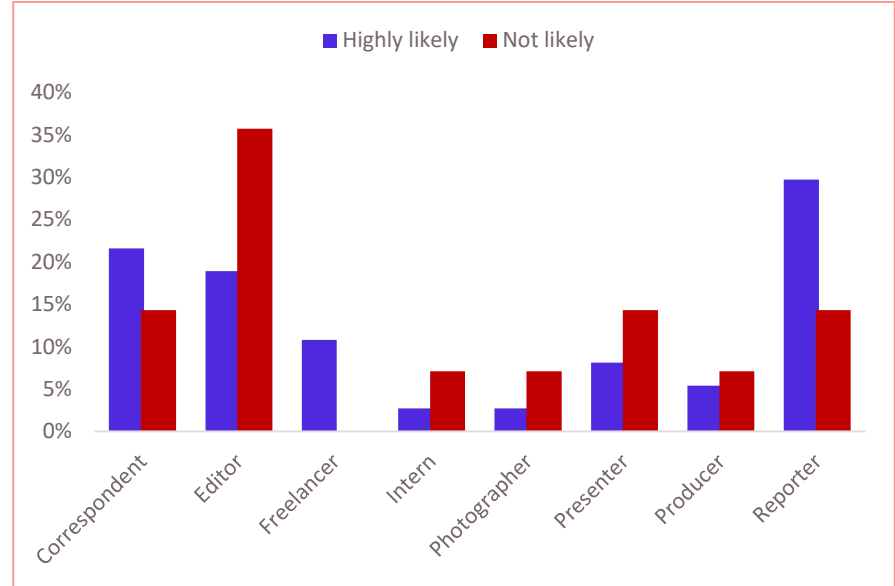
- A colleague who is a reporter was asked to have a date-outing with his immediate supervisor, to get a favour for a promotion.
- A female colleague was asked for a sexual favor from a client in exchange of giving business to the media house.
- A friend of mine was an intern ad her immediate boss constantly asked her to go to his office for tea. She worked in the sports desk and was constantly facing sexual harassment but covered under the word mentorship.
- A friend was touched inappropriately by a senior staff in another department, the lady reported to HR and an investigation was done. The senior staff was found guilty and fired.
- A senior person insisted on going out with her and after she rejected the offer, her stories were killed for a while, or was not sent out on assignments

How likely are you to experience sexual harassment outside your media house or during assignments?

Gender



Occupation

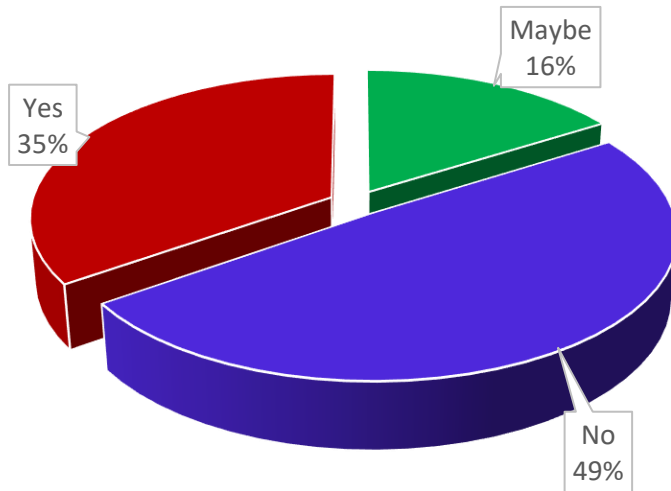


Categories of sexual harassment

- ✓ Receiving e-mails or text messages with sexual content
- ✓ Discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at work, outside work, or in other inappropriate places.
- ✓ Non-verbal conduct, such as staring or gestures.
- ✓ Jokes that are based on sexual or gender
- ✓ Supervisor/Line manager denying reporter or opportunity to do a story unless they have sex.
- ✓ Discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at work, outside work, or in other inappropriate places.

- ✓ Sexual advances, propositions, suggestions or pressure for sexual activity at or outside work.
- ✓ Someone displaying sexually explicit pictures in your space or a shared space, such as at work
- ✓ Suggestions that sexual favours may further a person's career, or that refusal of such may hinder it.

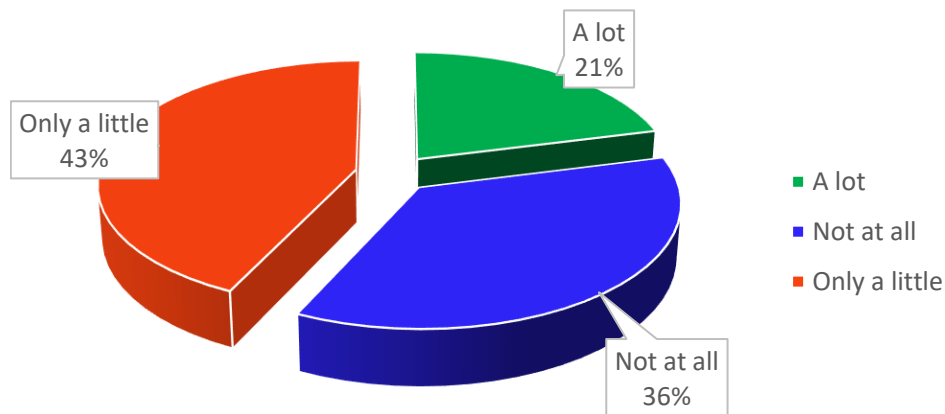
Do you feel comfortable to speak to your supervisor about frustrations or any form of harassment at work or outside?



What are your fears for not speaking/reporting cases of sexual harassment?

- Normalization of sexual harassment in newsrooms
- Because sometimes the supervisor is the culprit
- Being victimized and being fired from employment.
- Discrimination, intimidation and an eventuality in job loss
- Embarrassment/shamed
- Fear of being subjected to any form of victimization
- Fear of my security if the culprits may want to revenge
- Fear of victimization if the culprit is well connected with the management
- I am an intern and want to secure a job which in most cases is unlikely. Giving a complaint may end up having myself ostracized
- Lack of confidentiality.
- Lack of trust of how the case will be handled
- One could get ridiculed/ He-Said-She-Said type of situation

How much has sexual harassment hindered your work or report stories both inside and outside your newsroom?



THANK YOU!