



Book Review

Carlsson, U., & Pöyhtäri, R. (2017). *The Assault on Journalism: Building Knowledge to Protect Freedom of Expression*. Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom. ISSN. 978-91-87957-50-5

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This book “The Assault on Journalism (Building Knowledge to Protect Freedom of Expression)” is edited by “Ulla Carlsson” and “Reeta Poyhtari” and is published by Nordicom, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Dr. Ulla Carlsson is a Professor at Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg, Sweden and holds the position of UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Global Policy. Her areas of interest are Media and Information Literacy, Freedom of Expression, Conflict and globalization. The other editor of the book, Dr. Reeta Pöyhtäri is a Post-Doctoral Researcher at Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET), University of Tampere, Finland. She has been a former Expert, Division for Freedom of Expression and Media Development at UNESCO.

This book is a compilation of research works of renowned scholars on freedom of expression and safety of journalists. In connection with, World Press Freedom Day 2016 in Helsinki an international conference, entitled, ‘Safety of Journalists, Knowledge is the Key’,

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was arranged by UNESCO and the UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression at the University of Gothenburg in collaboration with International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). This publication is based on the contributions to the conference. The book is organized in four major portions.

In the first part “The status of Safety of Journalists”, the key articles presented are an analytical framework for all the next chapters. It begins with Professor Simon Cottle’s keynote speech at the conference, where he underlines the importance of understanding how journalism is caught up in both the whirlwind of history and the globalization.

Second part “The Way Forward” focuses on two major areas. First is related to initiatives for journalists’ safety and in the second area they map out the measures and existing tools to evaluate these initiatives. This portion also suggests new means and ways for safety. In the third part, revised versions of the papers which were presented during three different sessions of the conference are added. Also some poster contributions are transcribed. The chapters are divided in two main themes: Threats and Violence against Journalists, and its Effects, and Protection of Journalists and Sources.

The fourth section covers the statistics for building a knowledge base on safety of journalists.

In the paper, ‘Journalist Killings and the Responsibility to Report’, the author, Simon Cottle, based on Jeffrey Alexander’s works on “Civil Sphere” tries to picture the harms and threats to journalists all around the world and relates the reasons with the history of journalism and today’s globalization.

While Guy Burger in the paper “Why the World Became Concerned with Journalistic Safety, and Why the Issue Will Continue to Attract Attention” explains the historical perspective, current situation and future dimension of the issues related to the security of journalists. He concludes that the issue of journalists’ security will gain more significance with digitalization of society.

Another paper “The United Nations’ Role in Promoting the Safety of Journalists from 1945 to 2016” by ‘Silvia Chocarro Marcesse’ highlighted the efforts of UN in promotion safety measures for journalists around the globe. It also evaluates the factors related to the magnificent performance of UN plan of action in this regard.

Thomas Hanitzsch in his paper “Collaboration Is the Future. Doing Research in the Network Era” asserts on the need of global collaboration to improve the security of correspondents and journalists. He explains three models for collaboration which are the centralized, the correspondent, and the coordinated cooperation model. He also suggested to allocate scholarships for further study on this topic.

In the part, ‘The Way Forward’ Elisabeth Eide highlights the fears and risks which Afghan journalists are facing since decades in the chapter “A Country without Mercy – Afghan Journalists Caught in Crossfire”. She points out the issues and dangers of extremism, government sanctions and conflicting laws in the country. She has specially mentioned the poor condition of women journalists in Afghanistan. She also emphasizes the need for improvement in scientific media research in Afghanistan.

Pradip Ninan Thomas in “The Cost of Truth Telling in India –

Reporting in the Context of Intolerance” defines the current legal and extra-legal challenges to press freedom in India. He explains the various kind of laws which are being used to silent the reporters and journalists. He stresses the need for shaping a policy suitable for a huge country like India.

The book not only discusses the issues related to safety of journalists, but also mentions a paper from Magda Abu-Fadil who gives solution for it. In the article, “Journalism Schools Must Include Safety Courses in Curricula” she argues for the need of introducing safety courses in curriculum of journalism all around the globe and especially in Arab world. She has pointed out that most of the courses taught at journalism schools have nothing to do with the real or practical journalism. She highlights the gaps in theoretical and practical work in the field. Magda also suggests the news organizations to train journalists and insist on safety measures.

In the section “How to Measure Safety of Journalists”, the chapter “Assaults against Journalists – We see the tip of the iceberg”, Katharine Sarikakis first shares the shocking stats and trends of journalists killing worldwide and then reveals a myth related to the condition of journalistic freedom in third world countries. She proves that it is not only the autocratic regimes or conflict zones where journalists are in danger but they are also assaulted in Europe up to a serious number. She highlights the worrisome situation and stresses that it can go worst in near future if the global community did not cooperate for the safety of journalists.

The chapter “Tribal Journalists under Fire – Threats, Impunity and Decision Making in Reporting on Conflict in Pakistan” by Syed Irfan

Ashraf and Lisa Broten is related to the miserable condition of journalists in a particular area (FATA) of Pakistan where so called "War on Terror" has ruined the life of local people. As a result of this non-traditional war, local journalists are facing issues like unemployment, family relocation, abduction and even life threats. But still, courageous journalists are making their way to report the truth between this multidimensional war of state, militants and foreign interests.

Safety of journalists is a worldwide issue but it becomes more serious when it comes to politically unstable countries like Nigeria. Lillan Ngusuur Unaegbu in his research "Safety Concerns in the Nigerian Media – What Gender Dynamics?", in particular focusses on the most vulnerable situation of the female journalists of Nigeria who are facing serious threats in their job. Unlike their male colleagues, they are exposed to sexual harassment and abuse both at work and outside work. Based on in depth interviews on female journalists, Lillan has also noted that even journalists hesitate to report such crimes because they are frightened that reporting may cause more shaming.

We all know that journalism in states like Iran is not an easy job. But how tough is it actually? This has been answered in the paper "The Psychological Wellbeing of Iranian Journalists" by "Anthony Feinstein and Bennis Pavisian" with an analysis of data collected from the responses of Iranian journalists working in news rooms and in fields. The results show a high rate of arrests, torture, assaults, intimidation and family threats which are the major cause of increase in PTSD symptoms. This emotional distress is a proof of extra

ordinary danger which Iranian journalists are facing.

In “The Dangers of Sports Journalism” Kirsten Sparre says that sports journalism is considered to be comparatively safe zone for journalists but this study of Kirsten shows that there’s no such safe zone when you’re reporting the truth. After a detailed study of reports related to violation of media freedom, the researcher finds that verbal abuse, attacks, assaults, personal and social media harassment and even killing of journalists were also reported in this domain as well. Amazingly, not only the fans but the athletes, support staff and sports organizations were also involved in such incidents.

When we talk about the threats to journalists, we usually mean threats from state institutions and other influencers. But there are less studies regarding threats within the own organizations of journalists. Sriram Arulchelvan in his study “Internal Threats and Safety of Journalists – A Study from India” reveals that sudden suspension, non-allocation of work, demotion, transfer and dismissal are some of the major threats which a journalist usually faces from his own organization.

Journalism nowadays is highly dependent on Citizen Journalists (CJs) because they report from the areas where professional journalists do not have access such as war zones and other dangerous areas, and they are doing this at the risk and sometimes price of their lives. The researcher “Mariateresa Garrido Villareal” in paper “The Protection of Citizen Journalists during Armed Conflicts – A Legal Approach” provides a legal framework for the safety of CJs and also discusses the situations when CJs are taken as spies instead of

civilians.

Not only war zones are risky for journalists but they can also be at a risk when they are reporting conflicts in democratization. “Judith Lohner and Sandra Banjac” in paper “A Story Bigger than Your Life? The Safety Challenges of Journalists Reporting on Democratization Conflicts” after interviewing journalists from various countries found that insult, intimidation, phone tapping, physical attacks, legal proceedings and imprisonment are some of the major tactics to pressurize a journalist. The author also suggests some measures to increase the safety of journalists.

Sadia Jamil in her paper “Freedom Under Pressure – Threats to Journalists’ Safety in Pakistan” highlights the issues faced by journalists in Pakistan which are affecting their ability to work and quality of journalism. Major threats are financial, physical, psychological, social and emotional pressures which directly hit their professional practices. This study is a reflection of real problems of journalists in Pakistan which are frequently mentioned by international media organizations as well.

In a nutshell, this book mainly covers the latest research work related to the safety and security of journalists. Articles in this book are from diverse regions of the world and hence gives a global view of current situation of threats to quality of journalism. The most important thing is that the contributors, researchers and editors have not only highlighted the dangers but also suggested a way forward for the improvement of safety of journalists. Also, this book gives an insight of factual data of assaults on journalists worldwide.

